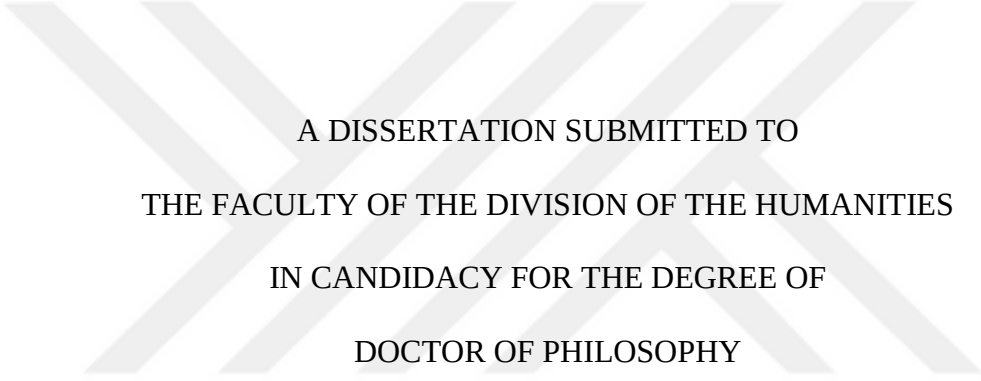


THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

TRANSFORMING ERZURUM/KARIN: THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF A
MULTI-ETHNIC OTTOMAN CITY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY



A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS

BY

YASAR TOLGA CORA

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2016

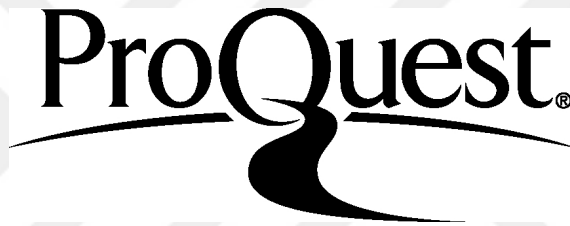
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In memory of my father, Mehmet Yüksel Cora.



*Yağmur çiseliyor.
Serez çarşısı dilsiz,
Serez çarşısı kör.
Havada konuşmamanın, görmemenin kahrolası hüznü
Ve Serez çarşısı kapatmış elleriyle yüzünü.
Yağmur çiseliyor.*

Nazım Hikmet

Table of Contents

List of Tables	viii
List of Maps	ix
Notes on Transliterations, Dates and Measurement Units.....	x
List of Abbreviations	xii
Acknowledgments	xiii
Abstract.....	xix
Introduction: Writing Armenian Provincial Notables into the Tanzimat or Writing the Tanzimat through Local Armenian Notables and the “New Imperial Order”	1
An Overview of the Conventional History of the Tanzimat Era (1839–1876).....	13
The Geographical Context: The Province and the City of Erzurum in the Nineteenth Century— a Town on the Borderlands	55
Theoretical Bases and Methodological Approaches	64
Sources	77
Synopsis of Chapters.....	82
Chapter 1: Notables of the Old-Order: The History, Social Networks, and Self- Representation of the Allahverdiyans.....	85
A Dynasty in a World in Flux: The Allahverdiyans in the 16 th and 18 th Centuries	93

Center in the Province, Province in the Center: The Economic and Social Ties of the Allahverdiyans	116
The New Order: Limits of Personal Ties and Shifting Relations during the <i>Tanzimat</i>	134
Conclusion.....	151
Chapter 2: A Man of the New Order: Kürkçübaşı Agop and Tax Farming, Provisioning the Army, and Bargaining Loyalty.....	155
Kürkçübaşı’s Early Years in Erzurum	168
The Crimean War: Provisioning of the Army, Organization, Networks and Profit.....	189
The Crimean War: “Ottomanness” of Kürkçübaşı and Strategies for Claiming Loyalty	211
Conclusion.....	222
Chapter 3: “The Infidel has run wild”: Livestock Trade and Manufacturing, and Impermeable Social Boundaries: Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi.....	228
Dynamics of a Local Economy in the Nineteenth Century: Livestock Trade and <i>Pastırma</i> Production in Erzurum	234
The Rise of Khachatur Efendi in Erzurum.....	254
The Murder of Khachatur Efendi: Violence and Impermeable Social Boundaries	270
Conclusion.....	279
Chapter 4: Reform in Practice: Armenian Notables in the 1860s.....	283
Khachatur Khan Ter Nersisyan Efendi	292
Hamazasp Ballaryan and Daniel Kharajyan Efendis	307

“Reform in Practice”: Investigation in the Mush region (1869) by Daniel Kharajyan and Politics of Reform by Khachatur Khan	319
Conclusion.....	334
Chapter 5: “We Want Justice!”: Conflict between the Notables, the Bishop and the Artisans in the Context of the Armenian Constitution	338
The Armenian Constitution in the Provinces: Legal Framework and First Election in Erzurum	344
Disputes about the Bishop Harutyun Vehapetyan and His Temporary Removals	352
Conclusion.....	394
Chapter 6 and Conclusion: Twilight of the Age of Armenian Notables, and Modernization and Nationalization of Armenian Politics.....	399
The Notables of Erzurum and Their Careers in the 1870s and Afterwards	410
Changes in Local Politics: “National” Criticism towards the Notables and the State	419
Bibliography	428

List of Tables

Table 1: Complaints from the region of Mush about government failure to pay for its purchases during the Crimean War	203



List of Maps

Map 1: Map of the Province of Erzurum (ca. 1880).....	xxi
Map 2: Map of the Northeastern Part of the Valley of Erzurum.....	103



Notes on Transliterations, Dates and Measurement Units

Transliterations:

For transliterations from Armenian (both Eastern and Western), I follow the following chart.

Ա, ա	Ծ, ծ	Ջ, ջ
Բ, բ	Կ, կ	Ռ, ռ
Գ, գ	Հ, հ	Ս, ս
Դ, դ	Ջ, ձ	Վ, վ
Ե, ե	Ղ, ղ	Տ, տ
Ե (beginning of word), e, or y (for suffix for surname as in -yan)	Ճ, ճ	Ր, ը
Զ, զ	Մ, մ	Յ, չ
Է, է	Յ, յ	Ու, ու
Ը, ը	Կ, կ	Վ, վ
Թ, թ	Ն, ն	Փ, փ
Շ, ժ	Շ, շ	Ք, ք
Ի, ի	Ո, ո	Եվ, և
Լ, լ	Չ, չ	Օ, օ
Խ, խ	Պ, պ	Ֆ, ֆ

For transliterations from Ottoman Turkish and Turkish, I follow modern Turkish orthography with the addition of showing long vowels, and the letters *ayn* (‘) and *hemze* (‘) when necessary. I refer to *Misalli Büyük Türkçe Sözlük* (aka *Kubbeathı Lugatı*), ed. İlhan Ayverdi, 3 volumes (İstanbul: Kubbeathı Neşriyat, 2005) for most transliterations.

Dates:

In the dissertation most dates are given according to the Gregorian calendar. The dates that follow the *hijra* calendar are given in the text (denoted as “h.”) and in the footnotes are accompanied by their equivalent in the Gregorian calendar.

Measurement Units and Their Conversion:

Non-metric measurement units are kept as they appear in the primary sources. The following table is used for their conversion when necessary.¹

1 *somar* of high quality wheat in Erzurum in 1865 $\cong$ 776 lbs. $\cong$ 352 kilograms.

1 *somar* of middling kind of wheat and barley in 1865 $\cong$ 675 lbs. $\cong$ 307 kilograms.

1 *lidre* $\cong$ 2 okkas $\cong$ 2.56 kilograms.

1 *batman* $\cong$ 16.8 lbs $\cong$ 7.6 kilograms.

1 *kıyye/kile* $\cong$ 25.6 kilograms.

1 *barre* $\cong$ 154 kilograms.

1 *kile-i İstanbulî* (standard) $\cong$ 25.6 kilograms.

¹ Halil İnalcık, “Weights and Measures,” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. II, ed. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 987–994; *Commercial reports received at the Foreign Office from Her Majesty's consuls in 1866* [no. 3654]; Vahe Tachjian, *Daily Life in the Abyss: Genocide Diaries, 1915–1918* (New York: Berghahn Books, forthcoming). I would like to thank Dr. Tachjian for sharing information from his forthcoming book.

List of Abbreviations

<i>B.N.U.</i>	Bibliothèque Nubar, Paris
<i>B.O.A.</i>	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri, Istanbul
<i>C.A.D.C.</i>	Centre des archives diplomatiques de la Courneuve
<i>C.A.D.N.</i>	Centre des archives diplomatiques de Nantes
<i>CR</i>	<i>Commercial Reports Received at the Foreign Office from Her Majesty's Consuls</i>
<i>F.O.</i>	Foreign Office
<i>GAH</i>	Gitutyunneri Akademiayi Hratarakchutyun
<i>IJMES</i>	International Journal of Middle East Studies
<i>IJTS</i>	International Journal of Turkish Studies
<i>N.A.</i>	National Archives, Kew, London.
<i>S.V.E.</i>	<i>Salname-i Vilayet-i Erzurum</i>

Acknowledgments

There is a long list of people I should thank. If it had not been their support this project could have never finalized. To begin with, I would like to thank my advisor A. Holly Shissler, whose constant support both academically and outside the classroom has been one of the most important motivating factors throughout my graduate studies at the University of Chicago. Our long discussions about the history and current politics of Turkey have been a privilege for me. I also owe her a debt of gratitude for showing me that academia and the outside world are not separate, that on the contrary they can and should be handled concurrently. I also would like to thank the other members of my committee, Orit Bashkin, Cornell Fleischer, and Hakan Karateke, whose mentorship I enjoyed both in classes and in private conversation. I learned a lot from Prof. Bashkin and Prof. Karateke about the current scholarship and new directions for research, and from Prof. Fleischer, who explained the significance and persistence of the traditions of our field. I should add here the names of two other members of my committee, Ronald G. Suny and Janet Klein. I am indebted to Prof. Suny for his constant support from the very early stages of my project and for the attention he gives to the kind of research I carry out. And I have to thank Prof. Klein not only for assisting me with this project and others, but also and above all for pointing out new directions of research on the history of the Eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire which the younger generation of scholars, including myself, will follow. Here I want to mention and thank Franklin Lewis, Fred Donner, and Saeed Ghahremani, members of the NELC faculty, whose personalities and level of scholarship have been a source of inspiration for me.

This journey would not have been possible had I not enjoyed the support of my friends, both those whom I met during my studies at the University of Chicago and some others from

earlier in my life. I would like to start with Cihangir Gündoğdu. Our brotherly relation began with our days at Bogazici University about 15 years ago when he was a teaching assistant for a World History class and I was a freshman, and it continues up to now, including our long stays in Chicago and long discussions of Turkish history and politics. (Nowadays it is not easy to find a friend with whom you can talk for hours about the Ottoman Archives!) Toygun Altıntaş is another friend/colleague to whom I owe huge thanks not only for being a great friend and a source of support but also for enjoying long (really long) discussions of history, politics and Fenerbahçe, and for sharing an apartment with me. I also thank Madeleine (Maddy) Elfenbein, with whom I had the chance to share a flat during our research in London. We spent hours on British Imperial history in addition to our regular debates about the Young Ottomans of the mid-nineteenth century. She is a great example of combining intellectual spirit with humor and a good personality. I thank Dzovinar Derderian for our long conversations on the scholarship on the history of Ottoman Armenians and hosting me during my stays in Ann Arbor; I greatly admire her intellectual curiosity. Ali Sipahi's name should be mentioned here as well. During a project I carried out with Ali and Dzovinar, they showed me how to look at history from a different perspective, and more significantly they taught me the potential power of collaboration. Ayşe Polat is another person that I feel lucky to be friends with. With her different views on things, she has expanded my perspective on academia and life, and she is still doing so even after her graduation. Last but not least, I thank Uğur Bahadır Bayraktar, with whom I had a great time in Paris during our research trips. We shared our mixed feelings about Paris and had endless discussions about the history of the Ottoman East, gossiped about historians, and cooked up many projects for the future.

I spent my last year at the University of Chicago as an M.A. preceptor at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. That position has been one of the most pleasant experiences of my academic life, during which I constantly interacted with brilliant M.A. students and had a chance to work with the academic and administrative staff of the center, Prof. Paul Walker, Brittany Ciboski and Thomas Maguire. I want to thank them and the students of the Center for turning my last year at the university into a wonderful one.

My research extended over several years and was funded by different organizations from within the University and outside it. Here, I should start with thanking the staff of the University of Chicago's Regenstein Library for their expertise and dedication, and helping me to carry out my research over the last eight years. My year-long stay and research in Istanbul were funded by the Orient-Institut Istanbul, Max Weber Stiftung. I am grateful to all the administrative and academic staff at the Institut and the researchers there who helped in every way to turn my stay in Istanbul into an extremely productive year. For that, I also would like to thank the employees at the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Atatürk Kitaplığı, Istanbul and Milli Kütüphane, Ankara. Likewise, I spent hours at the library of the Research Center of Anatolian Civilizations working on my dissertation. There, I met many young scholars like myself, as well as reuniting with old friends. Among them, Yavuz Sezer deserves a special mention as he has always impressed me with his diligence and knowledge of Ottoman cultural history; he sets high standards.

As a part of my research projects and attempts to improve my Armenian, I spent about five months in Yerevan. Here, I would like to thank the employees of the Spyurk Center under the directorship of Prof. Suren Danielyan at Mankavarzhakan University, Yerevan, where I took classes in Armenian, for the warmth and friendship they extended to me. I also thank the archivists and librarians of the Matenadaran, Azkayin Gradaran and the Azgayin Arkhiv where I

conducted research. During my stay, Khachatur Terteryan and Arsen Avagyan and his family showed me great hospitality and kindness. They all helped to make my stay enjoyable and my research productive. I also spent half a year in France, mainly in Paris, thanks to a University of Chicago-Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) Exchange Fellowship. During my stay, I conducted research in the Bibliotheque Nubar, Paris, Centre des archives diplomatiques de la Courneuve and Centre des Archives diplomatiques de Nantes. I would like to particularly thank the employees at the Bibliotheque Nubar, namely Megerditch Basma and Boris Adjemian, for their constant assistance in finding the sources I was looking for in the vast collection of the library, and the promenades we enjoyed at lunch times, carrying our baguettes in our hands through the posh sixteenth arrondissement. Special thanks should also go to Sébastien Greppo, the administrative director of the University of Chicago Center in Paris. His constant support, hilarious (sometimes not so hilarious) jokes and cynicism turned the after-work hours to fun and turned our relation into a true friendship. Last but not least, I offer my most heart-felt thanks to Yervant Baret Manok. My numerous visits to his apartment in Paris, hours of conversation and joy, and the most delicious Anatolian food made outside Anatolia by his wife Aregnaz, make up the nicest memories of my stay in France.

During the writing process I received assistance from different people who turned my text into a much more readable one, both in terms of its language and content. I would like to thank Rachel Harrell for her devotion of time to my dissertation, and never saying no to my last minute “urgent” emails. I also thank my colleagues Basil Salem, Ercüment Asil and Ella Fratantuono who, in addition to Maddy, Dzovinar and Uğur, read and commented on my chapters with great suggestions.

There are many people to whom I owe a great deal for the support and training they provided to me before my graduate studies and that continues to this day. Among them I can only mention a few here due to the limitations of space. I would like to thank Sevan Değirmenciyan, one of the most erudite scholars on the culture and history of Armenians in Turkey. Our friendship, which began with my taking classes from him in Istanbul, has been one of the boons of my graduate studies. I also thank Vahe Tachjian, whose knowledge and academic works on Ottoman Armenians I deeply admire, for his support for my research. I am grateful to all of my former professors at Boğaziçi University. Among them I am grateful to Belgin Tekçe, who introduced me to sociology– the effects of her classes are visible in this work. I also thank Selim Deringil for his support for my work at Boğaziçi and later, as he was also my supervisor during my M.A. education at the Central European University, Budapest. Ahmet Ersoy and Oktay Özel are two other scholars whose mentorship/friendship encouraged me to work more and made some of my projects possible. Here, I want to recall the memory of my friend and *hoca*, the late Vangelis Kechriotis, who deserves pages of praise beyond this acknowledgement. However, I can only say that he was one of the best people I have ever met in my life and his loss is one of the worst for all of those who knew him. With this work, I hope, I can fulfill at least some of his expectations of me.

My last sentences should be devoted to my friends and family. I always felt the moral support of my friends Ahu Erdoğan, Alp Demirel, Oğuz Çeceli and Serkan Bilgin throughout my studies in Chicago despite the thousands of miles that separated us. I am simply grateful to my maternal and paternal grandfathers who passed away long ago, for their material and moral support throughout my endless studies motivated me to continue (though they may not have meant for me to pursue them quite this far). I cannot find adequate words to express my gratitude

to my mother, who devoted herself completely to her children. Or to my father, who passed away in the middle of my graduate program and was never able to see me complete my studies and get a job. I was never able to explain to him what I am trying to do in life—a common regret for many young scholars who do not come from the economically and culturally privileged classes in a “developing” country like Turkey.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the endless support, care, understanding and love of my wife, İpek, who is the greatest joy of my life.

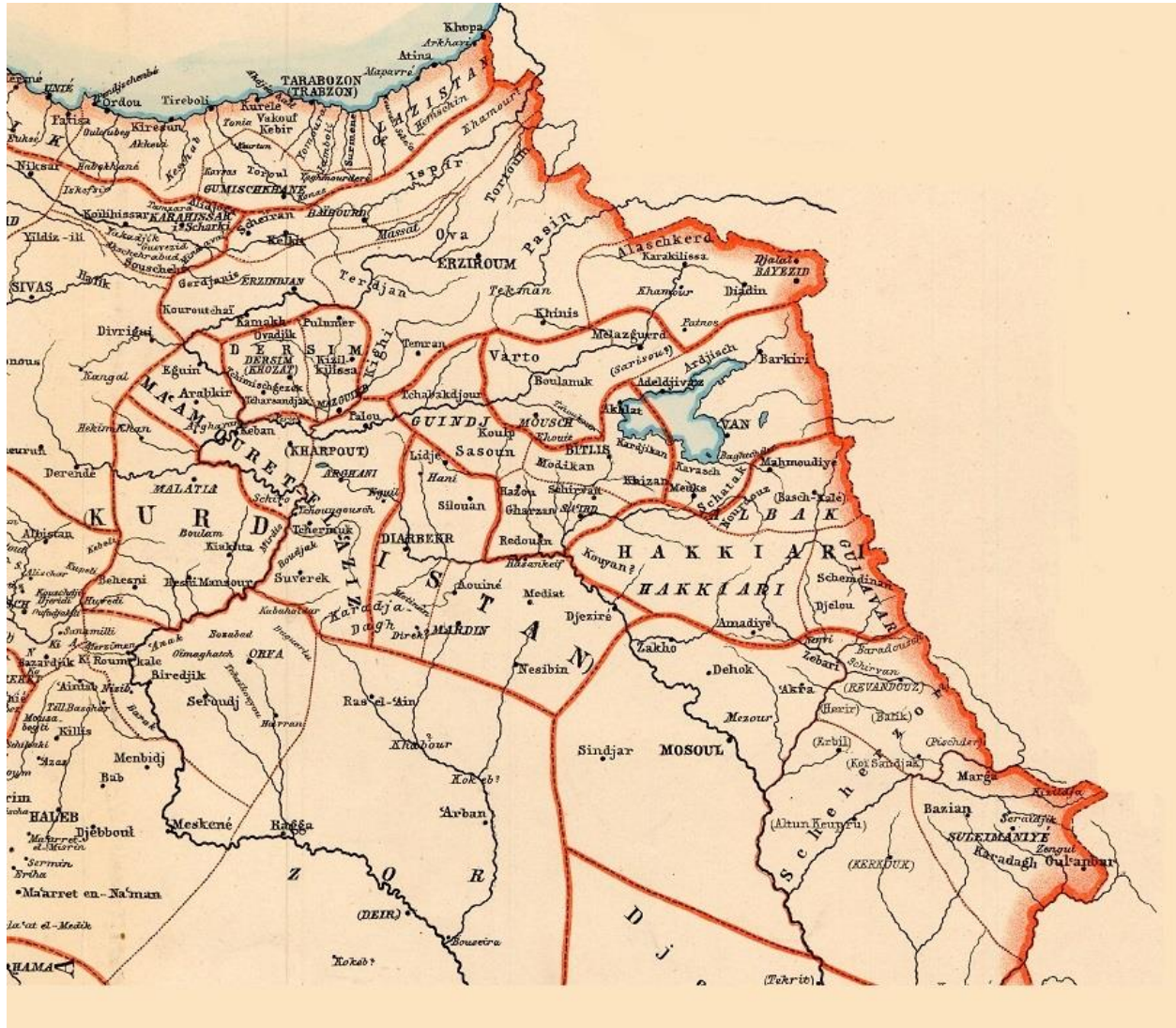
Abstract

This dissertation is a study of the Ottoman imperial order during the mid-nineteenth century, known as the age of reforms, the Tanzimat. Through the biographies of local Armenian notables, it examines societal change in the Armenian community of the city of Erzurum (Karin in Armenian), the capital city of an eponymous province on the Ottoman Empire's borders with the Russian and Qajar Empires. The dissertation focuses on the ways in which the construction of the modern Ottoman state and societal changes in the Armenian Community (*millet*) were enmeshed in this borderland city. It approaches the histories of local Armenian communities as integral to and connected with the empire's broader history. The dissertation also tackles the validity of the dichotomies "center-periphery," "Muslim-non-Muslim" and "modern-traditional," which are employed in the scholarship to understand the empire's nineteenth-century transformation.

The dissertation's primary focus is on social biographies of Armenian local notables, who constituted a major pillar of the new social and economic order of the Tanzimat in the provinces. Through their hitherto underexamined economic activities, such as tax farming, army contracting, and manufacturing for local and regional markets, the notables attained great social, economic and symbolic power within and outside the local Armenian community. The notables actively participated in various imperial and communal reform projects and had the capacity to mediate and transform these projects as they were implemented. The notables' agency in the formation of the imperial ethnicity project (Ottomanism) in the period following the Crimean War (1853-1856) displays the ways in which they negotiated with imperial bureaucrats over such topics as patriotism and loyalty, and the application of Ottomanist policies in the provinces.

Their relations with the members of the local Armenian community, who reacted to the notables' growing economic and social power in the period, underscore the importance of examining intra-communal conflict in the mid-nineteenth century to understand the social and political transformation of local Armenian communities and the modernization of politics. The dissertation thus contends that the rise and decline of local Armenian notables in the provinces was one of the key societal changes in the Ottoman Empire's last century, bearing wide social, economic, and political consequences.

Map 1: Map of the Province of Erzurum (ca. 1880)



SOURCE: Extract from *Nouvelle carte générale des provinces asiatiques de l'Empire ottoman (sans l'Arabie)* by Henri Kiepert, (Berlin: Imprimerie H.S. Hermann, 1884), scale 1:1,500,000.

Map Collection, The University of Chicago Library.

**Introduction:
Writing Armenian Provincial Notables into the Tanzimat
or Writing the Tanzimat through Local Armenian Notables
and the “New Imperial Order”**

This dissertation is an examination of the age of Ottoman reforms, commonly known as the *Tanzimat*, the period between the 1840s and the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878. This project sets itself apart from many other projects with a similar chronological and topical focus due to several factors: its focuses on a borderland city, Erzurum/Karin and its hinterland; its unit of analysis is the local Armenian notables; its methodology is the exploration of the notables’ biographies; it relies on sources written in Ottoman Turkish, Armenian and Western languages; and most importantly, it reaches distinctive conclusions about the Tanzimat era.

In the following pages, I examine the local Armenian notables of Erzurum/Karin on the frontiers of the Ottoman, Russian and Qajar Empires to explain the transformation of the Armenian community of the city in general and its notables in particular during the Tanzimat era. My work is an attempt to complement and, when necessary, challenge the existing scholarship on the history of the Tanzimat. In the broader sense, this dissertation is an attempt to answer the simple but intriguing question posed by Halil İnalçık more than sixty years ago: “What is the Tanzimat?” İnalçık’s call for examining the social and economic bases of the “new Ottoman regime” as a critique of contemporary historians’ focus on Westernization during the Tanzimat at the expense of its social consequences is a call that still needs to be followed.¹ I aim to do so by bringing human agency, and particularly the active participation of non-Muslims, into the history of the Tanzimat—a project that stands in stark contrast to the state-centric, centralist,

¹ Halil İnalçık, “Tanzimat Nedir?” *Ankara Üniversitesi D.T.C.F. Yıllık Araştırmalar Dergisi* 1(1940–1941): 237–267 reprinted in *Tanzimat: Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, ed. Halil İnalçık and Mehmet Seydanlıoğlu (Ankara: Phoenix, 2006), 13–36.

Muslim/Turkish-dominated imperial and ethnically-biased national(-ist) historiographies still prevalent today. My primary goal is, therefore, to reevaluate the Tanzimat era by bringing local Armenian notables of the eastern provinces of the empire into the historical picture and by focusing my social-economic history of the region through the lens of these notables' lives.

Writing the history of Armenian local notables into the Tanzimat—or more aptly, writing the Tanzimat through the notables—serves the second goal of the dissertation, namely approaching Ottoman Armenian history as an interactive history, one in which Armenian communities and social agents are no longer treated as belonging to an “autonomous history.” As Sebouh Aslanian recently put it, this “autonomous history” approach has resulted in a “downplaying of cross-cultural relations between Armenians and the many cultures and peoples with whom they have interacted.”² By showing the ways in which local Armenian notables formed and transformed the Ottoman age of reforms, I aim to point out the very basic fact that, before the destruction of the Armenian communities in the Genocide during World War I, Armenians were not only among the main components of the Ottoman society and but also had agency in shaping that history, including the history of the provinces.³ This view challenges dominant historiographies, which either focus on the “successfully integrated” Armenian elite (*amiras*) in the imperial capital, Istanbul (Bolis), or on the oppression and ethnic violence in the eastern provinces where the majority of Armenian lived before their destruction during the Genocide. The current historiography makes it impossible to see the agency of Armenians because all narratives, despite their many lacunae, converge on the historical reality of the

² Sebouh D. Aslanian, “The Marble of Armenian History: Or Armenian History as World History Studies,” *Études arméniennes contemporaines* 4 (2014): 136.

³ In the dissertation, I render the Ottoman Turkish term *millet*, an ethno-religious group recognized by the Ottoman state as a distinct body, in English as community, e.g. Armenian *millet* as Armenian Apostolic Community. I hope this will avoid any confusion that may arise from translation of *millet* into English as “nation”. Likewise, I translate the Armenian word *azg* as “community” rather than “nation” when it is used to mean “millet” except when it refers to a nation in the contemporary understanding of the term.

Genocide. Against this “lachrymose conception of history,” to borrow a term from Jewish historiography coined by Salo Baron, I strive toward “turning away from themes of [Armenian] victimhood and insecurity in favor of stress upon achievements and successful integration.”⁴ Thus I aim to contribute to an interactive study of Ottoman Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire.

Focusing on the agency of Armenians outside the elite in Istanbul and the revolutionaries in the provinces and the reformist clergy permits me to focus on another dimension of Armenian history, namely, intra-communal conflict and subsequent social change. The third goal of this dissertation is thus to explain the notables in terms of their relations with other groups in society. Intra-communal conflict has been one of the “taboo” topics in Armenian history. Ronald Suny aptly stated that Armenian history-writing was “often directed toward an ethnic rather than a broader international scholarly audience...[it] has been narrowly concerned with fostering a positive view of an endangered nationality...Criticism has been avoided as if it might aid ever-present enemies, and certain kinds of inquiry have been shunned as potential betrayals of the national cause.”⁵ By bringing in the issue of social conflict within the Armenian community, I aim to explain the local roots of political discontent and later radicalism among Ottoman Armenians in the late nineteenth century. This will allow us to approach the later Armenian history from the perspective of local developments, in addition—if not opposition—to the prominent *deus ex machina* role of such entities as the European Great Powers and Armenian revolutionaries in the Caucasus and Europe.

⁴ David Engel, “Crisis and Lachrymosity: On Salo Baron, Neobaronianism, and the Study of Modern European Jewish History,” *Jewish History* 20 (2006): 245. For an excellent study of Russian Jewry from this perspective, see Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: the Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). For the potential of this approach for writing Armenian history, see Aslanian, “The Marble of Armenian History.”

⁵ Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1993), 2.

I had begun this project with the goal of answering the question, “How did the Armenian notables in the city of Erzurum/Karin experience the Ottoman age of reforms in the mid-nineteenth-century?” However, closer examination of the history of a non-dominant community on the borderlands of the empire showed me the weaknesses in this formulation. During my research, I saw that the existing scholarship does not fully explain what I was observing in my sources, namely, the emergence of Armenian local notables during the Tanzimat and their concurrent participation in the making of the new order. I felt the need to reformulate my question and the way the Tanzimat has been described by historians. Thus, I began to rethink the very categories that my question and the existing scholarship took for granted, the “reforms,” “state,” “center and province,” and “notables” through which historians analyze the Ottoman Empire in its last century. I shifted my attention to broader questions about agency and structure, and relations between the constituents of Ottoman society in the mid-nineteenth century. As the fourth and final goal of my study, instead of examining the “impact” of the Tanzimat “state” and its reforms on the Armenian community, and particularly on the Armenian notables of Erzurum, I focus on the ways in which the central(izing)/modern(izing) Ottoman state and Armenian notables were simultaneously constructed as a result of their continuous interaction over that period. I call this interaction “the new imperial order,” a term which both encapsulates my concerns about the terminology and avoids the dichotomies (state/society; center/periphery; Muslim/non-Muslim etc.) we use in interpreting Ottoman history during the Tanzimat era. Therefore, the reformulated research question of this dissertation became: “What was the new imperial order in Erzurum during the Tanzimat, which was constituted by Armenian notables who were themselves its products?”

This dissertation argues that the local Armenian notables in the eastern provinces of the empire emerged as one of the main actors of the “new imperial order” in the age of the Tanzimat, which was a new form of cooperation between the local notables and the imperial bureaucracy including the Apostolic Patriarchate, local administrators and other local power-holders. The Tanzimat order was the relation between the growing economic market in the provinces and competition and cooperation with modernizing state and other actors for the control of these resources. This new order was both a continuation and rupture from the previous period, “the age of *ayans*,” in which notables fulfilled administrative, economic and military functions in the provinces, and the bureaucracy in Istanbul exerted control through decentralization. As I will show in the dissertation, similar social and economic structures (such as tax farming) continued to exist, albeit with changing actors and circumstances.

The main characteristic of the “age of *ayans*” was the life-long tax farm contracts (*malikanes*) held by provincial notables, which “created diffused but interrelated loci of state power.”⁶ By examining the life-long tax farms, Ariel Salzmann and others following her “trace[d] not only the fiscal links binding center and periphery but also the “nervous system” of state power itself”.⁷ Interestingly enough, the question of the fate of that “nervous system” in the context of the Tanzimat reforms has remained one of the most underexamined topics in the scholarship.⁸ One of the reasons for historians’ disinterest might be the fact that answer(s) to that question surprisingly resemble what we already know about the “decentralized” age. So what

⁶ Ariel Salzmann, “An Ancien Régime Revisited: ‘Privatization’ and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” *Politics & Society* 21 (1993): 395.

⁷ Ariel Salzmann, “Measures of Empire: Tax Farmers and the Ottoman Ancien Régime, 1695–1807,” (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 1995), 5–6.

⁸ Nadir Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli: Osmanlı’da Vergi, Siyaset ve Toplumsal Adalet (1839-1908)* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015) is a recent work on tax farming in the nineteenth century, but his approach is rather legalistic for explaining developments in the mid-nineteenth century and primarily examines mid-century developments as a background for his detailed analysis of Armenian-Kurdish conflict in the later decades.

was different in the age of the Tanzimat? In that period the bonds that linked different power holders in Istanbul (e.g. the imperial ruling elite) and provinces (such as *ayans*) were not life-long tax farms (*malikanes*) but, I claim, short-term tax farms of urban and rural revenues (*iltizams*) held by lesser local notables—the interest of the state grandees in some of them notwithstanding.⁹ Likewise, the army, which was dependent on the grand-*ayans*' militias and their logistics in its campaigns in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was still dependent on the local notables' social and economic capital to recruit men and supply the army with provisions and credit during the wars. And finally, the new local notables, both descendants of the grand-*ayans* and lesser notables, kept and even augmented their role in the administration of local affairs either through holding local governmental offices or through administrative councils of the Tanzimat era. Yet, in the midst of these relative continuities there was one important novelty: the rise of non-Muslim notables in the provinces.

The rise of non-Muslim notables in the provinces was based most importantly, but not solely, on their financial transactions with the newly developing modern state. They participated in and helped shape not only its reforms but also its institutions, while exerting control over their own communities as participants and as representatives of the imperial order. Scholars who have

⁹ The rise of petty-*ayans* as tax farmers, and the direct involvement of non-Muslims in such contracts began to be observed in the late eighteenth century but not to the extent that they would reach during the Tanzimat. Salzmann acknowledges increasing heterogeneity and social-mobility among small tax farmers towards the end of the eighteenth century. Salzmann, "Measures of Empire," 386–387. Also during the reign of Sultan Selim III, we see the *esham* system, which was a redistribution of certain large tax farms in shares. Non-Muslims were allowed to participate directly in *esham* of wine and liquor. Ibid., 421. And Sultan Selim III had envisioned giving life-long tax farms as short-term ones to "qualified" candidates, mainly to bankers with "great assets." Ibid., 423. It is interesting that Salzman does not follow up these observations with a discussion of the potential social implications of these changes in the eighteenth century for the Tanzimat era. On the contrary, she discusses the ways in which the modern state imposed direct rule in the provinces and put an end to the diffused power relations from the early nineteenth century onwards. She states "the Nizam-i Cedid regime [new-order of Sultan Selim III] began to effectively dismantle the indirect system of rule, pushing aside a century of informal control and autonomy that had been the de facto traits of provincial rule." Ibid., 432 However, as I will show, the fact that tax farms were carried out locally through administrative assemblies in the nineteenth century was the backbone of the new order.

examined the local notables' role in the Tanzimat have rightfully addressed their intermediary role and negotiations between the state and society. However, the scholarship has not addressed the fact that the very two sides that the notables mediated between, namely state and society, did not exist *a priori* and outside the notables. Instead state and society developed and changed in interaction during the Tanzimat. The “new imperial order” during the Tanzimat was a social power-field and the term encapsulates various forms of these interactions. The biographies of the local notables provide ample opportunities to observe these interactions, negotiations and changes.

Keeping all this in mind, I define local Armenian notables in relational terms. The local notables were holders of prominent positions in the local community, not necessarily official positions.¹⁰ They possessed a certain amount of economic, social, cultural or symbolic capital, and were able to convert this capital from one form to another in their interactions with local administrators, other notables and non-privileged members of the society. The foundation of their economic capital might be tax farming, trade or manufacturing, though these were not the only possibilities. Thus, I list bishops among the local Armenian notables, not only because their Muslim counterparts are regarded as notables in the scholarship, but also because like lay notables, they were able to convert the symbolic and cultural power stemming from their religious authority into social and economic capital and to exert control over the population.¹¹

¹⁰ Antonis Anastasopoulos highlights this point (on which I concur) as a critique of Ehud Toledano's emphasis on the necessity for local notables to be appointed to official posts to attain elite status. Ehud Toledano, “The Emergence of Ottoman-Local Elites (1700–1900): A Framework for Research,” in *Middle Eastern Politics and Ideas: A History from Within*, ed. Moshe Ma'oz and Ilan Pappé (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997). See also Antonis Anastasopoulos, “Introduction,” in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire* (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005), xviii. However, this aspect does not reduce the importance of Toledano's critical approach to the Ottoman background of the Middle East and the dual processes which he calls “localization” and “Ottomanization” in the eighteenth century to understanding of the region. Toledano, “The Emergence of Ottoman-Local Elites,” 148–149.

¹¹ Pinelopi Stathi, “Provincial Bishops of the Orthodox Church as Members of the Ottoman Elite (Eighteenth–Nineteenth Centuries),” in Anastasopoulos, *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire*, 77.

They also provide yet another example of the permeable state/society divide, as they were state officials, as well.

The local notables were actors who were able to exert influence on different fields of power simultaneously, which distinguished them from other power holders in the society—like the rich merchant or the local tough—although they shared some of their characteristics. The notables' symbolic capital was based on their recognition as leaders by their fellow community members through such acts as charity and patronage, which combined their symbolic, economic and social power. The notables needed such recognition for the stability and strengthening of their positions in the society; when they lost that recognition, their positions were jeopardized. Last but not least, the emphasis on local notables' "localness" comes from the fact that the bases of their power lay more or less within the administrative boundaries of the province. This was different from the great moneylenders of the earlier periods. Local notables were not "imperial" because the basis of their social and economic power was local, notwithstanding the fact that they were entangled with those broader networks. They were local also because the community leaders of the succeeding periods, namely revolutionaries, middle-class professionals, intelligentsia and import-export merchants, laid claim to political leadership through their "national" characters as distinct from the "local" claims of this earlier generation of notables. However, this does not mean there was a lack of social mobility, but rather that the local notables' interests were confined to the local and regional structures and their power relations within those localities. This was due to certain developments of the Tanzimat era.

During the Tanzimat era the role of non-Muslims changed from local community leadership (*kocabaş*) to the ranks of notables (*muteberan*) as actors in negotiations during the Tanzimat. The new local notables belonged neither to the strata of the great moneylenders and

amiras of Istanbul, nor to the group of merchants of international trade in the port cities. They grew within the social and economic milieu of the provinces during the Tanzimat period in interaction with the emerging modern state. They fulfilled functions similar to those of the moneylenders in the previous age, namely as creditors of the grand-*ayan* in the tax farm agreements and treasurers of the pashas to maintain their provincial treasuries and pay wartime expenditures. However, there was a major difference between the new local notables and their predecessors of the eighteenth century: the relative autonomy of the local notables. This was seemingly a contradiction in the age of centralization; however, it was the main pillar of the new imperial order during the Tanzimat.

After the destruction of the old order and during the nineteenth-century reforms, non-Muslim notables gained power and autonomy in the provinces to solve the challenges of establishing a new order. They no longer belonged to the household (*kapı*) of a grand-*ayan* or a pasha as his personal moneylender, they no longer rose or declined depending on the political (and military) fate of their patrons or carried out their financial transactions in Istanbul.¹² No more were the local Armenian notables “partners” in tax farm contracts; they were direct contractors, and began to establish relations with the imperial state through its agents who claimed to represent the central authority in the provinces. The impact of the demise of the janissaries, who were major actors in the local tax farm market before 1826, remains an important but an unanswered question in understanding the shifts in the local order.

The major development of the Tanzimat era was the empowering of local administrative assemblies to carry out tax farming—either at a fixed price (*maktûan*) or through auctions

¹² Salzmann, “Measures of Empire,” 202–203; Yavuz Cezar, “Role of Sarrafs in Ottoman Finance and Economy in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, ed. Colin İmber and Keiko Kiyotaki (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 67–68, compare with Toledano, “The Emergence of Ottoman-Local Elite,” 156–157.

(*müzayede*). This was complemented by the fact that the local tax farm holders (*mültezims*) were no longer required to form a partnership with a major moneylender in Istanbul, at least after 1871. Instead, they were held directly responsible for their payments to the local government.¹³ Even before 1871, there is no indication that they formed partnerships with moneylenders in Istanbul, and on the contrary, more often various lesser notables formed partnerships among themselves to obtain small tax farms. The system, as I will show below, went well beyond tax farming of agrarian surplus, namely the *oshr* (tithe);¹⁴ it included various urban taxes, tax farming of the revenues of custom-houses, and army contracting. In addition to tax farming, local Armenian notables also engaged in trade in agrarian surplus including livestock, manufacturing based on livestock, and urban building projects. Their expanding control of the agrarian and urban land and revenues constituted the entire social-economic order in the provinces. Ottoman historians who underlined the role of “imperialism,” “integration to world markets,” and “domination by foreign creditors” in the nineteenth-century Ottoman economy failed to see the enormous local financial sector in the provinces.¹⁵ The persistence of tax farming and control over other urban and rural resources explain both the “power” of the local notables and the persistence of the imperial order throughout the nineteenth century. It also permits historians to think about structural reasons behind the underdeveloped credit market,

¹³ Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli*, 39f; Abdüllatif Şener, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Vergi Sistemi* (Istanbul: İşaret, 1990), 123–126.

¹⁴ It is interesting that both Şener and Özbek focus on the importance of tax farming in collection of the tithe revenues but do not mention the farming of various urban revenues.

¹⁵ This does not mean that a financial sector did not exist in the provinces before the nineteenth century. On the contrary, as Yavuz Cezar demonstrates in detail, provincial finance (*taşra maliyesi*) was formed in the eighteenth century and it was controlled by local powerholders. The reason behind the rise of provincial finance was to regularize and control collection of certain taxes and fees and pay local expenditures. See Yavuz Cezar, “18 ve 19. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı Taşrasında Oluşan Yeni Malî Sektörün Mahiyet ve Büyüklüğü Üzerine,” *Dünü ve Bugünüyle Toplum ve Ekonomi* 9 (1996): 89–143. Whether this development expanded the size of the provincial monetary economy and local credit market and eventually led to the rise of a “class” of powerful local notables as direct contenders in tax farm contracts is an interesting question to examine.

market system, and lack of capital accumulation for industrial investment in the Ottoman Empire—all topics beyond the focus of this dissertation.

Going back to the Tanzimat period, we observe that the central state was establishing itself in the provinces and, with their lack of military capacity and strong economic and social capital, local non-Muslim notables were among the most reliable economic and social resources. Both the centralizing modern state and notables in the provinces benefited from this new kind of relationship, namely centralization through the empowerment of local notables under the rubric of empire during the Tanzimat.

The Armenian notables' autonomous positions and services for the making of the imperial state were acknowledged unofficially before the Crimean War and officially thereafter. Following the war, the notables were decorated for their services to the empire during its crisis. Their admission to the provincial councils in the mid-1860s was not a decision taken by the “center” in order to promote equality between ethnic groups. Instead, it was recognition of the notables' rights and power, and indeed of the imperial government's dependence on them in the provinces. From this perspective, Ottomanism—which has been regarded as an (unsuccessful) ideological bond designed to keep the empire intact in the mid-nineteenth century—seems rather to serve the goal of legitimizing this new kind of relationship. These non-material bonds were further accompanied by dissemination of symbolic power—the only form of power that Istanbul monopolized as the seat of the dynasty and the imperial government—to the provincial notables in the form of decorations and honorary ranks. Both in Ottomanism and the dissemination of the symbolic capital of the imperial government, Armenian notables actively bargained with local and imperial authorities. They defined the boundaries of Ottomanism and loyalty to the Ottoman

state, and participated in the application of policies in that direction. They not only put Ottomanism into practice, but also defined it.

Scholars of the Ottoman Empire regard local notables as intermediaries in the relations between the state and local society, as the modernizing state was not powerful *enough* to exert its control. This is problematic as it presupposes that a) there might be an almighty and impersonal state and b) that almighty state would eliminate all notables and intermediaries. This research points out the necessity of a different approach. I claim that the notables' position in the local communities and their mediating role was not pre-existing; instead, it came into being within the web of their relations with the broader society during the Tanzimat. Historians' approach to the "official" administration of the empire and the reform of the "*millet* system" and to the recognition of ethno-religious communities with autonomous self-administration in cultural and religious affairs as two exclusive domains has hindered us from seeing notables' simultaneous role in these developments. Their position as local notables was based both on their capacity to act as leaders of their communities and on their economic and social relations with authorities such as local governors, army commanders and the imperial state. The two sides of the notables' power were simultaneously created and interacted with each other during the Tanzimat. The financial and economic opportunities of the Tanzimat age bolstered their position in their local communities, helping them to oust the great moneylenders of the previous age. Moreover, similar to the recognition of their power in the broader Ottoman society through administrative assemblies, the notables' leading roles in their communities were also ratified in the 1860s, as they came to control the community institutions that were established in the provinces after the Armenian Constitution of 1863. Likewise, the reforms of the Armenian Patriarchate which aimed to increase its administrative power in the provinces were also carried out through negotiations

with the local notables, who had all forms of power except coercive power—yet they were very close to those who had it, either officially (the military) or unofficially (e.g., the tribes). In short, this set of material and symbolic relations between those who represented the emerging modern state and the local notables was among the pillars of the Tanzimat order.

An Overview of the Conventional History of the Tanzimat Era (1839–1876)

Before deconstructing the existing narrative of the Tanzimat in the historiography and reconstructing it with particular attention to the eastern provinces of the empire and Armenian notables, the conventional history of Ottoman reform should be outlined. Any overview of the Ottoman reform era attributes the beginning of the reforms in the late eighteenth century to Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1808), who adopted “Western” models of military organization and administration. This was an attempt to restructure the empire, cutting down the power of the provincial military magnates, the *ayans*. From the late seventeenth century until 1812, the grand notables, especially in the Balkans and Western Anatolia, possessed enormous power vis-à-vis the center—it was, as Bruce McGowan put it, the “Age of *Ayans*.”¹⁶ During the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839), however, the balance between the provincial notables and the imperial center began to shift towards the latter. The abolition of the age-old military institution of the Janissary in 1826, as part of a broader reform scheme, was a major example of the drive towards reform in Sultan Mahmud II’s reign. The main problems of the empire in that era were the Hellenic Kingdom’s drive for independence, assisted by the European powers and Russia, the defeat in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828–29, and the challenge from Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt in the 1830s. The Age of Reforms began in that context.

¹⁶ Bruce McGowan, “The Age of the *Ayans*, 1699–1812,” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. II, ed. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 637–758.

During the series of reforms known as the Tanzimat (1839–1876), enacted during the reigns of the Sultans Abdülmecid (r. 1839–1855) and Abdülaziz (r. 1855–1876) at the hands of the great bureaucrats of the age, Mustafa Reşid, Ali, and Fuad Pashas, social, economic, and cultural aspects of Ottoman society underwent significant changes. In this period the Ottoman state went through a process of modernization and aimed to reach subjects in novel ways, such as individual taxation and mandatory conscription, thus transforming them into citizens. Legislative, military, and educational reforms were carried out with the standardization of bureaucracy and the growth of the state. The promise of fair taxation and expansion of tax revenues were carried out in order to establish a just and modern statehood, and simultaneously created a supra-ethnic Ottoman identity.¹⁷ In this period the ethno-confessional communities of Greeks, Armenians, and Jews were also reorganized and democratized by institutionalized lay participation guaranteed by their own constitutions.¹⁸ The age of reforms, as an epoch, is usually considered to have lasted until 1876, when the Ottoman Constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi*) was declared and the First Ottoman Parliament opened, followed by the disastrous Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878. For many historians, however, the basic premises of the Tanzimat reforms continued during the regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) with much disruption of the traditional social order.¹⁹

The economic aspects of the reform era were not deemed to have been as successful as the political ones. The reforms meant increasing expenditures, and the imperial state tried to find

¹⁷ For a reinterpretation of the period, see Carter Vaughn Findley, “The *Tanzimat*” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey* v.4, *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 11–37.

¹⁸ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton University Press, 1963), 114–135.

¹⁹ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876–1909*, 2nd edition (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 11. It is necessary to mention that Stanford Shaw is one of the early proponents of this idea of the continuity of the Tanzimat reforms during the reign of Abdülhamid II. See Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, “Culmination of the Tanzimat: The Reign of Abdulhamit II, 1876–1909,” in *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, v.2 *Reform, Revolution and Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976–77), 172–271.

ways to increase its revenues commensurably. In this period the Ottoman treasury tried to finance anticipated reforms and constantly had to juggle taxation back and forth between direct taxation and tax farming, as well as introduce new taxes.²⁰ It introduced the tax on income (*temettuat*), first registered in the mid-1840s, which was levied on individuals after special censuses were run in the mid-1860s. This was yet another step in the Ottoman state's dealing with its subjects.²¹ In the sphere of economics, the general picture of the economic arena is one of foreign domination of both the capital and goods markets. In the capital market, the Ottoman government was heavily indebted to foreign creditors beginning with the Crimean War and culminating in the financial crisis and bankruptcy of 1875, which resulted in the establishment of Ottoman Public Debt administration under the consortium of the Great Powers in 1882. This administration controlled the tax revenues of major revenue-producing items and restructured Ottoman debt payment.²² Moreover, since the Ottoman government was only able to pay the interest on its debts, it was never able to direct the new funds into the field of investment. Therefore, projects necessitating major outlay and investment, e.g. railroads, were also executed by foreign investors, a situation which resulted in the development of "zones of influence" of creditor countries within Ottoman lands.²³ Some historians argue against the pessimistic view of the Tanzimat economy, noting that the economy expanded after the 1880s following a shift in

²⁰ Stanford J. Shaw, "The Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Tax Reforms and Revenue System," *IJMES* 6 (1975): 421–459.

²¹ Alp Yücel Kaya and Yücel Terzibaşoğlu, "Tahrir'den Kadastro'ya: 1874 İstanbul Emlak Tahriri ve Vergisi: 'Kadastro tabir olunur tahrir-i emlak'," *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 9 (2009): 9–10, 15–16.

²² Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 192–193.

²³ Şevket Pamuk, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Yabancı Sermaye: Sektörlere ve Sermayeyi İhraç Edenlere Göre Dağılım, 1854–1914," *ODTÜ Gelişme Dergisi*, 1978 Özel Sayısı, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Üzerine Araştırmalar*, 131–162.

production and consumption patterns and bureaucrats' changing attitudes to treasury and economy.²⁴

The Tanzimat governments also failed to make great compromises, such as changing the relations of production, which was needed to reform the agrarian sector. One of the most important reform attempts was the Land Code introduced in 1858. It aimed to regulate ongoing changes in the land regime and adapt them to the social, economic and political needs of the period. However, instead of altering the relations between the land-owner and renter peasants and/or share-croppers, the law ratified the existing tendencies in the land-holding regime in the Ottoman Empire. It is usually considered in the literature as the origin of private property in the Ottoman realms; however, it generally benefited the political and economic elite in the provinces who managed to register the land under their names, not the impoverished peasant masses who worked the soil.²⁵ The lack of reforms and/or the state's inability to implement them, such as its failure to act powerfully against the passage of lands from the hands of peasants to the notables through a variety of means, resulted in disgruntled peasants in the provinces and then in "ethnically relevant social-economic conflicts."²⁶ According to the late Donald Quataert, the major problems in the period were labor shortage due to low population density and loss of

²⁴ Osman Okyar, "A New Look at the Problem of Economic Growth in the Ottoman Empire, 1800–1914," *The Journal of European Economic History* 16 (1987): 30–31.

²⁵ For one of the earliest works on the importance of the Land Code of 1858 as a reflection of the government's financial policies and its effects on social stratification, see Kemal H. Karpat, "The Land Regime, Social Structure, and Modernization in the Ottoman Empire" in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 69–90. There are two main approaches to the study of the Land Code of 1858. The first emphasizes the role of the state in defining property relations through implementation of the law. The most sophisticated example of this approach is by Huri İslamoğlu, "Property as a Contested Domain: A Reevaluation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858," in *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East*, ed. Roger Owen, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 3–61. The second approach stresses the pre-existing agrarian relations and conditions of land "ownership" in the making of this law, and the state's attempt to formalize these relations. For this approach, see E. Attila AYTEKİN, "Agrarian Relations, Property and Law: An Analysis of the Land Code of 1858 in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 45 (2009): 935–951.

²⁶ I am grateful to Professor Holly Shissler for this term. The phrase is borrowed from Miroslav Hroch and his "nationally relevant conflict of interests." See Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe," *New Left Review* 198 (March–April 1993): 11 ff.

territories which were important for agriculture and industry to the emerging Balkan states. These in turn led to a reduced flow of goods, shortage of skilled labor familiar with mechanized industrial and agricultural innovations, unstable currency, low levels of investment in agricultural and industrial production, and expansion of state cadres, raising expenditures.²⁷ Moreover, agriculture, the single most important sector in the Ottoman economy, was commercialized only in western and central regions of Anatolia, which were linked to the greater world by railroads and ports.²⁸ However, for several reasons and in spite of various reform attempts by the government, the Ottoman agricultural sector kept some of its earlier characteristics, e.g., small producers and production for subsistence.²⁹

The picture was even bleaker in the realm of trade and manufacturing. In the era of Western European political and economic dominance, the Ottoman markets were integrated into the world economy. Subsequently, as a result of the so-called “Free-Trade Agreements” first with Britain in 1838 and then with other powers of the age, the manufacturing sector of the country failed, and the traditional guild-system, which was formerly the hub of urban manufacturing, disintegrated. There were attempts by the government, similar to those of Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt, to create its own factories, particularly for military provisioning. However, due to its various trade treaties with foreign countries, the governments could not support the development of manufacturing by raising the customs tax without taxing their products or their imports of machinery and raw-material.³⁰

²⁷ Donald Quatert, “Main Problems of the Economy during the Tanzimat Period” in *150. Yılında Tanzimat*, ed. Hakkı Dursun Yıldız (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1992), 211–219.

²⁸ Donald Quataert, “The Commercialization of Agriculture in Ottoman Turkey,” *IJTS* 1 (1980): 40.

²⁹ Tevfik Güran, “Zirai Politika ve Ziraatte Gelişmeler, 1839–1876,” in *150. Yılında Tanzimat*, 228–230. Güran claims that scarcity of labor, land-intensive production, and small producers remained the norm, and that agriculture was generally a subsistence economy rather than one of production for the market.

³⁰ Tevfik Güran, “Tanzimat Döneminde Devlet Fabrikaları” in *150. Yılında Tanzimat*, 238.

In the same year as the Land Code, the government passed the French-influenced Penal Code, which was an important step towards the secularization of the judiciary. It was followed by the introduction and expansion of secular courts (*Nizamiye Mahkemeleri*) in the second half of the nineteenth century.³¹ Active participation of non-Muslims in these courts was considered as an important step towards equality between Muslims and non-Muslims.³²

In the period following the Reform Edict of 1856, the ethno-religious communities (*millets*) of Orthodox Greeks, Apostolic Armenians, and Jews were also reorganized and democratized by institutionalized lay participation guaranteed by their communal “constitutions.”³³ The Protestant community gained official recognition from the Porte in 1850; its bylaws date from that time.³⁴ The Greek community was reorganized after its constitution in 1862, the Apostolic Armenians in 1863, and Jews in 1865. These constitutions also reflected the ongoing conflicts within these communities, particularly in the Apostolic community, first between the powerful Armenian elite of Istanbul (*amiras*) and the chief artisans in the 1840s, and then between the *amiras* and liberal educated classes in the 1850s and afterwards.³⁵ The Armenian Constitution, which was drafted over a long period of time and submitted to the Porte in 1860, was ratified after amendments in 1863. Notwithstanding the preference it gave to the

³¹ Avi Rubin, *Ottoman Nizamiye Courts: Law and Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

³² Ibid., 24–25; İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Sonra Mahalli İdareler, 1840–1878* (Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1974), 71–73.

³³ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton University Press, 1963), 114–135. For a critique of the scholarship on the community system before the mid-nineteenth century reforms, see Macit Kenanoğlu, *Osmanlı Millet Sistemi: Mit ve Gerçek* (İstanbul: Klasik, 2004), particularly pp. 27–90. Kenanoğlu criticizes the existing understanding of the “autonomy” of the millets and instead claims the millet system due to its nature (defined by geographic area and the responsibilities of the church) was similar to tax farms (*iltizams*)—given to clergy with specific roles.

³⁴ Vartan Artinian, “The Formation of Catholic and Protestant Millets,” *The Armenian Review* 28 (1975): 11. The Protestant community was not a “millet” in the full sense of the term, as the head of the community was a lay member and not a patriarch.

³⁵ Vartan Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire 1839–1863* (İstanbul: Isis Press, 1988), 19–30.

upper classes and Istanbul in the administration of communal affairs, it was relatively liberal compared to the “constitutions” of the other communities.

Religious law, the sharia, was also affected by these changes. It was standardized as the *Mecelle* by the famous the Tanzimat statesman Ahmed Cevdet Pasha between 1870 and 1877 and practiced as a civil code both in religious and secular courts (*Nizamiye Mahkemeleri*).³⁶ The Citizenship Law was passed in 1869 and defined the rules for being an Ottoman citizen (*tâbiye*). That law guaranteed treatment of all Ottoman citizens on an equal basis; differences between members of different ethnic and religious groups were eliminated theoretically, if not in practice.³⁷ The last step was the proclamation of the Ottoman Constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi*) in 1876 and the opening up of parliament to all members of the Ottoman nation.

These reforms and the growing state power were also manifested in “center-periphery” relations. In modernizing the state apparatus, the Ottoman state tried to impose stricter control on the provinces.³⁸ In the classic works of Ottoman historiography, the period is seen as an era of centralization following the period of political, military, and economic decentralization of the eighteenth century.³⁹ The suppression of the semi-autonomous Kurdish *Begliks* of Ottoman

³⁶ Rubin, *Ottoman Nizamiye Courts*, 37.

³⁷ Some historians argue that the Law on Ottoman Citizenship (*Tabiyet-i Osmaniye Kanunnamesi*) attempted primarily to halt non-Muslims’ changing citizenship to gain economic privileges from foreign powers. Gülnihâl Bozkurt, *Alman-İngiliz Belgelerinin ve Siyasi Gelişmelerin Işığında Gayrimüslim Osmanlı Vatandaşlarının Hukukî Durumu (1839–1914)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), 148–149; Cihan Osmanoglu, *Tanzimat Dönemi İtibarıyla Osmanlı Tâbiyetinin (Vatandaşlığının) Gelişimi* (İstanbul: Legal, 2004), 173 ff. As I will show, there were a number of notables in Erzurum alone who were citizens of a foreign state but accepted Ottoman subjecthood years before the law.

³⁸ The most comprehensive study on the reforms in the provincial administration is by Musa Çadırcı. See Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentleri'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapıları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991).

³⁹ Halil İnalcık, “Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration,” in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, eds. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 27–52.

Kurdistan in the 1830s and 40s⁴⁰ and the forced settlement of tribes in the Adana region under the supervision of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha⁴¹ are examples of cases where the Ottoman state used coercive methods in its centralization attempts. However, non-coercive developments were also employed. Some historians highlight continuities in the Ottoman administration in its provinces, especially through its indirect rule in different frontiers.⁴² Others emphasize the integration of local power holders in the provinces by the creation of provincial administration and introduction of local representation via local councils.

As part of these provincial reforms, various administrative regulations were passed from the 1840s onwards, culminating in the Provincial Law of 1864, which promoted centralization by structuring the provincial administration hierarchically, and constituted the basis of the modern republic's provincial administration.⁴³ These councils, which had been manifest in the previous period as *ad hoc* councils of local notables, were thereby institutionalized during the *Tanzimat* era. They consisted of appointed government officials and religious leaders and elected members from among city notables and guild masters.⁴⁴ An important aspect of the reform project for our purposes was the attempt to formally incorporate the local elite into the governing structure.⁴⁵ The councils made decisions on tax collection, the allocation of city services and resources for

⁴⁰ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1992), 175–180; Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 54–74.

⁴¹ Andrew Gordon Gould, *Pashas and Brigands: Ottoman Provincial Reform and its Impact on the Nomadic Tribes of Southern Anatolia, 1840–1885* (PhD Dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1973), particularly chapter 4: 74–119.

⁴² Fred Anscombe, “Continuities in Ottoman Centre-Periphery Relations, 1787–1915,” in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 235–51.

⁴³ Stanford Shaw, “Local Administrations in the Tanzimat,” in *150. Yılında Tanzimat*, 34.

⁴⁴ Musa Çadırcı, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Eyalet ve Sancaklarda Meclislerin Oluşturulması (1840–1864),” in *Tanzimat Sürecinde Türkiye Ülke Yönetimi* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2007), 264.

⁴⁵ In the early *Tanzimat* era, *İmar Meclisleri* (Public Works Council) made up of one religious and one administrative official in the provincial capitals were created and sent reports on the local conditions and proposals for their ameliorations to Istanbul. Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Türkiye’de Yönetim*,” in *Tanzimat Sürecinde Türkiye Ülke Yönetimi*, 202–203.

the public good. In short, they applied the fiscal aspect of the Tanzimat reforms at the provincial level.

The 1860s witnessed important changes in the provincial administration. The Provincial Law of 1864, which was based on the experience of Midhat Pasha's governance in Nish, organized the provinces hierarchically from canton (*nahiye*) to the center of the province in four tiers. The government departments in the center of the provinces were connected to the ministries in Istanbul, thus integrating the empire vertically. At the province (*vilayet*), sub-province (*sancak*) and sub-*sancak* (*kaza*) levels, there were administrative assemblies that were responsible for political and judicial affairs.⁴⁶ These assemblies also had economic power, particularly in controlling the collection of revenues, managing the auctions for tax farms, allocating the resources of the province, supervising the director of financial administration (*defterdar*), and forwarding the central government's share of provincial revenues to Istanbul.⁴⁷ Membership of non-Muslim notables in these assemblies is regarded as a crucial step for the history of empire. By being members of the assembly, the non-Muslims gained official recognition and the right to participate in administration, as well as a tool to ward off foreign powers' demands.⁴⁸ The experiences with representative local governance through these assemblies led the way to the Ottoman Parliament of 1875–1876. Indeed, the members of these assemblies were elected as deputies of the parliament.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentleri'nin*, 254 ff. However, Çadırcı notes that due to lack of those assemblies' minutes and registers, historians are far from knowing actual practices of these councils. Ibid., 258. This is the main reason behind the legalistic approach to these councils.

⁴⁷ In 1859 the office of *defterdar* was abolished and until 1864 governors were held directly responsible for the fiscal affairs of the provinces. Ibid., 230.

⁴⁸ Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Sonra Mahalli İdareler*, 57–58.

⁴⁹ Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: A Study of the Midhat Constitution and Parliament* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), 125–127. For a critique of Devereux's explanation of the election system, see Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Sonra Mahalli İdareler*, 82 n.111.

The period of reforms was also not free of reaction, opposition, and protest by those who had vested interests in the old regime, or were driven by other factors to oppose the reforms. There were violent conflicts, especially in the provinces where the Tanzimat had raised the expectations of ordinary people, and given them hope of alleviating their poverty. In some regions of Bulgaria, where economic conflict also had an ethnic dimension, the Christian peasants rose against their Muslim landlords, demanding the fair taxation promised by the Tanzimat regime.⁵⁰ In Anatolia, there was likely rural unrest of lesser magnitude, which therefore by and large remained unnoticed.⁵¹ The worst, largest, and best-known incident was the Armenian massacres that took place in the eastern provinces of Anatolia in 1894–96, which claimed the lives of thousands of Armenians and forced the conversion of many others.⁵²

Eastern Provinces in the Age of Reforms: Agency of Armenians?

The history of the Ottoman East, roughly the area covering Sivas and Erzurum, in the north; Mamûratül Aziz, in the center; and Diyarbakir and Mosul provinces in the south, accounts for little of this conventional history of the Tanzimat. These provinces were inhabited by Armenians and Kurds and have received little scholarly attention compared to other regions of the empire. Due to different factors, these regions were never allowed to be incorporated into the mainstream historiography of the Ottoman Empire—which was regarded as Turkish history until recently. On the one hand, there is the denial of the Armenian Genocide during World War I, including denial of the Armenians' historical existence in the region; on the other hand, there is the “Kurdish Question,” which ranges from denial of the cultural and civil rights of Kurdish

⁵⁰ Halil İnalcık, “Application of the *Tanzimat* and its Social Effects,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 5 (1973): 115–127. For a more recent study on the same topic, confirming most of İnalcık's findings see Ahmet Uzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler: Niş İsyanı Üzerine Ayrıntılı Bir İnceleme (1841)* (Istanbul: Eren, 2002).

⁵¹ Donald Quataert, “Rural Unrest in the Ottoman Empire 1830–1914,” in *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, eds. Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991), 38–49.

⁵² Despite its inability to overcome certain clichés, Robert Melson's article is still an important study of the topic. Robert Melson, “A Theoretical Inquiry into the Armenian Massacres of 1894–1896,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24 (1982): 481–509.

citizens throughout the republican era to the ongoing struggle between the army and the Kurdish secessionists which has claimed over 40,000 Turkish and Kurdish lives alongside displacement of Kurds in the last 30 years. As a consequence, the eastern provinces remained a “black hole” in the historiographies of the empire.⁵³ With this dissertation I aim to contribute to the developing historiography of the region. I will examine it as a proper component of the Ottoman imperial rule, not as a *sui generis* entity, and attribute agency to the non-state actors living there.

The works on the region’s history during the Tanzimat tend to prioritize understanding the historical injustices and the current political situation of the region. Scholars focus on reforms—and especially on their failures. The deteriorating material conditions of the Armenians in the provinces, oppression of Armenian and Kurdish peasants by various Kurdish land-owners (*aghas*), and oppressions by Kurdish tribes and Caucasian immigrants (*muhaçirs*), and the unfulfilled expectations and hopes of non-Muslims in the second half of the nineteenth century are the main issues dealt with in the scholarship.⁵⁴ Elke Hartmann summarizes these views by stating that the reforms removed former social structures without necessarily replacing them with new ones. She adds that these changes resulted in “a constantly widening gap opened between the postulated ideal of a modern central state exercising exclusive control over its provinces and guaranteeing public order on the one hand, and the real political desiderata and the applied

⁵³ Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi, “Introduction: Ottoman Historiography’s Black Hole,” in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, ed. Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 1. Articles in the volume share the goal of approaching the region’s history from new perspectives and integrating it to broader developments in Ottoman historiography.

⁵⁴ Arshag O. Sarkissian, in the relevant section of his work, *History of Armenian Question to 1885*, focuses on the events between the Congresses of Paris and Berlin, which he calls the *Bildungsjahre* of the Armenian Question. He examines the plight of Armenians in the provinces before the Congress of Berlin by using the minutes of the [Armenian] National Assembly and the *Reports of Oppression* by the same organ, which were prepared in 1872 and 1876. Arshag Ohan Sarkissian, “History of the Armenian Question to 1885,” *University of Illinois Bulletin* 35 (1938): 29–42. Likewise, Lillian Etmekjian in an article summarizes these reports and touches upon the attitude of the Armenian National Assembly in the turbulent years of 1876–1878. Lillian K. Etmekjian, “The Armenian National Assembly of Turkey and Reform,” *The Armenian Review* 29 (1976): 38–52. Tessa Hofmann and Gerayer Koutcharian, “The History of Armenian-Kurdish Relations in the Ottoman Empire,” *Armenian Review* 39 (1986): 1–45. This article, despite its hasty over-generalizations is still valuable due to the length of the period it examines and use of primary sources.

practice on the other, especially in the provinces of Eastern Anatolia.”⁵⁵ I will revisit this issue of discrepancy between ideal and practice in my theoretical discussion below.

Division of the region’s history along “ethnic” histories and historiographies that reproduce “perpetrators” and “victims” dominates the scholarship on the Ottoman East, whereas there are very few studies that focus on the applied practice of common history and interaction.⁵⁶ Gerard Libaridian calls this problem the “two-history” approach. Although he primarily criticizes Turkish and Armenian scholarships, his criticisms can easily be extended to the Kurdish scholarship. He states “the two histories are written as if two peoples that coexisted for centuries did not interact except when they crossed each others’ paths during massacres, each performing the predetermined and inescapable role their characters mandated: one, that of the victim; the other, that of the victimizer.”⁵⁷ This being generally true, however, “victims” vary in different scholarships.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Elke Hartmann, “The Central State in the Borderlands: Ottoman Eastern Anatolia in the Late Nineteenth Century,” in *Shatterzone of Empires. Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands*, ed. Eric Weitz and Omer Bartov (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 172.

⁵⁶ Janet Klein, “Conflict and Collaboration: Rethinking Kurdish-Armenian Relations in the Hamidian Period (1876–1909),” *IJTS* 13 (2007): 153–166; Dzovinar Derderian, “Shaping Subjectivities and Contesting Power through the Image of Kurds, 1860s,” in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century*, 91–108.

⁵⁷ Gerard J. Libaridian, *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 185.

⁵⁸ “Perpetrators” (i.e. Kurds) were once victims of the expansion of the Ottoman state in the region at the expense of the semi-autonomous Kurdish Beys of Butan and Hakkari, Bedirhan and Nurullah Beys, who revolted against the encroaching Ottoman state. Many historians regard Bedirhan’s revolt and the subsequent revolts of his allies in the region as proto-Kurdish nationalist rebellions. For a scholarly examination of the episode see Mehmet Alagöz, “Old Habits Die Hard, A Reaction to the Application of Tanzimat: Bedirhan Bey’s Revolt,” (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2003). The rise of the religious shaykhs and landlords as new leaders of Kurdish society in the post-Bedirhan era has been one of the most dominant explanations in the scholarship on Kurdish regions. Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, 182–184, 228–234. The framework van Bruinessen draws is accepted uncritically by historical sociologists. Cem Emrence, *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy, and the Islamic State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 82–83. Emrence lists Eastern Anatolia alongside Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula as frontier regions which “were politically volatile, economically undeveloped, and demographically sparse regions. With limited state presence, the Ottoman frontiers were ruled by culturally distinct and politically autonomous leaderships that represented heterodox religious communities from non-Sunni faith.” Ibid., 75. One wonders, besides non-Muslim participants in the imperial rule in the region, whether labelling the Nakshibandi-Khalidi order as “heterodox”—leaving aside the problematic use of the word heterodox in general—is a correct one.

Case studies undertaken by a new generation of scholars have begun to overcome these pitfalls and show nuances in different parts of the region. They constitute an important break with the older scholarship that has regarded the period as consisting of actions and reactions. Nilay Özok-Gündoğan's dissertation on the Beys of Palu⁵⁹ and Uğur Bayraktar's dissertation on the history of the Kurdish Zirki Beys in Diyarbakir province are recent important contributions to the subject.⁶⁰ Both authors highlight the role of negotiation between the center and the local power holders as an important aspect of the Tanzimat and show that there is a history well beyond the dichotomy of victims and perpetrators in Ottoman Kurdistan.⁶¹

If one examines the “Armenian” history of the region (referred to as Western Armenia in the Armenian scholarship), we have to acknowledge Soviet and post-Soviet Armenian historiographies' contribution to the scholarship, especially on expanding social and economic history of the region. They provide enormous amounts of information on issues like the over-taxation of the Armenian population by their landlords and state officials, the impoverishment of the peasantry, and the material basis of the Kurdish-Armenian conflict.⁶² However, their orthodox Marxist explanatory models mostly limit further achievements. They also do not provide any clues to the interaction between different groups and do not examine urban-rural

⁵⁹ Özok-Gündoğan shows the ways in which the Ottoman state attempted to break the power of the Kurdish Beys through re-distribution of land during the *Tanzimat* era, and describes the ways in which the process was shaped by the reactions from a variety of actors. Nilay Özok-Gündoğan, *The Making of the Modern Ottoman State in the Kurdish Periphery: The Politics of Land and Taxation, 1840–1870* (PhD Dissertation, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2011).

⁶⁰ Bayraktar examines the beys and the fate of their historical lands throughout the nineteenth century. He captures the economic and administrative aspect of transformation during the Tanzimat regime and aptly attempts to integrate the “Armenian” aspect of the story. Uğur Bayraktar, “Yurtluk-Ocaklıks: Land, Politics of Notables and Society in Ottoman Kurdistan, 1820–1890” (PhD Dissertation, Boğaziçi University and EHESS, 2015).

⁶¹ See footnote 58 above.

⁶² The prevalent theory in most Armenian-language works on the Ottoman East approaches historical change through the terms and concepts of breaking up the “feudal relations of production” and the exploitation of the Armenian and Kurdish peasantry under the alliance of feudal Kurdish beys, the central state, and ‘reactionary’ Armenian clergy in the nineteenth century. Azat Hambaryan, *Agrararın Haraberutyunneri Arevmtyan Hayastanum (1856–1914)*, (Yerevan: GAH, 1965), 4. It is interesting that the “church” as an “oppressive institution” as it appears in Hambaryan's work disappears in later works on the region. *Ibid.*, 99–103.

relations. Nevertheless, these works balance the lack of information on social and economic issues in the English-language scholarship on the region.⁶³ Scholarship on Kurdish tribes' grabs of Armenian lands is an exception to the general lack of interest in the social and economic issues in the scholarship in English.⁶⁴

The history of Armenians in the eastern provinces of the empire has also been approached from the point of view of the impact of the cultural and political centers of Armenian life, Istanbul and Tbilisi, on the provinces in the nineteenth century. Historians have paid attention to the cosmopolitan Armenians' growing interest in the conditions of provincial Armenians in the 1860s and onwards.⁶⁵ In this context, the activities of reformist clergy, most notably Vardapet Mgrdich Khrimyan (known as Hayrik), occupied the central place in the scholarly literature. His various efforts to draw attention to the provinces and alleviate the conditions of Armenians there

⁶³ In a series of books based on conferences held at UCLA since 2000 entitled "Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces," historians from different disciplines published over one hundred articles on the history of Van/Vasputran, Tigranakert/Diyarbakir, Edessa/Urfa, the Pontus region, Baghesh/Bitlis, Taron/Mush, Karin/Erzurum, Tspok/Kharput, and Cilicia, of which only a handful were about the history of the Armenian communities in the nineteenth century. Those articles that do address the nineteenth century tend to focus on the topics of population, education (e.g., Sanasarian College in Karin/Erzurum and Euphrates College in Kharput), literature, revolutionary activities, massacres during the 1890s, and the Genocide. Only three articles in the entire series paid substantial attention to the administrative, economic and urban history of the region. See James Reid, "How Turks Rule Armenia," in *Armenian Karin/Erzurum*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (California: Mazda Publishers, 2003), 147–188; Anahide Ter Minassian, "The city of Van at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in *Armenian Van/Vasputran*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (California: Mazda Publishers, 2000), 171–194; Bedross Der Matossian, "The Pontic Armenian Communities in the Nineteenth Century," in *Armenian Pontus: The Trebizond-Black Sea communities*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (California: Mazda Publishers, 2009), 217–245.

⁶⁴ Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 128–169; Stephan H. Astourian, "The Silence of the Land: Agrarian Relations, Ethnicity, and Power," in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark (Oxford University Press, 2011), 55–81; Dikran Mesrob Kaligian, "Agrarian Land Reform and the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire," *Armenian Review* 48 (2003): 25–45; Mehmet Polatel, "Land Disputes and Reform Debates in the Eastern Provinces," in *World War I and the End of the Ottomans: From the Balkan Wars to the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser, Kerem Öktem, Maurus Reinkowski (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 169–187.

⁶⁵ Gerard J. Libaridian, "The Ideology of Armenian Liberation: the Development of Armenian Political Thought Before the Revolutionary Movement (1639–1885)" (PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 1987). Razmik Panossian points out sources of the "creation of modern [Armenian] identity" in the nineteenth century as Istanbul, Tbilisi and the historical homeland in the Eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire and labels them as western, eastern and central points respectively. Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 129 ff.

are among the best-examined topics in the era.⁶⁶ One can add the examination of Mkrtych Portukalian's liberal-progressive ideas, which were disseminated through newspapers and educational activities in Van. Being the "spiritual father" of *Armenakan*, the first Armenian Political Party, puts him in an advantaged position in the scholarship compared to other similar figures.⁶⁷ In addition to the examinations of the ideology and actions of reformists in the region, the revolt of Armenians in the mountainous region of Zeytun in Cilicia in 1862 received special attention both in Armenian- and Turkish-language scholarship, most particularly thanks to the movement's anti-government aspects.⁶⁸

Works that examine Armenians' agency and integrate it to the history of the Tanzimat are very few in number.⁶⁹ One can mention Massayuki Ueno's article on the ways in which Armenians in the provinces voiced their complaints about the growing problems through the language of the Tanzimat, particularly its promises of security of life, wealth and honor.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Libaridian, "The Ideology of Armenian Liberation," 116–122. For Vardapet Mkrtych Khrimyan [Hayrik], see Emma Kostandyan, *Mkrtych Khrimyan: Hasarakakan-Qaghaqakan Gortzuneutyuni* (Yerevan: Zangak-97, 2000). For collection of works of the Vardapet Garegin Srvandztyants see Garegin Srvandztyants, *Yerker*, ed. V. Bdoyan and A. Kostandyan, 2 volumes, (Yerevan: GAH, 1982). Recent studies that pay emphasis to the social context of the region expand our understanding of Khrimyan Hayrik's and other reformist clergymen's ideas and actions. Dzovinar Derderian, "Mapping the Fatherland: Artzvi Vaspurakan's Reforms through the Memory of the Past," in *Ottoman Armenians: Life, Culture, Society*, ed. Vahe Tacjhan (A Houshamadyan Publication, 2014), 144–169.

⁶⁷ Panossian, *The Armenians*, 166–167.

⁶⁸ Hayk Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri Sotsial-Tntesakan yev Qaghaqakan Katsutyuni, 1800–1870*, (Yerevan: GAH, 1967), 471–524; Albert Kharatyan, "Zeytuni 1862t. apstambutyuni yev nra hamahaykakan ardzaganqneri," in *Hayots Patmutyun hator: 3: Nor Zhamanakashrdjan*, ed. Vladimir Barkhudaryan et al., (Yerevan: GAA Patmutyun Institut, 2010), 406–413; Erdal İltar, *Ermeni Meselesinin Perspektifi ve Zeytun İsyanları, 1780–1880* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü), 1988. Both Turkish and Armenian scholars agree on the point that the Zeytun resistance/rebellion in 1862 was a forerunner of the later Armenian resistance movements/rebellions, however they fail to demonstrate sound links between the earlier and later movements.

⁶⁹ Bedross Der Matossian's examination of the politics of Arabs, Jews and Armenians after the Constitutional Revolution in 1908, telling the history of the revolution from their perspective and with their participation is a recent and important contribution to the field. Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (California: Stanford University Press, 2014).

⁷⁰ Massayuki Ueno, "For the Fatherland and the State: Armenians Negotiate the Tanzimat Reforms," *IJMES* 45 (2013): 93–109. Ueno's concurrent use of Armenian published and Ottoman Turkish archival sources is an important contribution to the scholarship. Having said this, his main primary source from the Ottoman archives is not the actual petitions sent (and also written?) by complainers, but chiefly *takrirs*, which are official letters of complaint sent by ecclesiastical authorities to the Ottoman government including details of petitions. Issues of language, agency of complainers and representation of power relations vary depending on whether the document at

Parallel to the developments in the scholarship on the “Kurdish” regions of the empire, some historians have begun to examine reform in the Armenian community in the region by contextualizing it within the larger developments in the empire. Richard Antaramian’s dissertation on the expansion of the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate in Istanbul in the context of Ottoman reform is among the most important recent contributions to the scholarship. He examines the expansion of the Apostolic Patriarchate over historically rival seats and reforms undertaken by reformist clergy like Khrimyan Hayrik and his disciple Karekin Srvantzants during the 1860s and early 1870s—notwithstanding local resistance.⁷¹ Scholarship on Protestant Missionaries in the eastern provinces is a field that has been expanding, but not without certain problems.⁷² In short, the scholarship on the history of Armenians in the eastern provinces during

hand is a petition or a *takrir*. For an examination of these issues in Armenian subjects’ petitions in the era see Dzovinar Derderian, “Crossing Cultural Boundaries: Ottoman and Armenian Marriage Petitions, 1840s–1870s,” paper presented at the 49th Annual Meeting of Middle Eastern Studies Association, November 21–24, 2015, Denver, Colorado.

⁷¹ Richard E. Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State: Armenians and Ottoman State Power, 1844–1896,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2014). I disagree with some of the minor conclusions and factual data in Antaramian’s study. I will point them out when necessary in the dissertation. Nevertheless, Antaramian’s contextualization of the “Armenian reform” within the framework of Ottoman centralization is a major intervention in both Ottoman and Armenian historiographies, and definitely sets a framework for studying the Ottoman Armenians in the region.

⁷² The history of missionary activities in the Ottoman East in the nineteenth century has been evolving into a sub-field under Ottoman studies, but many works do not challenge the established boundaries in our understanding of Ottoman society and modernization. There are two dominant bodies of scholarship. One is a West-centric, missionary-dominated historiography which focuses on the activities of missionaries, particularly Protestant missionaries, to “modernize” the region through education, health services and above all opening it to “Western ideas.” No need to say that in this body the agents of change are always Western missionaries, whereas local populations are passive receivers of modernity. Frank A. Stone, *Academies for Anatolia: A Study of the Rationale, Program, and Impact of the Educational Institutions Sponsored by the American Board in Turkey, 1830–1980* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984) and Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadolu’daki Amerika: 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları* (Istanbul: İmge Kitabevi, 2000) are two notable examples of such an approach in English and Turkish scholarship, respectively. Against this “white man’s burden” scholarship there is a second body of work that focuses on the actions and motives of the Ottoman central state and its responses to the missionaries, again attributing no agency to local populations. Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 112–134; Emrah Şahin, “Responding to American Missionary Expansion: An Examination of Ottoman Imperial Statecraft, 1880–1910” (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 2011). However, only a few studies have tackled the issues of local Armenians’ agency, change of cultural identity, and the socioeconomic background of Protestantism in Anatolia. There is a developing scholarship on these issues, particularly on the interaction between missionaries and “heterodox” communities in the Ottoman Empire. Some notable examples are Hans-Lukas Kieser, “Muslim Heterodoxy and Protestant Utopia: The Interactions between Alevis and Missionaries in Ottoman Anatolia,” *Die Welt des Islams* 41 (2001): 89–111 and Zeynep Türkyılmaz, “Anxieties of Conversion: Missionaries, State, and Heterodox Communities in the Late Ottoman Empire,” (PhD

the Tanzimat era, with a few significant exceptions, tends to focus either on the material conditions of the Armenian communities or important reformist figures. The existing scholarship rarely attributes agency to the Armenians in the region—let alone describes their interactions with other groups, Turkish, Kurdish and non-Ottoman.⁷³

This study examines societal change within the Armenian community in Erzurum/Karin during the Tanzimat period, a hitherto under-examined field, and treats the community as a dynamic and active group, interacting with non-Armenians. This approach is significantly different from the existing scholarship, which attributes agency to Armenians either in unique events such as the Zeytun rebellion or to personalities and groups of reformist clergy and liberal thinkers and revolutionaries. Armenians in general and Armenian notables in particular had agency during the Tanzimat, as they had before and after that era. They were major elements of the local economy, linked Erzurum to other regions through economic activities and participated in the shaping of reforms. Their active collaboration with the local bureaucrats and other power-holders constituted the basis of the new imperial order in the provinces. As the second chapter shows, when they found it necessary, they bargained with the state authorities not only over the loyalty of their community but also about the very definition of that loyalty as it was

Dissertation, UCLA, 2009). For a case study of religiously dissident local Armenians' strategies to make use of Protestantism and social-economic background of their movement see Yaşar Tolga Cora, "Localizing Missionary Activities: Encounters between Tondrakians, Protestants and Apostolic Armenians in Khnus in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century*, 109–132.

⁷³ Nora Lessersohn labels this interaction as "Provincial Cosmopolitanism" and explains it thus: "This was not the self-evident cosmopolitanism often lauded of the great Ottoman imperial cities, major ports, crossroads of medium- or long-distance trade, or pilgrimage sites. Nor was it necessarily just a by-product of the European missionary presence or travel to Europe. Instead, provincial cosmopolitanism was a local cosmopolitanism, a lived disposition, affinity, and identity of individual persons and of collective groups that was the direct result of living in a demographically concentrated provincial urban environment in which individuals and groups of diverse and differentiated ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural composition engaged in an ecosystem of interaction." Nora Lessersohn, "'Provincial Cosmopolitanism' in Late Ottoman Anatolia: An Armenian Shoemaker's Memoir," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57 (2015): 552. I disagree with the validity of the concept of "cosmopolitanism" to explain interaction between people in the provinces, as the term has the potential to downgrade inter- and intra-communal conflict and to a degree urban-rural interaction. However, Lessersohn's attempt to challenge the established perceptions of multi-ethnic urban life in the Ottoman Empire and emphasis on (positive) interaction are valid points.

demonstrated during the Crimean War. As the fourth chapter demonstrates, some of them actively participated in the application of reform projects of the state and the Patriarchate. However, notables' power was not uncontested and non-elite had agency. As I examine in the fifth chapter, the artisans of the city revolted against the growing power of the notables and the rule of a bishop, a close ally of the notables. The notables reacted by consolidating their ranks against the artisans, dividing the local community along class lines. In short, this study clearly shows that the demonstration of Armenians' agency in the provinces in the social and economic context of the Tanzimat expands the boundaries of our understanding of the region's history.

In taking agency into consideration, I also aim to shift the focus from the state to social agents, and challenge the very notion of the modern Ottoman state. Thus, I question its existence as a preexisting polity which had empowered itself during the Tanzimat reforms. Instead, I claim that the modern state was established through a variety of social, administrative and economic networks and the practices of participants in those networks—what we call reforms. Not surprisingly, the above-mentioned studies of Özok-Gündoğan and Bayraktar on the land and revenue systems in regions like Ottoman Kurdistan approach the history of the state from a similar perspective. They do not take the state as an already-established, powerful entity, but as a power asserting itself in those regions and which had to negotiate with local power holders. Examining Armenian urban notables and their networks will expand this approach.

There are several benefits of this approach towards the state as an entity for improving our understanding of the history of the Ottoman East. By focusing on the bases of their economic capital and social networks rather than the “state” institutions, it is possible to examine notables' control over the resources of both the urban environment and the hinterland of the city

throughout the Tanzimat period.⁷⁴ For instance, a focus on an Armenian notable provisioning the army during the war not only challenges our notions about the economic roles of different ethnic groups within the empire, but also adds to our knowledge of the ways in which the modern army as an institution of the modern state functioned in the Tanzimat era. Likewise, case studies in both chapter two and chapter three highlight the important role of tax farming of urban and rural surplus and land-ownership of urban notables. In short, the examination of the urban notables' control over the rural surplus, movement of commodities, and possession of rural land will contribute to our understanding of the expansion of certain state institutions into the countryside during the Tanzimat era.

In addition to investigating the notables' control over rural surplus, through examining their trade relations and social-networks, it is also possible to reconstruct the hitherto underexamined regional and inter-regional trade networks. An examination of the linkage of the Ottoman east to other regions of the empire through commerce will provide an alternative to the state-led or international-trade-led modernization theories which are examined below. This also criticizes the *sui generis* treatment of the region in the scholarship and allows us to compare it with other regions of the empire.⁷⁵ In a nutshell, writing the history of the eastern provinces of the empire from the perspective of the active participation of urban Armenian notables

⁷⁴ Despite its crucial role in understanding urban life and social-economic change in the nineteenth century, topics of expansion of urban control over the countryside and their interdependence have been examined in the Middle Eastern context only relatively recently. Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Sarah D. Shields, “Interdependent Spaces, Relations Between the City and the Countryside in the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Urban Social History of the Middle East, 1750–1950*, ed. Peter Sluglett (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 43–66.

⁷⁵ The *sui generis* treatment of the region by historians is not limited to these fields. For instance, Bayraktar aptly questions the uniqueness attributed by historians to Kurdish semi-autonomous lands (*yurtluk-ocaklık*) before the Tanzimat era. He also compares the Kurdish lords of those lands with the grand-*ayans* in the western regions of the empire. Bayraktar, “Yurtluk-Ocaklık: Land, Politics of Notables and Society in Ottoman Kurdistan,” 22ff. Likewise Ali Sipahi's examinations of Harput-Mezre in the nineteenth century are crucial contributions to the long-avoided urban history of the region, see Ali Sipahi, “Suburbanization and Urban Duality in the Harput Area,” in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century*, 247–267.

contributes not only to the history of Armenian communities of the empire but also to understanding the social and economic dynamics of the Tanzimat era and the imperial rule it engendered. However, the important economic role of notables and their financial bases during the Tanzimat era has never up to now fully acknowledged. This historiographical problem should be addressed first.

“Notables” and the Tanzimat Era: An Overview

The conventional history of the Tanzimat, as outlined in the previous section, is a history of the state—namely of its centralization, expanding intervention in the lives of its subjects, and incorporation of local power holders in the provinces. I will examine the theoretical lineage of this dominant approach focusing on state and center in Ottoman studies and the alternative framework of analysis employed in this dissertation. Here, I first focus on the issues of notables and their relations with the Ottoman state in the current scholarship in order to contextualize my historiographical contribution to it.

The age of reforms had followed the period of rule by grand-notables, the *ayans* in the provinces, in the long eighteenth century. Put simply, after mass-scale tax farming had turned into one of the ways to cope with the crisis of the empire in the seventeenth century, certain individuals had acted as clients of the absentee tax farmers in the provinces during the eighteenth century.⁷⁶ These individuals belonged to the military-administrative class, the religious authorities, the merchants, and the guildsmen.⁷⁷ These local power holders began to take on administrative functions such as officially-recognized positions, and increased their economic power based on tax farms in their regions.⁷⁸ Eventually they fulfilled a variety of social, economic, administrative, and military functions which are interpreted as functions that should

⁷⁶ McGowan, “The Age of the *Ayans*,” 658–663.

⁷⁷ İnalcık, “Centralization and Decentralization,” 36–7.

⁷⁸ Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Âyânlık* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 1977), 117–128.

have been fulfilled by a (modern) state.⁷⁹ Thus, the phenomenon of the provincial *ayans* was interpreted in the traditional scholarship as a “decentralization” of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁰ However, recent scholarship on the topic emphasizes the integration of different regions into the empire through life-long tax farming (*malikane*) agreements controlled by these notables and their “transitional modernity.”⁸¹ The *ayans* reached the peak of their power in 1808, with the *Sened-i İttifak*. *Sened-i İttifak* was a pact between the imperial authority in Istanbul and the *ayans*, stating their responsibilities towards each other. More importantly, it ratified their claim to be partners in rule.⁸² However, Sultan Mahmud II (r.1808–1839), who undertook a variety of reforms to strengthen the central authority, including the abolition of the Janissaries in 1826, eliminated most of the great *ayans* either through military action or other means. The “Age of *Ayans*” was over and the centralizing state won the day.

⁷⁹ There is a distinction in the scholarship between the office of “*ayan*” (*baş-ayan*, *re’is-i ayan*, and *ayne’l-ayan* (chief *ayan*) as a position ratified by the government in Istanbul and self-proclaimed *ayans* who did not have such “official” positions but nevertheless concentrated power in their hands. Ali Yaycıoğlu suggests the terms *ayanhood* for the latter and *ayanship* for the officially ratified powerholders to underline their differences. Yaycıoğlu, “The Provincial Challenge,” 124. Many studies which talk about abolition of *ayans* during the reform era especially refer to the demolition of the officially ratified office of *ayan*. This legalistic approach to history misses much of the social continuity in the era, which I criticize in this dissertation.

⁸⁰ İnalcık was careful to conclude by pointing out the developing scholarship which did not treat *ayans* as Ottoman decline, but as rise of regional autonomy, İnalcık, “Centralization and Decentralization,” 83.

⁸¹ Dina Rizk Khoury’s study on Mosul, examining the ways in which the monopolization of the Mosuli economy by great families such as the al-Jalilis, who combined contracting of the army provisioning with life-long (*malikane*) tax farming rights demonstrates that the rise of *ayans* was not a story of decentralization, but was a compromise between the local and central forces. The office of the chief contractor and the governor were the same, the Jalilis. The story was “Ottomanization” of the frontier lands through incorporation through mobilization for war. Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540–1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Dina Rizk Khoury, “The Ottoman Centre versus Provincial Power-Holders: an Analysis of the Historiography,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey* v.3 The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839, ed. Suriya N. Faroqi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 133–156. As Karen Barkey states, examining the *ayan*-state relations allows us to understand “the intermediary processes of negotiation and distribution of rights and privileges, and intense dependencies created on both [the state and provincial *ayan*] sides” and the *ayans*’ “transitional modernity.” Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 227.

⁸² For an excellent study of this pact, see Ali Yaycıoğlu, “Sened-i İttifak (1808): Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Bir Ortaklık ve Entegrasyon Denemesi,” in *Nizâm-ı Kadîm’den Nizâm-ı Cedîd’e III. Selim ve Dönemi*, ed. Seyfi Kenan (Istanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2010), 667–709. After 1808 the *ayans* continued to hold and increase their power. A major example is Ali Pasha of Janina who entered into diplomatic correspondence with European powers. Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha’s Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

The fate of the *ayans* and their descendants during the Tanzimat era is not a well-studied topic, except for a few examples that I will touch upon below. Otherwise, all scholars who worked on the great *ayans* of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries briefly mention—interestingly enough only in their articles’ concluding sections—that people of *ayan* origin kept their positions during the Tanzimat era in Anatolia without explaining how and why.⁸³ This causes more curiosity when compared with the scholarship on notables in the Arab and Balkan regions of the empire. There one observes a paradigm shift in the scholarship, that the “Age of *Ayans*” gave way to “politics of provincial notables” during the reform era, at least in certain regions of the empire.

Examination of notables in the Arab provinces of the empire is a sub-field in the modern history of those regions. The scope of the studies on notables during the Tanzimat period was set half a century ago when Albert Hourani coined the term “politics of local notables.”⁸⁴ Hourani’s theoretical inquiry focuses on Muslim notables of Arab provinces in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries without much use of empirical data, and examines the origins of those notables—military leaders, bureaucratic officials, local religious dignitaries—and their functions as semiautonomous intermediaries between the Ottoman government and society. The gist of his argument is that the participation of local notables in the reform project as intermediaries between the state and local society determined the implementation and outcome of the early

⁸³ İnalçık states, “Subsequently, however, the lesser *ayan* continued to enjoy an important position in Ottoman social and administrative life; for a long time they were referred to as *müteayyinan* and as *vucuh-u ahali* (both meaning notables).” İnalçık, “Centralization and Decentralization, 51. Likewise Çadırcı argues that “people of *ayan* origin became members of the assemblies established in the sub-provinces’ centers, [and] continued to exert influence in city governance under different titles for a long time.” Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentleri’nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapıları*,” 37; Yağcıoğlu similarly claims “the thesis in the Ottoman history writing that ‘with Mahmud II the *ayan* and the dynasties in the provinces came to an end’ is nothing but a myth.” Yaycıoğlu, “Sened-i İttifak (1808),” 709.

⁸⁴ Moshe Maoz had earlier pointed out some of Hourani’s predictions about the relations between urban notables and the Tanzimat state in Syria. Moshe Maoz, “Syrian Urban Politics in the Tanzimat Period between 1840 and 1861,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 29 (1966): 277–301.

Tanzimat reforms.⁸⁵ He claimed that in a society where the notables determined local politics, the local social, political, and economic relations were based on networks of personal dependence centered on the notables who resided in the city and controlled the countryside, and that the notables therefore had the freedom to ignore certain demands of the government.⁸⁶ Hourani's argument about the crucial place of notables in local politics influenced later generation of scholars, particularly those who work on Syria and Lebanon, but it is not without its critics.⁸⁷

The Balkan scholarship has not been immune to this paradigm, although it adopted it more slowly. For the Balkans in general and for Greece in particular the focus is on the pre-nineteenth century.⁸⁸ More studies center on the notables of Bulgaria, one of the regions that remained under Ottoman rule for a longer period. For instance, in his examination of Midhat Pasha's governance of Bulgaria in 1860s, Milen Petrov highlights the importance of local actors: *chorbadzhii* (local notables), old noble families, bureaucrats, and intelligentsia in the Balkan

⁸⁵ Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reforms and Politics of Notables," in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, 43.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 45.

⁸⁷ Among those scholars who approach the history of the region from the perspective of notables, Schatkowski-Schilcher's book is a noteworthy example. Her study of the factions and estates of the Damascene elite families from mid-18th century to 1870s showed the ways in which factions within the urban elite were aligned with economic and political interests of two main groups, both aiming to control the Ottoman administrative structures and grain trade in the age of European domination. Linda Schatkowski-Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1985). Among Hourani's critics, Elizabeth Thompson argues that Hourani's "characterization of elites as intermediaries now appears imprecise, given that the council had authority to act on its own, without consultation, and to veto the governor's actions." She sees the origins of a unified "class" action of the elites in their bargaining with the Ottoman state. Elizabeth Thompson, "Ottoman Political Reform...", 470. One of the most significant among them and important for our purposes is James Gelvin's critique of the implicit structural-functionalism in Hourani's work—which Gelvin associates with the legacy of the University of Chicago on the author. James L. Gelvin, "The 'Politics of Notables' Forty Years After," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 40 (2006): 23. I will examine this issue in my theoretical discussion of the scholarship below.

⁸⁸ Socrates D. Petmezas, "Christian Communities in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Greece: Their Fiscal Functions," in *Minorities in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Molly Greene (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005), 71–116; Svetlana Ivanova, "Varoş: The Elites of the Reaya in the Towns of Rumeli, Seventeenth–Eighteenth Centuries," in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005), 201–246.

provinces of the empire performed a role similar to that of their Arab counterparts.⁸⁹ A more recent study called the urban notables “resilient notables” who, rather than losing their power during the early Tanzimat era, managed to extend their power well into the later decades even after the end of the Ottoman rule.⁹⁰ Alexander Vezenkov’s article on the seeming contradiction that some Bulgarian notables simultaneously collaborated with revolutionaries while serving on Ottoman administrative bodies expands our understanding of notables’ social and political roles in a unique way.⁹¹

The scholarship on Anatolia’s urban notables during the Tanzimat is fairly limited compared to other regions of the empire and underdeveloped compared to other fields of inquiry in nineteenth-century Ottoman history. The conventional approach to the notables has been to examine their persistence as an indicator of the failure of centralizing reforms of the state.⁹² New scholarship has shifted the focus from failure of reforms to their “degree of effectiveness” and the role of notables in that, by observing their participation in the local implementation of reforms.⁹³ Among these studies, Yonca Köksal’s work is based on new theories on state-society

⁸⁹ Milen V. Petrov, “*Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868*” (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2006), 217–228.

⁹⁰ M. Safa Saraçoğlu, “Resilient Notables: Looking at the Transformation of the Ottoman Empire from the Local Level,” in *Contested Spaces of Nobility in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Charles Lipp and Matthew P. Romaniello (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 257–77.

⁹¹ Alexander Vezenkov, “In the Service of the Sultan, in the Service of the Revolution: Local Bulgarian Notables in the 1870s,” in *Conflicting Loyalties in the Balkans: The Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire and Nation-Building*, eds. Hannes Grandits, Nathalie Clayer and Robert Pichler (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 135–154.

⁹² Kenan Akyüz, “Ziya Paşa’nın Amasya Mutasarrıflığı Sırasındaki Olaylar,” (Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1964), Ercüment Kuran, “Ayanlığın Kaldırılmasından Sonra Anadolu’da Sosyal ve Ekonomik Durum (1840–1871),” in *V. Milletlerarası Türkiye Sosyal ve İktisat Tarihi Kongresi, Tebliğler* (Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1990), 287–29.

⁹³ John Bragg’s study of Tokat, which examines the importance of local notables in administration and economy during the later decades of the Tanzimat period through use of sharia records, expands our understanding of relations between Muslim notables in that not-so-central region. His goals are “to recalibrate the impact of Tanzimat in the provinces by correlating patterns of appointment and litigation to the promulgation and enactment of reforms at the local level. The analysis that follows relies heavily on the idea that the Ottoman central state was chastened by its early setbacks and pursued a more accommodationist approach during a second phase of the Tanzimat Period following the promulgation of the Islahat Fermanı (1856–76). A secondary aim of this work is to show that the Tanzimat reforms succeeded in Tokat, and other Anatolian towns of similar size, when and where locals acted as

relations and a relational approach to the effectiveness of reforms. Her study breaks down the dichotomy between state and society and challenges the state-centric reform history of the empire.⁹⁴ However, as a historical sociologist, Köksal relies on quantitative analysis of patronage-based social networks. She does not question how these actors came into being in the first place beyond repeating the conventional explanations. More importantly, the agency of the notables is recognized as long as it served the needs of the state but, due to her methodology and sources—petitions sent to the imperial center from the provinces—notables' agency is not the central focus of her dissertation.⁹⁵ Michael Meeker's historical-anthropological study, which examines the notables of the Eastern Black Sea region from the late eighteenth century to the republican era, is likewise a work on state building, but a nuanced one. Meeker bases his study on British and French consular accounts and travelogues. He shows the ways in which the clan system of notables was an integrated part of local governance, particularly in the region he examines. His discussions of relations between local notables of various magnitudes and the state authorities on the one hand, and consuls' interpretations of the relations between the imperial center's representatives in the provinces and local notables on the other, are very illuminating in terms of showing the ways in which concepts of government, central authority, and imperial rule

primary agents of change." John K. Bragg, *Ottoman Notables and Participatory Politics: Tanzimat Reform in Tokat, 1839–1876* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 10–11.

⁹⁴ Yonca Köksal, "Local Intermediaries and Ottoman State Centralization: A Comparison of the Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Ankara and Edirne (1839–1878)" (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 2002).

⁹⁵ For instance she describes the importance of "local knowledge" in the success of the reforms in the following terms: "A natural part of the path dependency argument is the emphasis on local knowledge. Reforming administrations need to incorporate local knowledge, the basics of how to do things at the local level before implementing reforms. Application of reforms necessitates that the center know how things work at the local level. Thus, a certain level of contact with local actors is necessary. This explains the survival of local intermediaries in the Ottoman administration as state agents and local representatives. The Ottoman state strategy was to incorporate local intermediaries into the administration since they were the able bodies who had knowledge about local structures and administration." Köksal, "Local Intermediaries and Ottoman State Centralization," 36–37. Likewise, she explains the center's incorporation of local notables as "the positioning of local intermediaries in local structures constrained and reshaped the 19th century reforms. The center had to interact with local intermediaries and developed various strategies of incorporation such as appointing intermediaries to local offices and provincial councils." Ibid., 38. This is a very different kind of necessity than the ones I examine here, which stemmed from social and economic relations of the Tanzimat regime.

changed over time.⁹⁶ However, partly to due to limitations of his sources and partly due to his desire to explain the republican era, the entire Tanzimat period is left aside.⁹⁷ The question of whether the *aghas* and the *beys* of the 1880s were descendants of the elite of the 1840s, two time periods that Meeker discusses subsequently, goes unanswered.⁹⁸ The new components among the ranks of the ruling elite, such as Muslim urban merchants who extended their control to coastal regions like Of and challenged the existing elite, are also important elements still seeking scholarly attention.⁹⁹

While I argue that that were many changes both in the state and the notables throughout the Tanzimat period, I agree with Meeker's arguments about the continuation of the decentralized rule in different forms from the late eighteenth century to the republican system, and the importance of networks based on patronage and kinship. Likewise, Köksal's theoretical discussions of the interactions between the state and society offer new ways to think about their relations during the Tanzimat era. In order to expand on these issues and others, I focus on the ways in which local notables came into being in the Tanzimat. I claim they were a distinct social group and therefore approaching them as the nineteenth-century versions of the previous age's great *ayans* hinders us from seeing the peculiarities of the Tanzimat era.¹⁰⁰ The lives of local

⁹⁶ Michael E. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: the Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁹⁷ As a prelude to his chapter on the consuls' discovery of the persistence of local elites, Meeker observes: "The local elites of coastal districts, who had taken their proper place in the imperial government, had become virtually invisible. As we shall see, however, they would reappear toward the 1880s, suddenly and unexpectedly, as an inexplicable phenomenon." Meeker, *A Nation of Empire*, 250.

⁹⁸ It is interesting to see that although Meeker mentions the continuing power of local notables (*aghas* and *beys*) throughout the generations in the nineteenth century over and over again, their examination is restricted to a single footnote. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire*, 246, n. 39.

⁹⁹ Yaşar Tolga Cora, "A Muslim Great Merchant [Tüccar] Family in the Late Ottoman Empire: A Case Study of the Nemlizades, 1860–1930," *IJTS* 19 (2013): 4–5.

¹⁰⁰ To my knowledge Margaret Meriwether is the first historian who drew attention to the differences between the grand-*ayan* of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the lesser-*ayan* of the mid-nineteenth century. Margaret Meriwether, "Urban Notables and Rural Resources in Aleppo, 1770–1830," *IJTS* 4 (1987): 55–73.

Armenian notables provide us opportunities to approach the history of the era from hitherto unexamined perspectives.

Looking for the Armenian notable in the Tanzimat: Legacy of the nation-state and the Genocide in Ottoman historiography

Armenian notables in the provinces have not received the scholarly attention they deserve.¹⁰¹ There are multiple and complex reasons for the lack of interest, which cannot simply be reduced to the ethnocentrism of national(-ist) historiographies. Further historiographical and theoretical issues need to be taken into consideration. One of the reasons is the very definition of “notable,” which is treated as an exclusively Muslim group with political roles, constituted by the members of the *askerî*, ulema, merchants and guilds.¹⁰² However, as Margeret Meriwether argues, only by extending that definition to include high social status and wealth can we better understand the group dynamics. She states, “[i]n Aleppo, as in other cities, the stratification system was multifaceted. No single variable determined one’s status...Cutting across these social status groups, however, were distinctions of wealth that linked people across these lines and that limited the extent to which these traditional status groups represented meaningful social groups.”¹⁰³ Likewise, Philip Khoury, in a critique of his own book on “Urban Notables,” stated that new works on the politics of notables should pay more attention to the histories of the

However, she does not extend her analysis into the late nineteenth century. She attributes a key role to the control of the credit market in the persistence of lesser notables, disregarding their other sources of income.

¹⁰¹ The topic of Armenian notables has not received attention in the scholarship. For instance, Bragg devotes 11 pages to non-Muslim “leaders” in his 285-page book. This is rather strange as he also states the following: “A stratum of non-Muslim leaders existed parallel to the Tokat’s Muslim notables. These non-Muslim leaders typically derived from the city’s clergy and commercial elites and functioned similarly to their Muslim counterparts in the communal, manufacturing, and civic ventures of the town.” Bragg, *Ottoman Notables*, 188. Besides the limited space devoted to them, one also wonders about the choice of the word “leader” rather than “notable” for non-Muslims. The most serious attempt to examine Ottoman Armenian notables both in Istanbul and in the provinces is Elke Hartmann’s examination of deputies in the first Ottoman Parliament. Elke Hartmann, “The ‘Loyal Nation’ and Its Deputies: The Armenians in the First Ottoman Parliament,” in *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy*, eds. Christoph Herzog and Malek Sharif (Würzburg: Ergon, 2010), 187–222.

¹⁰² İnalçık, “Centralization and Decentralization,” 37–38.

¹⁰³ Margaret L. Meriwether, *The Kin Who Count: Family and Society in Ottoman Aleppo, 1770–1840* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 34.

notable families and their cultural products, as well as the differing origins of wealth of different family groups.¹⁰⁴ In agreement with these authors, I claim that in order to understand the functions of the (Armenian) notables, we have to change the definition that we use for the *ayan* of the eighteenth century, because it fails to acknowledge the transformation of the *ayan* as a social institution during the Tanzimat.

After the demise of the grand-*ayans* and the beginning of the age of reforms, political, economic and military power was still far from being concentrated at the “center”— even if we accept there was a center. The administrative apparatus, which was still being developed throughout the nineteenth century, lacked sufficient manpower. This shortfall was filled by the descendants of the grand-*ayans* and lesser notables, and thus enabled them to keep their importance in the new order in a different form.¹⁰⁵ The grand-*ayans*’ major source of power, their provision of military power and its logistics, was now supplanted by a standing army. The militias of the *ayans* were replaced through a general conscription. Nevertheless, the “center” was dependent upon the local power holders to form the reserve troops and to provision them. Last but not least, the economic basis of the grand-*ayans*, namely tax farms, was redistributed among the lesser notables throughout the age of reforms. Tax farming and sharing of surplus revenues in the provinces resulted in cooperation between local bureaucrats and notables through

¹⁰⁴ Philip S. Khoury, “The Urban Notables Paradigm Revisited,” *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 55-56 (1990): 217.

¹⁰⁵ Engin Deniz Akarlı demonstrates the validity of this argument in the context of the *mutasarrifiyya* of Mount Lebanon: “In fact, many of the powerful notables who occupied the subdistrict governorships appear to have been behaving in a similar manner, reminiscent of the *muqâta’ajis*. True, the lands under their jurisdiction were no longer a lifetime tax farm, and they no longer kept private forces, nor did they have judicial authority. They had to function within a centralized system...Nevertheless, traces of the old ways were visible in their behavior...Most important, they often served in areas where their families had been traditionally influential and had landed and other interests...some incumbents of the central offices and the judgeships also seem to have come to view their positions as a prerogative of their families, or of the Church.” Engin Deniz Akarlı, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 154–155.

the latter's role in local administrative assemblies.¹⁰⁶ Armenian local notables shaped the formation of the Tanzimat order with their economic basis in tax farming, provisioning of the army, trade activities, manufacturing, and political capital as members of the administrative councils. This was the new order, emerging through cooperation and conflict between imperial bureaucrats and the local elite in the provinces.

Like their Muslim counterparts, Armenian local notables in the nineteenth century were different in terms of their economic bases, social networks and communal functions than their predecessors in the previous age. The age of the grand *ayan* was also the age of the great non-Muslim moneylenders of the *ayans* and personal treasurers of the pashas in the provinces. With the development of the provincial bureaucracy and the separation between pashas' personal and bureaucratic finances, the great moneylenders lost their positions as treasurers of the pashas in the provinces. As the first chapter examines, one of the most significant moneylender families, the Allahverdiyans, built up their capital in the provinces before the nineteenth century and then moved to the capital. They were the basis of the great *amira* class of notables in Istanbul— who were, not surprisingly, losing power from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, a change also examined in that chapter. They were losing ground to the new Armenian notables, who cooperated with the bureaucrats of the imperial state and local administrators as participants in the making of the new imperial order. Their social capital and economic capital were closely connected and were based on tax farming, army contracting, manufacturing, and domestic and regional trade, all of which were under transformation in the mid-nineteenth century. Most interestingly, as the main bases of their social and economic power were their control over the local society and their relations with the local elite, they physically remained in the provinces, a

¹⁰⁶ Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli*, 34–35.

reflection of the new imperial order. Their stay in the provinces was a further distinction from their predecessors, as the great moneylenders in the pre-Tanzimat period had migrated to Istanbul. The new elite were also able to build cultural and symbolic capital during the Tanzimat under the umbrella term of Ottomanism. Yet, as I examine in detail in the dissertation, Ottomanism was not imposed upon them; rather, they gave it its meaning by actively participating in it. In short, the redistribution of the different aspects of the grand-*ayans*' power among different components of the society was a self-enforced solution to the challenges of the age.

The terminology attests both to the continuity and ruptures in the Tanzimat era. The word *ayan* (grand notable) lost its place to *vucuh-i memleket* (chief men of the place), *hanedan*[dan] ([from] the (local) dynasty), *eşraf* (the most honorables) more and more in the nineteenth century. The change in the community leaders' titles was not limited to the titles of the Muslim notables. Historians have noted the change from the terms *hoca* and *çelebi*, which were reserved for Armenian merchants and prominent men of provincial origin in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, to *amira*, reserved for the top Armenian—chiefly Apostolic—elite in Istanbul in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.¹⁰⁷ However, historians failed to notice

¹⁰⁷ Hagop Levon Barsoumian, *The Armenian Amira Class of Istanbul* (Yerevan: American University of Armenia, 2007), 16–33. Barsoumian makes a distinction between the honorary titles *çelebi* and *hoca*, which are thought to have been used, respectively, for prominent personalities or merchants from Istanbul and from the provinces. I think this is problematic as the case of the Allahverdiyans in chapter 1 demonstrates. According to Barsoumian's argument the Allahverdiyans should have been called *çelebis*, at least by the time their second or third generation was living in Istanbul, however Allahverdiyan Abraham is referred to as a *hoca* in the archival documents. In an earlier work on famous Armenian personalities, Harutyun Mirmıryan touches on the issue by simply claiming that Catholic personalities used the titles *çelebi* and *hoca* rather than *amira*. Harutyun Mirmıryan, *Masnakan Patmutyun: Hay Metzannunneru 1400en 1900*. (K.Polis: Palents, 1909), 106. Barsoumian also claims that the title *amira* was used only by Armenian Apostolic Christians. This might stem from his bias toward certain sources and the limitation of his works to Apostolic Armenians. For instance, Yeprem Boghosyan's two works on Armenian Catholic *gerdastans*—namely, the Allahverdiyans, Tingiryan, and Gümüşçüyan—do not appear in Barsoumian's bibliography. Besides the question of the proper title for Armenian Catholics, the disproportionately large number of Catholics among the Armenian *amiras* compared to their small population is a phenomenon that deserves more research, though it lies beyond the scope of this dissertation.

the disappearance of the term *kocabaş* (lit. big head) and emergence of the term *muteberan* (prestigious ones) in the provinces used mostly, if not exclusively, for non-Muslim notables, including Armenians. The more interesting development was the emergence and widespread use of Armenian equivalents of these titles such as *yereveli* (the prominent one) alongside the traditional title of *ishkhan* (prince, lord). Above all there was the use of *gerdastan* for Armenian notables, which literally means “family, extended household,” but as an Armenian-Ottoman Turkish dictionary of the early twentieth century states, its primary definition was *hanedan* ((local) dynasty).¹⁰⁸ One can also add here the honorary ranks bestowed upon non-Muslims in that period to note the similarities, such as *kapucubaşı*. It was an honorary rank given to grand-*ayans* in the eighteenth century when they were reaching the peak of their power.¹⁰⁹ Thus it is fair to say that if one juxtaposes the official positions and decorations that the non-Muslim community leaders received throughout the Tanzimat, differences between them and their Muslim counterparts disappear. These titles and ranks were the basis of the local Armenian notables’ symbolic capital in conjunction with their position in the community.

The second reason why Armenian notables were left out of the historical picture was political and related to the legacy of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey, and especially to the empire’s history of modernization. The twin narratives of the formation of a Turkish nation and a modern central state embodied by the foundation of the nation-state of Turkey have regarded any regional power-holders outside the state, including notables, as rival claimants to power and

¹⁰⁸ Petros Zeki Karapetyan, *Metz Bararan: Hayerene Osmaneren*, (K.Polis: V. yev H. Ter. Nersesyan, 1907), 211.

¹⁰⁹ İnalçık, “Centralization and Decentralization,” 40.

enemies of the state. This constitutes a major difference compared to other post-Ottoman lands.¹¹⁰

All modernization theories of Turkey are chiefly state-centric and based on an artificial Muslim *versus* non-Muslim divide. In fact, one's agency is recognized only so long as one is a state-related actor. All non-state actors (notables, Kurdish tribal leaders and religious *shaykhs*) are considered to have agency as long as they acted within the framework of state or they were regarded outlaws. One rarely reads about Muslim merchants/entrepreneurs, although there are signs of a strong Muslim merchant group *before* the state even claimed to *create* it.¹¹¹ As for the other side of the same coin, non-Muslims were considered to attain social capital only within their community and economic capital through international trade, notwithstanding their interaction with other groups and participation in state-making. Moreover, their rise was depicted as taking place outside of—and many times contrary to—the benefits of the state, which was growingly identified as Muslim.¹¹² All of these approaches in the scholarship were based on the

¹¹⁰ Indeed the interest in the notables in the Arab provinces was due to the Ottoman legacy on those lands after the end of the empire. The main interest in the Arab notables was to examine the origins of the upper and middle classes who were particularly significant in propagating Arab nationalism at the demise of the Empire and kept their intermediary role up until the World War II. Philip S. Khoury, "Continuity and Change in Syrian Political Life: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *The American Historical Review* 96 (1991): 1374–1395. Historians of the Balkan lands on the other hand still employ discourses of "treason" while examining these notables. See footnote 91 above.

¹¹¹ Cora, "A Muslim Great Merchant [Tüccar] Family"; Doğan Çetinkaya, *The Young Turks and the Boycott Movement: Nationalism, Protest and the Working Classes in the Formation of Modern Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 20–30.

¹¹² In the words of Çağlar Keyder, "since towards the end of the Empire ethnic hostility and conflict between Moslems and non-Moslems were paramount in social life, the fact that merchants, bankers and manufacturers were all minorities served to congeal this group as members of a single class." Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (New York: Verso, 1987), 46; Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), particularly 87–107.

economic explanations of Ottoman modernization of the earlier decades and they still dominate the scholarship to this day.¹¹³

Thus, those scholars who examined the peripheralization of the Ottoman imperial economy were preoccupied with international trade between European markets, exporters of finished goods, and the raw-material-producing Ottoman markets—particularly in the era that followed the Anglo-Ottoman Free Trade Agreement of 1838.¹¹⁴ Historians following this paradigm put forward two theses. First, port cities emerged as the most active elements in the process of integrating the Ottoman Empire into the world economy in the nineteenth century thanks to their role in international trade, and were considered central to any examination of the empire's economic and social transformation (i.e. Westernization).¹¹⁵ Second, unanimously all historians agree that non-Muslims emerged as a proto-bourgeois class, particularly in the port-cities, benefitting from international trade and at the expense of Muslims. The political

¹¹³ Scholarship on the Ottoman economy during the nineteenth century has been largely shaped by paradigms set forth in the 1970s in which relations between the Ottoman market and the world market were explained in terms of the Ottoman economy's integration into the European economy, and in terms of the former's relegation to the periphery as part of this asymmetrical relationship. A number of Ottomanists have utilized the world-system theory introduced by Immanuel Wallerstein in the late 1970s, which attempts to understand the development of the capitalist world-system as incorporating all other systems into itself since its emergence in the sixteenth century. According to Wallerstein, the system was dominated by the West, the core that pushed other countries to an inferior periphery. For theoretical approaches to the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the world economic system, see Huri İslamoğlu and Çağlar Keyder, "Agenda for Ottoman History," *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center* 1 (1977): 31–55; Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Ottoman Empire and the Capitalist World-Economy: Some Questions for Research," *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center* 2 (1979): 389–398. For a critique of this approach to the study of history of Ottoman Armenians see Stephan H. Astourian, "Testing World-System Theory, Cilicia (1830s–890s): Armenian-Turkish Polarization and the Ideology of Modern Ottoman Historiography" PhD Dissertation, (University of California, Los Angeles, 1996).

¹¹⁴ For the history of this process, see Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: The Nineteenth Century* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988). Kasaba, in a later study on the nonstate arena, admits that the focus on port cities and only on non-Muslim merchants gives a partial picture. Reşat Kasaba, "A Time and a Place for the Non-State: Social Change in the Ottoman Empire During the 'Long Nineteenth Century'," in *State Power and Social Forces*, ed. Joel Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 218.

¹¹⁵ One attempt to discuss theoretical approaches to the Ottoman port cities framed their importance in the following terms: "Whether foreign trade and investment and population movements which disturb old balances are considered positive elements of modernization or negative harbingers of dependency, the port-city cannot be ignored. The port-city captured and reflected in concrete form the entire episode of incorporation." Çağlar Keyder, Y. Eyüp Özveren, and Donald Quataert, "Port-Cities in the Ottoman Empire: Some Theoretical and Historical Perspectives," *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center* 16 (Fall 1993): 520.

backgrounds of these problems are well-examined in the case of Turkish scholarship.¹¹⁶ One could add here that such views are also reproduced in the non-Turkish scholarship in two ways. First, they emphasize the dominance of Armenians in the local economies—and thus the envy of Muslims/Turks—as one of the reasons behind the Hamidian Massacres and the Genocide.¹¹⁷ Second, they reproduce a stereotypical image of the non-Muslim merchant by focusing on international trade and do not examine the ways in which Armenian notables engaged in other economic activities such as production for domestic markets and regional trade, and the close relations they had with local bureaucrats and Muslim notables, as well as with their administrative functions.

The dominant paradigm in seeing Muslim-non-Muslim relations in the Ottoman Empire has been the so-called Ottoman state's tolerance towards non-Muslims "minorities." This discourse of tolerance emerged in the age of multiculturalism. It promotes Muslim/Turkish superiority in deciding who has the right to tolerate and who is tolerated, thus attributing disproportional power to the parties involved.¹¹⁸ In the case of Ottoman non-Muslims, even those who are tolerated are a limited group, as only the *amiras* in Istanbul in the first half of the nineteenth century and the non-Muslim bureaucrats in the second half of the century were included and highlighted as prime examples of tolerance. Non-Muslims' active participation in

¹¹⁶ Hilmar Kaiser shows the ways in which these "theories," particularly about Armenians, are used since the nineteenth century to create anti-Armenian attitudes in the Turkish historiography. He concludes his book by stating: "social history has been unable to criticize and revise Turkish nationalist views. On the contrary, it complements and reinforces these views." Hilmar Kaiser, *Imperialism, Racism, and Development Theories: The Construction of a Dominant Paradigm on Ottoman Armenians* (Ann Arbor: Gomidas Institut, 1997), 58.

¹¹⁷ For the "envy" thesis, see Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Structural and Functional Components of Genocide: A Victimological Approach to the Armenian Case," in *Victimology*, ed. Drapkin Israel and Emilio Viano (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1974), 126–128. For a critique of this attitude in the scholarship, see Yaşar Tolga Cora, "Osmanlı Taşrasındaki Ermeniler Üzerine Olan Tarihyazımında Sınıf Analizinin Eksikliği," *Praxis* 39 (2015): 38–39.

¹¹⁸ Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 1–14.

the formation of the modern Ottoman state and society in other capacities could not have been articulated in that supercilious approach.

On the other hand, the post-genocide Armenian scholarship struggles with its own problems. As examined in the previous section, scholarship produced in Soviet Armenia focused on class-based ethnic antagonisms between the Armenian peasants and the Kurdish feudal lords. The Armenian notables in the provinces who did not fit into that scheme did not receive any attention. At the same time, non-Soviet Armenian scholarship in the diaspora has developed under the auspices of party-politics before and after the Genocide, as most historians were also affiliated with the revolutionary parties. Their focus was again oppression by the Kurdish tribes, the material conditions of Armenian masses in the provinces, and the conservatism of the *amiras* in Istanbul, which were regarded as impediments to progress and eventual liberation.¹¹⁹ The urban elements in the provinces were not mentioned in the revolutionary discourse. As a consequence, the historical role played by Armenian local notables in the mid-nineteenth century was left out by both historiographies, through different discourses and for various reasons.

However, in the mid-nineteenth century, there was an Armenian notable class who were not different from their Muslim counterpart. They not only led their communities and integrated them to the Tanzimat order but also participated in the making of that order. They were not outsiders of the Ottoman state and/or society, but constituent parts of it. The “state” policies which seemingly aimed to integrate them, such as Ottomanism—the ideal of equality between Muslim and non-Muslims—were not top-down policies but instead the products of their active participation.

¹¹⁹ Hartmann, “The ‘Loyal Nation’ and Its Deputies,” 212–215.

Ottomanism and Armenian Notables: View from “Below”?

Scholars of the late Ottoman Empire agree that the idea(l) of creating a supra-ethnic Ottoman identity based on equality of all subjects regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliations was one of the main goals of the reform era. They also argue that it was a response of the Ottoman government to the nationalist and secessionist movements that were dismantling the empire. In his seminal article on the topic, Roderic Davison summarizes this view:

The first and most important Ottoman response to nationalism was the effort to combat separatist movements by proclaiming the equality of all Ottoman subjects regardless of creed. This doctrine of Ottomanism, *Osmanlılık*, had originated in the era of Sultan Mahmud II, but found its most formal expression in the Hatt-i Sherif of Gülhane of 1839. Reaffirmed and broadened in the Hatt-i Hümayun of 1856, the concept of *Osmanlılık* was a little more rapidly, though rather erratically, translated into fact during the ensuing two decades.¹²⁰

This quote from Davison not only provides the goals, content and time period of Ottomanism, but it also shows that “the state” proclaims Ottomanism. The discussion of Ottomanism is marked by these boundaries; it was a state policy or at best an ideology—but one definitely without a social history. In this dissertation, I aim to overcome this problematic attitude by showing the ways in which provincial Ottoman notables bargained with state authorities not only for guaranteeing their loyalty but also over the very definition of loyalty in the mid-nineteenth century.

There are two main approaches towards Ottomanism prevalent in the scholarship, one ideological and the other, legal. Both attribute agency to the bureaucrats and Muslim intellectuals, but not to the non-Muslims who were the main targets of the Ottomanist policy—if

¹²⁰ Roderic Davison, “Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response,” in *Nationalism in a Non-National State: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. William W. Haddad and William Ochsenwald (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1977), 39.

one can speak of a coherent policy or ideology at all.¹²¹ In the late Ottoman Empire, different forms of Ottomanism existed. Selçuk Akşin Somel's article on the topic makes distinctions between several phases of Ottomanism and labels the first phase as "authoritarian centralizationist Ottomanism," which covered the Tanzimat period up to the beginning of the reign of Abdülhamid II in 1876. In this period, discourses on Ottomanism were limited to the patriarchal figure of the Sultan, who protected his folk. However, particularly after the 1856 Reform Edict, the idea of equality and cohesion between different components of Ottoman society was emphasized more. With the Young Ottomans, the dissident intellectuals mostly publishing in Europe in the 1860s and 1870s, Ottomanism began to be discussed in a "constitutionalist framework and at an intellectual level." The "just" proportional representations of non-Muslims at the Parliament in 1876 were the materialization of the Ottomanist ideal.¹²² Within this framework, before its articulation as an ideology, only the non-Muslim bureaucrats at the top echelons of the Ottoman bureaucracy were the best examples of the "Tanzimat man" and manifestation of Ottomanism, as İlber Ortaylı points out.¹²³

As for the second approach, some historians examine Ottomanism from the legal perspective. In the Citizenship Law of 1869, they critically saw not only a state granting equal rights and defining who would receive them and who would not, but also a move in the expansion of the state in the lives of its subjects, its resources, and to control the peripheries of

¹²¹ Alexander Vezhenkov claims that the contemporary scholarly definition of "Ottomanism" as a project to create an "Ottoman nation" is based on the views of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century intellectuals, who interpreted the world through national terms. He also questions the historiographic emphasis on Ottomanism's goal of creating "one single nation" and argues that it was loyalty to the state and the Sultan that mattered. Alexander Vezhenkov, "Reconciliation of the Spirits and Fusion of the Interests: 'Ottomanism' as an Identity Politics," in *We, the People: Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*, ed. Diana Mishkova (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 47–77.

¹²² Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi (1839–1913)," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 1, *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, ed. Murat Gültekin and Tanıl Bora (İstanbul: İletişim, 2009), 97–103.

¹²³ İlber Ortaylı, "Tanzimat Adamı ve Tanzimat Toplumu," in *Tanzimat: Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, 309–310.

the empire.¹²⁴ For these historians, who are influenced by Thomas Mann's definition of citizenship in absolutist monarchies as a "ruling class strategy," Ottoman citizenship aimed to strengthen the empire with no participation from below.¹²⁵

There are problems with these discussions of Ottomanism and Ottoman citizenship at the intellectual and legal levels. First, as I mentioned, historians approach the issue from the perspective of the Ottoman state, focus on its pragmatism, and finally analyze the Ottoman bureaucrats' and Muslim intellectuals' views as *the* "Ottomanism."¹²⁶ This state-centric approach disregards both non-Muslims' adherence to the "Ottomanist" cause and their agency in the shaping of "official" Ottomanism. Second, the firm belief in Ottomanism's failure—as one historian reminds us, "we cannot forget that in discussing Ottomanism we discuss a failure"—further hinders historians from seeing its successes.¹²⁷ Last but not least, Ottomanism was not only an intellectual current and state policy, but it was debated and practiced with the participation of non-Muslims. Except for Julia Cohen's recent work on Sephardic Jews in the late Ottoman Empire, our knowledge about Christian and Jewish communities' "Ottomanist"

¹²⁴ Ariel Salzmann, "Citizens in Search of a State: The Limits of Political Participation in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808–1914," in *Extending Citizenship, Reconfiguring States*, ed. Michael Hanagan and Charles Tilly (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 44–45.

¹²⁵ Karen M. Kern, *Imperial Citizen: Marriage and Citizenship in the Ottoman Frontier Provinces of Iraq*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 13–14. Yeşim Arat, in the introduction to her discussion of the relation between gender and citizenship in Turkey, states: "Although his [Mann's] work has been criticized because it precludes the possibility of 'citizenship from below as a consequence of social struggles over resources', Mann's observation sheds light on the historical basis of citizenship rights in the Turkish context. Citizenship evolved in Turkey not as a result of a revolutionary social struggle from below wherein masses demanded their rights against those who withheld them but as a result of the choices enlightened ruling elites made to extend those rights to the masses to promote social integration and strengthen the state." Yeşim Arat, "Gender and Citizenship in Turkey," in *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*, ed. Suad Joseph (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 275.

¹²⁶ Sub-divisions within the examination of Ottomanism according to intellectual currents and groups, such as Young Ottomans and Jeune Turks, are the best examples of this tendency. Somel, "Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi..."

¹²⁷ Fabio Grassi's words are a typical example of this view: "...we cannot forget that in discussing Ottomanism we discuss a failure." Fabio L. Grassi, "An Anti-Nationalistic Dream: Ottomanism," in *Empires and Nations from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century*, eds. Antonello Biagini and Giovanna Motta (Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 1:75.

ideas and practices in the nineteenth century is still limited, and for the mid-nineteenth century it remains a terra incognita.¹²⁸

One of the few scholars who have examined this topic, Milen Petrov, shows in his dissertation that during the Tanzimat, political and economic opportunities combined with belief in the non-sectarian ideal of Ottoman citizenship and resulted in the Bulgarian elites' pro-imperial stance. These local notables, particularly the *chorbadzhii*, rested upon their entrepreneurial, financial, and mercantile activities, and the prestige stemming from their social position as intermediaries formed the basis of their "anti-nationalist" defense of the political status quo in the empire.¹²⁹ Here, I propose to build upon these views by examining the local Armenian notables' role in making and practicing it.

I claim that the idea(l) of Ottomanism emerged out of the set of relations between imperial bureaucrats, local authorities, and local power holders in the new imperial order. It was not a policy or an ideology that was imposed top-down and from center to provinces, but rather came into being within the quotidian negotiations of various actors. As discussed in detail in the second chapter, with the growing crisis imperial authorities faced during the Crimean War, various non-Muslim actors had a chance to bargain over their positions within the empire. Thus the Reform Edict of 1856 and subsequently the rights given to non-Muslims were not mere responses to European powers' demands, but were attempts to find solutions to the crisis of the

¹²⁸ Cohen's book on the Sephardic Jews' ordeal to adapt themselves, in her words, to "grafting models of patriotism and new forms of belonging onto expansive and diverse [Ottoman] imperial landscapes" in the period following the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878 has been one of the most novel contributions to the topic. Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 18. However, due to her focus on the Jewish community in the late nineteenth century, she does not offer much insight to understand developments in the Armenian community, let alone changes in the provinces in the mid-19th century. Also her failure to discuss the constituents of Jewish political leadership and its relations with the Ottomanist project, and how communal leaders not only were affected by the Ottomanist project's successes and failures but also shaped it actively, are drawbacks that need to be addressed.

¹²⁹ Milen V. Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside*, especially chapter 5: 208–259.

empire within the framework of the imperial order of the Tanzimat. Solutions to the financial burden of the war, the legitimacy crisis of the imperial government, and problems of logistics on the fronts necessitated a new set of negotiations between imperial bureaucrats, local authorities, and local notables. In that context, in return for guaranteeing their loyalty, the notables not only obtained concessions for their communities, such as permission to rebuild churches, etc., but also ratified their position as leaders of their communities both at the imperial and local level.

Erzurum, as a province on the frontier and war zone, provides vivid examples of the ways in which local Armenian notables improved their status while they worked for the success of the Ottoman army and actively participated in the war effort, and demanded in return what they thought they deserved. Thus what appears as the Ottoman state's modernization of its relations with its subjects was in fact a result of several pushes from below and of constant negotiations. As a ratification of the order, right after the war, the non-Muslim notables were decorated with medals for their services to the government in spite of the discontentment of many Muslims, who felt left behind. The "foreign pressure" model fails to explain this sharing of imperial symbolic power between Muslim and non-Muslim elites.

Ottomanism can be also taken as a power-field in which certain reform projects of the imperial authorities in Istanbul converged with reform-minded Armenian clergy's goals and were put into action through local notables. One such plan was to put a halt to some Kurdish tribes' raids on Armenian villages and monasteries in Mush in 1869. The investigation was co-led by an Armenian local notable and lasted for several months. As exemplified by this detailed case study in the fourth chapter, in addition to its ideal aspect, Ottomanism had real practical outcomes which required the active participation of Armenians.

Examining the agency of Armenian notables in Ottomanist projects contributes to the scholarship which primarily takes non-Muslims' positions in the local administrative councils and other official positions as an indicator of Ottomanism's "success," and provides a quantifiable but static image of non-Muslims' role in the administration.¹³⁰ There were various official and non-official venues open to Armenian notables to interact with local and imperial authorities outside these councils and other official positions. As many examples throughout this dissertation attest, the notables were not simple intermediaries but agents with transformative power. In certain cases, they gave the reforms their final shape.

Another area that historians fail to address, except for Petrov's discussion on Bulgarian notables, is the symbolic capital involved in notables' relations with the imperial government's representatives. These honorary ranks, titles, and forms of address were not merely symbolic or pragmatic efforts on the part of the state to "conquer the hearts and minds" of local power holders.¹³¹ The honorary ranks, decorations, and forms of address were representations and recognitions of the local social order. Armenian notables competed with each other to obtain higher ranks, and bargained with the governors to put some pressure on Istanbul to obtain them. For the notables, sharing the symbolic power of the ruling dynasty was yet another aspect of Ottomanism, which meant belonging to a higher and different stratum than the rest of the community. Their power was based on their dual function as being both part of and higher than the local society.¹³² This close identification with and adherence to Ottomanism, as I discuss in

¹³⁰ Carter V. Findley, "The Acid Test of Ottomanism: The Acceptance of Non-Muslims in the Late Ottoman Bureaucracy," *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. B. Braude and B. Lewis (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982), 340–368.

¹³¹ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 35–36.

¹³² As Elke Hartmann shows, by dressing up in armed regional costumes, the revolutionaries aimed to distinguish themselves from the urban folk but at the same time to exert some authority over poor villagers. Elke Hartmann, "Shaping the Armenian Warrior: Clothing and Photographic Self-Portraits of Armenian *fedayis* in the Late 19th- and Early 20th-Century," in *Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Uses and Significance of Dress in Self-*

the conclusion section, also had its downsides. The notables became targets of those who not only were not part of the order but also becoming gradually more critical of it.

This approach to Ottomanism is far from being a view from “below.” However, prioritizing non-Muslims’ participation opens up new fields of debate and discussion in Ottomanism, despite its class bias. Moreover, treating Ottomanism not as an attempt to modernize a Muslim polity by granting equality to its non-Muslim subjects under foreign pressure, but as a self-conscious ideological component of the new order of the Tanzimat with participation from “below” (or from the “periphery”) permits historians to compare it with similar imperial projects of the nineteenth century. For instance, comparing the reasons behind the Ottomanist project’s inclusiveness with Russian “Official Nationality” in the age of Russia’s Great Reforms would provide historians promising ground for discussion.¹³³ Leaving behind the assumption that Ottomanism was *sui generis*, another intriguing point of comparison is to look at Britishness, which emerged in the nineteenth century as a joint venture of different ethnic groups combined with Protestantism and imperial control over subjects.¹³⁴ Even without shared religion, as John Darwin argues, the British Empire’s “imperial ethnicity” included interpretations which “included indigenous elites, embraced a version of imperial identity and endowed it with moral and physical qualities.”¹³⁵

Narratives, eds. Claudia Ulbrich and Richard Wittmann (Würzburg, Ergon, 2015), 132. One wonders whether the uniforms and decorations of the Armenian notables were used in the same way to demonstrate the class they belonged to, i.e. the Ottoman ruling elite, and exert symbolic power over members of their communities.

¹³³ Jun Akiba points out the subject of “citizenship and nationality” as a topic to be compared between the two empires. However, he does not specify the directions for such comparison. Jun Akiba, “Preliminaries to a Comparative History of the Russian and Ottoman Empires: Perspectives from Ottoman Studies,” in *Imperiology: From Empirical Knowledge to Discussing the Russian Empire*, ed. Kimitaka Matsuzato (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2007), 43 ff.

¹³⁴ Linda Colley, “Britishness and Otherness: An Argument,” *Journal of British Studies* 31 (1992): 309–329.

¹³⁵ John Darwin, “Empire and Ethnicity,” *Nations and Nationalism* 16 (2010): 397.

The Geographical Context: The Province and the City of Erzurum in the Nineteenth Century—a Town on the Borderlands

Erzurum/Karin, on the border of Anatolia and South Caucasus, is a city on the trade route between the Iranian plateau and Europe through the Black Sea, west of the vast grazing lands at the northeastern end of the Anatolian plateau. However, it was not a “periphery,” a common term to denote territories at the edges of the empire, and particularly to emphasize limited “state/imperial” power and greater local “autonomy.”¹³⁶ The province of Erzurum encompassed “peripheral areas,” especially in its easternmost districts on the borderland with Iran. In the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, these borderland zones turned into areas defined by boundaries. State authorities’ demarcation of borders with increased surveillance was the result of a long process of imperial, regional and local actors’ participation. The impact of this transformation on the human and political geography was immense, especially on the local populations’ networks of exchange, movements and belonging. The demarcation of the boundaries also marked imperial ideas about sovereignty and citizenship regimes in the region.¹³⁷ Yet, these transformations did not change the most important characteristic of borderlands; “negotiation,” which, as has already been noted, has been an integral part of various actors’ political strategies in the borderlands. As “borderland historians” have recently put it, “[the borderlands] are places where—the best efforts of the state aside—ideas, goods and people move among various contact zones. Without such cross-cultural interaction, borderlands cannot

¹³⁶ Historians of Colonial America have developed schemes for understanding hierarchies within the territories ruled and claimed by overseas empires through the use of “periphery” as a major concept. Amy Turner Bushel, “Gates, Patterns and Peripheries: The Field of Frontier Latin America,” in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500–1820*, eds. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (New York: Routledge, 2002), 18–19.

¹³⁷ Sabri Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary: 1843–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 3.

be said to exist.”¹³⁸ Local administrators, communities, and notables all affected and were affected by these contacts. In some instances, boundaries of communal belonging and definitions of subjecthood/citizenship in Erzurum/Karin were also drawn and redrawn in line with changes in borders in the nineteenth century.

Being located in a borderland also meant that Erzurum was a contested area between the powers of the region. This was historically the case well before the nineteenth century. Between the end of the Saljukid period in the mid-thirteenth century and Ottoman rule in the early sixteenth century, the district was controlled by Mutahharten, the governor of the post-Mongolic state of Eretna in Central Anatolia. He was followed by Timur, who was again followed by the Karakoyunlu and Akkoyunlu nomadic empires in the fifteenth century, and finally by the Safavids. Even after the battle of Chaldiran between the Ottoman and Safavid powers in 1514, Erzurum was ruled by a local dynasty as vassal until 1535, when Sultan Suleyman I (r. 1520–1566) established the province of Erzurum and incorporated it into the central administrative system during his campaign against the two Iraqs.¹³⁹ After the establishment of Ottoman control, the city of Erzurum became a critical point for the Ottoman war effort in the east. It became an assembly point and provisioning center for Ottoman troops. It was the frontier town in the east, the *intihâ-yı serhad-i Acem*, (last [point] in the Persian frontier), with a significant Janissary presence before their destruction during the reign of Mahmud II.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Paul Readman, Cynthia Radding and Chad Bryant, “Introduction: Borderlands in a Global Perspective,” in *Borderlands in World History, 1700–1914*, eds. Paul Readman, Cynthia Radding and Chad Bryant (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 3

¹³⁹ Aydın Dünder, *Erzurum Beylerbeyliği ve Teşkilatı: Kuruluş ve Genişleme Devri (1535–1566)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1998), 87–88.

¹⁴⁰ Bilgehan Pamuk, *XVII. Yüzyılda Bir Serhad Şehri: Erzurum* (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2006), 43–45. On the destruction of janissaries in Erzurum, see Enver Konukçu, *Selçuklulardan Cumhuriyete Erzurum*, (Erzurum: Erzurum Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası, Yardım, Araştırma ve Geliştirme Vakfı, 1992), 256–257.

Being the capital and the most important town of this vast borderland province, Erzurum was always of great importance to the empire. Ottoman Erzurum/Karin was a “first class” city of Ottoman Anatolia according to a nineteenth-century Ottoman historical geographer,¹⁴¹ and almost all foreign visitors to the region referred to it as the capital of the Upper Armenian Plateau [*Bardzr Hayk*].¹⁴² The *sancak* [sub-province] of Erzurum was centered on the city of Erzurum/Karin, with its valley stretching away towards the neighboring sub-province of Erzincan/Erzinka in the west, the city of Bayburd/Baberd in the north, the sub-province of Bayezid in the east, and the *vilayet* [province, formerly sub-province] of Mush/Bagesh in the south.

On the eve of the Tanzimat reforms, the *sub-province* of Erzurum constituted of 14 *kazas* [townships, subservient to sub-provinces], although their number and size were subject to change over time due to the administrative restructuring during the Tanzimat reforms.¹⁴³ The city was the main agricultural market of the region and, as recently as the mid-twentieth century, half of the villagers in the region came to the city center to sell their products.¹⁴⁴ Likewise, the artisans, particularly masons who worked in the villages in the Erzurum valley, produced their goods for the city center.¹⁴⁵ As I examine throughout the dissertation, the economic and administrative

¹⁴¹ Ali Cevad, *Memalik-i Osmaniye'nin Tarih ve Coğrafya Lugatı* (Dersa'adet [Istanbul]: Mehmet Bey Matbaası, 1313 [1895]), 55.

¹⁴² This region was called Kurdistan by the English authorities. For the complaint of the Armenian Patriarch to the British Ambassador in Constantinople regarding this issue, see “Dispatch of A. H. Layard to the Marquis of Salisbury, date July 1, 1879,” *Correspondence Respecting the Condition of the Population in Asia Minor, 1878–79*, 105.

¹⁴³ These were: Erzurum, Erzincan, Hınıs, Kelkit, Malazgirt, Tortum, Karahisar-i Şarki, İspir, Kuruçay, Pasin, Mamervan, Kazavcan, Kiğı, Mecenkerd. Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 14.

¹⁴⁴ *Köy Envanter Etüdlerine Göre Erzurum*, (Ankara: Tarım ve Köy İşleri Bakanlığı, 1965), 112.

¹⁴⁵ For example, A-Do [Hovhannes Ter Martirosian], who visited the region in the early twentieth century, names the Onzin, Kricki, Zitogh, and Kan as involved in artisanal production. A-Do, *Vani, Bitlisi yev Erzrumi Vilayetnerı: Usumnasirutyanyan mi Pordz Ayd Yerkri Ashkharhagrakan, Vijakagrakan, Iravakan yev Tntesakan Drutyanyan*, (Yerevan: Kultura Tparan, 1912), 171.

dependence of these regions on Erzurum/Karin was intense in the mid-nineteenth century. The urban local Armenian notables exerted control over these regions either by controlling the surplus through tax farming revenues or directly as agents working in cooperation with the authorities in Istanbul—and usually as both. This is one of the reasons for my emphasis on notables' urban and local characters, as they were based in the city of Erzurum and exerted influence beyond the city, yet limited to the broader administrative district. What historians today regard as the expansion of state control was also the expansion of urban control over the outlying regions through notables.

The city itself was built in the southeastern corner of Erzurum valley, which is approximately 2,000 meters above sea level and stretches over the northern foothills of the Palandöken Mountains, watered by the Karasu, a tributary of the Euphrates, and streams from the adjacent mountain range. In the east, Deveboynu pass separates Erzurum from the Pasin/Basen valley, and provides a natural defense against attacks coming from the east.

Due to its geographical position on the easternmost edge of the Ottoman Empire, the city of Erzurum was one of the most significant military and commercial towns of the empire. In the early nineteenth century, Erzurum was comprised of three sections: the old citadel in the middle of the city, the district located around the citadel, where public offices such as the governor's palace and the *kadı's* (Islamic judge) court were located, and four major districts outside the walls of the inner city.¹⁴⁶ There were around fifty neighborhoods within these four districts in the middle of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁷ The widespread belief about ethnic concentration in quarters

¹⁴⁶ Şemseddin Sami, *Kamus-ül Alâm: Tarih ve Coğrafya Lûgati ve Tabir-i Esahhiyle Kâffe-yi Esma-yi Hassa-yi Cami'dir* (Istanbul: Mihran Matbaası, 1889–1898), 1: 829.

¹⁴⁷ It is very difficult give an exact number of neighborhoods as the number indicated in the sources changes over a very short period of time. The tax survey conducted in 1844–45 names 45 neighborhoods, whereas the population

in Islamicate cities seems to hold true for Erzurum/Karin; Muslims and Armenians lived in different quarters, although there were some ethnically mixed neighborhoods.¹⁴⁸ The Armenian population was concentrated in the northern and northwestern neighborhoods.¹⁴⁹

The major ethnic groups living in the city and the valley were Muslims (Turks and Kurds) and Armenians (chiefly Apostolic and Catholics, and Protestants in lesser numbers) and much smaller communities of Greeks and Persians. However, in the broader *sancak*, there were also either settled or nomadic Kurds. It is difficult to provide exact numbers for these ethnic groups; the population figures are problematic for a variety of reasons.¹⁵⁰ The historian might estimate by comparing various figures given by the travelers to Erzurum/Karin and the figures provided by the central government and the Armenian Patriarchate. However, this is not a very helpful method, as these figures varied greatly throughout the nineteenth century, ranging from 17,000 to 85,000.¹⁵¹ Therefore, instead of trying to determine the exact population of the sub-

survey counted 53. Haydar Çoruh, "Erzurum: A Border City of East Anatolia," in *The Ottoman State and Societies in Change*, eds. Kayoko Hayashi and Mahir Aydın, (New York: Kegan Paul, 2004), 176.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 177.

¹⁴⁹ A-Do, *Vani, Bitlisi yev Erzrumi Vilayetneri*, 163.

¹⁵⁰ It is not easy to estimate the population figures for the city itself, since the sources usually record the *sancak* of Erzurum as comprising the city itself and the surrounding *kazas*. Moreover, the population figures for the *sancak* from the later periods of the century are all contested for political reasons. These figures aimed either to prove a Turkish or Armenian character of the region through statistics. Thus, there are discrepancies between the official statistics provided by the Ottoman government and the figures of the Armenian Patriarchate. Finally, Turks and Kurds are counted together under the category of Muslims constituting the absolute majority, a policy criticized by later historians.

¹⁵¹ The population estimate derived from the tax survey of 1844–45 was 17,000. French scholar Francois Alphonse Belin, who visited Erzurum a few years later, estimated 30,000 souls, whereas official statistics from the last quarter of the century provided figures between 30,000 males in 1871 to a total population of 40,000 in 1900, whereas V. Cuinet, an official of the Ottoman Public Debt Administrator, gives a number of over 83,000. We may trust the frank estimate made by Robert Curzon, who visited the town in early 1850s and said of it: "The city is said to contain between 30,000 and 40,000 inhabitants, but I do not myself think that it contains much more than 20,000: this I had no correct means of ascertaining," Robert Curzon, *Armenia: A Year at Erzerum, and on the Frontiers of Russia, Turkey, and Persia* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1854), 47.

province and the city at a certain point in the nineteenth century, one might instead attempt to locate trends in population change and dramatic rises or declines after specific events.¹⁵²

One such event was the migration of Armenians to Russian lands after the 1827-1828 Turco-Russian War. Twenty thousand Armenians from Erzurum/Karin and its surrounding regions migrated to Russia and settled there, a fact confirmed by both Armenian and Turkish sources.¹⁵³ It is also important to note that although the numbers vary in all of these estimates, the total number of Armenians remains around one-third to one-quarter of the population. Although there are no scholarly works addressing this question at hand, at least for the city of Erzurum, the reason for this might be constant demographic changes. There having been settlements of Caucasian Muslim immigrants and Muslim migrants from the provinces of Kars and Ardahan, which were incorporated into the Russian Empire after the 1877–1878 War, there was also significant Armenian out-migration to coastal regions of the Empire and to the New World. However, the Armenian population in the city received Armenian migrants from the countryside as well.¹⁵⁴

Apart from the contested issue of population, particularly of Muslims and Armenians in the city, there are two other central themes in the works on nineteenth-century Erzurum/Karin: the Turco-Russian Wars and international trade. Being a borderland city, Erzurum was very

¹⁵² Leila Fawaz makes a similar argument about the population growth in Beirut, and marks 1860 as a turning point in the population growth and its effects on the urban landscape. Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 31.

¹⁵³ Kemal Beydilli, “1828–1829 Osmanlı-Rus Savaşında Doğu Anadolu’dan Rusya’ya Göçürülen Ermeniler,” *Belgeler* 13 (1988): 386–390 and the table no. V on p. 410; Vladimir E. Khojabekyan, *Regularities of the Demographic Processes in Armenia in the 19th and 20th Centuries and at the Threshold of the 21st Century*, translation by E.L. Danielyan (Yerevan: Press of NAS RA, 2004), 38.

¹⁵⁴ Detailed census reports from the late Ottoman Empire are missing, therefore it is hard to make claims concerning such demographic changes. However, local Armenian sources can offer help to solve this problem. Qosyan, for instance, based on a local report, states that there were 905 *yekvor* (*ecnebi*/outsider) as opposed to 11,392 local Armenians (*teghatsi/yerli*). In addition to those numbers there were 1,993 Armenian migrants outside the empire. Hakob Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq: hator A: Karin Qaghaqi; Teghagrutyun, Patmutyun yev Sovorutyun*, (Vienna: Mkhitarian Tparan, 1925), 89.

much affected by the Turco-Russian Wars throughout the century. As a result of Russian expansion into the southern Caucasus beginning in the early nineteenth century, Erzurum found itself the last eastern stronghold of the Ottoman Empire against the expanding Russian Empire. Erzurum was occupied in three of the four wars fought between the Ottoman and Russian Empires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The first of these was the 1828–29 Turco-Russian war, the effects of which have already been mentioned. Although it was not under threat of occupation during the Crimean War (1853–1856), Erzurum nevertheless played a major role in mobilization of the Ottoman forces and logistics, as I will examine in detail in the second chapter. The Russian army invaded the city during the Turco-Russian War of 1877–1878 and once again, during World War I in 1916. Due to its strategic importance on the eastern fringes of the empire, Erzurum/Karin was the headquarters of the Ottoman army in the eastern provinces (The Fourth Imperial Army) and although the main headquarters of the army was moved to Erzincan, to the west of the province of Erzurum, after the 1877–1878 War, the city continued to host three barracks and a headquarters in its vicinity.¹⁵⁵ Due to the presence of the army and direct effects of mobilization for war on the borderland province, construction materials, grain, and meat were crucial aspects of the economy in Erzurum in the period. The suppliers were the Armenian notables.

The second issue of great interest to the existing scholarship is the location of Erzurum on the Tabriz-Trabzon trade route, which carried the bulk of the trade between Iran and Europe. Erzurum was an important point in the East-West international trade, as it was located on the historic Silk Road.¹⁵⁶ In the first half of the eighteenth century, when there was a high demand

¹⁵⁵ Şemseddin Sami, *Kamus-ül Alâm*, 1: 829.

¹⁵⁶ Selahattin Tozlu, “Trabzon-Erzurum-Tebriz Yolu (XIX. Yüzyılda Sosyal ve Ekonomik Bakımdan Bir İnceleme),” in *Türkler*, eds. Hasan Celal Güzel et al., (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2002) 14: 482.

for Iranian silk in Europe, the customs house of Erzurum/ Karin was the second most active and revenue-producing customs house of the empire.¹⁵⁷ Although that trade declined in the second half of the eighteenth century due to the political disintegration of the Safavid realm, the transit trade was revitalized from the first quarter of the nineteenth century onward due to changes in the global economic system. The treaty following the Iran-Ottoman War of 1821 included articles aiming to facilitate the transit trade, i.e., noninterference by the Ottoman state in the business of the Iranian merchants, and fixation of the customs duties paid at the Erzurum customs.¹⁵⁸ However, my focus will not be the international trade. As I criticized above, studies on international trade underestimate the importance of developments in local and regional markets, which were only tangentially impacted by the international trade. Erzurum/Karin was the center of production and trade for the surrounding regions. By the early twentieth century the city hosted more than twenty commercial inns (khans) and bazaars in various quarters of the city.¹⁵⁹ The importance of local production and trade should also be considered from the perspective of their producers, namely the artisans. One Armenian author of the early twentieth century claims that there were 3,500 shops in the city, including around 200 bakeries, 5 shoe, 6 dye, 7 brick, and 7 spirit workshops.¹⁶⁰ As will be discussed in the fifth chapter, the changes in local production, not directly stemming from European competition but also from internal dynamics such as the rising taxes and notables' dominance, were major sources of discontent among the local population in the 1860s.

There were also non-artisanal occupations in Erzurum/Karin. Thanks to its geographical location on the highest plateau of Anatolia and its perfect summer grazing land for nomads,

¹⁵⁷ Neşe Erim, "Trade, Traders and the State in Eighteenth Century Erzurum," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 5-6 (1991):128.

¹⁵⁸ Halil İnalcık, "Erzurum," *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 355.

¹⁵⁹ For the list of these inns and bazaars, see Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:43.

¹⁶⁰ Sukias Eprikyan, *Patkeradzard Bnashkharhik Bararan* (Venetik: S. Ghazar, 1907), 2:324.

Erzurum/Karin was a major livestock exporter to the other Ottoman provinces. The third chapter demonstrates in detail that the sheep trade constituted more than three-quarters, and dried meat (*pastırma*, both in Armenian and Turkish) one-tenth of the trade with other cities and provinces, with the rest comprised of oxen and horses. Livestock-related goods like skins and hides, which were manufactured in the city, made up between one-half and three-quarters of the goods exported abroad. From these figures it can be safely assumed that the livestock trade and the attendant production of livestock-related items was the most important element of the local and regional economy of Erzurum/Karin. Therefore, the effects of livestock as a commodity with a “social life” will comprise a chapter of this dissertation.¹⁶¹

An urban and trade center of this magnitude with such proximity to the Russian border also attracted foreign interests. Foreign powers—Britain, France, Russia, Iran, Italy and Austria—had their consuls and vice-consuls there; they began to establish their consulates one after another from the 1830s onwards, following the Turco-Russian War of 1828–1829. The Protestant and Catholic missionaries likewise had their mission headquarters in and around the city from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, pursuant to some earlier sporadic missions to the region.¹⁶² Erzurum/Karin was a cosmopolitan city compared to many other cities in the region:

¹⁶¹ This development can be related to changes in the tribal economy in the surrounding regions as a result of increasing external demand for livestock, and more on relations between the Kurdish tribes as producers, Armenian merchants in the city, and Armenian peasantry possessing grazing lands. Anthropological studies on the nomads and nomadic economy show the impact of commercialization of nomadic pastoralism on society in general and on the social structure of tribes in particular. For instance, see Thomas J. Barfield, *The Nomadic Alternative* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1993), 118–128. The economic background of certain Kurdish tribal groups’ grabs of Armenian lands in the eastern provinces of the empire particularly in the late nineteenth century has been limited to arguments about the increasing value of land and importance of property rights following the 1858 Land Code. However, in addition to these rather hypothetical arguments, social-economic developments such as the importance of the livestock trade and grazing lands in the face of declining food prices during the “Great Depression” of 1873–1896 might be equally important, and should be researched. For the impact of the Great Depression of the late nineteenth century on the Ottoman Economy, see Şevket Pamuk, “The Ottoman Empire in the ‘Great Depression’ of 1873–1896,” *The Journal of Economic History* 44 (1984): 107–118.

¹⁶² However, the power and influence of the Protestant missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century was far from what it would be later in the century and limited to the poor in the city. See footnote 72 above.

Turks, Armenians, Kurds, a few Greeks, Europeans, many Caucasian immigrants, and a small community of Persians managed to co-exist, albeit with some measure of struggle, in defiance of contemporary challenges. However, this portrait of Erzurum/Karin as a lively city remained only until, as Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, a novelist of Republican Turkey, wistfully put it, “before the triumph of death.”¹⁶³ After, the deportations and massacre of Armenians during the Genocide of 1915, the war fought in eastern Anatolia and the Russian occupation in the same year, and the Armenian bands’ retributory massacres of Muslims in the region in 1917–18, Erzurum/Karin left its multi-ethnic imperial history behind. It is my aim to recover the history of “changing patterns of relations among...themselves and their place in their immediate geographical and cultural environment” rather than the “triumph of death.”¹⁶⁴

Theoretical Bases and Methodological Approaches

Studying a group of people to understand the entire society carries various challenges. As one moves from social history to the history of society, one also moves to an area of “total” history which incorporates different sub-fields of history and requires theoretically-laden approaches to its analysis. More than forty years ago, in his critique to the approaches to class in history-writing, Eric Hobsbawm stated that:

The most serious difficulty [of the study of class] may be the one which leads us directly toward the history of the society as a whole. It arises from the fact that class defines not a group of people in isolation, but a system of relationships, both vertical and horizontal. Thus it is a relationship of difference (or similarity) and of distance, but also a quantitatively different relationship of social function, of exploitation, of dominance/subjection. Research on class must therefore involve the rest of the society of which it is a part.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Beş Şehir* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1969), 26.

¹⁶⁴ Akarlı, *The Long Peace*, 3.

¹⁶⁵ Eric J. Hobsbawm, “From Social History to the History of Society,” in *Historical Studies Today*, eds. Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Graubard (New York: W.W. Norton&Company, 1972), 18.

Keeping this in mind, in my discussion and critique of the historiography on Ottoman modernization in general and local notables in particular, I have used several concepts which reflect the theoretical and methodological bases of this dissertation. My criticisms were directed towards (a) existing approaches towards the nineteenth century of Ottoman history as a history of centralization of the state and its (failed) encroachment on the peripheries, and (b) treatment of state and society as two separate entities. In the previous sections I also referred to different forms of *capital* that notables possessed and *fields* that are the social settings in which social agents interact and struggle, based on the rules of that particular setting. In this section, I will explain the theoretical background of these approaches and these concepts and propose a model which combines these seemingly different approaches to social change. The model aims to bridge the dichotomies of periphery and center, and structure and agency, especially after the return of the agent following the cultural turn in historiography. It offers an alternative approach to the modern (Tanzimat) state through the life-stories of local notables.

The theoretical background of approaches to nineteenth-century Ottoman history is based on the legacy of the structural-functionalist school of the 1960s. The school's proponents at the University of Chicago, and among them particularly Edward Shils, had a tremendous impact on the social sciences, and among social science-informed students of the Middle East and the Ottoman state. Three components are distinguished in Edward Shils' model of the "center": values and beliefs, institutions, and elites.¹⁶⁶ In Shils' words, "the centre, or the central zone...is the centre of the order of symbols, of values and beliefs, which govern the society. It is the centre because it is the ultimate and irreducible; and it is felt to be such by many who cannot give

¹⁶⁶ Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 44–45

explicit articulation to its irreducibility.”¹⁶⁷ Values in the center were complemented by institutions to disseminate them in the society. This function also makes the center “a phenomenon of the realm of action. It is a structure of activities, of roles and persons, within the network of institutions.”¹⁶⁸ The third component of the center was the elites who articulate the central values and control institutions. The center derives its authority from possessing all three components and it has the ability to shape the periphery by disseminating values through institutions.¹⁶⁹ Change in the peripheries occurs when the ones who are left outside of the center are taken in—but partially:

...these more sensitive and more intelligent persons [outside the center] have, as a result of their distinctiveness, often gained access to some layer of the centre by becoming school-teachers, priests, administrators. Thus they have entered into a more intimate and more affirmative relationship with the ‘centre’. They have not in such instances, however, always overcome the grievance of exclusion from the most central zones of the central institutional and value systems. They have often continued to perceive themselves as ‘outsiders’, while continuing to be intensely attracted and influenced by the outlook and style of life of the centre.¹⁷⁰

Shils’ model has been criticized for its incapacity to understand and explain non-Western settings (and even Western settings).¹⁷¹ One of the solutions that historians of the modern Middle East developed was to emphasize a distinct social group—the local notables—who were located in the periphery but (if one uses Shils’s words) “had an affirmative relation with the center.” The role of the structural-functionalist school in Albert Hourani’s works is mentioned above.¹⁷² Here

¹⁶⁷ Edward Shils, “Centre and Periphery,” in *The Logic of Personal Knowledge: Essays Presented to Michael Polanyi on his Seventieth Birthday* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1961), 117.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Migdal, *State in Society*, 45.

¹⁷⁰ Shils, “Centre and Periphery,” 127.

¹⁷¹ Migdal, *State in Society*, 46–47.

¹⁷² Besides his focus on the “central value systems” and “central institutions” as the bases of the post-1860 order in the Syria, Hourani also accepts the importance attributed to patronage-systems in the pre-bureaucratically organized societies by the structural-functionalist school. In his book *Europe and the Middle East*, he refers to social relations as “pyramids of relations of protection and dependence.” Albert Hourani, *Europe and the Middle East*, (Berkeley:

it is important to note that besides his focus on the “central value systems” and “central institutions” as the bases of the Ottoman order before and particularly after post-1860 Syria, in which the notables were “intermediaries,” Hourani also accepts the importance attributed to patronage-systems in the pre-bureaucratically organized societies following the premises of the structural-functionalist school. In his words, Middle Eastern society was made of “pyramids of relations of protection and dependence.”¹⁷³

Hourani was not alone in his structural-functionalist approach to the notable’s role in the late Ottoman Empire. Şerif Mardin, an important social thinker from Turkey, was also heavily influenced by that school in his explanation of “center-periphery relations” in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. His seminal article on the topic, which begins with a citation of Shils’s work, explains “change” in the periphery in the nineteenth century through sharing of market values, acquiring uniformity, and [continuing to fulfill] notables’ functional roles as “the hinge between the lower classes- the peasantry- and the officials.”¹⁷⁴ Thus the change in the periphery is dependent on the encroachment of the center, and notables’ history is reduced to their function as intermediaries.

The limitations of structural-functionalist approaches to center-periphery relations in general and to the history of notables in particular are obvious. In order to overcome the pitfalls that historians encounter, I propose to approach the interaction between the state and society (and center and periphery) as a continuous process in which they not only interact and negotiate but transform each other. Following Joel Migdal, I use the “state-in-society approach,” according to which states (and centers) are shaped by two elements: image and practice. The image of a state

University of California Press, 1980), 188 quoted in James L. Gelvin, “The ‘Politics of Notables’ Forty Years After,” 23.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 24.

¹⁷⁴ Şerif Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?” *Daedalus* 102 (1973): 169–190.

consists of two boundaries—first, an international one, as the states distinguish themselves from other states territorially, and second, the image of social boundaries in which the state sets itself (and its agents, i.e. public) apart in an elevated position with respect to the ruled (i.e. private). Practices such as ceremonial events either reinforce the state's and its agents' distinctiveness or “batter the image of a coherent, controlling state and neutralize the territorial and public-private boundaries.”¹⁷⁵ By examining the relations between image and practice of the state, it is possible to solve problems caused by our current terminology and the dichotomies it creates. It helps to further dismantle the state, particularly by pointing out that states are not monolithic entities, but constructed on localities and with interaction.

To understand the practical aspect of the state, ethnographers' views of the state are very helpful. They have demonstrated that Western categories are not applicable to state formation in non-Western settings. These scholars have also underlined that *state* is not a closely knit set of giant, impersonal, and law-abiding institutions extending over a vast imperial landscape from the center to the provinces. Rather, in this context, the state must be taken as an amalgamation of various institutions whose construction is based on cooperation—and sometimes struggle—between the various parties involved. These actors change and are simultaneously changed by personal relations based on their own interests and on everyday practices.¹⁷⁶ This interactive approach to the “state” and particularly the challenge to its image from the perspective of everyday relations is a key element in understanding the modern state's practices.

¹⁷⁵ Migdal, *State in Society*, 17–19.

¹⁷⁶ Akhil Gupta criticizes the legacy of Western scholarship on the state and calls for a reexamination of “conventional distinction between state and civil society, on which such a large portion on the state is based.” Akhil Gupta, “Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State,” *American Ethnologist* 22 (1995): 376 ff.

Migdal proposes to examine the state as an interaction between image and practice in a *field*, a term borrowed from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. A field in Bourdieu's own definition is "a network or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation in the structure of the distribution of species of power whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions."¹⁷⁷

Individuals struggle over accumulation and/or transformation of species of power, which are known as *capitals*. *Capitals* are various. Economic (e.g. material wealth), social (e.g. resources stemming from one's control in a network), cultural and symbolic resources can all be transformed into *capitals*, "social relations of power." This transformation can take place only in a specific *field* they act in, with their differences from other forms of capital.¹⁷⁸ *Habitus*, namely one's social practices based on conditional probability, is the third main element of Bourdieu's sociology and is also related to the other two concepts. *Habitus* embodies a practical rather than a discursive action and social practice in dispositional terms, which "are created and regulated by internalized, generalized, and transposable dispositions rather than by rules, norms, or external structures or by conscious intentions or calculations."¹⁷⁹ Thus action is generated from the encounter of internalized past experiences of socialization, habits, opportunities, and constraints

¹⁷⁷ Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 97.

¹⁷⁸ David L. Swartz, "Metaprinciples for Sociological Research in a Bourdieusian Perspective," in *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis*, ed. Philip S. Gorski (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 26–27. For definition of capitals see Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York, Greenwood, 1986), 241–258.

¹⁷⁹ Swartz, "Metaprinciples for Sociological Research," 31.

presented by (objective) situations. The dichotomies between structure and agency, and micro and macro analyses lose their importance in this approach to action.¹⁸⁰

All fields are in relation to each other, as different forms of capitals are, but there is a hierarchy of fields. The political field is a major field due to the intensity of struggles, multiplicity of actors, and its impact on the other fields. By using *field*, Migdal gains the tools of “multidimensional space of positions” to examine relations between image and practice of state, and the concept of power “to denote the struggles over who dominates” the *field* of state. These power struggles are a process of interaction between and within competing groups. This process “changes the groupings themselves, their goals, and ultimately, the rules they are promoting.”¹⁸¹ The state and society are not static entities and develop within this process of competition for social control, or struggles for power in field.

States’ ability to impose social control depends on their power to gain compliance, participation and legitimacy.¹⁸² However, states do not have unlimited power and their attempts to increase social control are contested by relatively weaker social groups in the society. One of the major contenders for the state’s social control are the power holders in the “peripheries” where “the state lacks the wherewithal to dislodge people from the existing strategies offered by organizations with rules different from the states.”¹⁸³ In facing local power holders with great social capital in the locality, officials as the representatives of the state are stuck between pressures from the center—to take measures to increase social order—and counter-pressures from local power holders with other priorities. These interactions shape state, society and the

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 32; Rogers Brubaker, “Rethinking Classical Theory: The Sociological Vision of Pierre Bourdieu,” *Theory and Society* 14 (1985): 658–660.

¹⁸¹ Migdal, *State in Society*, 23

¹⁸² Ibid., 52.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 54.

holders of different forms of capital —whom I call local notables— as major actors in this interaction and struggle.

The shift from approaching notables as functional elements, i.e. as intermediaries between state and society in a holistic approach to the society, to actors who engage in struggles with a variety of actors (in different fields) to possess power (in different forms of capital) changes our understanding of both the notables and the society. In his empirical work, Bourdieu stated that “it is one and the same thing to determine what field is, where its limits lie, etc., and to determine what species of capital are active in it, within what limits, and so on,” and adds, “we see here how the notions of capital and field are tightly interconnected.”¹⁸⁴ Likewise, understanding the *habitus* of notables, explaining why they acted in a certain way in a certain situation, as opposed to explanations solely based on their membership in the economically determined “class,” also permits us to interpret their actions. One of these fields of power struggle is the imperial state, and it is indeed a major one. However, as I examine in the dissertation, there are numerous instances of struggles and interactions in the lesser power *fields* and economic spheres such as “community leadership,” “corruption,” “Ottomanism,” and “reform” in which the notables struggle with other notables and with local and imperial bureaucrats on the basis of their different forms of capitals. The clash between the image and practice of the state, and eventually the role of society in the making of the state, are most visible in the examination of those areas of interaction. Throughout the dissertation, I approach these different fields of struggle separately for practical reasons, but, as I show, they were closely related both to each other and to the broader power field of the state. Examining struggles within the local society contributes to current approaches to seeing relations between the notables and

¹⁸⁴ Bourdieu, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 98–99.

the representatives of state in the Ottoman Empire as “negotiation,” by adding the dimension of how negotiation formed and transformed both state and society.

This chain of theoretical reasoning, in addition to my empirical findings, leads me to the “new imperial order” as a key term, a political field of the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. This term avoids the artificial dichotomy between state and society; draws attention to the interaction between imperial officials, local officials and notables, and shows the relations between their different forms of capitals in various arenas of struggle; attributes agency to local notables in their interaction with “structures” and eventually in social change, as a result of this set of relations. Identifying fields of struggle (and interaction between actors in them) is a key element in Bourdieu’s sociology. One of the most important tools to build the field[s] is the social history.¹⁸⁵ I think the above-mentioned concepts in Bourdieu’s sociology can be seen as tools to interpret social history and actors in the case of the Ottoman state in the nineteenth century, with the Armenian local notables taking part in various fields of interaction. This is both a historiographical and a political move.¹⁸⁶

Methodology: The Social Lives of Local Armenian Notables

How to write about the notables? The state-in-society approach has been criticized for risking “losing generalizability in its keen sensitivity to historical particularity” and its critics offer social network models to overcome this problem.¹⁸⁷ However, this hinders historians from

¹⁸⁵ Swartz, “Metaprinciples for Sociological Research,” 22.

¹⁸⁶ Rogers Brubaker’s comments on the political aspect of Bourdieu’s social theory make this point clearly: “Bourdieu’s texts are not simply an objectified trace of his way of thinking and seeing; they are among the instruments deployed as part of a practical strategy that aims at altering our way of thinking and seeing.” Rogers Brubaker, “Social Theory as Habitus,” in *Bourdieu: A Critical Perspective*, eds. Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 218.

¹⁸⁷ Yonca Köksal suggests a network model based on concepts “such as brokerage and structural holes [which] can be very useful in defining patterns of interaction between the state and local groups” because, she continues, “an important step to answer the question about reform success is to conceptualize reform attempts as the state’s activity to increase its control over the local network.” Köksal, *Local Intermediaries and Ottoman State Centralization*, 17–18. Köksal’s analysis is based on Ronald Burt’s theory of “social capital as structural holes” theory. For Burt,

seeing many developments which can only be observed in “historical particularity,” especially when the primary concern is seeing fields and how actors move in them with their social capital (e.g. networks), rather than prioritizing networks over their actors. Historians of the late Ottoman Empire have not realized the potential that the life-stories of individuals carry for understanding broader issues, such as state-society relations. However, whenever historians examine individual lives, they make corrections not only in the “common knowledge” but also of truisms in the scholarship.¹⁸⁸ Indeed, one can take the claim one step further by stating that one of main differences between the study of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire is the fact that the latter highlights the state’s power at the expense of individual experience on the peripheries. In contrast, the study of the eighteenth century is dominated by the study of individuals, the *ayans*. Their rise from obscure origins and accumulation of different forms of capital due to changes in the social-economic order of the empire is the focus of historians, and they reconstruct the imperial order of the eighteenth century through examining biographies of various *ayans*. The nineteenth century is the history of the state; individual biographies are at best integrated if they are of state officials or (Muslim) intellectuals. And this difference is not necessarily supported by the available conceptual tools.¹⁸⁹ So, I contend that the construction of

“weaker connections between groups...are holes in the social structure of the market. These holes in social structure- or simply structural holes- create a comparative advantage for an individual whose relationships span the holes...[S]tructural holes are thus an opportunity to broker to flow of *information* between people, and *control* the projects that bring together opposite sides of the hole.” Ronald Burt, “Structural Holes versus Network Closure as Social Capital,” in *Social Capital: Theory and Research*, eds. Nan Lin, Karen Cook, and Ronald S. Burt (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2001), 34–35 (emphasis in original).

¹⁸⁸ For instance, Vangelis Kechriotis’ article on the life of an Ottoman-Greek deputy through his memoirs is an excellent example of such opportunities in writing history through biographies. Vangelis Kechriotis, “On the Margins of National Historiography: The Greek İttihatçı Emmanouil Emmanouilidis—Opportunist or Ottoman Patriot?” in *Untold Histories of the Middle East: Recovering Voices from the 19th and 20th Centuries*, eds. Amy Singer, Christoph K. Neumann and S. Akşin Somel (London: Routledge, 2011), 124–142.

¹⁸⁹ Karen Barkey, who also uses Burt’s thesis on “structural holes” (see note 187), regards these structural holes as bases of notables’ networks in the provinces in the eighteenth century. She states, “the creation of these [regional] governance regimes [of notables] was not the result of grand strategy by notables who wanted to seize power from the center. Rather, these actors seem to have taken advantage of available local positions, *openings in the social structure that emerged out of a series of larger social and political developments*.” Barkey, *Empire of Difference*,

social biographies of the nineteenth-century provincial notables will provide us different understandings not only of the (Ottoman) state-in-society but also of *fields* of social struggle which have been hitherto unexamined.

Historical biography has once again begun to attract historians' interest. Following decades of being pushed aside, with priority given to structure (Marxist historians, Annales School and others) in history-writing, following the cultural turn—particularly in the context of critical theories of race, feminism, and post modernism from the 1990s onwards—writing the lives of individuals is becoming again a legitimate historical practice.¹⁹⁰ One of the last representatives of the Annales School, Jaques Le Goff, put the reasons for the rise of biography succinctly, comparing it with narrative history (in defense of the Annales School):

But should not the collective lead in turn to the individual, and is not the individual, for the historian, inevitably a member of a group, and is not the study of the individual- biography- an indispensable complement to the analysis of social structures and collective behaviour? Now that history has been profoundly renewed, is not the historian, now both scientifically and mentally better equipped, able to return to those inescapable historical subjects: events, politics, individuals- including great figures? All these are subjects that the *Annales* school was quite right to combat vigorously, when they were the preserve of a reductionist, positivist and mystificatory historiography.¹⁹¹

Robert Rotberg makes a similar comparison between narrative history and biography in simpler terms: “Although narrative history can be written without the employment of a full range of interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary investigatory methods, effective biography demands

243 (emphasis mine). It is interesting to compare Barkey with Köksal (who was Barkey's student at Columbia University) in their different employment of the same concept. In Barkey's argument the notables were the agents who used these structural holes for formation of networks in their region and the state; for Köksal, who focused on the nineteenth century, the state gathered information about locality by using the notables, who occupied these holes in the society. Likewise in Barkey's argument notables fulfill economic, social and cultural roles in the provincial society, whereas in Köksal's work, such roles were less important, as the state filled them. However, the main difference between them is Barkey's analysis in which notables had different capitals and used them to form networks. In Köksal's work networks are examined independent of the relations between notables' different types of capital and their transformations.

¹⁹⁰ Ilse Josepha Lazaroms and Emily R. Gioielli, “The Politics of Contested Narratives: Biographical Approaches to Modern European History: Introduction,” *European Review of History* 19 (2012): 653.

¹⁹¹ Jacques Le Goff, “Writing Historical Biography Today,” *Current Sociology* 43 (1995): 12.

more than the piling up of facts.”¹⁹² Many subfields of history benefited from the potential of examining biography in understanding history well beyond an individual’s life. It is an examination of “the process of historical change through an individual who, like other humans, grapples simultaneously with complex forces both public and private” as Nick Salvatore, the “social-biographer” of Eugene Debs, stated.¹⁹³ In the revitalization of the interest in biography, family biographies also began to attract attention in the social and economic history of the modern era.¹⁹⁴ Middle Eastern Studies, particularly scholarship focusing on Arabic-speaking countries, has remained slow in producing English-language biographical works due to structural, demand-related and source-based problems.¹⁹⁵ But there are interesting developments particularly related to examining the lives of “neglected” people.¹⁹⁶

I build my methodology on developments in the field of (social) “biography”-writing in history, as well as the “life-stories” approach in sociology. This approach has been defended by French sociologist Daniel Bertaux, who offered examining historical case studies of families including extended kinship ties as a way to examine social mobility over generations and outside the limitations of structuralist and actionist approaches.¹⁹⁷ In Bertaux’ words:

The subjective dimension of the socio-historical world, which underlies not only perceptions and representations but also agency, needs to be seized and utilized. While we cannot expect ordinary men and women to offer us full-blown sociological explanations of their behaviour, they are also certainly not cultural

¹⁹² Robert I. Rotberg, “Biography and Historiography: Mutual Evidentiary and Interdisciplinary Considerations,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 60 (2010): 306.

¹⁹³ Nick Salvatore, “Biography and Social History: An Intimate Relationship,” *Labour History* 87 (2004): 190.

¹⁹⁴ Simone Lässig, “Toward a Biographical Turn? Biography in Modern Historiography-Modern Historiography in Biography,” *German Historical Institute Bulletin* 35 (2004): 154.

¹⁹⁵ Laila Parsons, “Some Thoughts on Biography and the Historiography of the Twentieth-Century Arab World,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 21 (2010): 5–20.

¹⁹⁶ Many of the articles in the following volumes are good examples of this trend: *Struggle and survival in the modern Middle East*, eds. Edmund Burke III and David Yaghoubian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and *Untold histories of the Middle East: Recovering Voices from the 19th and 20th Centuries*, eds. Amy Singer, Christoph K. Neumann and S. Akşin Somel (London: Routledge, 2011).

¹⁹⁷ Daniel Bertaux and Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, “Heritage and its Lineage: A Case History of Transmission and Social Mobility over Five Generations” in *Pathways to Social Class: A Qualitative Approach to Social Mobility*, ed. Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 63–64.

dopes—and indeed the poorer they are the shrewder they need to become to survive at all. We see their interpretations as vital first steps to our own: first- and second-order hermeneutics respectively. They are the best short cut towards grasping the local rules of the games of generalized competition.¹⁹⁸

This approach contributes to the social biographies of the Armenian notables, particularly by allowing me to address issues like generational change and social mobility over generations, which a focus on one notable's biography could not fully furnish. The changes over generations from merchant fathers to bureaucrat sons give historians hints about potential social change in the broader Ottoman society, yet this is not discussed thoroughly in the scholarship, but only as passing remarks in conclusions.

In short, the local Armenian notables are left out of the mainstream historiography, and recovering their agency requires different theoretical and methodological approaches—to say nothing of different sources, as I will discuss in the following section. Throughout the dissertation, I will follow a hybrid methodology which is based on closely related historical biography and sociological life-history approaches to individuals' lives, to understand social change in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century through them. Through the prisms of these methodologies, I will examine individuals' lives in the context of the various relations they enter, the ways in which they built their various forms of capital and transmitted it to later generations. This will allow me to overcome various historiographical and theoretical problems I have criticized in the existing scholarship. The goal, however, is not to write the story of individuals but of the social through them.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson, "Introduction," in *Pathways to Social Class*, 12.

¹⁹⁹ It is needless to point out that post-modern criticism has shown that one individual cannot represent an entire society. Historians have learned that individuals' lives are situational and their positions with respect to the rest of the society are determined by some categories, including gender, race and class. However, this does not mean that we cannot reach some general knowledge about the society by examining individuals' lives—at least in their relation to these categories. As Nicole Eustace puts it, "No two subject positions are ever identical; yet each and

Sources

Studying intricate and complex issues like the social order of the Tanzimat era, Armenian local notables' role in it, and their relations with the broader society and local community requires use of a wide range of unpublished and published primary sources, located in different archives and libraries. For this dissertation, I have conducted research in a number of the libraries and archives in Istanbul, London, Nantes, Paris and Yerevan. First, I used documents from the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri*), Istanbul, which is chiefly dedicated but not limited to Ottoman-Turkish documents from the Ottoman era.

Primarily, I have used three different kinds of sources from the Prime Ministry Ottoman archives. First of all, official documents such as dispatches from and to Erzurum, imperial orders, reports written by bureaucrats, tax registers, and censuses which were produced by bureaucrats and destined for consumption by their fellow bureaucrats are among my sources. They provide “hard data” for the consumption of social economic historians, such as agents in networks, financial affairs, as in the case of tax farm agreements, and writings of political and/or symbolic significance like decoration orders.

Among these sources, the most valuable records for the social and economic history of Erzurum are the registers of individual taxpayers (*temettuat defterleri*) dating from 1844–1845. These registers were a product of the new taxation system based on income, which was implemented as a result of the Tanzimat. They include valuable personal information and data on the property holdings of individual taxpayers in the city of Erzurum as well as the

every one that can be plotted tells us something more about the matrix with in which all are situated.” Nicole Eustace, “When Fish Walk on Land: Social History in a Postmodern World,” *Journal of Social History* 37 (2003): 88.

surrounding villages. They provide information on a certain time period and do not give any details about the ownership of the means of production and debt.²⁰⁰ Instead of using these registers for a quantitative analysis, I examined them to see individual notables' material conditions in the early period of the Tanzimat as a basis to compare with their later wealth.

Second, the Ottoman archive contains documents such as petitions (*arzuhal*), which were produced by lay members of the society addressing members of the bureaucracy. There are also interrogation reports (*istintâknâme*) that are reports produced in question-answer style as part of investigations of a certain criminal issue, such as corruption. These petitions and interrogation reports do not provide historians "hard" data, but more interestingly, they give us hints about their authors' relation with authorities representing the state, their various strategies for promoting their interests, such as a distinctive language, and representations of self and sometimes of the community. In some instances, I used them to outline historical cases when there was no other documentation of the event.

Third, the archives house personal correspondence that usually found their way to the archive after being confiscated by authorities. For instance, this is how I got hold of K rk başı's personal documents about his business and local alliances, as the documents were confiscated and examined during an investigation after the Crimean War. Extensive use of these sources is required to reconstruct the social history of the town, especially in the absence of other sources such as court records (* erriye sicilleri*).

Historians of Erzurum lack the * erriye sicilleri*. These registers, which contain much valuable information about aspects of everyday life, from family relations to business

²⁰⁰ Tevfik G ran, "19. Y zyıl Temettuat Tahrirleri," in *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bilgi ve İstatistik*, eds. Halil İnal ık and  evket Pamuk (Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstit s , 2000), 79–80.

transactions, were either lost or destroyed in the course of invasions, earthquakes, and fires. If they were available, it would have been possible to provide a fuller picture of (Armenian) notables' interaction with Muslim notables in the city.

In order to balance the bureaucracy's inherent presence in the state-produced documents, with the exception of private documents and to some degree petitions, I used other, mainly Armenian-language sources giving voice to local Armenian notables. Among these there are narrative sources, such as the family history of the Allahverdiyan dynasty examined in the first chapter, which gives us clues about the ways in which great moneylending families in Istanbul perceived themselves in the mid-nineteenth century and reflected upon their provincial past—a view that cannot possibly be obtained through examining official documents. Another type of source I have utilized is correspondence between members of the Armenian community. They belong mostly, if not exclusively, to the privileged classes. These include printed letters found in the *Divan Hayots Patmutyan (Tiflis [Tbilisi]: N. Aghanyantsi Tparan, 1915)*, which is a collection of personal correspondence, documents intended for circulation within the Armenian Apostolic Church, and petitions addressed to church authorities. In addition to these documents, I examined Armenian periodicals published in Istanbul for the period between the mid-1850s and mid-1870s. In addition to the news that these periodicals include on the provinces, including that of Erzurum/Karin, thanks to the “provincial correspondence” included, they were doors opening to local society in the absence of a local press. These correspondences are chiefly letters written from the provinces about local developments and political and social strife (the correspondents' biased views withstanding in them). Their potential contribution to Ottoman historiography is not only supplementing documents from the Ottoman archives but also opening new fields of research. For instance, intra-communal relations in the city are reflected in them, a topic hardly

visible in Ottoman Turkish sources. The only local press, the official gazette of the province, *Envar-ı Şarkıye* (Lights of the East), was published in Ottoman Turkish and Turkish in Armenian script from 1867 onwards, but its collection is far from complete and this makes it difficult to use the gazette as a main source.²⁰¹

In terms of archival sources in Armenian language, in addition to the correspondence published in *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, I have made use of the Archives of the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate, partially located in Bibliothèque Nubar, Paris. My use of them is limited to a few folders on Erzurum/Karin, and to a notable's biography. My use of documents located in the archives in Yerevan was quite limited as the *Hayastani Azgayin Arkhiv* (National Archives of Armenia), Yerevan, contains primarily materials from later decades of the nineteenth century, and particularly on the "Armenian Question." Another limit to my research was the fact that I was not allowed to see the limited number of documents related to my research, which were located in the Matenadaran Manuscript Depository in Yerevan.²⁰²

Local histories are another type of primary source that I have used for my dissertation, particularly Armenian histories belonging to the *houshamadyan* (memory-book) genre. The *houshamadyans* are post-Genocide products. They are written by non-professional historians whose goal was mainly to transmit the details of now-lost Armenian life in Anatolian towns. In that sense, they are not different from many similar books written by survivors of genocide, ethnic-cleansing, and forced-displacement, such as the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, Bosnian Muslims and Palestinians who depicted their lost personal and communal everyday

²⁰¹ To my knowledge the only detailed study of *Envar-ı Şarkıyye* is a work by a non-professional historian: Muammer Yaşar Bostancı, *Anadolu'da ilk Türk Gazetesi (Envar-ı Şarkıyye)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1971).

²⁰² I hope I will be able to use these sources when I extend this research in the future.

lives.²⁰³ The information about Armenian life in Anatolia in the late nineteenth century is unsurpassed: however, it should be treated critically as they are based mostly on oral testimonies and memories of Genocide survivors, and are thus difficult to verify. However, as I show in this work, their incorporation into the corpus of the sources of the Ottoman towns' histories will improve our understanding of the period before the Genocide.

Last but not least, I used sources produced by non-Ottomans, among them most notably foreign consuls. I examined British Foreign Office documents located at the National Archives in Kew, London, and French consular reports deposited at the *Centres des Archives diplomatiques* in Nantes and La Courneuve, Paris. In addition to this unpublished consular correspondence, I also examined these consuls' published trade reports. These statistics, as I examine in the third chapter, when taken cautiously, have an important potential to contribute to the economic history of the region. The greatest problem of consular reports, as is true of any historical source, is that the consuls were not objective observers of events, but rather active participants in them. Therefore sources produced by them should be examined only in tandem with other sources. My examination of the involvement of the British dragoman in local politics and the mobilization of imperial rivalries is an example of such caution in using consular reports.

As for the published sources, I referred to travelogues, an important source for historians of the region in some instances, especially when they provide observations which are not found in other sources. In addition to travelogues written in European languages, I used some travelogues produced by Armenian authors. Among the Armenian sources in that genre, Bishop Yeramia Tevkants' travelogue/report entitled *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*

²⁰³ For the books produced by Palestinians on their villages before 1948, see Rochelle A. Davis, *Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

1872–1873 *tt.*, (On the Roads of Upper Armenia and Van, 1872–1873) is a major first-hand account of the region at a particular time, including the murder of Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi, the focus of the third chapter, and the Apostolic Patriarchate’s attempts to establish the Armenian Constitution in Erzurum/Karin.

Synopsis of Chapters

To recapitulate what I have put forward above, I claim that the growth of Armenian local power holders in Erzurum/Karin and the emerging modern state in the Tanzimat period were inseparable; the former emerged and obtained the ranks of notables both in their community and in the broader society while the latter took on a variety of “state” functions through its interaction with the Armenian notables. This was more than a matter of the notables’ previously-ascribed intermediary role between state and society, or the already-emphasized negotiation between state and notables: instead, the development of the modern state and the local notables were concurrent and entangled developments.

This thesis has three sub-theses which also constitute the sections of the dissertation. First, the great moneylenders in the provinces, who were personal treasurers of the grand-notables and the pashas in the eighteenth century and had moved to Istanbul as *amiras*, began to lose ground to the new provincial notables in the pre-nineteenth century. As the first chapter on the Allahverdiyan family shows, the rise of a new set of social, administrative, and economic relations in the provinces during the Tanzimat undermined the power base of the great Armenian notables of provincial origins in Istanbul and their relations with the provinces. The Allahverdiyans’ family history laid down the claims of having ancient origins in the region and collaboration with the Ottoman polity in later periods; it epitomizes the self-perception of

members of that high class as both Ottomans and Armenians—but no longer as locals—in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Second, in the mid-nineteenth century, a new group of Armenian notables emerged and reached the peak of their power in the provinces within the administrative, economic, and social changes of the empire. During this period several factors provided the social and economic context for the Armenian notables to obtain higher positions in their communities and engage in dense interactions with the local bureaucrats. On the one hand, there were changes in the tax farming system including local auctions and the growing importance of provincial budgets, the financial and logistical burden of the Crimean War in the fiscal area, the growing Ottoman domestic market, and manufacturing to meet its demands. On the other, there was the development of administrative councils with greater administrative powers and secular courts, both with non-Muslim participation in the administrative field. These developments were supported by the idea(l) of “Ottomanism,” which, I argue, turned into a power-field in which local Armenian notables negotiated their loyalty and position within the society. The life-stories of Kürkçübaşı Agop and Khachatur Pastırmacıyan in the second and third chapters, respectively, and case studies of Khachatur Khan, Hamazasp Ballaryan and Daniel Kharajyan in the fourth chapter examine the ways in which local Armenian notables actively participated in shaping the course of these developments, commonly known as the Tanzimat “reforms,” and eventually the construction of the Ottoman “modern state” through them.

Third, the notables’ power was dependent on the social, administrative, and economic institutions of the Tanzimat period and was challenged by the rise of a new set of social institutions and actors in the same era. As the fifth chapter demonstrates, Armenian communal structures, which were democratized after the ratification of the Armenian Constitution of 1863,

raised expectations among the non-privileged elements of the community and eventually brought a challenge to the dominance of the notables. As I touch upon in the conclusion, by the end of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878, when communal politics was nationalized, the local notables' power began to be challenged by new commercial and political power holders namely the merchants and revolutionaries. They managed to translate existing local social struggles into their own “national” political language. Their claim to represent the Armenian community was a vital challenge to the political framework of the social and economic order of the Tanzimat in the provinces.

In short, the age of Ottoman reform was the age of Armenian local notables in the Ottoman eastern provinces. Their failure was based on their success, namely being part of the imperial order during the Tanzimat. When that order began to fall short of coping with the challenges of the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Armenian local notables began to lose ground. The dissertation examines these hitherto unexamined societal changes in the mid-nineteenth century and their later repercussions.

Chapter 1: Notables of the Old-Order: The History, Social Networks, and Self-Representation of the Allahverdiyans

Yeprem Poghosyan, a twentieth-century historian of Armenian Catholic notable families of the Ottoman Empire, narrates a local tale in his study on the Allahverdiyan family. According to legend, the Sultan, while on campaign near the empire's eastern frontier, stopped in Erzurum and demanded money from the Armenian notables there to support his military efforts. When Astvatzatur's (lit. God given, i.e. Theodore) turn came, he gave the Sultan a sum greater than what the other city residents had provided all together. When the Sultan inquired how he had become so rich, Astvatzatur's reply was simple: "*Allah verdi*" (God granted [it]).¹ The story contains no indications of the Sultan's personality (nor did it need to); he is not the center of attention in the story. Rather, the focus is on the Armenian notable Astvatzatur—or Allahverdi, as he became known—who was richer than anyone else in the city. More important, the short anecdote openly conveys that this Armenian notable in the borderlands of the empire could meet and speak freely with the Sultan.² Astvatzatur, moreover, spends his wealth in the service of the Ottoman state, and that wealth has been provided by God. This legend encompasses several major themes that this chapter seeks to explore—wealth, social prestige and networks, and symbolic and cultural representations of the power wielded by provincial Armenian notables of

¹ Yeprem Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastanı* (Vienna: Mkhitarian Tparan, 1957), 15. In many of the Armenian sources, the family name is given as Allahverdiyan, whereas in Ottoman documents consulted for this research, it also appears as Hüdaverdioglu, in which *Allah* has been replaced with its Persian synonym, *Hüda*. The difficulty that an ordinary Turkish speaker would have pronouncing the name *Astvatzatur* might have resulted in the common translation of the name into *Allahverdi* or *Hüdaverdi*, neither of which contains three-consonant clusters or the *ḍ* (tz) sound. Hacı Beyzade Ahmed Muhtar, in his manual for teaching the Armenian alphabet, makes the following comment on the issue: "As it is impossible to render the sounds of [these letters, including *ḍ*] in Ottoman letters, those who want to learn their real sounds require access to someone who knows Armenian; nevertheless, in newspapers, etc., that are printed in Armeno-Turkish, these letters are not used." Hacı Beyzade Ahmed Muhtar, *Osmanlıca Bilenlere Dört Günde Ermenice Okumanın Usulü*, ([Istanbul]: Nışan Berberyan, 1308 [1890/91]), 6.

² Having personal contact with the Sultan was an important source of symbolic capital among the local community leaders elite of Bulgaria in later periods, as well. See Milen Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasha and the Vilayet of Danube: 1864–1868" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2007), 224.

the Ottoman Empire in the period before and after the Tanzimat. My goal here is to answer a series of simple but vital questions: Who were the Armenian notables before the *Tanzimat*? What were the main characteristics of a Christian notable family in the provinces in the pre-Tanzimat period? What challenges did they face during the new imperial period? The history of the Allahverdiyans provides us a rich context to discuss the answers to these questions. In the case of the Allahverdiyans, thanks to one particular document, a family history written down in the 1850s, we are not only able to answer these questions, but also to talk about the ways in which the notable family represented their history and transformation throughout the centuries.

The details of the history of the Allahverdiyans and their transformation from an ancient noble house in the region of Erzurum predating Ottoman rule into imperial elites over the course of two and a half centuries reveal the mobility of social boundaries in the early modern era. The Allahverdiyans maintained their vibrant local networks and control over the regional economy even as they began enjoying closer relations with top-level bureaucrats and other powerful imperial actors.³ Their close alliances with local governors and local religious dignitaries (ulema) persisted even after they moved to Istanbul, while they regularized their visits to the Grand Vizier as his chief moneylenders. These relations also highlight another main argument of this chapter: the brokerage of elites like the Allahverdiyans between various actors and the Catholic Armenian community gave imperial rule its negotiated character; and members of that

³ My argument about regional and imperial elite is based on anthropologist Michael Meeker's distinction among imperial, regional, and local elites in his examination of various notables in the Black Sea region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. See his *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 213–226. However, as I discuss later, in this work, Meeker focuses solely on Muslim notable or elite families, their social networks, and their military power without mentioning a single non-Muslim notable in the region. This is a prime example of the preeminence of a nation-state perspective and its influence on the historiography of the empire even in a work that criticizes it.

community not only connected the center to the provinces but also formed alliances among diverse groups within the provinces themselves.⁴

However, the Allahverdiyans were not independent power holders and their business careers were dependent upon the careers of the political elite that they had business with. Unlike the notables in Erzurum during the Tanzimat, the Allahverdiyans did not have an independent power base and were dependent on political power holders, the grand notables and the governors, to maintain their social and economic capital. And most importantly, they moved to Istanbul in the eighteenth century, and thus they began to exert control over the local community only indirectly, through the bishop of Erzurum. As the empire was transformed once again in the nineteenth century, some of their social relations lost their function as basis of social and economic power. This happened because, I argue, they were notables of the *ancien régime*, and their social and economic power had to be ratified through their positions in the households of the grand pashas and the palace in Istanbul. In the new imperial order, as I will examine in the following chapters, the Armenian notables who stayed in Erzurum grew into major power-holders. With the transformation of the administrative and social structures in the age of reforms the power of the Allahverdiyans came to be confined to Istanbul. By the 1860s, the Allahverdiyans could not even win a simple law suit against an aspiring lesser notable in Erzurum. By the 1850s, the age of the great moneylenders like the Allahverdiyans was over in

⁴ Karen Barkey uses the analogy of “hub and spoke” to explain the network structure in the Ottoman Empire and how the central state exerted control over the peripheries through that structure. Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9–15. Although this is a very useful analogy for understanding the dynamics of the Ottoman system of governance, I disagree with Barkey’s emphasis that “different segments of the polity remain largely unconnected among themselves” (ibid., 9). As I show in following pages, the Allahverdiyans relied on networks at various levels that included seemingly unrelated groups of local Christian militia, Muslim and Christian religious dignitaries, and governors.

the provinces, and they were replaced by lesser but independent Armenian notables, who made themselves into lesser notables/*eşraf* in the context of the Tanzimat reforms.

The consequences of administrative and economic changes in the period are also reflected in the culture of the notables, their self-representations and representations of their relations with the Ottoman state. We see that change in a family history they left behind. The Allahverdiyans left us a family history, penned in 1858 but based on earlier works, through which I reconstruct the history of the family. Besides its value for providing historians “facts” about the long history of the notable family, the text also gives us clues about how the family perceived itself as a notable household, narrated its transformation from the provinces to Istanbul, and most importantly, located its place in the Ottoman endeavor from the sixteenth century onward. The components of the history, mainly their support for the Sultan and his state during difficult times, were no different than other self-expressions of loyalty in the same period, examined in chapter two. There was, however, one major difference, which reflected a change in the mentality of period. The medium in which the Allahverdiyans represented themselves was a family history, which highlighted the past deeds of the family. It was produced just as the last traces of the family’s power began to fade in Erzurum, and aimed to recapture that power by showing the family’s roots in the history of the province, not in its present. The text was far from speaking the language of the Tanzimat, which reset the relations between the state and its subjects. Instead, it marked the final steps in the transformation of the Allahverdiyans into a notable house of the capital—a household with provincial origins, but no actual power in their home province.

The Allahverdiyans were originally an Apostolic family but converted to Catholicism probably sometime in the mid-seventeenth century. The difference of their denomination

rendered them in many ways different from the majority of Armenians in the region of Erzurum, who were Apostolic. On the one hand, the Allahverdiyans and other Catholic Armenians faced persecution from the Apostolic Armenians in the eighteenth century. These events, as examined in the following pages, left important marks on the members of the Allahverdiyan dynasty, who were banished temporarily from their hometown. On the other hand, their denomination provided them networks. When the Allahverdiyans moved to Istanbul in the eighteenth century they met a thriving Catholic community in the imperial capital. The Catholic Armenian community, small though it was, attained—especially in Istanbul—a power disproportional to its numbers. The community enjoyed the power of many *sarrafs* who worked as moneylenders to the top class of imperial bureaucrats, palace attendants and professionals, in addition to a strong merchant class in other commercial centers of the empire. Their local power and the similarity of the communal and social structures that they shared with the Apostolic community—notwithstanding certain differences—gives a study of the Allahverdiyans’ history explanatory force well beyond the limits of the Catholic Armenian community. It also provides a productive background to understand later developments in the region.

Structure of the Chapter

Taking these assertions as its point of departure, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first section establishes the dynasty’s history by critically examining the traditional account of the Allahverdiyans’ origins provided by the local priest Serovbe Bajyan, who was a close associate of Erzurum’s Catholic Bishop Hovhannes Selviyan until the latter’s death in 1865. It focuses on the Allahverdiyans’ transformation from allegedly ancient notable origins in the region of Erzurum into an Ottoman Armenian elite family in Istanbul, from the fifteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century.

After deconstructing the narrative of Bajyan, with the help of Ottoman archival records and secondary literature I reconstruct the Allahverdiyans' history. The ancestors of the Allahverdiyans were called "beys" but then reduced to "kahyas;" they armed their strongholds during the age of the *Celalis* and fought on the side of the Ottomans against the peasant rebels. In the mid-seventeenth century, curiously enough, they converted to Catholicism, as did the peasants in their villages. In the eighteenth century, having faced persecution at the hands of Apostolic Armenians because of their new faith and simultaneously risen to great wealth, members of the family moved to the imperial capital, where they became some of the most important financiers of the empire in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In that section I also question the timing of Bajyan's endeavor to write the history of the Allahverdiyans in the late 1850s. I contend that it was no coincidence, for he wanted to capitalize on the simultaneously developing cultural nationalism among Armenians and the official Ottomanist ideology of the time with a distinct provincial tone. The text attempted to narrate the history of the Allahverdiyans as a story of collaboration between two—not yet equal—noble houses, the Allahverdiyans and the Ottomans. Therefore it differed significantly from contemporary narratives about Armenians' loyalty to the Ottoman state which were constructed within the framework of obligations and rights of imperial subjects. The history of the Allahverdiyans was neither a literary product nor for the consumption of the public, as the history of the text shows, nor was it a discursive text used to bargain with the state. The Allahverdiyans' history was produced when the ties of the family with its ancient lands were lost, when they were at the peak of their power in Istanbul. Finally, the text highlighted collaboration, the mode of relations between the state and its subjects in the pre-modern age. This was different from the cooperation between the imperial center, local authorities and lesser

notables in the provinces in the nineteenth century. The Allahverdiyans, despite their economic and social power, lacked the relative autonomy the Armenian notables of Erzurum were to enjoy in the following decades.

In the second section of the chapter, I study the Allahverdiyans' relations with the local Muslim and Christian ruling class and elite, examining the changes that took place in these relations through case studies attested in local sources, and in the Ottoman archives and consular reports. This section first shows the links based on financial transactions and the tax farming agreements through which the family maintained ties with the city of Erzurum and its surrounding region even after moving to the imperial capital. As I demonstrate, social networks linked through political and military power, as well as the importance of sharing origins in the same region (*hemşe[h]ri* in Turkish, *hayrenakits* in Armenian), were crucial components of these financial relations, and they formed the real basis of the Allahverdiyans' power. The constant financial support that the family members supplied to the governor of their home region, Erzurum, and their support of Bishop Selviyan as if he, too, had Erzurum origins, demonstrate the importance of these relations in the networks of the Allahverdiyans. The following subsection examines the family's connection with the Catholic Bishop of Erzurum, Hovhannes Selviyan Efendi, in order to explore the internal workings of these networks. The career of Selviyan and his tenure in Erzurum reflect how the Allahverdiyans' economic, social, and symbolic capital was instrumental in maintaining control over the Catholic Armenians in the city once the family had relocated to Istanbul.

The third section of the chapter includes two case studies depicting the Allahverdiyans' declining power in Erzurum as a result of administrative, social and legal changes during the Tanzimat. The first case will be an examination of a lawsuit concerning properties which the

notables had “endowed” for a church they built in the city of Erzurum. With the loss of their ties, i.e. social capital in the province, they could not manage to work the new Land Code for their own benefit. They lost the lawsuit over control of the “endowed” property, a major setback for their symbolic capital in their ancestral hometown. The second case study deals with a drawn-out lawsuit against a rich Catholic Armenian merchant of Erzurum, Grigor Bisiloğlu, who owed the family a significant sum. The dispute between the two parties—a powerful moneylender in the capital and an officially *Avrupa Tüccarı* in the province—lasted for years without reaching any definite resolution. *Avrupa Tüccarı* or more commonly as *beratlu tüccar*, was a merchant who had received privileges from the Porte to trade on favorable terms, including but not limited to not paying the poll-tax.⁵

The reason for the delay in the verdict was not the sluggishness of the Ottoman bureaucracy, but the competing power bases of the parties involved. As the modern state apparatus developed and extended into the provinces during the Tanzimat period, the bureaucrats found niches to maneuver and postpone the application of orders. The case vividly demonstrates the declining power of a major notable household in the provinces and its replacement by a lesser notable of the new order. The new order of Tanzimat was a new equilibrium between imperial center, local authorities, and lesser notables in the provinces—including Christian notables—to which the Allahverdiyans ceased to belong.

⁵ Those Muslim merchants, known as the *Hayriye Tüccarı* and their non-Muslim counterparts, the *Avrupa Tüccarı* also known as the *beratlu tüccar*, were privileged to transact business on favorable terms and to pay less tax than their non-privileged compatriots. For more information on them, see Ali İhsan Bağış, *Osmanlı Ticaretinde Gayrî Müslimler: Kapitülasyonlar, Avrupa Tüccarları, Beratlı Tüccarlar, Hayriye Tüccarları (1750–1839)* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1983); Bruce Masters, “The Sultan's Entrepreneurs: The Avrupa tucaris and the Hayriye tucaris in Syria,” *IJMES* 24 (1992): 579–597.

A Dynasty in a World in Flux:
The Allahverdiyans in the 16th and 18th Centuries

The Allahverdiyans (were originally from the village of Yerashkhut (also referred as Khashut) in the district of Sper, northeast of the province of Erzurum and south of the Artvin region. Their origins are highly disputed, and the study in the following pages is an attempt to contextualize these disputes in regional and imperial historical contexts. Examination of their history will provide us a vivid picture of the ancien régime in the provinces from the perspective of an Armenian notable household. It underlines the Allahverdiyans' agency in the making of the pre-Tanzimat the imperial order, and shows the ways in which they chose to represent their role in that order by commissioning a family history.

Erzurum in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and the Allahverdiyans

The main account of the history of the Allahverdiyans is the work by Sevrobe Bajyan, a Catholic priest in Erzurum. Bajyan wrote his “History of the Allahverdiyans” between 1853 and 1858 in Erzurum and Istanbul; however, it was not published until 1908, when H. Sargisyan published it with a critical introduction in the literary journal *Bazmavep*.⁶ Bajyan's main goal in writing his history of the Allahverdiyans was to link them to the historical Armenian dynasty of the Kamsarakans. The Kamsarakans constituted one of the last ruling dynasties in historical Armenia, active in the seventh and eighth centuries, but lost their important position after the eleventh.⁷ In his own words, Bajyan aimed to show that “the clan of Kamsarakan's brave and patriotic soul and ardor are kept burning [and] aflame” by their descendants—namely, the

⁶ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (June 1908), 241–251; (July 1908), 289–297; (August 1908), 377–383; (September 1908), 399–405. For instance, Sargisyan accepted the authenticity of the two anonymous histories that Bajyan used in this work based on their language and the detailed accounts they contain. But owing to certain problems, including but not limited to factual errors and periodical lacunas, in the same account, Sargisyan concluded that even if the anonymous histories were accepted as authentic, they could not be identified with the famous lost book Kamsarakan History. “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (June 1908), 241–244, 250.

⁷ Cyrille Toumanoff, “Kamsarakan,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 15:453–455.

Allahverdiyan dynasty—and that their prosperity was a continuation of that of the Kamsarakans.⁸

Bajyan used three main sources in this history. First, there was a manuscript that he had seen in the possession of an Apostolic (Armenian) “stranger” and had read in 1852; the stranger had reportedly found it in a “dark corner of the Surb Hovannes Monastery in Sper.”⁹ The manuscript was said to cover the history of the ancient Armenian noble house of the Kamsarakans up to the sixteenth century. The second source was another anonymous history bound together with the first one and constituting an addendum to it, covering the time up to 1694. Bajyan’s last source was himself, as he was active in the region during the first half of the nineteenth century, and he had worked with Bishop Selviyan (discussed in detail later in the chapter).¹⁰

It should be noted that the Allahverdiyans were not the only Armenian notable family that claimed noble historical roots; other major *amira* families “discovered” their sometimes real and often most probably fabricated noble origins in the period when Bajyan was writing the history and genealogy of the Allahverdiyans.¹¹ Thus, a discussion of these sources should be carried out here first. H. Sargisyan, who published Bajyan’s history in *Bazmavep* in 1908, was the first historian to examine these histories.¹² Sargisyan accepted the authenticity of the two anonymous histories that Bajyan used in his work based on an evaluation of their language and

⁸ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (July 1908), 290.

⁹ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (June 1908), 242. For a note on the personality of this stranger by famous historian and geographer Serovpe Alishan, see “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (July 1908), 291, n1.

¹⁰ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (June 1908), 242.

¹¹ Barsoumian, *The Armenian Amira Class of Istanbul*, 51–54.

¹² “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (June 1908), 241.

the detailed accounts they contain.¹³ But owing to certain problems—including but not limited to factual errors and lacunas in the narrative—Sargisyan concluded in the same account that even if the anonymous histories were accepted as authentic, they could not be identified with the famous lost book, Kamsarakanats' *History*.¹⁴ Another historian who criticized the priest Bajyan's work was Yeprem Poghosyan, with whom I opened this chapter. He decried Pajyan's assertion of a link between the Kamsarakanats and the Allahverdiyans as baseless and without proof.¹⁵

Poghosyan's work quotes other historians, such as Levon Alishan¹⁶ and Sahag Kogyan, who refrained from using the anonymous history that Bajyan had employed because it was “defective and full of mistakes.”¹⁷ Poghosyan also points out specific issues that call Bajyan's account into question; these points revolve around the narrative of the historical figure of Sahak, who forms the link between the Kamsarakanats and the Allahverdiyans in Bajyan's account.¹⁸ Although his points cast a shadow on the validity of Bajyan's account and on the link he established between the noble family of the Kamsarakanats and the Allahverdiyans, this does not mean that Bajyan's account is “inauthentic.” Most of the information on the history of the Allahverdiyans in the period between the late sixteenth and eighteenth centuries is verified not only by early-modern histories which Pajyan probably used while writing his own work, but also by modern scholarship. The important point here is not whether the anonymous histories used by Bajyan are “defective and full of mistakes” but rather that one should pay attention to personalities and their

¹³ Ibid., 243–244.

¹⁴ Ibid., 250.

¹⁵ Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastani*, 1–4.

¹⁶ Levon Alishan was one of the most prolific nineteenth-century writers of western Armenian literature. He wrote many volumes on the history, geography, and topography of Armenia and published philological works and texts, as well. Alishan's influence on other Armenian writers in terms of topic of study and style was significant. For more information on him, see Kevork B. Bardakjian, *A Reference Guide to Modern Armenian Literature, 1500–1920* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 116–118.

¹⁷ Sahag Kogyan, *Kamsarakanneri: Teark Shirakay yev Arsharunyats* (Vienna: Mkhitarian Tparan, 1926), 2; quoted in Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastani*, 4.

¹⁸ Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastani*, 12–14.

social and economic positions, as well as to the various politics of genealogical production at various levels throughout the centuries—from anonymous histories to Poghosyan’s own work in the twentieth century. In other words, one has to think about why these “defective” accounts exist rather than whether they are indeed defective or not. It should not be forgotten that, despite their questionable authenticity, they provide a relatively coherent and historically accurate narrative of the early history of the Allahverdiyans, a rarity indeed.

Although the Kamsarakans had lost their prominence, they were able to regain some power in their home regions of Sper and Tortum under the Timurid and successor states, and they did well even after those had disappeared by end of the fifteenth century. The patriarch of the Kamsarakan dynasty at the time, Nerses, by “being loyal to the [Ottoman] Sultan, was conferred the title of *Bey* [lord] and the governance of the Papert and Sper districts,” and his sons received the title of *meliq* (ruler). According to Bajyan, the first anonymous history that is used was “very probably ... written up at the demand of this Nerses.”¹⁹ Based on this first history, Bajyan claims that the Kamsarakans continued to cultivate power in the region in the following century and that they were able to make use of turmoil in the region to consolidate their own position.

Nerses’ commissioning of history indicates that, regardless of whether he had real links to the ancient Kamsarakanats family, he felt the need to commission a history of the region in which he was represented as an ally of the new ruling dynasty, the Ottomans. Nerses was so well-invested in the Ottoman endeavor as cited above that he was granted the title of *bey*, and his sons were called *meliks*. Indeed, Vardapet [celibate priest] Karapet Meliqyan (1736–1790), the Archbishop of Tbilisi in the second half of the eighteenth century, claimed to have come from

¹⁹ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 380.

Hindzk village and to share some genealogical link with the Allahverdiyans.²⁰ This suggests that these honorary titles were not total historical fiction. It is obvious that through this historical narrative, Nerses “Bey” claimed legitimacy based on his family’s historical roots in the region (roots that predated Ottoman times), and based on that, justified the family’s future as part of the Ottoman ruling class in the same region. The goal may have been to show continuity in the midst of the ruptures taking place throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Only by the sixteenth century was Nerses convinced that a new polity, the Ottoman Empire, had gained firm control of his family’s ancient lands.²¹ Whether Nerses had noble origins or not, the fact that he made such a claim shows his willingness to take an active role in the new political order in the region.

The late sixteenth century and the early seventeenth marked the period of the *Celali* rebellions, a reign of mass violence between thousands of armed peasants and bandits (known as *Celalis*) led by rebellious *pashas* (or those who were turned into bureaucrats, to paraphrase Karen Barkey’s words²²) and the central state, which drew its manpower, except the janissaries, from the very same pool where the *Celalis* originated. The rebellions sprouted up in the 1590s in various parts of Anatolia owing to financial crisis combined with ecological changes and could not be suppressed until the 1610s. The conflicts resulted in great demographic changes (the

²⁰ Grigoris Galemqeryan, *Kensagrutyunner: Yerku Hay Patriarkneru yev Tasn Episkoposneru yev Dzamanakin Hay Katoghikyatsq* (Vienna: Mkhitarian Tparan, 1915), 148–149.

²¹ Evrim Binbaş’s discussion of the emergence of genealogical tables in the universal histories of the medieval Islamic world may be helpful here. Binbaş contends that besides their obvious role in supporting claims to legitimacy, the genealogical tables in universal histories of the era were solutions to the political problem of writing a sacred universal history in a period when that “unity” was divided into many polities. Further, the genealogical tables offered a solution to the discrepancy between the universalistic claims of sacred history and the disunity of the political reality. Evrim Binbaş, “Structure and Function of the Genealogical Tree in Islamic Historiography, 1200–1500,” in *Horizons of the World: Festschrift for İsenbike Togan*, ed. İlker Evrim Binbaş and Nurten Kılıç-Schubel (İstanbul: İthaki, 2011), 465–544. It could be that Nerses’s historian desired to produce an image of continuity between the ancient (Armenian) history of the region and the current political (Muslim/Ottoman) regime.

²² Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: the Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

peasant flight, or *Büyük Kaçgun*, of 1603–1606), as well as economic ones (the destruction of the *timar* system as result of abandoned lands), in the regions where the rebel forces were powerful.²³ The region of Erzurum lay outside the control of the Ottoman central state during the *Celali* rebellions in the early seventeenth century and once again during the rebellion of Abaza Mehmed Pasha, the governor general of Erzurum (1621–1628) who fought against the central government's forces.²⁴ After the Pasha's "rebellion" the Ottoman order was reestablished in the region.²⁵

The Allahverdiyans in the age of the *Celalis*

The house of Kamsarakan, according to Bajyan, fought against the *Celali* rebels and resettled the Christian population in the region of Erzurum region after the *Celali* rebellions, which had been left in turmoil by the earlier events.²⁶ Mass Islamization of Armenians took place in the middle of the seventeenth century in response to the greater tax burden imposed on non-Muslims; this shift was followed by economic and political crisis, combined with the oppression of a janissary leader called Fethi Bey—himself a convert from Armenian Apostolic Church.²⁷

²³ For a survey of the *Celali* rebellions in light of new data and criticism of the political approach to these conflicts, which disregards social and economic factors, see Oktay Özel, "The Reign of Violence: The Celâlis (c.1550–1700)," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 184–202. The classic text on the larger effects of the rebellions, particularly on the Ottoman fiscal system, is İnalcık's seminal article on the Ottoman Empire's socioeconomic system in the seventeenth century: Halil İnalcık, "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600–1700," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980), 283–337.

²⁴ Özel, "The Reign of Violence: The Celâlis (c.1550–1700)," 190. Hakob Karnetsi (1618–d.?), a famous seventeenth-century Armenian historian and geographer from Karin/Erzurum, provides interesting views of these events in his short "chronicle". See Vazgen Hakobyan, *Manr Zhamanakagrutyunner (XIII–XVIII dd.)* (Yerevan: GAH, 1951), 237–244.

²⁵ On the sources and modern historiography of the Abaza Pasha's "rebellion" see Gabriel Piterberg, "The Alleged Rebellion of Abaza Mehmed Paşa: Historiography and the Ottoman State in the Seventeenth Century," *IJTS* 8 (2002): 13–24.

²⁶ "Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats," *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 381.

²⁷ It is interesting to note that H. Sargisyan, who edited and published Pajyan's article, added a footnote to Pajyan's text stating that "in neither Arq. Tavrizetsi, nor Tovm. Metzopetsi, nor Zakaria Sarkavazi, or even Yeremia Çelebi's histories we came across the Islamization of whole Armenian districts in the second half of the seventeenth century;" in other words, even the editor cast some doubt on the historicity of this claim. "Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats," *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 381, n1. Vardapet Dashian, on the other hand, according to Hakovb Karnetsi, claims that mass Islamization of Armenians took place in the region of Tortum in 1643 as a result of heavy taxation (*kharaç*) by a certain Cafer Molla, who conducted the census in the region. See Jacobus Dashian, *La*

According to his anonymous source, Bajyan claims, Kamsarakan Nerses, the *melik* of the Armenians in the region and a friend of the governor, was allowed to take his folk from his village of Yerashkhut (Khashut) in Sper to the village of Hindzk (Hins) in the valley of Erzurum. The move should have allowed him to escape from the abuses.

The information on this period in Bajyan's account is based on the second anonymous history—which covers mainly the mid-seventeenth century. That history focuses on Nerses and, more, on his son, Nalcı Sahak Kahya, who established the Catholic Armenian community in Hindzk village following the upheavals of the post-*Celali* age in the region of Erzurum during the first half of the seventeenth century.

After the submission of Erzurum's Abaza Mehmed Pasha in 1628 to the forces of the Grand Vizier Hüsrev Pasha, a new governing edict (*kanunname*) had been issued for the province as a part of attempts to reintegrate it administratively and fiscally into the empire.²⁸ Eventually, the officials from Istanbul, who were sent to the region in 1632–1634, learned the consequences that the previous ruinous decades had wreaked on the area, particularly on the *timar* system in the region. They proposed to reestablish it by settling vacant lands and investigating the illegal landholdings of the ruling (*askerî*) class.²⁹ Meanwhile, the central government was also trying to resettle villagers who had left their homes in the previous decades during the *Celali* rebellions. One method the government used for resettling peasants was land reclamation (*şenlendirme*), which entailed granting peasants or some privileged ones among them property rights to a village and tax exemption with an imperial edict confirming property

population arménienne de la région comprise entre la mer Noire et Karin (Erzeroum); rapide coup d'oeil historique et ethnographique, trans. Frédéric Macler (Vienna: Impr. des Méchitharistes, 1922), 66–67.

²⁸ Bilgehan Pamuk, "1628 Tarihli Erzurum Kanunnamesi ve Tahlili," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi* 42 (2005): 137–158.

²⁹ Douglas Arthur Howard, "The Ottoman Timar System and Its Transformation, 1563–1656" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1987), 218.

rights (*temlikname*) on condition that the granted villages would be rebuilt and returned to cultivation.³⁰ When the government sent tax collectors to the region to collect the emergency tax (*avarız*) in the early 1640s, the peasant population in the region was still low compared to that of the pre-*Celali* period.³¹ The *avarız-i divaniye* taxes were occasional levies (they were later regularized) meant to cover the expenditures of the Ottoman central government in the seventeenth century.³² Population numbers were low: Many peasants had either fled or concealed themselves during the registration, others were wandering the countryside as bandits, and plague had devastated those who remained. The impact of the plague must have been significant, for the governor of Erzurum requested more accurate *avarız* tax survey and collection of taxes in 1645–1646.³³

Thus, the region in the 1650s had changed a great deal since before the turmoil of the preceding decades. Kahya Sahak's life story encompassed the *Celali* rebellions, the rule of the rebellious Abaza Mehmed Pasha, pestilence, and attempts to establish Ottoman authority in the region. I begin with Bajyan's paraphrase of what his original source said about the Kamsarakans during the period of the *Celali* rebellions:

In the time of the *Celalis*, the Kamsarakan lords plucked up their former courage in order to protect the nation and family from their [the *Celalis*'] hands. Therefore, Arshav's son Meliq Manuk and his son Sahak, gathering brave Armenian youth to themselves, ruled and armed the native [i.e., fatherland's]

³⁰ Bilgehan Pamuk, “XVII. Yüzyılda Bir Şenlendirme (İhyâ) Uygulaması: Mormoc Köyü'nün İmarı (Kelkit),” *Bilgi Türk Dünyası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 36 (2006): 227–41.

³¹ Özel, “The Reign of Violence: The Celâlis, c. 1550–1700,” 195.

³² Linda Darling, “Avarız Tahriri: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Ottoman Survey Registers,” *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 10 (1986): 23–26. Oktay Özel emphasizes the importance of these registers in terms of understanding the demographic structure of seventeenth-century Anatolia and the changes (mainly depopulation) it underwent during the *Celali* rebellions. Oktay Özel, “Avarız ve Cizye Defterleri,” in *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bilgi ve İstatistik*, ed. Halil İnalçık and Şevket Pamuk (Ankara: DİT, 2000), 33–51.

³³ Linda Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560–1660* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 97–98. For more information on the plague in the early-modern Ottoman world, see Nükhet Varlık, *Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World: the Ottoman Experience, 1347–1600*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

fortresses and strongholds, so that the *Celalis* did not dare to go to their districts. When the government carried away these *Celalis* and peace ruled briefly, the people who had moved away because of them [the *Celalis*] returned to their lands.³⁴

Crisis continued in the second half of the century, however, as already mentioned, the tax registers were compiled by the central government twice in the 1640s by Hacı Cafer Efendi,³⁵ resulting in the conversion of many people in the Tortum region to Islam—at least, they could thus avoid the poll tax (*cizye*). This was followed by the reign of terror of the janissary Fethi about whom historical accounts are silent. At this time, the governor of Erzurum asked Kamsarakan Nerses, who “was the *meliq* and head of the Armenian community and was loved in the eyes of the governor of Erzurum,” to resettle in the valley of Erzurum, along “with his family and community and all the inhabitants of the Yeraskhud [Hahsud] district and other villages [which are] still of Christian faith.”³⁶ Avariz tax records, which include summaries and on rare occasions detailed (*mufassal*) data on the collection of the *avariz-i divaniye* tax, are of great value here.

According to the detailed avariz records of 1642, Allahverdiyan’s new village, Hindzk (Hins), was a *timar* village, one of 44 among a total of 126 villages in the valley. In addition to the timar holder there were four members of the *askerî* class, all of whom were janissaries and

³⁴ “As Jelalileru dzamanakı Kamsarakan iskhankı irents nakhnyats qadjutyen hogin arin; azgı yev intaniq asonts dzerqen pashtpanelu hamar, usti Arshavri vordin *meliq* Manuk yev ir vordin Sahak Hayots kadj yeritasardnerı irents het miatsinelov; hayreni amrotsneru yev berderu tiretsin yev zoratsan, anank vor Jelaliq al anonts gavarneri yertalu chein hamardzaker. Yerbor terutyun ays Jelalinerı vertsutts yev kich m’aten khaghagutyun tirets, asonts yeresen pakhtakan zhoghovurdq irents tegherı dardzan.” “Allahvertinerı Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 381.

³⁵ Cafer Efendi was an important figure in Erzurum at the time and had established a large endowment (*waqf*) in Erzurum during the very same period. Ümit Kılıç, “Erzurum’da Câfer Efendi Vakfı,” *A.Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi Dergisi* 41 (2009): 173–87. Interestingly enough, Cafer Efendi was murdered by local militia in 1651. *Ibid.*, 174.

³⁶ “...Hramanav nora ar z-indanis yev z-azgagitss ur yev z-amenayn bnakichs Yerashkhut avanin yev aylots gyughoreits vor i havat kristoneudyan kayin derevs...” “Allahvertinerı Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 382.

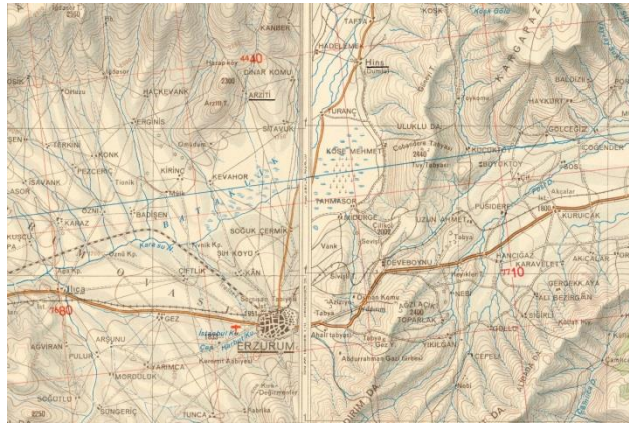
had estates (*çiftlik*s) in their possession in Hindzk.³⁷ It was one of the most populous villages in the valley: in addition to the *askerî* households, 41 non-Muslim households and 1 Muslim (non-*askerî*) household resided there. This was higher than the average number of households for villages in the valley, which were 8.4 and 3.65 for non-Muslims and Muslims, respectively.³⁸ According to the *avarız* records, there was no Nerses or Sahak in either Hindzk or Khashut, where the Kamsarakans allegedly came from. Unlike Hindzk, Khashut at the time was not densely populated, and only 7 households (5 non-Muslim, 2 Muslim) lived there.³⁹ This shows a government policy after the upheavals of the early seventeenth century to settle Armenians in the villages close to Erzurum. The Allahverdiyans, as leaders of the community in the district, benefitted from this policy. As I will examine shortly, the Allahverdiyans would associate more closely with Hindzk and control lands in that village.

³⁷ Hâne-i Kara Mustafa 'an yeniçeriyân-i dergâh-i 'âlî çiftlik, hâne-i Hüseyin 'an yeniçeriyân çiftlik, hâne-i Kâtib Ali 'an yeniçeriyân Küfre-zâde çiftlik, hâne-i Nuh 'an yeniçeriyân çiftlik, hâne-i Kurd 'an sipâhîyân-i dergâh-i 'âlî çiftlik. Mehmet İnbaşı, İbrahim Etem Çakır, and Selçuk Demir, *1642 Tarihli Erzurum Eyaleti Mufassal Avarız Defteri 1 (Erzurum-Tortum-İsbir-Hınıs-Pasin)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 127.

³⁸ Ibid., 20–23, table 10.

³⁹ Ibid., 199. The father of one non-Muslim inhabitant had the very curious name Emir-han (price-lord); however, linking this name to Armenian nobility and specifically to Nerses is mere speculation in the absence of further information. It was recorded as “Hane-i Vertenik [*sic*] veled-i Emirhan.” That some Armenians bearing the name *Han* as attested in the *avarız* records requires further investigation and comparison with earlier tax records. These figures might be important in improving historians’ understanding of the region’s integration into the Ottoman polity during the sixteenth century.

Map 2: Map of the northeastern part of the Valley of Erzurum.



Hindzk (Hins) and Ardzati (Arziti) villages are located to the north of the city of Erzurum.

SOURCE: Extract from *Türkei*, published by Oberkommando des Heeres (Berlin: Abt. f. Kr. Kart. u. Verm. Wes, [1941–1943]), scale: 1:200,000; sections D-XIV (Erzurum) and D-XV (Pasinler). Map Collection, The University of Chicago Library.

According to the narrative provided by Bajyan, the Kamsarakatns resettled in Khashut those villagers who had fled in the Büyük Kaçgun during the *Celali* rebellions. But the low population in the village’s avarız records attests either that this did not happen or that those who were settled left again in the following decades or died of pestilence. On the other hand, a relatively dense population of Armenians is attested in Hindzk, Tuvanc, and Ardzati, three villages in the Erzurum valley that were later inhabited by Catholics, and interestingly enough, Armenians of Tortum origin were also recorded in Tuvanc village in that period.⁴⁰ This indicates that there was indeed a population movement toward these villages from more-distant subdistricts during the period after the *Celali* rebellions, confirming the statement made in the first anonymous history: Nerses “settled in the Hindzk village of Karin [Erzurum] where Christians were numerous and [where] the great governor had ordered him so [as] suitable.”⁴¹ Moreover, the high number of *askerî*s who had seized the villagers’ lands in the previous decades and now possessed *çiftlik* in those villages (18 *askerî* households in Tuvanc and 7 in

⁴⁰ Ibid., 134.

⁴¹ “[Nersesi] nsdav i Hindzk gyugh Karnoy, ur bazmutyun er Kristosneits yev metz kusakaln aynpes batshaj datetsav nma.” “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 382.

Ardzati), along with the high population density, might be taken as an indicator of the emergence of a new socioeconomic order and of increasing production in the post-*Celali* age. Settlement of the population, mostly non-Muslim, in these clusters should be understood in this context.⁴²

These rapid transformations in the region created a fertile environment for Nerses to rise as a local power broker between different segments of the society.

According to the history of the Kamsarakans as narrated by Bajyan, Nerses or another family member had either rendered services to the central government or served his own interests (or both) during the *Celali* rebellions. In that period, local notables struggled with disorder, and arming the population was indeed a state policy. From time to time, the central government called the local population to arms (*nefir-i 'âm*) under regional notables (*ayans*) as a last resort against *Celalis* and the rebellious pashas.⁴³ Further, it is known that non-Muslim notables were present in the conflicts between the empires of the region, among them Giorgi Saakadze of Georgia who were participated in the war with their forces was a significant actor.⁴⁴ It comes as no surprise, therefore, to see that the authorities in the region of Erzurum made use of Nerses' and other non-Muslim notables' services to help meet the needs of the state.

The House of Kamsarakan's conversion to the Latin Catholic rite in 1652 coincides with this period, and many of his kin followed their leader.⁴⁵ The most notable presence of Catholic

⁴² According to tax registers in the villages of Erzurum *kaza* (2nd tier sub-province), the number of non-Muslim households was 1,060 whereas Muslim households of non-*askerî* status numbered 460, and 557 (including 52 *ilmiyye*) had *askerî* status. The fact that Cinis, the most populated village in the region, had immigrant households in Tortum (4 households) and Tercan (1 household) shows the movement of population from farther regions into the valley. İnbaşı, *1642 Tarihli Erzurum Eyaleti Mufasssal Avarız Defteri 1*, 159–160. For more information on the village of Cinis, which was a county (*nahiye*) in the sixteenth century, including facsimiles and transliterations of various tax reports, see Enver Konukçu and Atınur İbrahim Ethem, *Bir Köy Tarihi: Cinis*, (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2010), 45–67. The table on the pages 68–77 titled “1642 tarihli Erzurum Avarız Defteri ve Cinis Karyesi ile ilgili Bilgiler” is wrong, as the data comes from the *temettuat* registers of the village dated 1261 (1845).

⁴³ İnalcık, “Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600–1700,” 304–311.

⁴⁴ Donald Rayfield, *Edge of Empires: A History of Georgia*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 192–194.

⁴⁵ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 381.

missionaries in historical Armenia arose in the region of Nakhichevan under the Safavid rule, where Dominican missionaries were active beginning in the 1630s.⁴⁶ By contrast, in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the activities of Jesuit missionaries gained traction at the end of the seventeenth century, when the group opened mission houses in Trabzon and Erzurum (1695).⁴⁷ They were primarily active in the districts near the Caucasian border—namely, Khodorchur (Sıra Konaklar), Sber (İsbir), Tortum, and Kiskim, and the villages of Ardzati (Yeşilyayla), Tuvanc (Güzelova), and Hindzk (Hins, today part of Dumlu), which are located in the valley of Erzurum.⁴⁸

These villages were inhabited by Catholics who had emigrated from farther-flung districts of the province in a process that I discuss here as a part of the Allahverdiyans' history. As the number of "Franks" (the name given to the converts to Catholicism) grew in Anatolia, particularly among Armenians, the Armenian Apostolic Church responded with persecutions that continued sporadically throughout the eighteenth century.⁴⁹

This chain of events from the early sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth, from the region's incorporation into Ottoman domains to the post-Abaza Mehmed Pasha period, forms the historical background of the Kamsarakan/Allahverdiyan family. By the end of that period, Kamsarakan Nerses's son Sahak had become the new leader of the Armenian Catholic

⁴⁶ Charles Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire: 1453–1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 130.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁴⁸ Ghazar Charig, *Hushamatyan Bardzr Hayqi Karinapatum* (Beyrut, Mshak Tparan, 1957), 333. For more information on Khodorchur, see Harutiun Hulunian and Madteos Hajian, *Khodorchur: Lost Paradise: Memories of a Land and its People*, trans. Vatche Ghazarian, (Monterey, CA: Mayreni Publishing, 2012).

⁴⁹ Leon Arpee, *A History of Armenian Christianity from the Beginning to Our Own Time* (New York: The Armenian Missionary Association of America, 1946), 252–261.

community in Hindzk village, and Sahak's son Astvatzatur/Allahverdi would move to the vicinity of Erzurum and found the new dynasty, the Allahverdiyans.⁵⁰

In addition to the literary evidence he provides, Bajyan adds that he had met a very old man in the Alkaltsikhe region of Georgia who claimed that his father had been a good friend of "Sahak Kahya, the father of Allahverdi."⁵¹ The old man stated that the Allahverdiyans had ruled over Tortum, controlling the land from Oltu to Kiskim. He also mentioned Allahverdiyan's struggle with the infamous Fethi Bey, after which the Allahverdiyans had to move to Hindzk. As Sahak Kahya was also a farrier, "he was called Sahak Kahya Nalcı by Turks." The old man's claim that his father was a friend of Sahak Kahya was improbable simply because of the difference of centuries between them. This, however, shows that Bajyan's account of the origins of the Allahverdiyans, regardless of its accuracy, was a popular one in the region in this period.⁵²

The most interesting aspect of this story is Nerses's title, the *kahya*, and although it has not received enough attention in works on the Allahverdiyans, it can solve the mystery about the Kamsarakans/Allahverdiyans in Hindzk. Why, within a century, did *melik*, an ancient title of Armenian nobility, allegedly kept also during the early stages of Ottoman rule in the region, transform into *kahya*, a title given to a subordinate servant?

Nerses, the *kahya*. The word *kahya*, originally derives from the Persian word *kethuda*, which means "master of the house," and was used for wide set of posts, stewards of landlords, village headmen, tithe collectors, and an official position as representatives of Christian and Jewish community. In the Ottoman Empire, both *kahya* and *kethuda* had been used to mean "steward of

⁵⁰ Ibid., 382.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 383. The fact that the story told by the old man is a perfect repetition of the anonymous history leads me to speculate that either the old man had read the history or the story was so common as to have become a "legend" among Armenians of the region who had fled their homeland.

a household” and to denote the “head of a guild.” In the Ottoman administrative terminology the first meaning of the term, “someone who looks after the affairs of an important government official or influential person” attracted attention from scholars. The most important of those kahyas were the *kahyas/kethudas* of the provincial governors (*kapı kethudası*), who represented those officials at the Porte, and the kethuda of the Grand Vizier, who was responsible for managing his affairs.⁵³ For the non-Muslim communities, however, the word had more specified meanings. In the villages, the kahyas were charged with administrative duties and most probably with seeing to the affairs of a *timar* or a *çiftlik* held by a member of the *askerî* class or a local Muslim power holder. In the cities, under the name *kethuda* of the city (*şehir kethudası*), certain people carried out functions of maintaining public works, collecting taxes from their communities, and various other financial and administrative roles. As seventeenth-century evidence from Ottoman Greece suggests, local Christian communities had a salaried kethuda, officially sanctioned by the local *kadı* and “who was an executive and represented the group vis-à-vis the Ottoman administration.”⁵⁴ The Jewish communities also had a similar post, Shaykh al-Yahud, who carried out a wide range of administrative and financial duties.⁵⁵ However, the post of kahya/kethuda/shaykh was not a standardized office, as the Greek *kethuda* of Karya district was elected yearly whereas the shaykh’s post in Jerusalem was usually for unlimited time.⁵⁶

Nerses was not alone in Anatolia in the capacity of a *kahya*, as there were many steward Armenians who had a certain amount of land and wealth in different regions in that period. For instance, one Armenian source relates a local legend about a meeting that allegedly took place

⁵³ Cengiz Orhonlu and Gabriel Baer, “Kethuda,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition.

⁵⁴ Eleni Gara, “In Search of Communities in Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Sources: The Case of the Kara Ferye District,” *Turcica* 30 (1998): 145–146.

⁵⁵ Amnon Cohen, *Jewish Life under Islam: Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 36–42.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

between Sultan Murad IV and Kara Gavur, the *kahya* of Hobusi village in the Palu region. The *kahya* impressed the Sultan with his wit and wealth, and the latter in return granted the *kahya* a new surname, *hanedan* (dynasty).⁵⁷ The title of *kahya* was still used among rural Armenians in the nineteenth century, when it indicated some links to wealth and property, if it had lost its significance as a political office in local administration. The Kahya family, for example, was among the founders of Vakıflı village in Antioch (the only Armenian village in contemporary Turkey), which was founded during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1809–1839).⁵⁸ Likewise, lands of the Pastırmacıyan *gerdastan* in Erzurum’s Ilice (İllica) village, whom I discuss in the third chapter, were administered by a certain Avag Kahya.⁵⁹ The *kahyas* were active in the Erzurum region’s rural social life in the mid-nineteenth century. There is evidence that they supported local Armenian bards, backing their competition with local Muslim barns, in the presence of the region’s big land owners.⁶⁰ In short, although it had various meanings which changed over time, the title of *kahya/kethuda* was closely associated with the administration of local Christian communities, and sometimes also rural estates, and it was shared by both Armenians and Muslims.⁶¹ Therefore, Sahak’s title was not a mere formality but denoted his status in the regional social and economic order in the seventeenth century.

There is an additional element in this story—namely, Nerses’s conversion to Catholicism in the year 1652. However, the details of this event are not known. As stated earlier, Jesuit

⁵⁷ Vatche Ghazarian, *A Village Remembered: The Armenians of Habousi* (Waltham, MA: Mayreni, 1996), 15–16.

⁵⁸ Nigân Bayazıt Doğru, *Vakıflı Köyü: Bir Köy Monografisi* (İstanbul: Yapı Araştırma Kurumu, 1966), 16.

⁵⁹ Armen Garo [Garegin Pastırmacıyan], *Aprvatz Ozer* (Boston: Hayreniq Tparan, 1948), 51.

⁶⁰ Metin Özarslan, *Erzurum Aşıklık Geleneği* (Ankara: Akçağ, 2001), 89–90.

⁶¹ In the lists concerning the appropriation of Armenian property by Muslims in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, *kahyas* appear as both perpetrators and victims of land seizure. For instance, in a land-grab that took place in the Pzgarut village of Kangal in Sivas, it was Kara Mehmed, son of Osman Kahya, who appropriated Sarkis Topalyan’s five fields and a house, whereas in Bergiri in Erzincan in 1904, Hüseyinoğlu Mehmed seized Anton Kahya’s building, worth 2,000 gürush, and two fields, worth 3,000 gürush. These examples, which show property changing hands in the countryside, were not isolated. Azgayin Patriarqaranı, *Teghakagir Hoghayin Gravmants Handznzhoghovoy* vol. 2 (K.Polis: Osm. Gortzaksakan Inkerutyan, 1911).

missionaries had conducted some work in the region in the mid-seventeenth century, but they reached the zenith of their influence there at the end of that century.⁶²

Given all of these points, I suggest that Sahak and Nerses were products of the *Celali* and post-*Celali* age. Nerses and Sahak served the government during the *Celali* rebellions, but their names do not appear in the *avarız* registers for the villages of Khashut or Hindzk for that time; the population was very low in Khashut, whereas it was dense in Hindzk in 1642—about the time they would have moved from Khashut to Hindzk. Sahak converted to Catholicism in the same period, and he obtained the title *kahya*. The evidence may be understood to show that both men belonged to the militarized lay peasantry and were active as heads of small military bands that fought the rebellious *Celalis*. As a return for their services, they were later permitted to lead the resettlement process in the village of Hindzk, probably after plague had ruined the region, and in the village they were granted the post of *kahya*, in order to administer the lands of one or more members of the *askerî* class in the village, along with some lands of their own. This idea is supported by the fact that Sahak Kahya was saved from persecution in the year 1721, thanks to the intervention of the village *bey* on his behalf—a sign of a Muslim (absentee or not) landlord in the village.⁶³ Moreover, many partnerships (usually the Armenian partner was to take around 1/3 to 1/2 of the product) were formed in the countryside of Erzurum between Muslim “landlords” and their Armenian “partners,” who were themselves quite wealthy, as late as the mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁴ The rise of the Allahverdiyans was one of the most significant and successful such partnerships, if not the only one in the region.

⁶² Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 180–181.

⁶³ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (September 1908), 400.

⁶⁴ Yaşar Tolga Cora, “Osmanlı Taşrasındaki Ermeniler Üzerine Olan Tarihyazımında Sınıf Analizinin Eksikliği,” *Praxis* 39 (2015): 34–36.

The apparently conflicting facts that Hindzk was still registered as a *sipahi* (a timar holder) village in the 1830s and that the Allahverdiyans controlled vast estates in the same village (which they left to Bishop Selviyan perhaps as early as the mid-1840s but officially in 1861, as examined below) indicate that the village's official *sipahi* status was more fictional than real. The lands of the village (which should include the lands surrounding the “proper” village and defined by *hududname*) probably passed through the stages that many lands did in the eighteenth and nineteenth century—namely, privatization and changing hands as a result of the advance of the tax farming (*iltizam*) and life-time tax farming (*malikane*) regimes. By such tax farming agreements different groups of people, both *askerî* and non-*askerî*, became entitled to collect revenues from those lands. This theory also explains how the Allahverdiyans, as they came to be called within a few generations, could have come to possess such immense wealth within only a single generation.

Eighteenth Century: Persecution and The Allahverdiyans' Move to Istanbul

Knowledge of the region's eighteenth-century history is scarce, beyond the fact that the Armenian traders from Erzurum were very active in trade in the port of Trabzon.⁶⁵ According to Bajyan, despite their economic power, members of the Allahverdiyan family were subjected to persecution throughout the eighteenth century. This was the period in which the Armenian Apostolic church was taking action against converts to Catholicism.⁶⁶ Sahak Kahya was maltreated when the anti-Catholic persecutions that began in Istanbul in 1702 reached Erzurum in 1707.⁶⁷ He was persecuted once again in 1715 alongside four other Catholics but was set free

⁶⁵ Necmettin Aygün reaches this conclusion based on his examination of *kadı* court records and provides a list of merchants who regularly went to the city for trade. Necmettin Aygün, *Onsekizinci Yüzyılda Trabzon'da Ticaret* (Istanbul: Serander Yayınları, 2005), 172–201.

⁶⁶ Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 178 f.

⁶⁷ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (September 1908), 399.

by the village's *bey* because of his advanced age—once he had paid a 1,500 piaster fine.⁶⁸ In 1721, Sahak Kahya was jailed yet again, this time along with a larger number of Catholic Armenians, and was again released after paying fine of 2,500 piasters. In 1722, it was his son Astvatzatur who was persecuted and saved by paying a still higher “ransom.” Upon escaping persecution, Astvatzatur made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. While he was there, his father, Sahak, passed away. After his return, Astvatzatur moved from Hindzk to the city of Erzurum “since his father had passed away and he [Astvatzatur] was occupied with trade;” in Erzurum he established the Allahverdi[yan] notable dynasty.⁶⁹ Sahak Kahya was buried in the family cemetery in Hindzk.⁷⁰

Astvatzatur had two sons, Manuk and Mateos, who were born around the middle of the eighteenth century. Like their father, they also faced anti-Catholic persecutions, as pressure on Catholics continued in the second half of the eighteenth century. For instance, Manuk Allahverdiyan was persecuted for his belief in 1768 and exiled to Van, where he stayed for over a year before returning to Erzurum impoverished.⁷¹ Manuk Allahverdiyan's sons, Nazaret and Abraham, were born in Erzurum in 1784 and 1791, respectively.⁷² In about 1793, Manuk relocated to Istanbul with his brother, Mateos, and his sons grew up there and began acting as moneylenders.⁷³ What followed for the Allahverdiyans was a rapid rise to the top social and political echelons of Ottoman society in the first half of the nineteenth century—some persecution and brief exiles notwithstanding. For instance, Manuk Allahverdiyan was exiled to

⁶⁸ Ibid., 400.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 382.

⁷¹ Ibid., 401. Based on *Mecmua-i Ahbar*, no. 4361 (1906), Poghosyan claims that Manuk Allahverdiyan was born in 1756. Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastani*, 17–18. However, this is highly dubious, for such dating means that he would have been persecuted because of his Catholic faith and sent to exile at age of twelve.

⁷² “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 402.

⁷³ Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastani*, 63.

Rhodes in May 1816, but this was related to his connection with the out-of-favor Grand Vizier Hurşid Ahmed Pasha, not to his Catholic faith.⁷⁴

Given that Astvatzatur's sons Manuk and Mateos moved to Istanbul as great moneylenders (*sarraf*) toward the end of the eighteenth century, the family must have accumulated capital within a generation while they were still in Erzurum. There is, however, no information as to whether they accumulated the necessary capital from control of land or from another source such as trade or moneylending. This was the period when moneylenders fulfilled a structural role, underwriting the economy in the provinces as various changes took place in the Ottoman fiscal system, most notably its monetarization.⁷⁵ The moneylenders' capital was necessary not only in the provinces for underwriting various expenditures but also in Istanbul for down payments on tax farms by provincial governments—each of which, one historian claims, was a “trio of vizier [pasha, governor or other high-ranking state dignitary], *kapı kethudası* [the Pasha's representative at the Porte], and the moneylender (*sarraf*) which rules the provincial economy.”⁷⁶ There is no further information about the Allahverdiyans' activities in Erzurum, but it is certain that the Allahverdiyans were part of a trio after they moved to the capital. Since in this period the state dignitaries had vastly invested in tax farming, the Allahverdiyans' closeness to them should have strengthened their social and economic capital.

In Istanbul, the Allahverdiyans were among the most prominent personalities of the city's Catholic community. There are many signs of their high position, ranging from their financing

⁷⁴ Ibid., 23–24.

⁷⁵ For the development of the new financial sector in the provinces in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Yavuz Cezar, “18. ve 19. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı Taşrasında Oluşan Yeni Mali Sektörün Mahiyet ve Büyüklüğü Üzerine,” *Dünü ve Bugünüyle Toplum ve Ekonomi* 8 (1996): 89–143.

⁷⁶ Yavuz Cezar, “Role of Sarrafs in Ottoman Finance and Economy in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, ed. Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 68.

members of the ruling Ottoman elite and investing in great projects, to marrying into other Catholic elite families and exercising control over the Catholic community. Like many of the Armenian elite (*amira*) families of the era, the Allahverdiyans intermarried with other leading Catholic families.⁷⁷ Mateos married into the empire's most important Armenian Catholic family, the Duzyans.⁷⁸ Manuk's other son, Abraham, was a member of the "Council of the Twelve" (*Yerkotasanits Zhoghov*) in the late 1840s; this was the elite-dominated administrative council of the Catholic community established after the state recognized that *millet* in 1830.⁷⁹ Abraham Allahverdiyan was among the founders of the company of Association of Bankers of Rumeli (*Rumeli Sarraf Şirketi*), inaugurated in 1842. As part of the Ottoman reforms to the taxation system, the company was granted the rights to all tax farm agreements throughout the entire expanse of the empire's European holdings.⁸⁰ About a decade later, Abraham Allahverdiyan was among the group of Armenian and Greek moneylenders of Istanbul who founded the *Banque Ottomanne* in April 1853 with the capital of two hundred million piasters.⁸¹ The *Banque Ottomanne*, however, was short-lived given the pressing conditions of the Crimean War.⁸² In this period, when the Allahverdiyans were at the peak of their political and economic power as leading Catholic Armenians, they engaged in various charitable works, from building a chapel in the St. Lusavorich Church in Ortaköy to helping Irish Catholics in 1847, and constructing a

⁷⁷ Hagop Levon Barsoumian, *The Armenian Amira Class of Istanbul* (Yerevan: American University of Armenia, 2007), 46–47.

⁷⁸ Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastanı*. 31.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 63–64. The founders of Rumeli Sarraf Şirketi were Maksud Allahverdiyan, Mahdesi Harutyun Gelgelyan, Abraham Allahverdiyan, Hovannes Tingiryan, and Hovsep Davudyan. See Avedis Varzhapeti Perperyan, *Patmutyun Hayots: Skysyal i 1772 Ame Prkchin Minchev Tsamn 1860* (Konstandinopolis: Poghosi Qirishjiyan, 1871), 276.

⁸¹ The *Banque Ottomanne* is not to be confused with the Ottoman Bank (London), which was founded in 1856.

⁸² Barsoumian, *The Armenian Amira Class of Istanbul*, 71–72. On this bank, see Harris Exertzoglou, "Greek Banking in Constantinople, 1850–1881" (PhD diss., King's College, London University, 1986), 124–125.

church in the city of Erzurum.⁸³ Within this context, the history of Allahverdiyans was to be completed as a symbol of their immense social and economic capital.

Revisiting Bajyan's History: Politics of Ottomanism and Armenian Cultural Nationalism

The last question I address on this topic is that of Bajyan's own endeavor—particularly, why did Bajyan write his history in 1858? Scholars argue that Vardapet Bajyan read the anonymous histories in about 1852; he began writing his history of the Allahverdiyans in 1853 in Erzurum and finished it in Istanbul in 1858, probably using firsthand knowledge of the family. Bajyan's work should be seen as a one of several similar attempts by the Armenian *amiras* of the time, although Sargisyan rejects the idea Bajyan might have fabricated things, because he was a respected and meticulous scholar.⁸⁴

Modern historians like Poghosyan, who wrote his book on the Allahverdiyans in 1957, and like Barsomuian, who finished his dissertation on Armenian *amiras* in 1980, could not comprehend the possibility of two historical facts related to the ancient Armenian noble houses. First, these houses as I showed above continued to exist and even thrived under Ottoman rule. Second, their existence and prosperity under the Ottoman rule was considered a historical possibility and completely normal in the 1850s, when Bajyan wrote his history of the Allahverdiyans, and even as late as in 1908 when it was published in *Bazmavep*.⁸⁵

What modern historians did not take into account is the double claim made in these (fictive or real) genealogies by the Ottoman Armenian elite. On one hand, the dynastic houses claimed ancient roots in Anatolia during a period when they began to show growing interest in their ancient and “heroic” history. This was well suited to the growing “cultural nationalism”, interest in historical, cultural and literary accomplishments of ancient Armenians, among the

⁸³ Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastan*, 66–67.

⁸⁴ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (June 1908), 243.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 245–246.

Armenian elite of Istanbul at the time.⁸⁶ On the other hand, by demonstrating their family's continuity throughout the course of Ottoman rule, they showed their participation in the Ottoman endeavor. More important, this initiative took place in a period when Ottomanism, as discussed in the introduction in detail was becoming the official ideology of the state.⁸⁷ The Allahverdiyan's history is an important and rare voice that responded and contributed to the official Ottomanism of the period.

Also, the text had other purposes. As I will examine in the last section of the chapter, the family began to lose power in Erzurum in the same era. The provincial origins of the Allahverdiyans, underlined over and over in the text, constitute little more than a claim to bolster their historical rootedness in their homeland. If readers are to believe a later Catholic Bishop of Erzurum, after having left for Istanbul, the Allahverdiyans “stopped visiting Erzurum [since their move to Istanbul]; as [it is] publicly known, [they] had not gone to the eastern half of the Black Sea.”⁸⁸ The Allahverdiyans compensated this loss of interest and power in Erzurum through a romanticized account of their ancestors' deeds in the region. Histories, whether sixteenth-century chronicles or nineteenth-century family histories, were quite influential in claims to legitimacy, and they were tools for consolidating the social and symbolic capital needed by the Allahverdiyan dynasty to maintain their status as an elite family in Istanbul in the mid-nineteenth century.

In sum, within the span of two hundred years, the Allahverdiyans transformed themselves from a notable family in Erzurum into one of most prominent moneylenders of the empire. But this does not mean that the Allahverdiyans abruptly lost their ties with Erzurum. On the contrary,

⁸⁶ Gerard Jirair Libaridian, “Nation and Fatherland in Nineteenth-Century Armenian Political Thought,” *Armenian Review* 36 (1983): 74–75.

⁸⁷ See the section “Ottomanism and Armenian Notables: View from “Below”?” in the introduction.

⁸⁸ B.O.A., ŞD. 1504-37, 15 Mart 1289 (27 March 1873), Dispatch sent by the Catholic Bishopric to Istanbul.

it was a gradual process and with their move to Istanbul adding another dimension to their connection with their hometown. Nevertheless the Allahverdiyans maintained dynamic relations with both the province and the imperial capital until the mid-nineteenth century. This was possible thanks to their growing economic, social, and symbolic capital, which they began accumulating in the province and augmented in Istanbul.

Center in the Province, Province in the Center:
The Economic and Social Ties of the Allahverdiyans

Members of the Allahverdiyan dynasty—Manuk and Mateos and, later, Abraham and Nazaret—after settling in Istanbul, engaged in the business of financing state officials and local and central governments. Here my focus is the Allahverdiyans’ financial and social relations with members of the ruling elite, on one hand, and connections with their hometown, Erzurum, on the other. Providing an extensive account of the financial activities of the Allahverdiyans, who were major financiers of the empire, is beyond the scope of this chapter and requires a study on its own; my examination here provides some background for such an endeavor from a particular angle. I assert that despite their settlement in the imperial capital, not only did the Allahverdiyans continue to be part of Erzurum’s local politics, but their business also maintained a solid basis in that city, thanks to their long-established social relations with the Muslim ruling elite in the region. Similar social and financial relations are attested in various provinces, and it was through such relations that provinces were integrated into the empire.⁸⁹ Besides financial relations, the appointment of the Allahverdiyans’ close associate, Bishop Selviyan, constituted an important component of the control that the Allahverdiyans exercised over Erzurum society.

⁸⁹ Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540–1834*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 76–78.

Tax Farming as the Bond: Relations between the Allahverdiyans and the Muslim Elite of Erzurum

The Allahverdiyans were among the greatest moneylenders of the empire by the second decade of the nineteenth century. Among their clients were the most important political figures of the ruling elite: the Grand Viziers Hurşid Ahmed Pasha (1812–1815) and Derviş Mehmed Pasha (1818–1820).⁹⁰ Manuk Allahverdiyan's relationship with Hurşid Ahmed Pasha is particularly noteworthy, as it exemplifies the idea that the power of an Armenian moneylender was dependent on the position and political life of his patron.⁹¹ Although Armenian sources are silent about the reasons for Manuk Allahverdiyan's exile to Rhodes, it cannot be a coincidence that it took place at about the same time as the deposition of the Grand Vizier Hurşid Ahmed Pasha.⁹²

Besides their close connections with these top political figures in Istanbul, the Allahverdiyans also maintained financial relations with their home region, Erzurum. The Allahverdiyans enjoyed close contact with Mehmed Emin Pasha (Veysizade), who was of Erzurum origin and also the chief officer of Erzurum customs (*gümrükçü*). This was a very important position, for Erzurum customs formed a major tax farm made up of various smaller tax farms, and although customs revenues were in decline in the eighteenth century, Erzurum's was still a very important customs house for the empire.⁹³ Mehmed Emin Pasha was one of the most

⁹⁰ Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastanı*, 31.

⁹¹ Barsoumian, *The Armenian Amira Class of Istanbul*, 64.

⁹² Both Poghosyan and his main source on the exile, the diary of Anton Köleyan, are silent on the reason for the exile but imply the possibility of anti-Catholic persecution. Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastanı*, 23. The document, which permitted Manuk to return from exile —after paying a very large sum—, also mentions none of the reasons behind the banker's punishment. In the document there is only a mention of Manuk's *hıyanet* (treason) without explaining what it was. B.O.A., HAT, 1591-56 [no date].

⁹³ Revenues from the Erzurum customs-house tax farm fluctuated throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The customs-house tax farm was a lifelong (*malikane*) tax farm by the early eighteenth century. Revenues from *malikane*, which declined in the early eighteenth century for various reasons (most notably the political turmoil in Persia), revived in the 1780s. For more information, see Neşe Erim, "Erzurum Gümrüğü as an International Transit Center and Some Problems of Administration," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* XVI (1996): 189–197.

important political and military figures in the region in the early years of the nineteenth century; he was appointed Chief Commander of the Eastern Front (*Şark Seraskeri*) and as governor of Erzurum with the rank of vizier in 1810. He was removed in 1814, however, but appointed as governor of Diyarbakir for a brief period until 1815.⁹⁴

From a dispatch dated 23 November 1813 that was sent by the succeeding governor of Erzurum, Ahmed Pasha, to the Porte, we learn that Manuk Allahverdiyan was the *sarraf* of Mehmed Emin Pasha. Manuk and Mehmed Emin Pasha probably got acquainted with each other in Erzurum, as they were both locals: the Allahverdiyans were moneylenders, while the latter was the chief of customs. It should be noted that Manuk Allahverdiyan was still working as Emin Pasha's *sarraf* almost twenty years after his move to Istanbul from Erzurum.

What is more interesting in the dispatch is Ahmed Pasha's request that the Porte not to appoint Kara-Cehennemzade [later known as Cennetzade] Ragıb Efendi, a member of the city's main ulema family, to the post of *nâib*. This was a position of a substitute-judge to fill in or assist the kadı in the city. In other words, Ahmed aimed to annul a request made by his predecessor, Mehmed Emin Pasha. The Allahverdiyan connection in this affair is that Ragıb Efendi had tried "to acquire the post of *nâiblik* under the protection of and the refuge provided by the non-Muslim named Hüdaverdioğlu Manuk [who] resides in Istanbul."⁹⁵ Ahmed Pasha further claimed that Kara-Cehennemzade Ragıb had formed an alliance for tax farming with a certain Agop [Hakob] in Erzurum, who was a partner of Manuk Allahverdiyan. This alliance was the main cause of the country's grievous condition, the letter claims without further explanation.⁹⁶ Although the report

⁹⁴ "Emin Paşa (Veysizâde)," Mehmet Süreyya Bey, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ed. Nuri Akbayan and Seyit Ali Kahraman, 4 vols. (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996), 1:480.

⁹⁵ "Der-i 'Aliyye'de mukîm sarrafları Hüdaverdioğlu Manuk nam zımmînin istishab ve ilticâsıyla Erzurum niyâbeti mürâselesini tahsîl." B.O.A., HAT, 729/34665.

⁹⁶ B.O.A., HAT, 729-34665, 19 Zilka'de 1228 (18 November 1813).

of incumbent governor Ahmed Pasha should be taken with a grain of salt, as he may have wanted to target his predecessor, the connection between Manuk Allahverdiyan and Kara-Cehennemzade Ragıb through Manuk's partner Agop is noteworthy.

A petition written by the representative (*kapı kethudası*) of Mehmed Emin Pasha to the Porte reveals the details of the relations among members of the trio of ruling provincial elites—in this case, the Pasha, his *sarraf* (Manuk Allahverdiyan), and the *kapı kethudası*.⁹⁷ The petitioner's request was that he be remitted the money that the state owed to Mehmed Emin Pasha for his expenditures while he was chief commander of the army on the eastern front. Manuk Allahverdiyan, as the Pasha's *sarraf*, had lent the Pasha funds to finance a set of activities: tax farming income from the Erzurum customs house in 1813–1814, which had been used to cover the expenses of the Eastern Army; farming the collection of taxes in Diyarbekir for the year 1813; and farming the collection of *cizye* and *avarız* taxes from the same city for the year 1814. But because the Pasha already owed a substantial amount to Manuk Allahverdiyan from their previous agreement, the moneylender refrained from financing the last tax farm, and the Pasha requested that it be granted to someone else.⁹⁸ The amount the Pasha owed Allahverdiyan is not known; it is described only as a “substantial amount” (*külliyetli mebâliğ*) in the petition. There are clues, however, about this sum: after Emin Pasha's death, Manuk Allahverdiyan asked the Porte to compensate him for his losses, and the Porte agreed to give him the right to collect tithe and the sheep taxes for the region of Lefke (Osmaneli) and for certain towns in the Hüdavendigâr province for the years 1808–1809.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Cezar, “Role of Sarrafs in Ottoman Finance and Economy in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” 67.

⁹⁸ B.O.A., C.A.S., 644/27113, 5 Muharrem 1230 (18 December 1814).

⁹⁹ Owing to the document's poor condition, the names of the other towns could not be deciphered. B.O.A., C.M.L., 308-12580, 5 Şaban 1232 (20 June 1817). It should be noted that some of these towns had been in tax arrears for about

Manuk Allahverdiyan also controlled the local economy by means other than financing local governors and their expenditures. For instance, in 1811 he was the financier of many copper-refinement facilities (*kâlhane*) in the region, including the major concern in Tokat, alongside smaller ones in Erzurum and Diyarbekir. In 1814, however, he lost his position as superintendent of the copper mines in Ergani (*Maden-i Hümayûn Emîni*).¹⁰⁰ One scholar has claimed that Manuk's loss of this position was related to opposing local interests and the replacement of the superintendent by another official.¹⁰¹ But based on Manuk's relations with Erzurum governor Mehmed Emin Pasha, I contend that the declining power of his patron may have been a more important factor in this change. The case shows the intricate relations between the various interest groups and the moneylender's relations with the provincial ruling elite.

Later generations of the Allahverdiyans were also involved in the lucrative business of tax farming in the province of Erzurum. In the years h. 1268 and 1269 (1851/52–1852/53), Erzurum customs were assigned to tax farmer Abdurrahman Agha of Erzurum under mutual engagement with and the financial support of Abraham Allahverdiyan for paying the state the massive sum of five million guruh. The tax farmer was entitled to collect revenues from the customs on goods, tobacco, and *tonbaki* (tobacco for water pipes).¹⁰² This was only one of the businesses in the portfolio of Abraham Allahverdiyan, and probably it was not the most lucrative one, as he was among the founders of a bank to finance the central government in 1853. The

five years. It is not clear, however, whether the amount that Manuk Allahverdiyan was supposed to receive from them includes these five years of taxes in arrears.

¹⁰⁰ Yüksel Duman, "Notables, Textiles and Copper in Ottoman Tokat, 1750–1840" (PhD Dissertation, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1998), 215.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 216.

¹⁰² "Erzurum eyâletinin emtia ve duhan ve tönbeği ve tevâbi gümrükleri rûsûmat-i sâire ile birlikte olarak altmış sekiz ve dokuz senelerine mahsuben ma-zamm elli yük kuruş bedel ve sarraf Hüdaverdioğlu Hoca Abraham taahhüdü ile mültezimden Abdurrahman Ağa'nın muhavvel-i uhdesi olub." *B.O.A.*, A.MKT.MVL., 99-79, 22 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1274 (8 January 1858). The document attests Abraham Allahverdiyan's request for a deduction of six hundred thousand guruh, the amount he would pay to the treasury due to a change in the customs tariffs. *B.O.A.*, I.MVL., 232-8048, 17 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1268 (9 March 1852).

point here, however, is that the partnership that Abraham Allahverdiyan had with Abdurrahman Agha was not rudimentary. First, Abdurrahman Agha was one of the most prominent personalities of Erzurum in the first half of the nineteenth century; he had constructed a mosque, and a neighborhood had been named after him.¹⁰³ Second, before Abraham Allahverdiyan, the tax farm of the Erzurum customs was financed by another Catholic Armenian *sarraf* of Erzurum origin, Karapet son of Murad, in the years 1850–1851.¹⁰⁴ Sarraf Karapet, as he is referred to in the documents, had also formed such a partnership with Ali Bey, a notable of Erzincan, for tax farming the tithe of the district of Erzurum in h. 1272 (1855/56).¹⁰⁵ This is yet another example of collaboration between a local Muslim notable from the Erzurum region and a moneylender from the same region who was located in Istanbul. These also show the transformation in the Ottoman economy and society, since by the mid-nineteenth century even the most lucrative tax farms were given to local notables. This was a major change from earlier periods in which only governors and grand notables (*ayan*) were able to obtain such agreements.

These cases reveal the complex nature of social and economic capital in shaping economic relations. Without scrutinizing the intermingled economic and social ties that bound Armenian and Muslim local elites and the imperial governing circles, it is not possible to comprehend developments that took place in the region later in the century. The Allahverdiyans' financing of the governors, their investment in various tax farm endeavors, and their collaboration with local Muslim elites formed a part of the town's social order. Moreover, relations like an Armenian moneylender's support of a local ulema's bid for a position can be

¹⁰³ Not much is known about Abdurrahman Agha; however, today a mosque and a neighborhood in Erzurum are named after him. İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, *Abideleri ve Kitabeleri ile Erzurum Tarihi* (Istanbul: Ercan Matbaası, 1960), 177-178.

¹⁰⁴ B.O.A., A.MKT.MVL., 99/79.

¹⁰⁵ B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 306/52, 15 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1274 (1 January 1858). From the fact that he signed the document as Sarraf Erzurumlu Karapet and was referred as Erzurumlu Hoca Karapet, one may infer that he had moved to Istanbul by the time of the partnership.

understood only as part of this closely knit socioeconomic order. Just as a governor-Pasha might ask the moneylender to assist the ulema in his bid by using his connections in the palace, the moneylender would also benefit if the partner (e.g., the *nâib*) of his own business partner (e.g., merchant) remained in power, especially when his former partner, the governor-Pasha, was replaced by an unfriendly one. These cases are important in illustrating, first, just how the provinces were connected with the center through interethnic personal networks. Second, such examples demonstrate the agency of the moneylenders—in this case, the Allahverdiyans—and highlight their active participation in shaping the Ottoman socioeconomic order beyond the sphere of financing governors.

The Career of Bishop Hovhannes Selviyan: The Allahverdiyans' Control over the Catholic Community

Hovhannes Selviyan's biography is available today thanks to another work by Serovbe Bajyan, who was with Selviyan during his tenure in Erzurum.¹⁰⁶ Bajyan had written notes about the life of Bishop Selviyan, but it was turned into a coherent text later.¹⁰⁷ Hovhannes Selviyan's father, Ter Sahak, was an Apostolic priest originally from the Bzuniq region (northeast of Lake Van) of historical Armenia. Hovhannes Selviyan received his early education in the St. Karapet Monastery in Mush.¹⁰⁸ His father was persecuted after he renounced his ties with the Apostolic Church and began preaching Catholicism; he therefore had to leave his homeland and moved to Istanbul.¹⁰⁹ This must have taken place at the turn of the eighteenth century, as Hovhannes

¹⁰⁶ In documents in Ottoman Turkish, he is sometimes referred to as Serviyan, as the word *selvi* is originally derived from the Persian word *servi*.

¹⁰⁷ Pajyan was sent to Marzovan (Merzifon) sometime before Selviyan's death, so his notes, unfortunately, do not cover the later part of Selviyan's life. Hakob Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq: hator A: Karin Qaghaqi; Teghagrutyun, Patmutyun yev Sovorutyun* (Vienna: Mkhitarian Tparan, 1925), 421 n1. As Pajyan's history of the Allahverdiyans was written in Erzurum in 1858, he must have left after that.

¹⁰⁸ Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1: 422.

¹⁰⁹ The life story of Ter Sahak is quite interesting. It includes Ter Sahak's conversion to Catholicism and the persecutions by Apostolic clergy that followed. Ter Sahak was once saved by the Muslim khan of the region; another time, a Muslim shaykh (elder) intervened. These stories illustrate very vividly the multilingual and multiconfessional world of the early-modern northeast Anatolia and southern Caucasia. *Ibid.*, 432–434.

Selviyan was sent to the Papal Collegium Urbanum in Rome in 1802, where he stayed until 1814 or 1815. During his education, he received his surname, Selviyan, after his mother, Selvi.¹¹⁰ After graduation, Selviyan returned to Istanbul, where he stayed briefly with his father and worked as a secretary and intendant. He was sent briefly to Erzurum, where he worked under the Vardapet Satletsi Kurjyan Stepan, but it was not long before he moved back to Istanbul once more.¹¹¹

While living in Istanbul, Selviyan managed to gain the trust of prominent members of the elite class—most notably, the Allahverdiyans: “[Selviyan] ... is also beloved of the celebrated members of the righteous community [Catholics] and has occupied the hearts of many with his skills. [He] comes and goes from the house of Mahdesi Asdvadzaduryan [Allahverdiyan] Manuk Amira confidently, and that pious *gersdastan* respects him as if [he were] from the same town [i.e., Erzurum].”¹¹²

Selviyan’s relations with the Allahverdiyans were fundamental to his career. When the Bishop Kurjyan resigned from his post in Erzurum, the Vardapet Purnazyan Petros was appointed to replace him. But for unknown reasons, a dispute took place between the notables of Erzurum and Purnazyan that ended in the *vardapet*’s dismissal: “The notables of Erzurum [who were] at Konstandinopolis complained to the *Korezi* (Latin Archbishop) about Purnaz[yan] and wanted Vardapet Selviyan Hovannes [as] their religious leader [*aradjnord*].”¹¹³ “The notables of Erzurum in Istanbul” probably refers to the Allahverdiyans.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 434.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 423.

¹¹² Ibid. “ibrev hayrenakits k1 patve zink1 [As if he were his compatriot].” Note that being from the same town (*hayrenakits*) is a factor in building personal networks.

¹¹³ Ibid., 424.

While in Erzurum, Selviyan also established close relations with the ruling elite, most notably Selim Pasha, a notable of Mush and a commander in the Ottoman army during the Persian-Ottoman War of 1821–1823.¹¹⁴ According to Qosyan, thanks to this relationship, Selviyan was able to secure the release of the more than 150 Armenians enslaved by the Qajar army.¹¹⁵ But soon the “notables and people of Erzurum” asked for Selviyan’s removal because of “a trivial issue” and requested that Purnazyan be reinstated to the post. The episode ended in Selviyan’s resignation.¹¹⁶ Thus, Selviyan’s first position in Erzurum as bishop of Catholic Armenians lasted for five years (1820–1825). Although there are no specific details about the reasons behind these appointments and removals, this switching of bishops—requesting the appointment or removal of the religious leader of Catholic Armenians in the region of Erzurum—reflects the struggle between local notables in Erzurum and notables of Erzurum origin in Istanbul, including the Allahverdiyans; members of both groups wanted “their man” in this office as they vied for control of affairs in the provincial city.

When Selviyan returned to Istanbul, he continued to enjoy close relations with the Allahverdiyan dynasty, even after his original patron, Manuk Allahverdiyan, had passed away and the role of dynastic patriarch was taken up by Manuk’s son Nazaret. Their relations were so cordial that when Nazaret Allahverdiyan encountered a problem with a certain Pasha and was consequently exiled in the late 1810s, it was none other than Selviyan whom Nazaret “took to accompany [him] in this exile.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Selim Pasha was executed in 1826/1827 because of his alleged pro-Qajar leanings. Mehmet Süreyya Bey, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, Vol. 4:1492.

¹¹⁵ Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:424–425.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 425.

¹¹⁷ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 403. The only certain information about the date Manuk Allahverdiyan died is that it occurred after 1825. Poghosyan, *Allahverdyan Gerdastani*, 30. This exile took place between 1825 and 1828.

The years between 1828 and 1830 marked a period of great difficulty and upheaval for the Catholic Armenian community in Istanbul, and Selviyan was very much in the middle of this turmoil. When Catholics were banished from the city in 1828, Selviyan was sent to Bucharest. He returned to Istanbul in 1830 only once Catholic Armenians were recognized as a separate community (“*millet*”), after the pope had recognized Anton (Anthony) Nurciyan as the first papal primate of Istanbul. In the elections for that post, Selviyan received the second-highest number of votes,¹¹⁸ and he was appointed as Nurciyan’s vicar (*atorakal*). Later, Selviyan was assigned the special mission of visiting Tsar Nicholas I in St. Petersburg to convince him to include an article on Catholic Armenians in the peace treaty that ended the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828–1829.¹¹⁹ But Nurciyan, the elected primate, was not an Ottoman subject, and therefore he was not granted official recognition by the Porte. He was replaced by Hakob [Agop] Chukuryan (who served as the Archbishop of Istanbul, 1831–1835) and then succeeded by Harutyun Chuhacıyan (who served as the Patriarch of Istanbul, 1834–1838).¹²⁰ The political balance among the Ottoman Empire, Russia, France, and the Habsburg monarchy was important in Nurciyan’s removal: Austria and Russia supported him; France and the Ottoman Empire opposed him.¹²¹ Selviyan continued to serve as the “deputy” of the head of the Catholic community [*azgapet*] during the reigns of Chukuryan and Chuhacıyan, but he was eventually removed “owing to [the efforts of] his rivals.”¹²²

¹¹⁸ The following list shows the number of votes received by each candidate: Nurciyan Andon: 87; Papazyan Kevork: 8; Maruşyan Bogos: 23, Selviyan Hovannes: 46. Ahmet Türkan, *Ermenilerin ve Doğu Hristiyanlarının Sorunları Çerçevesinde: Osmanlı-Papalık İlişkileri* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2012), 20 n30.

¹¹⁹ Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1: 426–427.

¹²⁰ Arpee, *A History of Armenian Christianity from the Beginning to Our Own Time*, 263.

¹²¹ Kemal Beydilli, *II. Mahmud Devri'nde Katolik Ermeni Cemaati ve Kilisesi'nin Tanınması (1830)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1995), 32–33.

¹²² Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:427.

Sources on the Allahverdiyans are silent about their activities in this rather important time, when the Catholic community was first recognized by the Porte. Bajyan simply does not discuss this period, whereas Poghosyan explicitly says that he does not have any information on Nazaret Allahverdiyan's activities developing the Catholic community but adds that a "substantial part of his activities probably took place during the organizational period of 1830–1835."¹²³ It is interesting to note that after the recognition of the community as *millet*, when Catholics gained permission to construct their first church in Istanbul, the Allahverdiyans were not listed among the financiers of that building, although the rest of the leading Catholic elites were among its founders. Selviyan was also present for the official ceremony of the church's foundation in 1831.¹²⁴ Nazaret's death in 1835, at the age of fifty-two or fifty-three, might explain his family's absence from community affairs in this period. Sources are silent on the details of his demise.¹²⁵

After Nazaret Allahverdiyan's death, Abraham became the dynasty's patriarch. As already noted, Abraham was among the most prominent figures in the political and economic spheres of both the empire and the Catholic community. Here I focus on Abraham Allahverdiyan's role in the communal politics of both Istanbul and Erzurum—the latter through Bishop Selviyan. The bishop's career was closely associated with that of Abraham Allahverdiyan and the latter's immense philanthropic activities in the city of Erzurum. An

¹²³ Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastanı*, 42.

¹²⁴ The firman, granted by Sultan Mahmud II for the building of the church, names the following Catholic priests and elites as present at the earlier investigation into the construction project: the priests Selvikoğlu Evannes (Selvioğlu Hovhannes), Hekimoğlu Mikail, and Küpelioglu Osep; the amiras Düzoğlu Agop, Kılıcıoğlu Grigor, Tingiroğlu Artin, Köçekoğlu Anton, Davidoğlu Osep, Tingiroğlu Evannes, Canbazoglu Artin, Düzoğlu Karapet, and Hisaroğlu Mıgırdıç. For the original facsimile and transliteration, see Beydilli, *II. Mahmud Devri'nde Katolik Ermeni Cemâati ve Kilisesi'nin Tanınması* (1830), 269–272.

¹²⁵ Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastanı*, 44.

examination of these relations reveals a complex set of social networks that connected the capital to the provinces through several means.

Selviyan's career in this period continued to develop, with fluctuations. After losing his position as acting patriarch, he was sent to the eastern provinces with immense authority. First, he was appointed as *aradjnord* of the Artvin district and tasked with calming things down in that region; he also took over the post of *aradjnord* of Trabzon, as Aradjnord Kurekian had resigned. Later, Selviyan was appointed inspector (*veratesuch*) in the Erzurum region by the primate of Istanbul to solve problems in the Catholic region of Khodorjur¹²⁶ related to the office of parish priest in that region, where Selviyan went in 1836.¹²⁷ He worked in all of these regions and finally settled in Erzurum in a house given to him by the Allahverdiyans.¹²⁸ But Selviyan once again encountered trouble with the local priests and the population of Erzurum, and this resulted in his eventual move to Kars.¹²⁹ After the great cholera epidemic of 1847, which killed many, including the Catholic *aradjnord* Vardapet Petros Poghosyan, Selviyan was invited, while visiting Trabzon, to become that city's *aradjnord*, but he declined because of the ongoing epidemic in the region.¹³⁰ But there was probably another reason that he did not wish to accept this post. Selviyan's next career move was election as the Armenian Catholic Patriarch of Istanbul.

Selviyan's election took place in the context of the Hassunian conflict, which dominated both the religious and lay worlds of the Catholic Armenians for a long time in the nineteenth century. The conflict emerged from the division of the community into "Latinists" (a pro-Pope

¹²⁶ Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:427.

¹²⁷ Hajian, *Khodorchur: Lost Paradise: Memories of a Land and its People*, 178.

¹²⁸ N.A., F.O., 195-227, dispatch from Consul Taylor in Erzurum to Stanford Canning, no. 17, 9 November 1844.

¹²⁹ These were the Armenian Apostolic priests: Ardanushti Lewandyan Der Andon, Zadikyan Der Hovannes, Petanyan Der Hovannes, Yesayan Der Poghos, Der Manuel. Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1: 428.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 429.

party) and other groups, predominant among which was the Mkhitarian order of Venice.¹³¹ Moreover, the structural intricacies of the Catholic Community's administration caused problems within the community's leadership. The Archbishop, or Primate (*başepiskopos*), of Istanbul was the religious head of the community and was appointed by Rome, whereas the Patriarch (and confusingly enough, the authority of this post differed from that of the Apostolic Patriarch), also a member of the clergy, was responsible for lay affairs. This distinction was also upheld in the provinces, where the bishops—usually appointed by Rome as the religious heads of the communities—had to be recognized by the Porte. In the Ottoman administrative system, the Armenian Catholic bishops should have been recognized as *aradjnords* (*murahhas* in Ottoman Turkish), who acted as both the religious and the administrative leaders of their respective communities in the provinces. But the appointments made by Rome were not always respected by the Porte, not only for diplomatic reasons, but also because the candidate selected by Rome was not necessarily supported by local Catholic communities, who wanted their own candidate to hold the office. Last but not least, the authority of the primate of Istanbul did not encompass certain regions—most notably, northern Syria and Cilicia, which were under the control of the Catholicate of Cilicia.¹³² In the center of all of these problems and divisions stood Anton Petros

¹³¹ The Mkhitarian order was founded by the priest Mkhitar in Istanbul in 1701; the order moved to Venice following persecutions in 1717 and sought the union of dissident Armenians with the Catholic Church. The order's allegiance lay with the Pope, notwithstanding cultural differences. The group's cultural activities ranged from collecting ancient manuscripts to publishing voluminous works in their printing house, contributing to the "Armenian Enlightenment" in the mid-eighteenth century. Vahé Oshagan, "Modern Armenian Literature and Intellectual History from 1700–1915," in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 2:142–144. For the pro-Pope party's accusations before the Porte that Mkhitarian was "dividing the community," see Türkan, *Ermenilerin ve Doğu Hristiyanlarının Sorunları Çerçevesinde*, 71–78.

¹³² The Catholicate of Cilicia controlled the Bishoprics of Adana, Mardin, Amasya, Maraş, Alexandria, and Kayseri. In this period, in order to expand his rule, Grigor Bedros VIII decided to open up new sees in Baghdad, Kilis, and Damascus. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 263. Hassun was also appointed as the Catholicos of Cilicia in 1866, thus uniting the two bodies under his authority with residence in Istanbul. This unification was followed by the Pope's promulgation of *Reversurus*, which revoked many rights of the Armenian Catholic community that they had held independent of Rome. The Hassunian-anti-Hassunian strife also resulted in "secular" solutions to the division within the community. The most notable attempt was that of Mkrtich Beshiktashliyan, who established the Hamazgeats

Hassun, who occupied the top positions of the Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy in the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. Thus, the strife is known in Armenian history as either the Hassunian conflict or the Hassunian-anti-Hassunian conflict.

Anton Hassun, a clergyman educated in Rome, was the vicar of Archbishop Marushyan, who designated Hassun as his successor in 1842, at Rome's request. Hassun was also elected as patriarch of the community in 1845, and after Marushyan's death in 1846 he became the primate, thus uniting the religious and lay offices of primate and patriarch. This consolidation was met by protests from the Catholic Armenian elite of the Ottoman Empire, who wrote to the papacy, and a special envoy was sent to Istanbul from Rome to solve the problem.¹³³ The main cause of strife was the question of the proposed lay assembly's nature: whether it would be an exclusive one dominated by the *amiras* and limited to addressing the lay affairs of the community, or an inclusive one that would also choose the community's religious leader (primate). Hassun resigned from the office of patriarch but not that of primate in 1850. In the context of the complicated politics of the administration of the Catholic community, Selviyan was elected as the new Patriarch—probably as a stakeholder—until the problems of the community were solved.¹³⁴

According to Bajyan, Selviyan took up this position in the midst of these intense struggles: “all with one voice were calling Ker. Selviyan ‘head of the community’ (*azgapet*): Patriarch.”¹³⁵ The new Patriarch Selviyan, in contrast to Archbishop Hassun, sided with the great

(National) Association, which proposed unity among Armenians regardless of creed. See Boghos Levon Zekian, “Modern Armenian Culture: Some Basic Trends Between Continuity and Change, Specificity and Universality,” in *Armenian Perspectives: 10th Anniversary Conference of the Association internationale des etudes arméniennes*, ed. Nicholas Awde (London: Curzon, 1997), 348.

¹³³ Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 262; Türkan, *Ermenilerin ve Doğu Hristiyanlarının Sorunları Çerçevesinde*, 38.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 46. It should be noted here that Frazee talks neither about these problems of the early 1850s among Armenians nor about Selviyan's appointment to the post of the Patriarch of Istanbul. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 262–264.

¹³⁵ Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1: 429.

sarrafs, who demanded the establishment of a new assembly with greater authority. It is interesting that the *esnaf* (artisans and small tradesmen) had opposed such an assembly, but their protests were not taken seriously by the government. Those “known by the state, experienced leaders, prominent members” of society—these actors wanted an assembly, and these were the *sarrafs* [moneylenders], not the *esnaf* [artisans].¹³⁶ It should be noted here that a very similar development took place throughout the 1840s within the Armenian Apostolic community but with a different outcome: the *esnaf* successfully curtailed the *amiras*’ power.¹³⁷

Selviyan’s election as Patriarch of the Catholic Armenians must have taken place with the consent (probably also with the support) of Abraham Allahverdiyan. He had been functioning as an auxiliary to the lay Patriarch after president Agop Duzyan’s death in 1847, and he was also a member of the “National Assembly of the Twelve,” listed second on the roster.¹³⁸

Selviyan’s tenure in the office of the Patriarch of Istanbul’s Armenian Catholics (1848–1852) was a period of continued intra-communal strife that resulted in his removal from the office by the Ottoman government.¹³⁹ Different parties within the anti-Hassunian group—namely, those belonging to the Mkhitarian order and those who supported the Catholicate of

¹³⁶ Türkan, *Ermenilerin ve Doğu Hristiyanlarının Sorunları Çerçevesinde*, 47.

¹³⁷ Vartan Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1863: A Study of Its Historical Development* (Istanbul: [s.n.], 1988), 53–58. The question of why the Apostolic *esnaf* was successful in its struggle against the *amiras* but not against the Catholic Armenians deserves an insightful examination but lies beyond the scope of this chapter. The Apostolic community was much larger, and its *esnaf* of Istanbul might have had the economic and political power to struggle against the *amiras*. As I discuss in the fifth chapter, the opposite was the case for the artisans of Erzurum in the 1860s. Their economic and social power was in decline and that was the reason behind their struggle against the notables of the town.

¹³⁸ Türkan gives the following list based on B.O.A., İ. HR., 60/2912: Artin Küçüköğlü, Ohanes Kuyumcuoğlu, Vahak Kılıcıoğlu, Ohanes Tıngıroğlu, Abraham Hüdaverdioğlu, Mihran Düz, Mois Hasunoğlu, Toma Köçekoğlu, Karapet, Karhad ve Kaspar. Türkan, *Ermenilerin ve Doğu Hristiyanlarının Sorunları Çerçevesinde*, 47n122. However, Poghosyan emphasizes that the Allahverdiyans had a higher status in the community, second only to that of the Düzyans. Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastanı*, 67. The list that Bogoshyan provides also differs from the official list that was submitted to the Porte: Düzyan Mihran Bey, Allahverdi Abraham Amira, Tıngır Hovhannes Efendi, Kılıcı Viçen Agha, Küçek Harutyun Efendi, Khuyumcuyan Hovhannes Efendi, Sinapyan (Fran) Agha Bey, Sinapyan Kaspar Bey, Dölvetyan Feyrat Agha, Hasunyan Musa Çelebi, Küçek Tovmas Agha, Maielyan Harutyun Agha. Poghosyan, *Allahvertiyan Gerdastanı*, 68.

¹³⁹ Türkan, *Ermenilerin ve Doğu Hristiyanlarının Sorunları Çerçevesinde*, 65.

Cilicia (known as Antonian priests)—supported by amiras like the Tingiryan, ran in the religious elections, and Nikoghos was elected as the new Patriarch. His reign was even shorter than that of his predecessor, Selviyan, as Nikoghos was obliged to withdraw from the post temporarily in early 1853, citing his poor health. At that point, the anti-Hassunian and pro-Hassunian factions held a common meeting to discuss the fate of Hassun as primate of the Armenian Catholic community. The anti-Hassun group had prepared a report to be submitted to the government, whereas the pro-Hassun party denied the validity of such a report on grounds that Abraham Allahverdiyan was not present at the meeting. This debate reveals that Abraham's absence was not unusual: he had not attended meetings for some time.¹⁴⁰ When the imperial government sent a decree to all patriarchates requesting that they form assemblies and increase their role in the governance of their respective communities, it received two letters of gratitude from the Catholic Armenian community, one signed by the notables of that community and the other signed by Abraham Allahverdiyan alone. "We are grateful for the *firman* [imperial edict] granted to the Catholic Patriarch," Abraham wrote; "however, since our community is [in] two factions and I have resigned and withdrawn from works related to the community, the letter of gratitude is not sealed by me. Therefore, I declare my gratefulness with a separate dispatch."¹⁴¹ It is not known whether Abraham Allahverdiyan resigned as a reaction to Selviyan's removal from the office or whether this was a tactical move in support of the pro-Hassun party during the debate. There is circumstantial evidence that he intended both.

According to Qosyan, who bases his narrative on Bajyan, Selviyan was forced to choose a side in the Hassunian-anti-Hassunian conflict; he chose the Hassunian party, and this was the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 68-69.

¹⁴¹ B.O.A., İ. HR., 99-4858; quoted in Türkan, *Ermenilerin ve Doğu Hristiyanlarının Sorunları Çerçevesinde*, 87.

reason for his removal from office when the anti-Hassunian party had the upper hand.¹⁴² Not surprisingly, Selviyan was once again assigned to Erzurum, this time with the rank of bishop, and there he was officially recognized as an *aradjnord*. He traveled to the region only after the Crimean War in 1855, and he stayed in the city as its bishop until his death in 1865, at the age of seventy-six.¹⁴³

Bishop Selviyan's tenure in Erzurum was marked by displays of strength, both socially and financially. "He made his grand entry (*entrée solennelle*) to the city on the twenty-fourth of this month [October 1856]," wrote the French Consul in Erzurum. "I was pleased to find a prelate with deep knowledge of the needs of the country and the strong desire to exert influence, either here or in Constantinople, the progress and civilization of these so interesting and so poorly administered parts of the Ottoman Empire." The sum of three thousand francs that Empress Eugénie of France had donated to him to spend for Catholic Armenians only bolstered his power.¹⁴⁴

During this period, Bishop Selviyan loaned the large sum of five hundred gold liras (*mecidiye*) to the imperial army in Erzurum in 1856 to repay its wartime expenditures either to the local population or to the army contractors, and cover its move to Erzincan. The local government, which was not able to repay this debt to the bishop within a year and a half, was obliged to pay an additional eighty-three gold liras. The governor asked for assistance from the central authorities, as the war-ridden local population could not pay it.¹⁴⁵ More interesting than a bishop's lending such large sum are his complaints about its not being repaid. When an imperial

¹⁴² Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:430.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 430–31.

¹⁴⁴ C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no. 6, addressed to Ambassador Antoine Thouvenel in Constantinople, 28 October 1856.

¹⁴⁵ B.O.A., I.Dh., 405-26810, no. 2, 04 Zilka'de 1274 (16 June 1858).

inspector was sent to Erzurum to investigate the wartime activities of Vecihi Pasha, the governor of Erzurum, Bishop Selviyan was the only notable there who showed some dissatisfaction with the Pasha. When the governor-Pasha approached all the town notables, Muslim and non-Muslim, to sign a *mazbata* (official report) expressing their satisfaction with him, “the Catholic Bishop here, very properly, declined to affix his seal to it, but it appears inconsistent on his part to have permitted the heads of the Armeno-Catholic community to sign a document whose falsity prevented him from doing so.”¹⁴⁶ Bishop Selviyan’s social and economic power was based on the personal relations he had built over years: he could thus act more freely than other elites in the city could.

The nature of Selviyan’s relations with Istanbul, particularly his stance toward the primate Hassun after his removal from the office of Patriarch, is not known in detail. Hassun became both the Primate and the Patriarch of Istanbul after 1861 and, in addition to that, became the Catholicos of Sis after he united both offices under his authority in 1866; he excommunicated five bishops for their antipapal stance in 1870.¹⁴⁷ What is certain, however, is that Selviyan tried to build a strong basis for his power in Erzurum during his mission in the region as *veratesuch* in the 1830s and 1840s, and he consolidated that influence during his tenure after the Crimean War, thanks to his connection with the elite families of Istanbul—most notably, the Allahverdiyans.

Members of the Allahverdiyan family tried to maintain close ties with the homeland—through Selviyan—even after they had moved to Istanbul. Of Manuk Allahverdiyan, who took the decision to move to Istanbul, Bajyan wrote that “though he had separated from his fatherland Karin [Erzurum] by moving away, the love of his fatherland had always bound his heart with the

¹⁴⁶ N.A., F.O., 193-493, dispatch from acting consul William Abboth to Stanford de Redcliffs, no. 59, 8 December 1856.

¹⁴⁷ Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 267.

people of his fatherland.”¹⁴⁸ It is not known whether Manuk Allahverdiyan performed any concrete deeds demonstrating this “love for his fatherland,” but the next generation of Allahverdiyans, Nazaret and Abraham, certainly undertook one of the most impressive projects in the town: the construction of Erzurum’s Catholic church.

The New Order: Limits of Personal Ties and Shifting Relations during the *Tanzimat*

The Allahverdiyans’ social, economic, and symbolic capital was enormous but not unlimited. Dynamic changes in Ottoman society diluted the family’s power in a variety of ways, and they had to accommodate themselves to a rapidly changing society. One of the most important changes in Erzurum during the Tanzimat era was that the Allahverdiyans’ former allies, the Kara-Cehennemzade family, fell from power in the early 1850s. Indeed, one of the last blows to them would be by Kürkçübaşı Agop Efendi, subject of the second chapter. The major notable houses’ (i.e. the *ayans*’) loss of position was significant for the Allahverdiyans in two ways: first, as *nâibs* and an *ayan* family, the Kara-Cehennemzades represented continuity and predictability in local politics; they had been the Allahverdiyans’ political allies against hostile governors, their economic partners in tax farming, and in the lucrative business of financing the imperial government. Second, the Kara-Cehennemzades had authority over the judiciary, the final word in local disputes, and the soft power to enforce laws in favor of their partners—noteworthy qualities in a collaborator from the perspective of businessmen like the Allahverdiyans. But the Tanzimat regime had undermined such relations in several ways. First, in the early Tanzimat period, provincial powerbrokers like the Kara-Cehennemzades saw their political power all but eliminated; second, in the later Tanzimat period, the structural basis of

¹⁴⁸ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 401.

such actors' influence—in this case, the Islamic *kadı* courts—was supplanted by secular courts, including the local administrative council, the secular (*Nizamiye*), and the commercial courts (*Ticaret Mahkemeleri*). Third, once the Kara-Cehennemzades were sidelined, new powerbrokers, either appointed bureaucrats from the center or prominent personalities who had been passed over by the Kara-Cehennemzades, were furnished with a different form of power in the newly established offices of the Tanzimat. The new imperial order during the Tanzimat era saw formation of political alliances, as basic political and social structures were made and unmade during the same era. The Allahverdiyans' loss of the “endowed” properties to the Catholic Church and their lawsuit with Grigor Bisiloğlu encapsulates these developments for one elite family.

The Catholic Church Building in Erzurum: (Un)making an “Endowed” Christian Property

The number of Catholics in the region of Erzurum had declined substantially after their flight to the other side of the border along with the withdrawing Russian army following the 1828–1829 Russo-Ottoman War. Those who remained, however, were still in need of a church. This need corresponded with Selviyan's mission to the region as a *veratesuch* in the 1830s and 1840s—the same period when he was having problems with the local population—but we don't know exactly what those problems were. It was at this time that Selviyan obtained an imperial grant to construct a church. And it was the Allahverdiyans themselves who “opened their purses and had the church built.”¹⁴⁹ In his account of the Allahverdiyans, Bajyan gives even more credit to the family in this affair: according to this account, because Selviyan had accompanied Nazaret Amira in his exile, “it was to him that they [the Allahverdiyans] entrusted the surveillance of the construction of the church in Erzurum, and through the hands of that famous *vardapet*, [they] rendered much munificence to their compatriots ... [Selviyan] was very watchful for the

¹⁴⁹ Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:428.

flourishing of these benevolences, and that fortunate bishop has always talked about Nazaret Amira with praise.”¹⁵⁰ It is apparent from these lines that Selviyan, the most important Catholic priest in the region, acted as the hands and eyes of the Allahverdiyans. The cordial relations between Selviyan and Nazaret Amira formed the background of these relations, and one can add to the Allahverdiyans’ symbolic “presence” in the city the charitable activities of Nazaret Amira’s wife, Gatinko, who was called the “mother of the poor.”¹⁵¹ The construction of the Catholic St. Asvatzatzin church building had begun in 1840, a few years after Nazaret’s death, and it was finished in 1842. Inside the church, an inscription in marble read, “In memory of the immortal house of Allahverdiyan, 1840.”¹⁵²

Not everyone in Erzurum was happy about these developments. James Brant, the British Consul at Erzurum, in his report of late 1844, wrote about Bishop Selviyan in unfavorable terms. According to Brant, Selviyan was “fond of show and intrigue, and though a shrewd man, by no means a learned one. He however possesses great influence with the Turks, particularly in the district of Adjarah [Artvin].”¹⁵³ The consul’s report reflects London’s concern about the growing power of France in the region because of the Catholic presence, particularly concerns about France’s role as protector of newly established Catholic institutions. Brant’s report was written in response to a confidential dispatch on the topic. This concern was not baseless, as Selviyan the bishop was trying to push the limits of France’s protection of local Catholic community.¹⁵⁴ But it was not France that built these edifices: “both churches were built under the firmans of Sultan

¹⁵⁰ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 403.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² “Hishatak anmah tann Allahvertyan 1840.” Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:461.

¹⁵³ N.A., F.O., 195-227, dispatch from Consul Taylor in Erzurum to Stanford Canning, no. 17, 9 November 1844.

¹⁵⁴ C.A.D.C., Affaires Économiques et Commerciales Correspondance Consulaire et Commerciale, Erzeroum: 1, no. 9, addressed to Ministre des Affaires Étrangères in Paris, 19 September 1843.

Mahmood, and without any interference on the part of France, for there were no French authorities to protect them.”¹⁵⁵

The Allahverdiyans were instrumental in building Catholic churches in two ways. First, (although there is no evidence at hand to prove this directly), they would have been major actors in obtaining permission to construct a church. It was only a year earlier that the Tanzimat reforms had been proclaimed in Istanbul, and they almost certainly had not been put into effect in Erzurum by 1844; therefore, obtaining official permission to raise a new church building in the area would have been rather difficult. Interestingly enough, according to the British consul, permission to build the Erzurum church was granted as early as 1837, even before the Tanzimat edict.¹⁵⁶ The Allahverdiyans—particularly Abraham, who had close connections with the imperial authorities—must have been instrumental in obtaining the permit, especially given that his position as one of the major sarrafs of the empire coincides with this period. A similar fruit of the Allahverdiyan-Selviyan collaboration was the reconstruction of the Catholic church of Trabzon during the same period.¹⁵⁷

The second way that the Allahverdiyans facilitated church construction, if a later bishop of the city is to be trusted, is through their donation of the substantial sum of five hundred thousand piaster.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, for the new church’s maintenance, “their ancestral estates in Hindzk village, and their ancestral houses in [the city of] Erzurum were bound to the church [as]

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 403. There is not much information on this, either, and a new Catholic church dedicated to Santa Maria was built only in the 1860s. So this might be the church in Adjara (Artvin), as stated above.

¹⁵⁸ “Allahverdi oğulları târih-i mîlâdîyenin bin sekiz yüz kırkında bin kise akçe yedlerinden sarf ile derûn-i Erzurum’da bulunan millet-i acizânemizin kilisesini ihyâ ve inşâ eylediklerinde.” *B.O.A., ŞD.*, 1504-37, 15 Mart 1289 (27 March 1873).

perpetual income.”¹⁵⁹ Archival documents on the transaction and ensuing lawsuit attest that the amount of land endowed was enormous and worth even more than the initially donated sum.

The income-tax records (*temettuat*) of the Hindzk (Hins) village from the mid-1840s provide some information about these lands. It can be seen that Bishop Selviyan controlled more land than any other landholder in the area: 65.5 *somars* (52.5 *somars* of which was under cultivation, 13 *somars* was uncultivated).¹⁶⁰ There is additional evidence indicating that these properties, which were controlled by Selviyan in the mid-1840s, were indeed possessed by the Allahverdiyans. An undated document lists the fields that were “controlled with title deeds (*tapu*) by Allahverdioğlu Abraham, son of Manuk, [and] the rights of which were transferred (*farig*) to the deceased Catholic spiritual leader (*murahhas*) of Erzurum Selviyan Efendi on 7 Ramazan 77 [19 March 1861].”¹⁶¹ Together, these documents prove that although the lands in question were controlled by Selviyan in the 1840s while the church was being built, they were legally transferred by title deed only in 1861. This transaction would result in a complicated situation owing to the complex nature of the “privatization” of property in the nineteenth century, and a dynamic process developed in the interaction between the imperial law (i.e., the Land Code of 1858 and successive amendments) and those who had and claimed certain rights over the land in practice.¹⁶² The Allahverdiyans, who were able to obtain an imperial decree to build a church in Erzurum in the 1830s, were not able to “endow” them to the church a few decades later.

¹⁵⁹ “Allahvertineri Payazatk Kamsarakanats,” *Bazmavep* (August 1908), 403.

¹⁶⁰ B.O.A., MVL.VRD.TMT.d. 6902.

¹⁶¹ B.O.A., A.M., 24-50, 7 Ramazan 1277 (19 March 1861). It should be noted that the term *farig*, which means “to transfer (property) rights to someone else,” is used in the document. *Farig* differs from the words for “to sell” (*iştirâ*, *bey*, *satmak*), as the former term applies to state (*miri*) lands, whereas the latter words are used only for private (*mülk*) properties. Aytekin’s 1858 critique of the scholarship calls this “legal fiction” and criticizes scholars for accepting these definitions at face value. E. Attila Aytekin, “Agrarian Relations, Property, and Law: An Analysis of the Land Code of 1858 in the Ottoman Empire,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 45 (2009): 937.

¹⁶² Yücel Terzibaşoğlu, “Eleni Hatun’un Zeytin Bahçeleri: 19. Yüzyıl’da Anadolu’da Mülkiyet Hakları Nasıl İnşa Edildi?” *Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 4 (2006): 122–123.

The document recording the transfer of lands was prepared after Selviyan's death in 1865. These lands then became escheated property (*mahlûl*), as the bishop did not have any heirs. After his death, the Bishopric in Erzurum began to complain in order to stop encroachments by local authorities on the properties, which were "indeed transacted by rich and charity-loving people as a means of administering the churches and employees, and as in similar cases, [they] were registered under the control of the above-mentioned [Selviyan]." ¹⁶³ The local administrative council (*İdare Meclisi*) of Erzurum, which included two Armenian members, the Catholic Christian Şabanyan Grigor and the Apostolic Christian Khachatur Khan Efendi, investigated and, after listening to villagers in Hindzk and to Christian notables of the city, decided that the land had been owned by Abraham Allahverdiyan in the past and had later been "endowed" by him to cover the expenses of the Catholic church in Erzurum. ¹⁶⁴ The local property office had prepared the aforementioned list of lands dated 19 March 1861, proving the legality of the transaction. The Provincial Administrative Assembly in Erzurum repeatedly asked Istanbul whether it should accept the endowment as sound and valid (*sahih*), ¹⁶⁵ but Istanbul did not an answer for several months, most probably because the affair involved the Catholic Church and the pious charity of an Armenian moneylender. ¹⁶⁶ The officers in Istanbul also did not know what to do in cases pertaining to the new endowments by Christian subjects of the empire. The new Land Code of 1858, as shown below, had articles against the creation of such endowments. The scholarship on the foundations established by non-Muslim communities (community

¹⁶³ "Hal bu ki mezkûr tarlalar ashâb-i servet ve hayrât taraflarından kiliselerin ve hüdemasının idârelerine medâr olmak üzere mübâyaa olunub bazı emsâli misüllü müteveffa-i mersûmun 'uhdesine kayd olunmuş." B.O.A., MVL., 1051-12.

¹⁶⁴ This appeal to the court and use of the testimony of villagers and local notables support Terzibaşoğlu's claim that taking land disputes to (local) court for settlement was a means of constructing and securing rights to property. Terzibaşoğlu, "Eleni Hatun'un Zeytin Bahçeleri," 133.

¹⁶⁵ B.O.A., ŞD., 1504-37.

¹⁶⁶ B.O.A., ŞD., 1504-37, 3 Cemaziü'l evvel 1283 (13 September 1866), Governor Mehmed Reşid's dispatch to Istanbul.

foundations (cemaat vakıfları) as they would be called after the Treaty of Lausanne) is silent about developments between the Land Codes of 1858 and 1913, the year when legal personalities including churches and hospitals gained the right to own property with the title deed in their own names. In the period before 1913 the properties used by communities were endowed only by a decree from the Sultan, or else were registered in the name of the superintendent of the “endowment.”¹⁶⁷ The scholarship also takes for granted the idea that, unlike Islamic foundations, the foundations of non-Muslims “with few exceptions” did not have *vakfiyes* (foundation charters) but were established anonymously.¹⁶⁸ Thus, the case of Allahverdiyans’ properties in Erzurum and their attempt to “endow” them provides us details beyond the discussion of law and shows the actual processes by which properties were endowed (or could not be endowed) by non-Muslim subjects of the empire in the nineteenth century.

The correspondence between Istanbul and Erzurum and investigation of those lands stretched out for years: it was seven years later that the Catholic Bishopric sent another petition to the central government claiming that the lands in question had been endowed for the purposes of maintaining the church and covering its expenses, “on condition that the lands cannot be alienated and remain under the Allahverdiyans’ surveillance.”¹⁶⁹ The bishop at that time further claimed that even if there had been legal proof of the transaction, it was nevertheless invalid because Abraham Allahverdiyan had never visited Erzurum, nor had he sent a legal deputy to complete the transaction. The bishop asserted that what his predecessor Selviyan had done was a mistake and asked the government to return the lands to the descendants of Abraham

¹⁶⁷ Polatel et al., 2012 *Beyanamesi: Istanbul Ermeni Vakıflarının El Konan Mülkleri / 2012 Declaration: The Seized Properties of Armenian Foundations in Istanbul*, (Istanbul: Hrant Dink Vakfı Yayınları, 2012), 28–38.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. 31. Compare with Mustafa Alkan, “Azınlık Vakıfları: Tarihî Arkaplanı, Hukukî Yapısı ve İç Analizi,” *Gazi Akademik Bakış* 2 (2009): 97–99.

¹⁶⁹ “Ferd ve ecd bey’ ü şirâya muktedir olmamak için nezâreti evlâddan evlâda sâhibi bulunan mûmâileyh Allahverdi oğullarına hass olmak şerâitiyle.” *B.O.A., ŞD.*, 1504-37, 15 Mart 1289 (27 March 1873), Dispatch sent by the Catholic Bishopric to Istanbul.

Allahverdiyan and to continue to use them as “endowed” church property. He even promised not to repeat Selviyan’s error of recording the property as his own.¹⁷⁰ At the local government’s insistence on a final verdict in the case, a judgment on whether this immense amount of land should pass to the government, the Council of State decided to transfer the property to the state treasury. On the basis of articles 121 and 122 of the Land Code, which regulate the endowment of private property and the property of monasteries, respectively, the council determined that the land was not an endowment and could not be endowed. Moreover, it brought forward the evidence that Bishop Selviyan had paid 21,243 gurush for the transfer of the property and received title deeds registered in his name on 20 December 1862. Finally, there were no records showing that the land was endowed. Therefore, the Council of State requested that permission be sent to the local government of Erzurum to put the lands up for auction. As a small favor to the local Catholic community in Erzurum, based on article 79 of the same law stipulated that “nothing shall be claimed as rent (*icr-i misl*) or as decreased value of land (*noksan-i arz*), from any person who has arbitrarily taken vacant (*mahlûl*) lands, *miri* (state) or *mevkufe* (endowed), and has cultivated them ... pay the taxes due by the land,” the council decided not to demand any additional charges from the church, which had received revenues from the sale of products grown on these lands since Selviyan’s death.¹⁷¹ The lawsuit involving these properties ended when the requested permission was sent to Erzurum on 28 July 1873.¹⁷²

The fate of the “endowed” lands provides hints about local society and politics in several respects. On the legal level, the government’s claim to property rights based on documentary evidence rather than on witnesses’ testimonies and the report of the Administrative Assembly

¹⁷⁰ “Keyfiyyetin tekrarına mahal kalmamak üzere.” Ibid.

¹⁷¹ [From the government of Erzurum] to the Council of State, dated 10 July 1873. B.O.A., ŞD., 1504-37.

¹⁷² B.O.A., ŞD., 1504-37, 22 Ramazan 1282 (8 February 1866), Dispatch from the Administrative Assembly of Erzurum to the Office of the Grand Vizier.

shows its ability to use the new Land Code for its own purposes. But this situation involves a rather complex set of issues around the status of the land itself. The land was treated as *private property* when its possessor transferred it in exchange for money. This was a completely legal transaction within the framework of the Land Code, as the Allahverdiyans had held title deeds to the land before the transfer, and Selviyan had also registered the lands in his own name. That land could not become an endowment, however, because according to article 121 of the same law, the landowner could not turn the land into a *waqf* property unless he possessed a *mülk-name* [official grant for property ownership] granted by the Sultan.¹⁷³ Thus, the land was treated as *state property* once its possessor wished to turn it into an endowment—in other words, the state confiscated land once state authorities determined that its endowment was illegal. This was the case even after the 1858 Land Code. Although Abraham Allahverdiyan was not present for the transaction and no deputy of his represented him when it took place, Selviyan was able to conduct property transactions without following the formal procedure. He was too powerful—or at least, he was extremely well integrated into the workings of local society.

These lands were already under Selviyan's control in the mid-1840s, and the tax records indicate that he paid tithe tax for their harvests in that decade. The Land Code of 1858 and the death of both Abraham Allahverdiyan and Selviyan complicated the struggle over ownership of that land. Intervention by Abraham Allahverdiyan, a well-known moneylender in the capital, or by Selviyan, a strong provincial bishop, might have affected the course of the lawsuit, but in the absence of such influence, the state eventually got its way. However, after the bishop's death, the Allahverdiyans completely lost their power, real and symbolic in Erzurum.

¹⁷³ Article 121 of the Land Code of 1858 reads as follows: "A person cannot make the land he possesses *waqf* to any object without its being put into his actual possession by an Imperial Mulktname from the Sultan." *The Ottoman Land Code*, trans. F. Ongley (London: W. Clowes & Sons, 1892), 65.

Selviyan Efendi's successor, Stepanos Melqisedekyan, the pro-Hassun bishop of Erzurum, did not have his predecessor's power. Bishop Melqisedekyan came from humble origins and, unlike Selviyan, who enjoyed cordial relations with and the strong backing of the Allahverdiyans and was always in the top echelon of the Catholic Church's hierarchy, Melqisedekyan had modest aspirations.¹⁷⁴ Also unlike Selviyan, who had been a patriarch before being appointed bishop of Erzurum in 1855, Melqisedekyan had worked under Selviyan, and had served only in the provinces.¹⁷⁵ Melqisedekyan was less powerful than Selviyan for yet another reason: in the period when the state decided to take over the disputed lands in Erzurum, circa 1873, Melqisedekyan's patron, the Primate Hassun, was also removed from office (1870) and eventually sent from Istanbul (1872).¹⁷⁶ The anti-Hassunians had taken the upper hand in the struggle for power in the capital with the election of Patrik Kupeliyan in October 1872.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, Bishop Melqisedekyan was removed from his office in Erzurum in 1874, losing control over the local church, the office of the *aradjnord*, and the area's Catholic school.¹⁷⁸

It can be concluded that Selviyan's success in his office was dependent upon his ties with the *amiras* of Istanbul, through whom he was able to influence local officers. As one document in the Surb Edjmiatzin archives testifies, "The *vsemashuq* [very exalted] Bey Selviyan Catholic *aradjnord*, carrying in his hand Tıngıryan Hovannes Amira's recommendation to the governor, always succeeded in many issues."¹⁷⁹ The personal relationships that Selviyan had developed

¹⁷⁴ Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:436–444.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 445.

¹⁷⁶ Tırkan, *Ermenilerin ve Doğu Hristiyanlarının Sorunları Çerçevesinde*, 185.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 207–208.

¹⁷⁸ Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:446–447. In this period, when the newly appointed Bishop Uzunyan took control of the church, the Bishopric, and the school (he held the position for about a year), Melkisetekyan organized an alternative church and office by renting two mansions on the Eren Street in Erzurum. Melkisetekyan had spent about five hundred gold liras in this period for these expenses. The support that he received from some of the important Catholic families of Erzurum, including the Şabanyan family, was fundamental to his struggle. Ibid., 447–448.

¹⁷⁹ Quoted in Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:432. The Tıngıryan *gersdastan* was one of the most important Catholic families of the empire, alongside the Duzyans and the Allahverdiyans.

with the Allahverdiyan *gerdastan* early in his career—first with Manuk Allahverdiyan and later with his sons, Nazaret and Abraham—formed the basis of a complex personal network. These relationships were fundamental to connecting the imperial center to the province of Erzurum, and they were crucial to empowering the Allahverdiyans to keep a firm handle on issues in their homeland even after they had moved to Istanbul. But the case of the endowed lands show such relations were not stable, and their components changed constantly during the Tanzimat period. The social and economic capital that the Allahverdiyans possessed was not limitless, and their hold on local affairs, whether through their financial relations with the Pashas or through personal ties with Selviyan, did not remain unchallenged. As the new imperial order began to take firm roots in the provinces, and local actors changed more quickly and multiplied over time, the Allahverdiyans had to face a test of their power. Another lawsuit, this one between the Allahverdiyans and Grigor Bisiloğlu, illustrates both these limits and the changing political and economic atmosphere of Erzurum in the Tanzimat era.

The Suit against Grigor Bisiloğlu: No Power in the Home Province

The earliest extant information about Grigor Bisiloğlu is found in the 1840s tax records of the city of Erzurum. He was, like the Allahverdiyans, a Catholic, and his family had relatively humble origins. But Grigor himself was a well-to-do merchant, one of the 128 household heads (of a total 573) who paid the poll tax at the highest level (‘*âlâ*).¹⁸⁰ Grigor was an herbalist (*attar odacısı*), but he was also a creditor (*sermayeli tüccar*).¹⁸¹ His brother Anton was a small-scale trader (*çerçiyân dükkancısı*) and paid the midlevel poll tax (*evâsıt*); their father was unable to work (*alil bila-kesb*) and was therefore exempt from the poll tax. According to the tax record,

¹⁸⁰ Haydar Çoruh, “Erzurum: A Border City of East Anatolia,” in *The Ottoman State and Societies in Change: A Study of the Nineteenth-Century Temettuat Registers* (New York: Kegan Paul, 2004), 205.

¹⁸¹ Haydar Çoruh articulates the uncertainty surrounding the term *sermayeli tüccar*, which he defines as “probably engaged in earning interests loaning credits.” Haydar Çoruh, “Temettuat Defterlerine Göre Erzurum Şehri (1260/1844)” (MA thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi, 1997), 47.

Grigor and Anton's yearly income combined was 1,030 piaster, and they had no property except the house they lived in and one cow.¹⁸² This information is contested as Grigor was also referred to as proprietor of the French Consulate in a consular dispatch.¹⁸³ Nevertheless, the Bisiloğlu household income was quite high compared to the average income of Erzurum's population, which was 189.4 gurush per Catholic household in the city and 271.7 gurush per household overall.¹⁸⁴ Anton's position as a small-scale merchant, along with the fact that the family held no estate property at this time, may be taken as an indicator of a recent improvement in the family's—and Grigor's—socioeconomic status.

There is not much detail about how Grigor Bisiloğlu improved his economic standing, but he signed the petitions that he submitted to the government in the lawsuit with the Allahverdiyans as *Avrupa Tüccarı* Grigor Bisiloğlu. This title marks a privileged status that Grigor must have gained sometime after the tax registers were compiled in the 1840s, as there is no indication that he held such a title during that decade. Data on Grigor Efendi's business life is also scarce, but he had been an agent (*komisyoncu*) of Abraham Allahverdiyan's nephew Gevorg, who had passed away.¹⁸⁵ In the lawsuit, plaintiff Abraham Allahverdiyan claimed that Grigor Bisiloğlu and his partner, Hovhannes, had not paid their debt to Gevorg. Abraham claimed that Grigor and Hovhannes had initially borrowed the quite large sum of 120,000 gurush; Hovhannes had also died, and only 38,216 gurush had been repaid.¹⁸⁶ As Grigor had not paid but “had passed time in opposing the claim,” the initial unpaid amount of 81,784 gurush had accrued interest (in the amount of 160,351 gurush), making the total Abraham now sought

¹⁸² B.O.A., ML.VRD.TMT.d. 6895.

¹⁸³ C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-1, Erzeroum, no. 5, addressed to Ambassador Butenval in Constantinople, 14 November 1844.

¹⁸⁴ Çoruh, “Erzurum,” 201.

¹⁸⁵ B.O.A., MVL., 400-55, 10 Rebi'ü'l-evvel 1279 (3 November 1862).

¹⁸⁶ B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 287-25, 17 Cemaziü'l-âhir 1275 (22 January 1859).

242,135 gurush. If Grigor Bisiloğlu was unable to pay his debt in cash, his properties would be sold at auction, and the Allahverdiyans would receive their money. These cases were examined in the secular courts, including the commercial tribunals.

Abraham Allahverdiyan, acting through his deputy in Erzurum (one Agop Kundakçioğlu is listed in the petitions; nothing but his name is known), submitted his claim to the Council of Commerce (*Ticaret Meclisi*) in Istanbul; it was upheld, and Abraham had that council send an order to the governor of Erzurum to enforce the liquidation of Grigor's property.¹⁸⁷ The amount owed had increased so substantially because this matter had apparently been disputed for years: in a petition dated 4 November 1860, Grigor Bisiloğlu wrote that the lawsuit had begun eighteen years earlier—that is, in 1842.¹⁸⁸ According to Grigor's version of the story, while his dispute with Abraham Allahverdi's nephew Gevorg was being heard by the court, the latter had passed away. Grigor Bisiloğlu had taken the issue to the local administrative assembly (*İdare Meclisi*) several times in order to resolve the debt, calling upon Gevorg's descendants to appear in Erzurum's local court. The suit had been postponed because of the Allahverdiyans' absence; however, "a couple of months later, a marshal of the court (*mübaşir*) presented a letter from the Grand Vizier declaring an alleged [debt of] 126,300 gurush."¹⁸⁹ Grigor was summoned to Istanbul and he sent his brother to represent him instead.

The following events turned the debt case into a drama, if one believes Grigor's story. First, Grigor's brother was arrested in Istanbul, and though he was "just twenty years old," he died in prison. Then Grigor was summoned to Istanbul, where he was also arrested and imprisoned. During his incarceration, which lasted three months and twenty-one days, he was

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ B.O.A., A.DVN., 157-78, 18 Rebi'ü'l-âhir 1277 (3 November 1860).

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

threatened with death until he signed a written statement acknowledging the debt. At this point, his family also applied to the French Consul in Erzurum to intervene on their behalf, as a duty of the protection of the Catholics by France.¹⁹⁰

In the November 1860 petition, Grigor complained about his ongoing persecution, and declared that he would pay the “real” amount of his debt after his registers had been reexamined. Grigor also wanted Abraham Allahverdiyan and his deputy, Avedis, to be tried at the High Council of State (*Meclis-i Vâlâ*) for extortion.¹⁹¹ Throughout the petition, Grigor Bisiloğlu repeated that Erzurum’s governor had seen his registers—an important move, as he was trying rally strong local backing in Erzurum vis-à-vis authorities in the imperial capital.

About one year later, in August 1861, Abraham Allahverdiyan, through the central government, sent another order to Erzurum meant to enforce the payment of Grigor’s debts. The order, sent through the Ministry of the Imperial Treasury (*Hazine Hassa Nezareti*), stated that although the interest to be paid on the debt had been decided without consulting Grigor Bisiloğlu, such a loan based on interest-bearing bonds (*tahvil*) must be repaid with interest.¹⁹² Grigor Bisiloğlu responded by appealing the ministry’s decision, claiming that Abraham Allahverdiyan’s absence made it impossible for the court to reach a conviction; therefore, Abraham Allahverdiyan should at least appoint a deputy. The Ministry of Imperial Treasury’s reply was negative: as the order for payment of the debt had already been sent to the governor of

¹⁹⁰ C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-1, Erzeroum, no. 5, addressed to Ambassador Butenval in Constantinople, 14 November 1844.

¹⁹¹ B.O.A., A.DVN., 157-78.

¹⁹² “Ru’ yet olunan hesablara dahi taraf-i mersûmun re’s almadan seksen bir bin yedi yüz seksen dört ve güzeşteden bir yük altmış bin üç yüz elli bir gurusuna cem’an iki yük kırk iki bin yüz otuz beş kuruş alacağı tebeyyün ve tahakkuk eylediği ... bu makûle tahvile merbût alacağın ma-güzeşte tahsîl-i iktizâsı nizamdan bulunduğu cihetle.” B.O.A., A.MKT.MHM., 230-37, 28 Muharrem 1278 (5 August 1861).

Erzurum, there was no need for Abraham Allahverdiyan to assign a deputy; in other words, the case was closed, and Grigor had to pay the debt.¹⁹³

But the tables turned once again with the unexpected death of Abraham Allahverdiyan himself. After a long trip to Europe in 1861, Abraham returned to Istanbul in mid-November and passed away unexpectedly on 16 December the same year.¹⁹⁴ His death changed the course of the lawsuit. First, Grigor Bisiloğlu's appeal to the Council of Cassation (*İstînaf Meclisi*), a creation of the Tanzimat period, was accepted, and the case was sent to the High Council of State to be reexamined; the High Council of State then sent it to the Commercial Tribunal (*Ticaret Mahkemesi*). But in September 1862, as reported by tribunal member Hacı Raşid Efendi, that body sent the case back to the High Council of State, arguing that the council could pronounce verdicts in such lawsuits.¹⁹⁵ This decision stemmed from a regulation that the High Council of State had passed in 1860 that made Commercial Tribunal primarily responsible for cases related to sarrafs, while the High Council of State was to act as a superior court and hear cases that could not be heard by the Commercial Tribunals.¹⁹⁶

A war of petitions ensued between the heirs of Abraham Allahverdiyan—namely, his sons Grigor and Hovhannes—and Grigor Bisiloğlu. Allahverdiyan's sons cited the orders sent to the governor of Erzurum demanding the sale of Bisiloğlu's properties to pay his debt. The first had been sent on 10 August 1861; a second notice (*teki'dname*) from the office of the Grand Vizier eventually repeated the order, on 5 October 1862. Abraham Allahverdiyan's sons

¹⁹³ “Hoca Abraham’a irâ’ e-i vekil ettirilmesine hâcet kalmamış olduğu” *B.O.A.*, MVL., 375-68, 4 Rebi’ü'l-âhir 1278, (26 October 1861).

¹⁹⁴ Poghosyan, *Allahverdiyan Gerdastanı*, 73–75.

¹⁹⁵ “Meclis-i Vâlâ riyâset-i celîlesinin tezkeresi mahkeme-i ticârete havâle buyrulmasının üzerine â’zâ’-yı dâimîden ri’fatlu Hacı Raşid Efendi’ye mahkemece havâle olunarak mûmâileyh tarafından tanzîm olunan raportore husûs-i mezkûr zaten umur-i ticârete müte’alîk olmayub Meclis-i Vâlâ’da ru’yet olunacak mevaddan bulunduđu muharrer bulunduğundan.” *B.O.A.*, MVL., 400-55, 10 Rebi’ü'l-evvel 1279 (3 November 1862).

¹⁹⁶ Nuran Koyuncu, “Osmanlı Devleti’nde Sarrafların Mültezimlere Kefilliği,” *İnönü Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 5 (2014): 314.

complained that Bisiloğlu's properties had in fact been sold at auction about eight months earlier (in 1862), though they had never been paid. Therefore, they had sent the title deeds of the sold properties, which they held as surety, to the governor of Erzurum, requesting that an order be sent to the governor from the office of the Grand Vizier with admonishing language.¹⁹⁷ In the same period, Grigor Bisiloğlu had also sent a final petition to the Porte as a response to efforts of Allahverdiyan brothers, requesting revocation of the order to sell his property to repay his "alleged" debt.¹⁹⁸ The governor probably hesitated to apply the order of the government to finalize the sale of the properties and payment of the debt so as not to upset a strong local notable before a final verdict had been reached. The final outcome of the case is not known; a year later, in late 1863, it remained still unresolved.

The Allahverdiyans in Istanbul must have been pressing hard, for the language of the last petition that Grigor Bisiloğlu sent to the Sublime Porte, in October 1863, does not resemble that found in earlier requests. This petition takes an entirely different tack, no longer discussing the death of his brother, alleging coercion in signing debt bonds, or requesting postponed payment until his appeal was decided. Rather, this letter cites Bisiloğlu's previous services to the Ottoman government in times of crisis. Bisiloğlu claimed to have returned to Erzurum about one thousand families who had been on their way to Russia during the migration of Armenians following the 1828–1829 Russo-Ottoman War. He also claimed that he had never requested any reward for his services to the state by preventing Armenians' not preferred out-migration to Russia; now, however, he implored the Porte for favor in the lawsuit the Allahverdiyans were

¹⁹⁷ "Zikr olunan emirnâme-i sâminin kaydı bi'l-ihrac-i te'kidi hâvi vâli-i müşârünileyh hazretlerine bir kıta şedidü'l-mazmun emirnâme-i sâmi-i hazret-i vekaletpenâhîleri tesyar ve ihsan buyrulması babında." *B.O.A.*, MVL., 235-14.

¹⁹⁸ *B.O.A.*, MVL., 407-56, 4 Rebibi 'ü'l-âhir 1279 (29 September 1862).

pursuing against him.¹⁹⁹ The reasons why Grigor Bisiloğlu wrote about (or fabricated) his past services can be easily seen, simply for playing the card of loyalty to the state in his struggle against a major Armenian sarraf. However this was not a rudimentary act devoid of the political context of the period. As I discuss in the following chapter in detail, this was a new approach to relations between the state and her subjects, a bargaining about rights and obligations. For the purposes of this chapter, the fact that a major imperial moneylender family like the Allahverdiyans failed to mobilize the state apparatus to enforce its will in the provinces is important.

On the whole, this case, like that of the “endowment” for the Catholic church building, demonstrates that personal networks were crucial in constructing the modern state during the Tanzimat era and that power relations based on those networks became determining factors in building modern state institutions and their application, particularly in the provinces. However, they also show that there was a decline in the potency of some of those networks, or emergence of alternative ones which shook the power of the older elites, like the Allahverdiyans. The family, despite their economic power and influence in Istanbul were relatively powerless in winning a case against a local notable and his alternative networks. The power of the center, in an age of centralization and modernization was not absolute. Rather the new imperial order was a

¹⁹⁹ “Geçen kırk dört senesi Rusyalunun Erzurum’a vürudunda Erzurum’da bulunan teba’-a-i gayr-i müslimenin cümlesini memâlik-i Rusya’ya nakl ettiği sırada çâkerleri dahi tarik-i sılaya sevk ile kırk familya ile Hoca Bey tarafına gitmek üzere pasaport ahz edip Trabzon’a azîmet ve orada biraz vakit ikâmet ba’de’l-masâlihe mezkûr familyalarla Erzurum’a ‘avdet edilmiş ve oradan memâlik-i Rusya’ya nakl olunan teba’-a-i devlet-i ‘aliyyeye tahrîr edip bin familya kadar Erzurum’a celb etmiş olduğum Erzurum vâlisi tarafından ve derbâr-i madelet-karâra inhâ olunarak hak-i bendegânemde mükâfat-i seniyyenin icrâ’sına dâir emirnâme-i sâmi tesyîr buyrulmuş idi ise de çâkerleri bu ana kadar mükâfat istid’âsında bulunmamış idim. Ancak Hüdaverdioğlu ile olan keyfiyyetimizden dolayı çend senedir şu sinn ü sâlimde han köşelerinde envâ’-i perîşânî ve sefâleti çekmekte olduğumdan mesbuka-i mezkûreme mukafâten şu keyfiyyetimizin bir an akdem fasl ve ru’yeti husûsuna müsâ’ade-i seniyyeleri şâyan buyrulmak babında...” B.O.A., MVL., 428-164, 3 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1280 (16 October 1863).

new set of relations between the central state in Istanbul, local authorities and notables in the provinces.

Conclusion

From their provincial origins in seventeenth-century Erzurum, the Allahverdiyan family ascended to the highest levels of society in the imperial capital within just two centuries. Following in the footsteps of earlier historians, I have deconstructed the traditional narrative about the emergence of this *gerdastan*, locating the family's history in the context of the *Celali* rebellions and their aftermath: the Allahverdiyans are probably not the same as the ancient house of Kamsarakan, as has already been suggested; rather, their social ascent likely related to their services to the government during the *Celali* rebellions. They served as a *kahya* family responsible for the care of lands owned by ruling *askerîs*, and this was the most important step in their rise to the top of the Ottoman social order. The Allahverdiyans attained all the advantages of wealth, prestige, and power in the late seventeenth century by establishing themselves as landlords, and they consolidated that position in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century by helping to finance local governments. Their conversion to the Catholic creed in a period when that church was making modest advances in the region might be taken as an indicator of their preference for avoiding being placed under a better-established power, such as the Apostolic Armenian Church. Further, in the mid-nineteenth century—an age of Armenian cultural nationalism and Ottomanist state ideology—the “family history” narrative of the Allahverdiyans' noble origins had the double goal of accruing prestige within their community and emphasizing their collaboration with the Ottoman polity since its inception in the region- all at a time when their power in the province was in visible decline.

After they moved to Istanbul, the Allahverdiyans were able to maintain their involvement in Erzurum's local politics and economics despite physical distance from the province. Their personal relations with other elites, including governors and local ulema, along with the financial relations they had with these actors, allowed the Allahverdiyans to foster and keep close ties to their hometown even after they had moved permanently to Istanbul. Family members also mobilized their economic and social capital in order to accrue symbolic capital, both in the center and in the province. The career of the Catholic Bishop Hovhannes Selviyan, including his tenure as the Catholic Patriarch in Istanbul, depended quite heavily on the support that he received throughout his life from two generations of the Allahverdiyan dynasty.

A major building project for Catholics in Erzurum, the construction of a new church, was financed by the Allahverdiyans and implemented under Selviyan's supervision. That building remained the most tangible mark the Allahverdiyans had left in their hometown until it was destroyed in the twentieth century, after the genocide. Its construction coincided with the period when Selviyan probably needed a political foothold for himself in the village. In addition, the fate of lands in the Allahverdiyans' ancestral village of Hindzk that were endowed for the maintenance of that church not only reveal relations between the political center and the law, on one hand, and locality and practice, on the other, but the case also demonstrates how property rights were constructed (and lost) through legal and social struggles during this period of transformation. This case may also contribute to the debates on the confiscation of Armenian endowed properties in the post-genocide period by shedding light on how those endowments were established in the first place.

The power of the Allahverdiyans, dependent as it was upon personal relations, was not free from challenges, which arose for personal and structural reasons. The unresolved lawsuit

that Abraham Allahverdiyan filed against the local merchant Grigor Bisiloğlu in the mid-nineteenth century illustrates that the patriarch of this powerful family, despite his standing in the imperial capital and the power he had once exercised even from afar, was unable to exert his will in his hometown; his sons had no better luck. Despite their efforts, the Allahverdiyans' power in Erzurum had waned, for it was no longer the city that they had left at the turn of the century. Although they maintained their ties with the local Muslim elite through tax farming collaborations, their partners among the city's ulema were not in power anymore. The grand-notables of the ancien régime declined together. Moreover, in the pre-Tanzimat period, the Pasha and local elite had represented the state in the provinces, whereas in the Tanzimat period the state was being transformed into a massive bureaucratic organization with various institutions and administrative, judicial, and executive branches, each dominated by different power groups (often struggling among themselves). The Allahverdiyans' absence from Erzurum during this transformation was fundamental to their losing control over provincial affairs as time passed. The social niches that they left were occupied by lesser notables, and even by their former agents.

The case of the Allahverdiyans contributes to our knowledge about the history of the *amiras* in Istanbul. At first glance, the Allahverdiyans' story parallels the narrative of the demise of *amira* power in the late 1850s and 1860s along general lines. However, a closer look at their history in their ancient hometown, Erzurum, reveals that the structural reasons for their demise do not fit this framework perfectly. Certainly, in the imperial center the *amiras* were replaced by European financial capital; likewise, the *esnaf* emerged as an opposing power in administering the community affairs, and liberal intellectuals challenged the *amiras* ideologically—these were

all developments that took place in Istanbul.²⁰⁰ But I contend that the great families' fall also related to their loss of control in the provinces, which were themselves undergoing transformation. The emergence of a different Armenian elite in Erzurum, examined in the following chapters, reflects this transformation.



²⁰⁰ For the challenge of the liberal intellectuals known as the Young Armenians, see Barsoumian, *The Armenian Amira Class of Istanbul*, 121–125; Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire*, 59–74.

Chapter 2: A Man of the New Order: Kürkçübaşı Agop and Tax Farming, Provisioning the Army, and Bargaining Loyalty

In the year 1872, Bishop Tevkants went to Erzurum/Karin with the goal of supervising the reforms in the Armenian community. There the bishop met with the local notables. Later, in his memoirs, the bishop commented briefly on their characters and achievements. Among those Armenian notable individuals/families (*gerdastan*), one stands out due the bishop's severe criticism, namely Makaryan [Kürkçübaşı] Agop Efendi. The bishop stated:

The Makaryan notable-family, over which Makaryan [H]akob Efendi presides. [He] who has not moved yet to Polis, has fame and influence in the government of the province of Karin [Erzurum]. Because he engaged in contracting, he obtained great wealth. However, he never had mercy and care for the poor and villagers, but mercilessly oppressed them, and especially [those] in the villages of Taron region [Bitlis and Mush]. [H]akob Efendi appears to be a mild man, speaks dispassionately, works without getting tired—if he had literacy and honor [*parkeshtutyun*; *namus*], there is no doubt that he would have been the most significant person in Armenia with [his] wits. However, the above-mentioned two vices and his son's ill-natured course of action cast a dark shadow on his glory and honor.¹

Bishop Tevkants' statement concerning Makaryan [H]agop Efendi (known as Kürkçübaşı) was written down in a period when reformist clergy like the bishop began to voice their criticisms against Armenian notables in the provinces.² This anecdote clearly shows the approach of the reformist Armenian clergy to reform in the Armenian community, and how they saw some of the Armenian notables as a threat to the new social order they envisioned in the late 1860s and early 1870s. This chapter deals with the ways in which Kürkçübaşı Agop Efendi

¹ Yeremia Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan 1872–1873 tt.*, ed. Hakob Poghosyan, (Yerevan: Hayastani GAH, 1991), 40.

² Yaşar Tolga Cora, “Osmanlı Taşrasındaki Ermeniler Üzerine Olan Tarihyazımında Sınıf Analizinin Eksikliği,” *Praxis* 39 (2015): 40–41.

emerged as one of the main notables in Erzurum in the 1850s in the context of early Ottoman reforms and the Crimean War. I argue that in this period the modern Ottoman state was constructed in Erzurum and the surrounding regions as a result of a symbiosis between bureaucrats in Istanbul and in Erzurum and the local non-Muslim notables. This symbiosis was the new imperial order: it was a product of the Ottoman reform attempts which aimed to modernize the state apparatus and most importantly to dismantle the basis of the fiscal, administrative, and military power of the grand-notables of the earlier age. Kürkçübaşı Agop's biography shows in detail that the non-Muslim notables participated in the new imperial order as active agents.

The symbiosis between the center, local bureaucrats, and local non-Muslim notables rested on two bases. On the one hand, tax farming, moneylending, and provisioning the army formed its economic basis. On the other, debates around loyalty to the empire and personal definition of patriotism formed personal attachments to the imperial order. Each of these issues constitutes one axis of this chapter. Thus, the first axis of the chapter is Kürkçübaşı's involvement in different business transactions, particularly tax farming contracts, which linked these different parties with one another. In his own words, the notable was "occupied with trade, moneylending and sometimes tax farming."³ These activities would take place mainly in the period before the Crimean War, but some continued during and after the war as well. In that period, the notable engaged in tax farming on varying scales and in different fields of the economy. As a part of the Tanzimat reforms, the Ottoman state had attempted various ways to reform its revenue collection system, including diffusing it to smaller farms in order to avoid their being controlled by a single magnate, as had been the case in the "age of *ayans*." However,

³ B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 232-85, "Kürkçübaşı Agop'un istintâkı," 18 Muharrem 1273 (18 September 1856).

this new form of collection resulted in major social change, especially in the provinces, where the new system gave rise to a new group of notables. Kürkçübaşı Agop belonged to that group. This phenomenon, the rise of a new group of notables—the *eşraf*—might seem to contradict the Ottoman efforts at fiscal, administrative, and military centralization; however, it did not. The centralizing state's primary concern was to limit the financial means of the grand-*ayans* of the previous age, who had been controlling the provincial revenues and building their political and in many cases their military power on the basis of those revenues. As I will show, the new notables, *eşraf* like Kürkçübaşı Agop, were supported by the state in order to create a new order to replace the former one of the grand-*ayans*.

The central state made two moves. First, the reform-minded elite in the center undertook a series of reforms to restructure the provincial governments, namely the office of the governors, administrative assemblies and various institutions including the provincial treasury, to destroy potential alliances that would form relations similar to those between the grand-*ayans* of the earlier period and their political allies in the capital. And second, as I examined in the case of the Allahverdiyans in the previous chapter, when the age of the grand notables came to an end at the time of the early Tanzimat regime, the great non-Muslim moneylenders, who were the personal bankers of the grand-*ayans* or personal treasurers of the pashas in the provinces, also began to lose their prominence in the local social order. The imperial state empowered non-Muslim notables as independent agents in order to dissociate economic power from political and military power in the provinces. This resulted in the dismantling of the military, administrative and fiscal bases of the previous age, and the cooperation of new and different parties around tax farming rights (*iltizam*). Due to this cooperation, the state authorities never, except in the first years of the Tanzimat, attempted to remove tax farming completely, but instead changed its shape and

integrated it into the “new” revenue collection system.⁴ The financial lacuna that emerged in the provinces during the turmoil of the early Tanzimat was therefore filled by the “new” non-Muslim notables; whereas the administrative lacuna was filled mostly by the Muslim *eşraf*, some of whom had grand-*ayan* origins.⁵ The imperial order of the Tanzimat was thus a symbiosis between authorities at the center and in the provinces and the local (and lesser) notables in the provinces, cemented by their shared interest in revenue collection and “corruption.”⁶

In this context it was not a coincidence that Bishop Tevkants underlined the fact that Makaryan Kürkçübaşı Agop never moved to Istanbul. The notable’s career began as a “protégé” of a local moneylender, Muradoğlu Karapet, who also joined the ranks of major moneylenders in Istanbul—indeed, he was the last from Erzurum to move to the capital. Kürkçübaşı Agop, however, became the major Armenian notable of the province of Erzurum. He did not move to Istanbul because by his time there were enough political and economic opportunities—i.e., tax

⁴ Some scholars consider the fall of the regime of revenue collection directly by agents, called *muhassallık*, as one of the main problems of the early Tanzimat regime. Abdülatif Şener, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Vergi Sistemi* (Istanbul: İşaret, 1990), 41–44. Nadir Özbek, on the other hand, criticizes the view in the scholarship that considers the fall of the *muhassallık* system as a complete return to tax farming, and claims that these systems coexisted in time. Nadir Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli: Osmanlı’da Vergi, Siyaset ve Toplumsal Adalet (1839–1908)* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015), 47.

⁵ On the transformation of descendants of the grand *ayans* of the eighteenth century and their integration into the system as local bureaucrats in the nineteenth century, see Ercüment Kuran, “Ondokuzuncu Yüzyıl’da Anadolu’nun Sosyal Tabakalaşmasında Ayanların Yeri,” *Tarih ve Sosyoloji Semineri 28–29 Mayıs 1990* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1991), 163–168; Ercüment Kuran, “Ayanlığın Kaldırılmasından Sonra Anadolu’da Sosyal ve Ekonomik Durum (1840–1871),” in *V. Milletlerarası Türkiye Sosyal ve İktisat Tarihi Kongresi, Tebliğler* (Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1990), 287–290; Saraçoğlu more recently pointed out the continuation of pre-Tanzimat notables’ position in the local administration through local assemblies, see M. Safa Saraçoğlu, “Resilient Notables: Looking at the Transformation of the Ottoman Empire from the Local Level,” in *Contested Spaces of Nobility in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Charles Lipp and Matthew P. Romaniello (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 257–77.

⁶ Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli*, 34–35. The shared interests in revenues immediately bring the issue of “corruption” of bureaucrats to mind in the context of the early Tanzimat state, a major problem that will be dealt with later in the chapter. Here, however, I suggest that corruption should be understood within the broader transformation of the state apparatus where offices were detached from the monetary functions which had been historically associated with them. As a part of this process, the moneylenders of the pashas of the pre-Tanzimat period (like the Allahverdiyans), who were responsible both for maintaining the provincial treasury and the private purse of a pasha, were replaced by individuals like Kürkçübaşı. The latter were not associated with a particular pasha and were mainly independent in their decision-making. Thus the “trio” of provincial governor, his representative to the Porte and his moneylender (*sarraf*), as examined in the first chapter, lost its function. “Corruption” of an office holder emerged in this major transformation from early-modern to modern statehood, and could be taken as an important aspect of the alliance formation of pashas and independent merchant/entrepreneurs.

farms and business provisioning the army—open to him in the province. More importantly, these opportunities could be reached through the social networks and cooperation that existed among the authorities in the center, bureaucrats in the provinces, and the local notables.

The second axis of the chapter is the Russo-Ottoman War of 1853–1856, known in the scholarship as the Crimean War. The war, in which Britain, France participated on the Ottoman side in 1854 and the Kingdom of Sardinia joined them in 1855, is considered a turning point in the history of the Ottoman Empire. Scholars have placed great emphasis on the diplomatic, economic, and political aspects of the war. On the diplomatic front, the Ottoman Empire was taken into the “Concert of Europe” and its territorial integrity was guaranteed by the Treaty of Paris in 1856. Historians also note that the war had an even a more important impact on the balance of powers in Europe, with questions being raised about the future of the Ottoman Empire.⁷ In the economic sphere, the loans from allies to cover its expenses are considered a major factor in the growing dependence of the empire on European capital. These were the first wave of long-term loans at very unfavorable rates, to be followed by more of the same.⁸ Besides these diplomatic and financial aspects, the Crimean War and its aftermath have been considered the period that unleashed the “second and the final phase” of the Tanzimat reforms.⁹ The Reform Edict (*Islahat Fermanı*) of 1856, which followed the Treaty of Paris, bolstered the promises of earlier reforms and even opened new areas in the reform agenda. The will of the European powers to push the Ottoman state towards more reforms in various fields of life—most of all on the status of her Christian subjects—was very strong and resulted in various legislative changes

⁷ Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923: A Study in International Relations* (London, Macmillan: St. Martin’s Press, 1966), 143 ff.

⁸ Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820–1913: Trade, Investment and Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 56–61.

⁹ Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), 52.

after the war.¹⁰ In all of these developments, however, domestic politics were equally important. As I argue below, in the domestic sphere of politics the challenges of the Crimean War itself, the urgent need for man-power, supplies, and money, led the bureaucrats in the center to change the imperial rule. Based on the experiences of “the age of *ayans*” and the needs of the Tanzimat period and the war, the government and its subjects, both Muslim and non-Muslim, reevaluated their relations: “bargaining” took place, using the new political vocabulary of “patriotism” and “loyalty.” The biography of Makaryan Kürkçübaşı Agop Efendi represents this change very vividly.

The scholarship on the war itself, particularly the Ottoman war efforts, is relatively less-developed when compared to the numerous works on British, French and Russian involvement¹¹ As a result, particularly “secondary” and “softer” issues such as the logistics of the war and its impact on the population of the war front remain underexamined.¹² The lack of interest in the non-military aspects of the Crimean war is an interesting phenomenon, as historians agree that the war was a “proto-world war,” joined in by the world-powers of the day.¹³ In the words of

¹⁰ Carter Vaughn Findley, “The Tanzimat,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, v. 4, *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 18–19.

¹¹ A recent work by Candan Badem can be considered as the first serious effort by a historian from Turkey to examine the war, consulting Ottoman (Turkish), Russian and Western sources and providing an insightful account of Ottoman-Russian relations in the mid-nineteenth century; although only one chapter (chapter 3: “Battles and Diplomacy during the War”) is on the war, whereas others are on its origins and impact. Candan Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War (1853–1856)* (Boston: Brill, 2010). For the literature on the war in different languages, see Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 1–45.

¹² This disinterest is visible in current works on the topic. For instance, the Ottoman Archives’ publication of a selection of documents on the Crimean War, titled *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kırım Savaşı* (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2006) does not include a single document on the provisioning of the army. There are a few exceptions to this. Eyyub Şimşek’s examination of the war’s social and economic effect on the province of Trabzon, with interesting notes on corruption and intra-communal relations, is one example. Eyyub Şimşek, “Kırım Savaşı’nın Trabzon Eyaleti’ne Toplumsal Etkileri,” *History Studies* 5 (2013): 273–291. Another exception is Figen Taşkın’s dissertation, “Kırım Savaşı’nın Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’na Ekonomik Etkileri ve İlaşe Sorunu” (PhD Dissertation, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2007) which is an examination of the economic policies of the government, including the problem of provisioning various military units and İstanbul during the Crimean War. Taşkın focuses on İstanbul and carries a legalistic approach (focusing on state regulations), which makes it very difficult to generalize her findings to other fronts during the war.

¹³ Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 1.

Virginia H. Aksan, the war both “closed the Napoleonic Age and also opened the imperial surge to total-war of the First World War.”¹⁴

The belligerent states mobilized a great number of men on seven different fronts from Sevastopol in Crimea to the Baltic front and from Silistra in Bulgaria to Kars on the border of Turkey and Russia. People and animals behind the front also participated in the war effort. As already noted, the Ottoman government had to take loans from allies to cope with its war-expenses. But that was not the only means it resorted to; the government also had to reach out to the population and ask for war-time “donations.” This exemplified the new relations between the state and her subjects, and the change of name for such financial mobilizations from “tax” to “donation/assistance” (*iâne*) was a clear indicator of that change.¹⁵ Non-Muslim participation was essential in this endeavor.

Local notables, officials, and governors, all with different interests and obligations, participated in the war effort from behind the combat-lines and cooperated with the military commanders. The intermediaries who connected these parties of different interests were the army contractors (*kontratocu*). Massive amounts of provisions were to be forwarded to the war front, which brought accusations of corruption against the bureaucrats, pashas and contractors. Indeed, for the British commanders in the front—if not for the diplomatic corps in Istanbul—fighting

¹⁴ Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700–1870: An Empire Besieged* (Harlow: Longman/Pearson, 2007), 458.

¹⁵ It should be added here that historians disagree on whether this donation was voluntary or not. For instance Candan Badem claims the *iâne* was a mandatory tax, however accepts that “there was a certain element of enthusiasm at the beginning of the war, especially in the provinces, it must have waned in time...” Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 319. However, the fact that the state approached its subjects through discourse of “donation,” therefore associating them with its own cause, was an important development. A. Üner Turgay argues that the “tax” is a continuation of the extraordinary taxes of the earlier periods and emphasizes its religious aspect, stating that it was first collected as “*cihadiyye*” (i.e. Holy War) donation. A. Üner Turgay, “*iâne-i cihâdiyye*: A Multi-Ethnic, Multi-Religious Contribution to Ottoman War Effort,” *Studia Islamica* 64 (1986): 115–124. However, the fact that the “war” (*harbiyye*) was substituted for “Holy War” in the official name of the *iâne* for the rest of war might be taken as an indicator of the Ottoman state’s efforts to integrate non-Muslims to its war efforts.

against corruption in the Ottoman Army was no less important than fighting the enemy.¹⁶ In the case of provisioning the Ottoman army on the Caucasian front and the corruption related to it, Kürkçübaşı Agop Efendi stood out as a major actor. The notable became the major army contractor due to his existing social and economic capital from before the war. However, the involvement in the contracting business by non-Muslims was also related to the new imperial order.

One of the bases of power of the grand-*ayans* of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was provisioning the imperial armies while contributing manpower.¹⁷ The authorities in Istanbul had to rely on the grand-*ayans* to provide the supplies and satisfy the transportation needs of the imperial armies. This resulted in the augmentation of the power of the grand-*ayans* in the provinces. The Tanzimat state, which aimed to break down the constituent elements of the grand-*ayans*' power, supported the rise of local non-Muslim notables to occupy the role of supplying the army that the grand-*ayans* had previously fulfilled. It should also be noted here that, interestingly enough, one of the very rare works in Turkish on the logistics of the Ottoman Army underlines the fact (though without showing any evidence) that the contractors were ethnically Turkish.¹⁸ As this chapter will show, this assertion is baseless. The opposite was true: the state allowed non-Muslim notables to take over that particular function of the grand-*ayans*. Likewise this chapter negates the prevailing nationalist assertion that Armenians participated in

¹⁶ James Blennerhasset Conacher, *Britain and the Crimea, 1855–56: Problems of War and Peace* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 131–132.

¹⁷ Virginia H. Aksan, "Canikli Ali Pasa (d. 1785), A Provincial Portrait in Loyalty and Disloyalty," in *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire: Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi*, eds. Eleni Gara, M. Erdem Kabadayı, Christoph K. Neumann (Istanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), 215, 219.

¹⁸ "The first class supplies (food provisions) that are needed by the Army of Eastern Anatolia, were obtained through a system called *iltizam* at the army headquarters. (*iltizam* [was given to] a trustworthy Turkish contractor [müteâhid] that was elected by the state.)" Hikmet Süer, *Osmanlı Devri Osmanlı-Rus Kırım Harbi Kafkas Cephesi Harekatı (1853–1856)* (Ankara: Genelkurmay ATASE Yayınları, 1986), 157.

the war exclusively on the side of the Russians in order to gain their freedom.¹⁹ They also served the Ottoman side and their notables bargained with the Ottoman authorities to attain more power.

The third axis of the chapter is the “ideological” basis of such symbiosis in the context of the Crimean War. As already mentioned, due to the pressing needs of the war and the changing governmentality of the state, certain non-Muslim elements in the society began to “bargain” over their position in Ottoman society. Kürkçübaşı Agop was able to adapt himself to various developments during the period of the Tanzimat. He adapted not only to new state institutions, bureaucratic procedures, and new financial opportunities, but also to the new imperial order. The order had provided a space to the notables, in which they could maneuver over their subjecthood. The “bargain” was over the rights and obligations of the subjects and the state, and was a major step in the making of the modern Ottoman state. According to Charles Tilly, “the core of what we call ‘citizenship,’ indeed, consists of multiple bargains hammered out by rulers and ruled in the course of struggles over the means of state action, especially the making of war.”²⁰ This was not the first time that the Ottoman ruling elite had reconfigured its relations with the population in support of its war efforts. The whole effort of Ottoman modernization of the army, particularly the creation of a new army in the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, was, according to Virginia Aksan, based on “ideology,” and the important place of Islam as the religion of all the soldiers. And it

¹⁹ For instance the section on the Crimean War in the “official” history of Armenians concludes with the following remarks: “Armenians’ very active participation in that war was conditioned with the perspective of reaching the realization of the dream of liberty with the power of Russian arms and presence of many high ranking Armenians in the Russian army who were entrusted very important services.” Hakob Muradyan, “Hay Zhoghovrdi Masnaktsutyuni 1853–1856 tt. Ghrimi Paterazmin.” in *Hayots Patmutyun hator: 3: Nor Zhamanakashrdjan*, ed. Vladimir Barkhudaryan et al., (Yerevan: GAA Patmutyun Institut, 2010), 307.

²⁰ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and States, AD 990–1992* (Cambridge, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 102.

had a long-lasting impact on the empire and its peoples, and even on the formation of the Turkish nation-state.²¹

However, as I argue below, this was not the only development that took place in the relations between Ottoman war efforts and “ideology,” which changed throughout the long nineteenth century. During the war, the central authorities tried to control both international and domestic public opinion.²² In those efforts, discourses of “loyalty” to the Ottoman state and “patriotism” began to appear during the war and were placed at the core of relations between the state and subjects and further developed, particularly after the war. The heavy financial, diplomatic and military burden of the Crimean War necessitated the development of new ways to organize these relations with a new governmentality. It was an interactive development, taking place in spheres outside the discourse of “loyalty” promoted by Istanbul, and most importantly required the participation of power holders in the provinces. Non-Muslim notables, like Kürkçübaşı, due to his double role of army contractor and provincial notable, were actors in this development. The notable “bargained” over the issues of loyalty and patriotism with the Ottoman imperial authorities in the center, while these terms were simultaneously being re-defined as a part of these negotiations. Assuring the loyalty and “patriotism” of the notable’s community was one aspect of the bargain, and their loyalty to the state was materialized, or expected to materialize, in service to the empire during the war. From the notable’s perspective, however, concessions from the state for their own and their community’s privileges were expected in return. This process of “bargaining” was a new development, indicating a new governmentality of the Ottoman state in the age of reform. It did not stem from the pressure of

²¹ Virginia Aksan, “Breaking the Spell of the Baron de Tott: Reframing the Question of Military Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1760–1830,” *The International History Review* 24 (2002): 275–276.

²² Fatma Özyiğit Coşkun, “Ottoman Official Discourse and its Reflections during the Crimean War,” (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, İstanbul, 2010), 9–13.

European powers, but was based on Ottoman realities, unique to the needs of making a modern state. However, details of these bargains did not necessarily reach the population, as they were still carried out in the traditional way—that is, through local notables. They eventually led to a new definition of more inclusive and individual subjecthood, the Ottomanism of a later era. And with this, a different set of Armenian notables became its champions, as I will examine in the fourth chapter.

Structure of the Chapter

Following these three axes, in this chapter, through the biography of Makaryan Kürkçübaşı Agop, I will examine the transformation of Erzurum society in general and its Armenian community in particular from the late 1840s to the aftermath of the Crimean War. I am primarily concerned with Armenian notables outside the imperial capital, their participation in the imperial social and economic order, and their role as power brokers between the state authorities and local communities, and particularly their role in the making of the modern Ottoman state, in this particular case during the Crimean War.

In the first section of the chapter, I will seek answers to questions related to how one became a notable in provincial society, and what financial dealings were required with the high-ranking state authorities in Istanbul and in Erzurum. I will examine the origins of such a person, the ways in which a notable became the notable of a town. Kürkçübaşı's case differs from the histories of other notables examined in this dissertation. As I observe below, he climbed up the steps of rank only over time, working first as junior partner to more important notables, and eventually “made himself” a notable. Besides the financial aspects of Kürkçübaşı's tax farming contracts, I will reconstruct the web of relations that he maintained with the rest of the society. My major source is his personal communications with the highest-ranking members of Erzurum society. These social relations show us the complex interpersonal relations and their impact on

business, which is not easily observable in other kinds of sources. In that section, I will also examine another type of investment, land-ownership in the hinterland of Erzurum. In addition to showing the notable's expanding control over the countryside, land-ownership allows us to examine his ability to circumvent the Tanzimat regulations, again thanks to his local connections.

In the second section of the chapter, I will focus on the structure of the business of provisioning the army during the Crimean War. As already stated, the war resulted in mobilization of an immense number of men on various, widely-separated fronts and required a new understanding of army logistics. With his social networks, the notable supplied grain and other goods to the front and in return accumulated wealth, as mentioned in the quote from Bishop Tevkants at the beginning of the chapter.

Due to the scope of the operation and the amount of money involved in it, the supplying of the army also paved the way for allegations of corruption, which included army contractors like Kürkçübaşı and major bureaucrats and officers who were summoned to Istanbul for investigation. By examining the interrogation reports I reconstruct the structure of the army provisioning business. In that section, I examine other businesses the notable carried out during and right after the war, both of which give us clues about the impact of the mobilization of troops and circulation of goods on the local economies. In the last part of that section, I will focus on the notable's reinstallation as the main tax farmer in the region after the investigation, and the problems he had with artisans of the city. These problems will introduce the theme of intra-communal conflict in society, which I examine in the last chapter of the dissertation.

In the final section of this chapter, I will return to the interrogation records with different questions, namely the strategies involved and their relation to then current politics.²³ I will address the changing nature of relations between the imperial government at the center and its non-Muslim, in this case Apostolic Armenian, subjects in the provinces during the Crimean War. This change was especially important in the context of the state's attempts to control or at least to manipulate "public opinion" through patriotic news coverage and obligatory "charity" such as war assistance/donation (*iâne-i harbiyye*). As I argue, these developments were not one-sided and top-down projects initiated from the center that the subjects in the provinces accepted passively. Instead, the discourses of loyalty and patriotism were accepted as a political asset, and their nature and content was negotiated between these two seemingly unequal parties very openly.

This negotiation is examined through a very rare document, a memorandum (*müzekkere*) by Kürkçübaşı Agop, on his services to the government during the war. That document was part of the already-mentioned investigation into corruption in the Ottoman Army. In order to defend himself before the interrogations began in Istanbul, the notable wrote the memorandum, highlighting his version of the events. These included the circumstances of his exile for spying for the Russians, before he was summoned to Istanbul for interrogation. As a notable with experience in local politics, he was very conscious of the new asset of patriotism and its special value in a borderland province like Erzurum. More interestingly and importantly for

²³ Scholars have recently begun to use interrogation reports (*istintâknâme*). Some historians, such as Can Nacar, who reconstructs the history of tobacco workers through these reports, use these sources as traces left by groups such as workers who did not leave many historical sources. Can Nacar, "Tobacco Workers in the Late Ottoman Empire: Fragmentation, Conflict, and Collective Struggle" (PhD Dissertation, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2010). Other historians have used these reports to understand the strategies employed in them. For a good examples of this approach, see Milen Petrov, "Everyday Forms of Compliance: Subaltern Commentaries on Ottoman Reform, 1864–1868," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46 (2004): 730–759. In this chapter, I use the interrogation records of Kürkçübaşı Agop and others both to reconstruct the history of a particular institution, army contracting, and to understand the narrative strategies and political agendas displayed in the reports.

understanding later developments in the region, when the notable negotiated over his loyalty and patriotism, he distinctly stated his difference, i.e., Armenianness. That is, he made it clear that he was loyal to the imperial state and served it as *an Armenian*. Secondly, he claimed to speak in the name of the Armenians of Erzurum, a strategy that aimed not only to secure an imperial pardon for the various accusations against him, but also to reaffirm his position as the leader of the Sultan's loyal Armenian subjects in Erzurum. Therefore, a close examination of Kürkçübaşı's case allows us to evaluate the non-Muslim communities' "patriotism" by focusing on negotiations of the very concept of patriotism and loyalty and the process of their (re)definition. As noted, these negotiations would eventually result in the "Ottomanism" of later eras.

Kürkçübaşı's Early Years in Erzurum

I cannot ascertain the date when Makaryan Agop came to Erzurum or why he was called Kürkçübaşı, literally, head of fur merchants, also an honorary title. The only clue that Makaryan Agop was engaged in the fur trade comes from an anecdote in his interrogation report, which relates that the notable was forced to sell a very valuable lynx fur to the governor of Erzurum during the Crimean War, allegedly for a price less than the notable had originally paid for it.²⁴ There is only one document stating that the notable obtained the title deed to a piece of land in the vicinity of Erzurum in 1244 (1828). I believe he came to the region around the time of or shortly after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828–29, as the date in the document which I examine below cannot be verified and is problematic. However, what is known for sure is that he was not a social or economic upstart. He had migrated from the town of Arapgir (Arabkir), known for the

²⁴ Alongside the lynx fur, the notable sold a Lahori shawl to the governor for the total price of 5,000 gurush. According to the notable, they were worth 7,000 and 3,000 gurush, respectively. *B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD.*, 194-83, 18 Muharrem 1273 (18 September 1856). Due to lack of other evidence, it is not clear whether Kürkçübaşı had engaged in trade in such luxury items or just used them for establishing connections with high officials.

out-migration of its inhabitants to other towns in interior Anatolia, northern Syria, and Istanbul.²⁵

The rise in production of *manusa*, a rough cotton cloth, and its trade in the first half of the nineteenth century might be the reason for capital accumulation in the hands of a group of Armenian merchants and their movement to other towns as entrepreneurs.²⁶

In the mid-1840s, when both a population census and tax surveys were conducted in Erzurum, Kürkübaşı was a resident of the Ali Pasha neighborhood. He was recorded as being of middle height, wearing a moustache, and was at the age of 45.²⁷ This shows that Kürkübaşı Agop was born around the turn of the century. In the tax surveys his income was recorded at the very high amount of 3,000 gurush, while the average for Armenians in the town was 339.1 gurush. Most importantly Agop was a *beratlu tüccar*, that is, a merchant who had received privileges from the Porte to trade on favorable terms.²⁸ Besides his occupation as a merchant with credit and capital (*itibarlı ve sermayeli tüccarlık*), he owned a mill in the village of Tortan (Uzunark) in the district of Pasin-i Ulyâ.²⁹ The tax register which was created in the mid-

²⁵ For instance in the late 1840s the overwhelming majority of immigrant workers in Aleppo were from Arabgir and Sasun. This case is also interesting in terms of showing movements of seasonal workers and migrants in the mid-nineteenth century. Kuroki Hidemitsu, "Mobility of non-Muslims in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Aleppo," in *The Influence of Human Mobility in Muslim Societies*, ed. Kuroki Hikemitsu (New York: Kegan Paul International, 2003), 130.

²⁶ Donald Quataert, *Manufacturing and Technology Transfer in the Ottoman Empire, 1800–1914* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1992), 85–86; Vural Genç, "Mamasoğulları: An Armenian Family of Investors in the 19th Century in Arabkir" (paper presented at the Forty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the MESA, New Orleans, October 10–13, 2013).

²⁷ B.O.A., NFS.d., 2725, [45]. Kürkübaşı Agop moved to the neighborhood of Topçuoğlu on 21 May 1849. Ibid. Whether this move might be considered as a reflection of the rise of Kürkübaşı in the local society is an interesting question. According to tax surveys, Ali Paşa neighborhood hosted the largest number of Armenian households (116) with an average income of 339.1 gurush per household, whereas there were only 7 Armenian households in the Topçuoğlu neighborhood, with an average income of 878.6 per household. Haydar Çoruh, "Erzurum: A Border City of East Anatolia," in *The Ottoman State and Societies in Change: A Study of the Nineteenth-Century Temettuat Registers*, eds. Hayashi Kayako and Mahir Aydın (New York: Kegan Paul, 2004), 200–201. However, the tax surveys seem to be incomplete for Topçuoğlu neighborhood, as the census which was run a few years before the tax surveys recorded 56 households. B.O.A., NFS.d., 2725, [25–33].

²⁸ B.O.A., ML.VRD.TMT.d., 6894, 9.

²⁹ B.O.A., ML.VRD.TMT.d., 6894, 9.

1840s—that is, soon after the notable’s move to Erzurum—shows that Kürkçübaşı Agop already possessed some financial capital when he moved to the city.

Both the fact that Kürkçübaşı Agop was referred to specifically in the tax records as being of Arapgir origin, and the fact that there was only one other male member of the family, his son Karapet, age 5, indicate that Agop migrated from Arapgir with his nuclear family without members of his extended family, and recently in the 1840s. This was important since, although he had economic capital, Kürkçübaşı Agop had to transform his economic power into social capital in Erzurum society. He relied for business transactions on networks of people from a wide range of localities and also on members of his immediate family. Lack of ties with the local Erzurum society, as shown throughout this chapter, would prove to be an important issue in the future in the notable’s career.

Making of a Notable: Tax Farms and Social Power in the Early Tanzimat Context

The Tanzimat reforms began to be applied in Erzurum only after 1844. It was no coincidence that this was the period when Kürkçübaşı Agop began to work on building a social base in the region. He used different means to make the most of the developments under the Tanzimat. He used his economic capital as a means to involve himself in different networks, both within his community and in the broader society. These were very extensive networks, linking the province to Istanbul, Muslim officials to Armenian notables, and including Muslim women of the high class. With his tax farming agreement with the government, as the customs official of Erzurum, he extended his networks and increased his wealth, as the two went hand-in-hand in the period.

A Notable “On His Own” and the Local Armenian Community

Kürkçübaşı Agop fulfilled the role of tax collector of the Armenian community in Erzurum. From the debates on Kürkçübaşı and his partner’s claim to possess the right to collect various local taxes from the community, submit them to state functionaries and to the Patriarchate, and to give credits when the community could not pay the required amount, it is understood that in the period preceding Tanzimat, this was one of the main functions of a notable. As expected, this important position was not uncontested, especially when it was occupied by a newcomer to the town. In 1845/46, Kürkçübaşı Agop of Arapgir and Muradoğlu Karapet of Palu, “who had formerly moved to Erzurum and accepted it as their homeland” (*mukaddema Erzurum’a nakl ve mütevattın olan*), collected various taxes of the Apostolic Armenian community in Erzurum. These ranged from the tax that the community paid to the government, to the tax that the community collected itself as a contribution to the maintenance of community buildings and other extraordinary expenditures.³⁰ Agop and Karapet’s collection of taxes was a normal act before the Tanzimat, yet resulted in two problems. First, the elders of the community contested Agop and Karapet’s position as notables, and secondly, they collected a much higher amount than was demanded by the government and the needs of the community.

The terminology used in the official document to refer to Agop and Karapet’s position is quite noteworthy. According to the members of the Provincial Assembly (*Meclis-i Kebir*), they acted “as leaders of the community on their own” (*hod-be-hod kocabaşlık suretiyle*) which shows that neither the government nor the community had recognized their power as notables yet.³¹ However, the real problem was the extra amount that they collected—56,718 guruh

³⁰ B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 85-68, 1 Receb 1263 (15 June 1847). Among the taxes collected there was no mention of *cizye* (poll-tax). This indicates that the collection of *cizye* was carried out separately from the other taxes on the community.

³¹ Ibid.

instead of 33,395, the amount the community leaders and state authorities had previously agreed upon. The balance, 23,323 gürush, was mostly collected either to pay the needs of the community or as donations. These included articles such as 3,000 gürush for the yearly salary of the community leader—a practice made void after the proclamation of the Tanzimat in the region.³² Upon protests from the leaders of the Armenian community, Agop and Karapet were called to the Provincial Assembly, which consisted of high-ranking state functionaries and religious dignitaries including those of the Armenian Apostolic community. The two notables admitted their fault in collecting the excess amount in question. They claimed that since the Tanzimat had only just begun to be applied in the region, they did not possess sufficient knowledge of the new imperial order. They were acquitted without any penalty, ordered to give the money they collected to the community treasury, and advised not to act against the new order.³³ The changes brought forward by the Tanzimat reforms, particularly in the field of community taxes, helped entrepreneurs like Kürkçübaşı Agop to establish themselves as major figures in the local Apostolic Armenian community as “notables.” They benefited from the period of uncertainty and change in the imperial system. As is well known, the collection of communal taxes by non-Muslim notables was not a new practice. Studies on Greek communities in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reveal “a new powerful class of Christian ‘notables cum merchant-financiers,’ who benefited from the above transformations [i.e. changes in the Ottoman fiscal system] and enhanced their leading position in the Christian populations.”³⁴

In the pre-Tanzimat period these notables also controlled community institutions and as they

³² Ibid. These expenses included money for maintenance of local churches (2241 gürush), yearly wage of the community leader [*kocabaşı*] Manuk (3000 gürush), donations to the Patriarchate in Istanbul (750 gürush), fee for tax registers (800 gürush), armed guard employed during the tax survey (860 gürush), etc.

³³ “...vukû‘-i Tanzimat-i Hayriyye’nin bidâyeti olmak hasebiyle lâıkiyle nizâmat-i seniyyeye adem-i vukûflarından neşet eylediğini.” Ibid.

³⁴ Socrates Petmezas, “Christian Communities in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Greece: Their Fiscal Functions,” in *Minorities in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Molly Greene (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005), 71–72.

increased their control over the taxation system of the community they “isolated” individuals from the Ottoman tax collectors and fostered economic paternalism over their communities.³⁵ Moreover, the tax that the two notables in Erzurum collected included some extraordinary items, for example the 10,000 gurush to be collected and paid for the “American physician’s losses that occurred during the revolt which was a result of the above-mentioned physician’s stirring up of the Protestants.”³⁶ Besides the interesting political and cultural aspect of this event, an early and violent encounter between Apostolic Armenians and a nascent Protestant community, it had a major social and economic importance.³⁷ A major extraordinary expenditure of that sort would have exceeded the financial capacity of the community and probably its communal treasury. So community members would have had to borrow money through ‘internal’ credit mechanisms controlled by local notables, who would step in and cover the extra expenditure.³⁸ There is no evidence at hand to describe the exact mechanisms of the lending process, however by collecting over the previously agreed amount, Kürkçübaşı and Karapet could have benefited from that credit market as well.

Thus, Kürkçübaşı’s early career both shared similarities with the careers of non-Muslim notables of earlier ages and showed significant differences, such as his involvement in tax farming contracts, both independently and in cooperation with the state authorities, which I examine in the following sections. As mentioned in the introduction, this was an era in which the

³⁵ Petmezas, “Christian Communities,” 89.

³⁶ “Erzurum’da kâ’in amerikalı hekimin protestan re’âyâ-yı mersûmeyi teraggumundan dolayı mukaddemâ vukû’ bulan ihtilâllerinde hekim-i mezbûrun zâyî’atı bedeline ale’l-hesab olunarak tevzî’-i mezkûre idhalen tahsîl eylemiş oldukları 10,000 [gurush].” *B.O.A., A.MKT.UM.*, 85-68, 1 Receb 1263 (15 June 1847).

³⁷ In the later periods, violent encounters between Apostolic Armenians and Protestants continued to take place in the region. As I argue elsewhere, such events were closely related with social-economic tensions in the region. For one such case, see Yaşar Tolga Cora, “Localizing Missionary Activities: Encounters between Tondrakians, Protestants and Apostolic Armenians in Khnus in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, eds. Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 109–132.

³⁸ Petmezas, “Christian Communities,” 91–93.

state was trying to increase its control over revenues by using lesser notables as opposed to the grand *ayans* of the previous age, who had largely disappeared by the 1830s. Kürkçübaşı's ability to maneuver in line with changes in the local society was one of the most important skills. That skill, together with his growing social capital, further carried Kürkçübaşı to a major position in society during the Crimean War.

Kürkçübaşı: Tax Farming and the Transformation from Protégé to Patron

Kürkçübaşı Agop's next big move was to obtain the tax farming rights of the Erzurum customs in 1850. Customs was one of the most lucrative sources of income in the entire empire. Due to the immense amount needed to obtain that tax farm, Agop, who had high aspirations to be a notable, had to form partnerships. In 1850, in partnership with Muradoğlu Karapet who was his partner collecting tax from the community, and the most important Muslim notable of the town, Cennetzade Abdullah Efendi, Agop obtained the tax farming rights of the Customs of Erzurum. As might be recalled from the previous chapter, the Allahverdiyans of Erzurum also had close connections with the Cennetzades [formerly known as Kara-Cehennemzades], engaging in various instances of collaboration based on financial interests at the highest echelons of local society. This also was not the first time that Muradoğlu Karapet and Cennetzade Abdullah collaborated with their economic and social power to obtain a tax farm. As will be shown in the next chapter, the two notables had obtained the tax farm of livestock tax of Erzurum in 1845. This time Agop joined them for different reasons and his partnership in the tax farm contributed to the growth of his power in different directions.

The tax farming contract of the Erzurum customs was obtained under rather peculiar circumstances, which reflect the ways provinces and the imperial center were connected to each other financially. In early January 1850, the farmer of the Erzurum customs, Mehmed Necmeddin Efendi, departed for Istanbul with the goal of securing his contract for the coming

year and negotiating with the government for the re-construction of the Trabzon-Tabriz road, which would increase traffic and hence custom revenues.³⁹ His negotiations seem to have failed as a certain Ali Agha obtained the tax farm for the year 1266 (1850/51), with a higher price of 3840 *kise* ($\cong$ 1,920,000 guruh).⁴⁰ However, this agreement was also revoked and the auction was renewed for the years of 1266 and 1267 (1850/51–1851/52). Mr. Brant, the British Consul in Erzurum, hints at the relations between statesmen in Istanbul and their men in Erzurum as the cause of the new auction.

Mr. Brant gives details of the agreement between three notables and their shares and investments in the tax farm: Cennetzade Abdullah, represented by his son Ziya, claimed two-fifths; Muradoğlu Karapet, represented by his son Petros, two-fifths; and Kürkçübaşı Agop, the remaining one-fifth. But, according to the consul, Agop's share did not mean much, "as he has no pecuniary means, is a creature of Carabet's, and a protégé of the Pasha's, it is supposed he figures for a share belonging to his Excellency."⁴¹ Consul Brant's views were shared by his French counterpart in Erzurum, who also acknowledged the potential of Kürkçübaşı, adding "his fortune is still in the making and [he] seeks to sneak everywhere to make money."⁴²

The details of the agreement show, however, that the historical picture was complex. Karapet was called to Istanbul by the government authorities in December 1848 and was declared *persona non grata* in his local community. His son nonetheless managed to obtain the right of conducting currency exchange (*mubâyaa*) in Erzurum in January 1849—another very lucrative business in a borderland province. Moreover, the consul further claimed that the tax

³⁹ N.A., F.O., 195-353, no. 1, From Consul Brant in Erzurum to Stanford Canning in Istanbul, 7 January 1850.

⁴⁰ B.O.A., I.DH., 210-12171, 2 Rebîü'l-âhir 1266 (15 February 1850).

⁴¹ N.A., F.O., 195-353, no. 18, From Consul Brant in Erzurum to Stanford Canning in Istanbul, 5 April 1850.

⁴² C.A.D.C., Affaires Économiques et Commerciales Correspondance Consulaire et Commerciale, Erzeroum: 1, no. 9, addressed to the Ministre Secrétaire d'État au Département des Affaires Étrangères in Paris, 28 March 1843.

farm of the Erzurum customs was first given to Tevfik Bey, “a favorite of Ali Pasha,” the famous Tanzimat statesman, for around 3,000 purses, and then it was resold to Karapet. However, the consul adds, “his name was not mentioned, the *firman* was taken out in the name of Ali Agha, a servant of Tevfik Bey, probably to conceal the real purchaser.”⁴³ If this is true, then there was a growing consciousness among the governing circles about obtaining tax farms during the Tanzimat period. This is in sharp contrast to the pre-Tanzimat era, when almost all of these agreements were controlled by the elite in Istanbul.

There are other evidences which show the complex relations between local Armenian notables and the Tanzimat statesmen in the capital. For instance, in September of 1849, despite the fact that an investigation into the misdeeds of Karapet, Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşid Pasha wrote to the governor of Erzurum ordering the governor to collect the various individuals’ unpaid debts to the Armenian notable Karapet, amounting to 143,645 guruh.⁴⁴ It should be also noted that Muradoğlu Karapet did not return to Erzurum, but became one of the last famous Armenian bankers to move and work in Istanbul. In short, the tax farming contracts not only connected different interest groups in society but also the provinces to the imperial center, and the Armenian notables to imperial bureaucrats. Kürkçübaşı’s involvement in these networks allowed him to extend his economic and social capital.

In that period, Kürkçübaşı Agop perfected his relations with the local government, most notably with Mazhar Pasha, the governor of Erzurum. In March 1852, for instance, the notable penned a testimonial (*mazbata*) with the Armenian Apostolic Bishop of Erzurum, Grigoris, in favor of the governor, and sent it to the Armenian Patriarchate. The bishop claimed to have been

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 8-78, 14 Şevvâl 1265 (2 September 1849).

forced to do so by the governor and claimed to have sent a private letter to the Patriarchate recanting his words in the testimonial. But in his dispatch concerning the petition, the British consul was suspicious of the bishop and could not (and did not) verify the retraction.⁴⁵ A few months later, Mazhar Pasha received an official letter of gratitude from the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate for his protection and care of Armenians.⁴⁶ This casts doubt on the bishop's supposed earlier retraction of his own laudatory comments. There is strong evidence that such signs of support from the local subject populations were needed by government officials in the provinces for their promotion.⁴⁷ The governor, who faced various challenges such as accusations of taking bribes, obtained a similar document from the artisans of the city in support of his governance. However, he was soon dismissed.⁴⁸ As I argue in a following section in detail, from the perspective of the new imperial order, the changing relations between segments of the society—governor, bishop and artisans—were a sign of the development of a different set of relations between the imperial state and its subjects in the Tanzimat era.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ The informant of the consul, an Armenian notable who had been asked to sign the memorial (*mazbata*) claimed to have asked the bishop about the sincerity of his praise of the governor. According to the informant, the bishop replied by stating that it was done under the orders of the governor and the bishop claimed to have sent a private letter to the Patriarchate recanting the *mazbata*. The British Consul Brant, who had an open anti-bishop stance due to the latter's persecution of the nascent Protestant movement in the town, could not verify the truth of this account. He also accused the bishop of being "servile flatterer of the Pasha, and does not protect flock from injustice and oppression, besides having become greedy of money, when before he was remarked for his disinterestedness." N.A., F.O., 195-353, no. 7, From Consul Brant in Erzurum to Stanford Canning in Istanbul, 30 March 1852.

⁴⁶ N.A., F.O., 195-353, no. 18, From Consul Brant in Erzurum to Stanford Canning in Istanbul, 8 May 1852.

⁴⁷ Similar examples can be multiplied. For instance in 1849, the Armenian clergy and notables of Van sent a memorandum to the Armenian Patriarchate praising the governor-general Reşid Pasha for his works in the region, particularly his assistance to Armenian peasants of the region to develop agriculture and city-folk to develop trade. The Patriarchate notified the government about the satisfaction of the Armenians of Van with the governor-general. B.O.A., A.DVN., 47-49, 6 Receb 1265 (28 May 1849). Likewise in 1862, the members of the administrative consul of the sub-district of Mardin and the people of the district had petitioned the central government for the promotion of Ali Bey, the governor (*kâimmakam*) of the district, to the rank of Pasha. B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 23 Safer 1279 (20 August 1862). It can never be ascertained, as in the case of Mazhar Pasha and the bishop of Erzurum, whether these memoranda were prepared under pressure from governors. However, even if that were true, it still shows that there was a new governmentality of the imperial center, ideally paying attention to local needs and promoting bureaucrats with some consideration for the populace's satisfaction.

⁴⁸ N.A., F.O., 195-353, no. 24, From Consul Brant in Erzurum to Stanford Canning in Istanbul, 15 June 1852.

⁴⁹ See the sub-section below: "Patriotism during the war: Armenians of Erzurum and the Role of Kürkçübaşı."

The testimonial of the notable and the bishop was driven by more practical causes, as well. It may not be a coincidence that Kürkçübaşı obtained the monopoly on timber in the forest of Soğanlı Dağ in the sub-province of Kars in the same period. The notable had bid 150,000 gurush per year and in the absence of other bidders, obtained it for an annual payment of 130,000 gurush to the government, extendable to five years. According to Consul Brant, Mazhar Pasha the governor was willing to strike this deal, as he would allegedly share one-fifth of the notable's profit, around 500,000 gurush in five years.⁵⁰ The investments in monopoly on timber, like the notable's interest in salt-pits (*memleha*), examined below, had also further value. The notable would sell salt and timber to the government during the Crimean War.

More Tax farms and more connections

Although the consul claims that Kürkçübaşı lacked financial means to undertake such a great taxfarming contract, the notable attained it in quite a short time. His relations with Muradoğlu Karapet were an essential part of his wealth. While Karapet was in Istanbul and rising in the ranks of great moneylenders of the empire, Agop carried out his transactions in Erzurum, as his “partner” or what the consul Brant called “his creation.”⁵¹

However, Karapet's support to Kürkçübaşı Agop was not the only reason for the latter's rise. The aspiring notable's cleverness in adapting to local politics was also an important factor. For instance, in 1852 the great notable family, the Cennetzades, were facing challenges to their power in Erzurum, like many of their counterparts in the rest of the empire. Indeed, they were one of the last great notable dynasties to stand against the encroachment of the Tanzimat state. In that period, Ziya Cennetzade, the representative of his father in the tax farming of the customs,

⁵⁰ N.A., F.O., 195-353, no. 23, From Consul Brant in Erzurum to Stanford Canning in Istanbul, 2 June 1852.

⁵¹ For instance a certain Numan Agha of Erzurum approached Agop in 1849 as Karapet did not pay his debt to him. Karapet was able to obtain an imperial order to be sent to the governor of Erzurum to keep Numan Agha away from Agop. A.MKT., 197-15, 13 Cemaziü'l -âhir 1265 (6 May 1849).

was accused of taking a bribe of 2,000 guruh from an Armenian merchant of the city for his favor in dealing with the tax on spirits (*zecriye rüsûmatı*). Kürkçübaşı Agop testified against his partner Ziya Cennetzade in the investigation, and the latter lost his position as an official and was sent into exile.⁵² As I will show later, it is highly likely that this was a plot, as Kürkçübaşı was the tax farmer of the tax on spirits, and therefore was powerful enough to have stopped the merchant in the first place. This was the period when a modern definition of corruption was first accepted in the Ottoman Empire and the government authorities began to wage a legal struggle against it. Yet “corruption” was also used as a pretext to eliminate political rivals in the context of reforms.⁵³ That might have been the main reason behind the allegations against Ziya. Be that as it may, Kürkçübaşı Agop’s move against his partner shows how quickly alliances were subject to change in Erzurum. Kürkçübaşı’s case therefore also differed from the case of the Allahverdiyans, whose power in the local society was closely related to that of the Cennetzades. Kürkçübaşı maneuvered as politics changed and made alliances with different power holders.

His position as the tax farmer of Erzurum customs provided new financial opportunities to Kürkçübaşı. For instance, he was involved in sub-contracting the customs of the Çıldır district, as one part of the tax farm of Erzurum customs. The sub-contractor Yusuf Bey, who had obtained the rights to tax farm from the above-mentioned Ali Bey for 157,000 guruh, claimed that by mistake he had paid an extra 39,991 guruh to Kürkçübaşı in the course of the transaction. The investigation continued over a decade without any real outcome.⁵⁴ In that particular transaction, the parties involved again show how tax farming contracts connected different groups to each other. The involved parties in the agreement were Yusuf Bey who was a

⁵² B.O.A., I.MVL., 233-8139, 08 Cemaziü'l -âhir 1268 (30 March 1852).

⁵³ Cengiz Kırılı, “Yolsuzluğun İcadı: 1840 Ceza Kanunu, İktidar ve Bürokrasi,” *Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, 4 (2006): 45-119.

⁵⁴ B.O.A., MVL., 1053-42, 26 Cemaziü'l -âhir 1284 (24 October 1867).

major of the Auxiliary Forces (*Asâkir-i Avniyye*), Şükrü Pasha, the major general of the cavalry forces of the Imperial Army, and Kürkçübaşı Agop's partner Idanok[?].⁵⁵ Kürkçübaşı also held the tax farm on the revenues from the tax on tobacco in the district of Mush in that period. The complaints registered by the local Muslim and non-Muslim population against that tax farm and Kürkçübaşı Agop proved futile, allegedly due to bribery.⁵⁶ Problems arising from that particular tax farm on tobacco tax persisted over decades and would resurface in the mid-1860s.

Besides sub-contracting the Erzurum customs, Agop was also involved in the business of controlling salt-pits in the province of Erzurum. The Ottoman state had shown substantial interest in the production and sale of salt due to its commercial value and its role in food preservation, human nutrition, and animal husbandry.⁵⁷ There were a number of salt-pits in the province of Erzurum, and their administrative status was based on their individual conditions. Most of the salt resources in Erzurum were listed under the tax farm of the Erzurum Customs House, whereas some of them were endowed property.⁵⁸ Kürkçübaşı Agop showed great interest in salt-pits, according to documents from the Ottoman archives. His interest might have resulted from his position as a customs officer and his desire to increase the revenues of his tax farm, but could also have been due to the vitality of this resource for animal husbandry, the chief source of income in the region. He communicated privately with the governors of the sub-districts of Hınıs (Kınıs)⁵⁹ and Tortum.⁶⁰ Mahmud Bey, governor of the sub-district of Tortum, for instance,

⁵⁵ B.O.A., A.MKT.DV., 233-32, 21 Rebî'ü'l-evvel 1279 (16 September 1862).

⁵⁶ Osman Efendi, who was assigned as the inspector of the Anatolian provinces including Canik, Trabzon and Diyarbakir in the year 1852/53 was infamous for taking bribes from local governors and notables. According to Consul Brant, the inspector received 25,000 gürush from Kürkçübaşı to decline the petition of the people of Mush who complained about the tobacco-duty. FO 195-410, # 23, From Consul Brant in Erzurum to Stanford Canning in Istanbul, February 4, 1853.

⁵⁷ Evangelia Balta and Fehmi Yılmaz, "Salinas and Salt in Greek Lands during the Ottoman Period," in *Tuz Kitabı*, eds. Emine Gürsoy Naskalı and Mesut Şen (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2004), 248–257.

⁵⁸ Neşe Erim, "18. Yüzyılda Erzurum Tuzları: Osmanlı Tüketim Malları Tarihine bir Katkı," *A.Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* 21 (2003): 219–229.

⁵⁹ B.O.A., A.M., 10-11, 17 Cemaziü'l-âhir 1268 (8 April 1852).

played an intermediary role between Kürkçübaşı Agop and the deputy judge (*nâib*) of Tortum, İbrahim Efendi, over the control of salt-pits in the region. The *nâib* had obtained a contract from a certain Artin to operate it, and had made “investments” probably for its improvement. The governor of Tortum “did not find it suitable” that they should take the issue to court as “the *çorbacı* [notable] Artin would not have prepared the contract unnecessarily.”⁶¹ Therefore he expressed his unwillingness for Kürkçübaşı Agop to take the case to court. Salt was an important part of the daily diet of soldiers and animals during the war. Kürkçübaşı supplied all components of a daily diet of a soldier.

This correspondence shows the role of personal relations in conducting business. There is evidence that Kürkçübaşı was also part of other social and non-business networks. The most interesting instance, one that shows the wide extent of Kürkçübaşı’s social connections as the tax farmer of customs, is reflected in the correspondence between two Muslim women of the high class. In February 1853, Ayşe Şerife Hanım in Erzurum wrote to Zekiye Hanım in İstanbul (who was also originally from Erzurum) and asked her to return the *saçaklı ihram*, a fringed cloak, which Zekiye Hanım had borrowed from her. According to the letter, Zekiye Hanım should give the cloak to the person who brought her the letter. That person was a man of Kürkçübaşı Agop’s who worked at the office of Muradoğlu Karapet. Zekiye Hanım did not give the cloak to the letter-bearer and not even to Kürkçübaşı Agop who went to her house when he was in İstanbul.⁶² Although the fate of the cloak is not known, Kürkçübaşı’s involvement in this affair, as a courier between two Muslim women of high class, gives clues about the extensive social links that the notable enjoyed. Likewise a letter from Hasan Bey, the governor of the sub-district of İspir

⁶⁰ B.O.A., A.M., 12-20, 27 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1270 (25 February 1854).

⁶¹ “...zirâ‘ Ar[u]tin Çorbacı beyhûde yere şartnâme vermek olmayacağı hasebiyle...” Ibid.

⁶² B.O.A., A.M., 10-97, 27 Rebîü'l-âhir 1269 (7 February 1853).

(Sper), to Kürkçübaşı Agop shows the Armenian notable's high standing in the local society. In a private dispatch, the governor expressed his sorrow for leaving Erzurum before Kürkçübaşı's arrival to town and wished him safe travels.⁶³ Such personal relations between the notable and the local authorities proved to be very important while he worked as the army contractor during the Crimean War, and show the "equality" of certain non-Muslim notables, even before the equality of non-Muslims and Muslims was declared.

In support of the last point it should also be noted that in all these communications Kürkçübaşı Agop was addressed with great respect, including the title of "*rağbetlu dostum*."⁶⁴ In the period before the Crimean War, no non-Muslim held an official honorary rank in Erzurum, therefore addressing Agop as *rağbetlu* was quite noteworthy and a sign of recognition of his social status in the Ottoman order. As these were the notable's private letters, any further discussion about the importance of this honorific form of address and its generality needs more research. However, its shared use by all government officials and Muslim dignitaries while addressing Kürkçübaşı Agop, shows that there were socially accepted codes of conduct in the mid-nineteenth century that transgressed ethnic and religious boundaries. As discussed in the following chapters, the non-Muslim notables of Erzurum would gain official titles and ranks in the second half of the 1850s and particularly in the 1860s. Kürkçübaşı would obtain a prestigious

⁶³ "...nâçizânem lâzimesince her an ezkârınızla demgüzar üzere iken hasbe'l-kader bizim Erzurum'dan bu tarafa derakab çıktığımız ve sizin ol günde Erzurum'a duhûlünüz ve mülaki olmadığımız hülyası halecân-i derûn olmuş olduğundan fakat sağ ü selamet gelmeniz bâdî-i mesruriyet olmuşdu." B.O.A., A.M., 11-17, 16 Safer 1269 (25 May 1853).

⁶⁴ "Rağbet" literally means something that is sought after, "rağbetlu" was a title of address used in referring to a non-Muslim, who did not have an official honorary rank. Şemseddin Sami, *Kamus-i Türkî*, (Dersa'adet [Istanbul]: İkdâm Matbaası, 1317–1318 [1899–1900]), 667.

honorary rank and would be decorated with the *mecidiye* medal.⁶⁵ The official recognition of his social position sealed his status in society as a top Armenian notable.

Land-owning: Circumventing the Tanzimat Regulations

Before examining details of Kürkçübaşı Agop's most important business with the imperial state, provisioning the army during the Crimean War, I will touch upon land ownership, another aspect of Kürkçübaşı's economic power and social links. As discussed in other chapters, Armenian notables of Erzurum invested in land in the hinterland of Erzurum and the surrounding districts. They were able to benefit from the changing land-ownership regimes during the Tanzimat reforms. What makes Kürkçübaşı's case worth examining is that it is exemplary of many ways in which some notables exploited the new legal system of land ownership. Kürkçübaşı's circumvention of various legal obstacles thanks to his cordial relations with officials and other illegal means was one aspect of this development. The other was the support lent by local and imperial authorities to the notable's efforts to accumulate land.

Kürkçübaşı had a water mill in the village of Tortan (Uzunark) in Pasin, one of the main grain producing districts in the province. He had other investments in the same region. For instance, he purchased (*iştirâ*) a substantial 15 pieces of farmland and 2 pieces of meadow in the village of Pertek (Saksı) in the same district.⁶⁶ He purchased these state lands (*arâzi-i mîrî*) from İbrahim bin Mehmed and his brother Hurşid, residents of the Lala Pasha neighborhood of Erzurum, at the relatively low cost of 2,400 guruh. For the title deed of this land, Kürkçübaşı sent a petition to the Head of the Chancery Office of the Imperial Council (Divan-ı Hümayun Beylikçiliği Nezareti Reisi). This case is noteworthy for at least two reasons. First, Kürkçübaşı in

⁶⁵ Kürkçübaşı Agop received the honorary second rank, second degree (*rütbe-i sâniye sınıf-i sanisi*) in 1862 and *mecidiye* of the fourth order in 1865. *B.O.A., A.MKT.UM.*, 387-11.

⁶⁶ *B.O.A., A.DVN.*, 83-16, 19 Safer 1269 (2 December 1852). The fields were able to hold 15 *somars* of seed and the meadows approximately 10 *barre* of hay.

his petition referred to the transaction as a purchase, despite the fact that they were state lands. This shows that, even before the Land Code of 1858, various transactions took place and purchases were legalized—or at least, transfers of state lands were legal and title deeds (*tapu*) were requested for them.⁶⁷ These title deeds showed the proprietor of the land, how the transaction was carried out, and the borders of the property. Issuing of these individual deeds for state lands and their registration by the government at the Defter-i Hakanî were developments of the Tanzimat. Second, the case shows that, by 1852 Kürkçübaşı had enough connections in the capital to reach one of the highest bureaucrats in the empire. His big partner Muradoğlu Karapet, who had established links with the Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşid Pasha at that time, might have been instrumental in this.

The more interesting case is his “appropriation” of meadows in the large village of İlice (İlica) in the Erzurum Valley. The problems with this transaction were manifold, and most important among them was the fact that Kürkçübaşı Agop recorded those lands in his own name and even obtained a title deed while he was not an Ottoman subject. As I will discuss below, Kürkçübaşı Agop, after being accused of embezzlement of army funds during the Crimean War, obtained a Russian passport in the late 1850s, which he kept until 1862. The protests of the İlice villagers who had been using the meadow as common land revealed various problems related to the new land regime, the power of notables, and the precariousness of politics in the borderlands.

İlice was a major village (later it became a *nahiye*, administrative center of a district made of a number of villages) located in the west of Erzurum on the way to Erzincan. According

⁶⁷ Atilla Aytekin’s critique of the scholarship calls this type of terminology “legal fiction” and criticizes scholars for accepting these definitions at face value. E. Atilla Aytekin, “Agrarian Relations, Property, and Law: An Analysis of the Land Code of 1858 in the Ottoman Empire,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 45 (2009): 937.

to one list prepared in 1880, the village hosted 455 Armenian and 145 Muslim households.⁶⁸

Some Armenians of the city of Erzurum held significant tracts of land in the village, among them Terzibaşı Hovhannes, the chief tailor of the city. In the mid-1840s Hovhannes' lands in İlice amounted 17 *somars*. Hovhannes seems to have had some financial problems, as did most of the artisans of Erzurum in that period, a topic discussed in the last chapter. Hovhannes transferred all of his lands to the moneylender Köseoğlu Hambardzum to settle his debt in 1847/48 and the latter transferred them to another moneylender around the same time. The case, although it does not include Kürkçübaşı Agop, was important in several ways.⁶⁹ For our purposes, however, it shows the presence of Armenian notables of Erzurum in the countryside, their control of lands in the village, and that they cultivated them for commerce.⁷⁰ This was a common development in other regions of the empire, what Beshara Doumani called “a forced marriage” between urban and rural areas in his examination of Nablus.⁷¹ Kürkçübaşı Agop was not an exception to this, however, his case was peculiar, as at the time he appropriated those lands, he was not an Ottoman subject.

⁶⁸ Sukias Eprikyan, *Patkeradzard Bnashkharhık Bararan*, hator 2 (Venetik: S. Ghazar, 1907), 2:300-301. Garegin Srvandztyan's figures give the population of the village as 380 Armenian, 140 Muslim households in the early 1880s. Emma Kostandyan, “Arevmtyan Hayastani Hayabnak Vayrerı Veraberyal G. Srvandztyantsi Kazmatz Vijakagrutyunnerits,” *Banber Hayastani Arkhivneri* 17 (1976): 89.

⁶⁹ The details of the transaction between Hovhannes and Hambardzum are not known as we learn about it indirectly when Köseoğlu Hambardzum transferred the land to another moneylender, Misakoğlu Poghos. Misakoğlu Poghos claimed that when Terzibaşı Hovhannes transferred his lands (*çiftlik*) to Köseoğlu Hambardzum through the local administrative council (*mahallî meclis mârifetiyle*) and the latter transferred them to Hambardzum with a document from the religious court (*hüccet-i şer'î*). However, when Misakoğlu tried to obtain the title deed (*tapu*) for the land, probably after the Law Code of 1858, it appeared that only 29 fields out of 34 had been registered in the imperial register, and 5 were still cultivated by Terzibaşı Hovhannes. *B.O.A.*, A.MKT.UM., 165-69, 17 Muharrem 1277 (5 August 1860). The case is interesting as it shows not only the dynamic nature of the real-estate market in the region, but also the ways in which “traditional” forms of ownership were transformed into modern forms.

⁷⁰ Terzibaşı Hovhannes' lands were 5 *somars* of cultivated field and 12 *somars* of uncultivated fields. His net income from these lands after taxation was 1,215 guruh in 1260 (1844/45). As Terzibaşı Hovhannes was a resident of Erzurum, his partner, a certain Artin son of Balo, took care of Hovhannes' lands in İlice and took half of the net revenue. *B.O.A.*, MVL. VRD.TMT. d., 6905. This is important to show the extensive control urban notables exercised over the hinterland of the city.

⁷¹ Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), 149.

As a town on the borderlands, Erzurum had many notable residents who changed subjecthoods as needed. These notables were able to take full advantage of their social and economic power, especially by finding a way to circumvent regulations and laws. Property ownership by non-Ottomans was not allowed until 1869.⁷² However, foreign subjects used different methods to circumvent this rule—registering lands in the name of an Ottoman subject, in the names of their wives who were Ottoman subjects, or showing themselves as Ottoman subjects at the time of registration.⁷³ It was not uncommon to see former Ottoman and recent Russian or Iranian subjects holding lands in Erzurum. More importantly they did it legally, in the words of Mehmed Reşid Pasha, the governor of Erzurum:

..some rich and affluent merchants [who were] of Iranian and Russian subjects, somehow penetrated into the officials. [They] took some lands (çiftlik), meadows and fields,... [and they] obtained title deeds which were ornamented and decorated with the royal insignia of his imperial highness...⁷⁴

In the late 1850s, when Kürkçübaşı Agop had already accepted Russian subjecthood, he managed to register a meadow in the village of İlice under his name. The size of the meadow was quite substantial as it produced hay worth 10,000–12,000 gürush per annum. In the same report by the governor, Agop's act was recorded as “zabt,” seizing by violence and “kapatma,” acquisition by trick.⁷⁵ Upon the protests of the villagers who claimed to have been using the meadow *ab antiquo* as their common pasture, an investigator was sent to the region. The investigator found out that Kürkçübaşı had illegally acquired the pasture with the help of the

⁷² “Law on Foreign Subjects’ Possession of Property” (Teba’ a-i ecnebiyenin emlâke mutasarrıf olmaları hakkında kanun) dated 7 Safer 1284 (16 June 1869). For more information on the law and additional protocols, rights of foreign nationals to possess real estate, see H.Nédjib Chiha, *Traite de la Propriété Immobilière en Droit Ottoman*, (Cairo: El-Maaref, Neguib Mitri, 1908), 499–563.

⁷³ Ibid, 499.

⁷⁴ B.O.A., MVL., 615-108 1 Safer 1278 (8 August 1861).

⁷⁵ B.O.A., BEO.VGG.d. 55, 178; A.MKT.UM 503-48, 27 Rebî’ü'l-evvel 1278 (2 October 1861).

recording officer (*tapu memuru*) Şahab Efendi.⁷⁶ The officer lost his position after the investigation at the orders of the Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Divan-ı Ahkam-i Adliye*).⁷⁷ However, there were many issues in this affair showing the complex set of problems put forward by the new Tanzimat regulations and the ability of notables to circumvent them through bribery or social connections.

First, the villagers did not have a chance to win the case as the law did not favor commonly-held lands. The new Land Code of 1858 was based on individual property ownership and it did not allow for communal ownership.⁷⁸ Also communal lands were regarded as underutilized in a period when efficiency in agricultural production was pronounced. Transfer of communal lands into individual properties caused problems in different parts of the empire, particularly the emergence of great landowners in the Arab provinces, where tribal lands were registered under the name of a tribal chief.⁷⁹ The case of the meadow of İlice was more complicated than its counterparts in other regions of the empire, as the villagers *perhaps* tried to get rid of Kürkçübaşı by pointing out that not only had Kürkçübaşı appropriated their common pasture land but also he was a Russian subject, and therefore could not legally own property in the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁰ Reference to the foreign subjecthood of a landowner was a common strategy of villagers in the borderlands in other historical and political contexts.⁸¹ However, in

⁷⁶ B.O.A., A.MKT.MVL., 132-20 10 Rebî'ü'l-evvel 1278 (15 September 1861).

⁷⁷ B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 503-48 27 Rebî'ü'l-evvel 1278 (2 October 1861).

⁷⁸ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Tapu," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

⁷⁹ For this process, see Albertine Jwaideh, "Midhat Pasha and the Land System of Lower Iraq," *St. Antony's Papers* 3 (1963): 106–136.

⁸⁰ Unfortunately, I was not able to find the petition of the villagers during my research in the Ottoman Archives. I reconstruct the petition through references to it in the following investigation.

⁸¹ Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of French and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 144–145. This raises questions about the consequences of non-Muslim notables' change of subjecthood. For instance, when a landlord changed subjecthood, did the villagers under his control express their loyalty to the imperial state more loudly, therefore establishing a stronger bond with the state to get rid of their landlord? Or, when the villagers changed their subjecthood, can it be possible that they were trying to escape from their landowner?

this case the villagers lacked the necessary political power and social connections to solve the problem in their favor. Leaving the land to the villagers was briefly an option, as stated by the governor, without explaining how. But that course of action was not followed; instead the meadow was put up for auction.⁸² Thus, the villagers lost their control over the communal lands.

Second, Kürkcübaşı found various ways to circumvent the new regulations even after the turmoil. As the land was not left to the villagers, the meadow gained the status of vacant state land, which was to be sold at auction.⁸³ The new possessors were Hacı Ömer Ağazade Şerif Bey, and Mahmud and Servet Efendis, who paid 56,000 guruh.⁸⁴ These were also not natives of İllice village, but landowners in Dzitogh (Sitavuk, contemporary Yolgeçti), another major Armenian village in the Erzurum valley.⁸⁵ Interestingly enough, the meadow was not given to them, which was again an act against the law.⁸⁶ Instead, it was given to Kürkcübaşı Agop and, moreover, it was given for free by the local authorities. Well before the Land Code, a title deed which was given to Agop by the late Esad Pasha, a previous governor in h. 1244 (1828–1829), was accepted as a valid and legal document.⁸⁷ Besides its legal validity, the date of the document is highly

⁸² B.O.A., A.MKT.MVL., 132-20, 10 Rebî'ül-evvel 1278 (15 September 1861). The governor must have had article 28 of the Land Code in mind, when suggesting leaving the meadow to the villagers: "Meadows from which the grass is reaped *ab antiquo* and from which titheable produce is taken are the same as cultivated lands and are possessed by tapu. Only the possessor profits by the grass which grows and he can prevent another from profiting by it. Meadows of this kind can be broken up and cultivated with the permission of the official." *The Ottoman Land Code*, trans. F. Ongley (London: W. Clowes & Sons, 1892), 9.

⁸³ Article 18 of the *Tapu* Law is on "the disposal of pure mahlul" lands. *The Ottoman Land Code*, trans. F. Ongley (London: W. Clowes & Sons, 1892), 78.

⁸⁴ B.O.A., A.MKT.MVL., 132-20.

⁸⁵ Şerif Agha, son of Ömer Agha, held 21,5 *somars* of land (10 *somars* cultivated, 11.5 uncultivated) in Dzitogh (Sitavuk). B.O.A., ML.VRD.TMT.d. 07006.

⁸⁶ Article 87 of the Land Code deals with this issue in the following way: "If, after vacant (Mahlul) Mirié or Mevkufé Rights of land has been transferred to a person for its equivalent value (Bedel Misl) ascertained at auction, another person appears and offers a higher price, no interference can be made with the former on the ground that the Sened has not yet been issued, and the land taken over by him cannot be taken away from him." *Ongley, Ottoman Land Code*, 45.

⁸⁷ "onlara dahi verilmeyerek Esad Paşa merhûmun kırk dört tarihinde verdiği tapu sened-i mu'tebere add ve ittihaz ile çayır-i mezkûrun meccânen merkûm Hoca Agop'a verilmesi..." B.O.A., A.MKT.MVL., 132-20, 10 Rebî'ül-evvel 1278 (15 September 1861).

dubious.⁸⁸ The incumbent governor of Erzurum, Mehmed Hayreddin Pasha, with the clear intention of saving his post, denounced the officials in Erzurum and claimed that the affair clearly showed their willingness to undertake corrupt and unlawful acts.⁸⁹ The final order of Istanbul was to determine the size of the land and after that to sell it through a new auction.⁹⁰ The affair manifests the social power of Kürkçübaşı: he was able to have an “ancient” title deed manufactured and accepted as legally valid even after the enactment of the new Land Code and to take back the land from its new Muslim owners. The cases related to Kürkçübaşı’s land ownerships show the notable’s ability to exploit social networks for his own benefit, find lacunae in the law and other ways to circumvent regulations.

The Crimean War: Provisioning of the Army, Organization, Networks and Profit

Kars was the most important fortress on the Russian-Ottoman border in southern Caucasia. The Russians made major attempts to capture it and faced stiff resistance from the Ottoman army. The fortress was the outpost from which Ottoman troops advanced into Russian territory in mid- and late-1853. However, in 1854, the condition of the troops on the Caucasian front, and particularly those in Kars, deteriorated for reasons I will examine below. After an unsuccessful attempt to make a breakthrough under the high command of Marshal (Müşir) Mustafa Zarif Pasha in August 1854, effective command of the fortress of Kars was handed over

⁸⁸ Mehmed Reşid Pasha, the governor of Erzurum at the time of the investigation, must have made a mistake by stating that Esad Pasha gave Kürkçübaşı the title-deed in 1828. Esad Pasha was not the governor of Erzurum until 1846 (1830/1831) as different sources attest. Mehmet Süreyya Bey, “Esad Mehmed Muhlis Paşa,” *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ed. Nuri Akbayan, Seyit Ali Kahraman, and Mehmet Süreyya Bey (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996) 2: 495. If the document is real, regardless of whether it is legally valid, it shows that Kürkçübaşı came to the region in the period of the 1828–1829 Russo-Ottoman War and took advantage of the economic opportunities in the war-ridden region.

⁸⁹ “...Erzurum’da bulunan me’ mûrîn-i mevcûdenin hâsl ve hareket ve saffet-i me’ mûriyyetlerini ve buna mûmâsil pençe pençe yolsuz ve nizâmsız husûsata cesâretleri derecesini beyan eder bir hâlet olduğu...” B.O.A., A.MKT.MVL., 132-20, 10 Rebî’ü’l-evvel 1278 (15 September 1861).

⁹⁰ B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 503-48, 27 Rebî’ü’l-evvel 1278 (2 September 1861). Vacant state lands less than 300 acres were sold through local auctions, whereas those lands larger than 300 acres were sold through the imperial register office.

to Colonel Williams of the British Army in September of 1854. The colonel decided to strengthen the fortress, instead of putting the army in the field, due to lack of supplies and horses. In the summer of 1855 Russian forces attacked the fortress for the first time, and despite the brief success of the Ottoman forces in late September in stopping the superior Russian attack, the fortress surrendered on November 28, 1855, due to starvation in the fortress-town.⁹¹ The question arises: Why did the most important fortress on the Caucasian front succumb to starvation? The answer lies behind the front lines, in the failure to provision the army from the hinterland, accompanied by accusations of embezzlement and corruption, cemented by an alliance of bureaucrats, commanders and contractors.

The allegations of corruption by the Pashas were voiced from the very beginning of the War. As early as February of 1854, the inspector Hayreddin Pasha carried out an investigation in Kars and sent Ahmed and Abdi Pashas to Istanbul for trial. The accusations were grave: Ahmed Pasha, the commander of troops in Kars, had filled fraudulent master rolls, numbering 30,000 soldiers, and had reached arrangements with contractors to provision these non-existent soldiers. Ahmed Pasha was accused of many fraudulent acts, including embezzling the funds allocated to these fraudulent agreements and selling provisions to the army at high prices. He, in return, overlooked the contractor-bakers' delivery of low-quality bread. Charles Duncan, the correspondent of the London daily *Morning Chronicle* who accompanied Hayreddin Pasha to

⁹¹ William Edward David Allen and Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border, 1828–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 81–94; Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 238–256.

Kars, provided a long list of corrupt acts of the pashas.⁹² Among them, their fraudulent agreements with an Ottoman-Greek subject, Kozma, the chief baker are well documented.⁹³

Hitherto the bread supplied to the troops had been most unsatisfactory, both in quality and quantity, and the contractors had made rapid fortunes. Hayreddin Pacha summoned the principal contractor, who had a secret partner in the commander-in-chief, Achmet Pacha, and expostulated with him. The contractor admitted that the bread was no good, and promised to remedy it on the morrow. The morrow came with the same black gritty loaves and no improvement. The pacha once more sent for the baker, who again promised that the next day's bread should be better. This scene was repeated three days following, and on the third day the bread was, if anything, a little worse. Hayreddin Pacha then treated the contractor, who was a Greek and a millionaire, to a little Turkish justice. He caused five large loaves to be brought to the palace, and taking out all the filthy, black, coarse crumb, he forced the contractor to swallow the whole quantity. This worthy was carried out swollen and nearly double his usual breadth, and cured of defrauding the poor soldier. At Erzeroum the bakers were likewise called to account and threatened to be bastinadoed before their own shops, if the bread did not sensibly improve.⁹⁴

The quality of the bread did not improve, as the chief baker Kozma was once again beaten for the same reason by Mustafa Zarif Pasha, the governor of Erzurum (1852–1853). Zarif Pasha was appointed as marshal of the Anatolian Army in the spring of 1854.⁹⁵ Interestingly enough, he would soon be removed due to his lack of ability to command troops, seen in his defeat at the Battle of Kürekdere in August—and more importantly due to grave accusations of embezzlement. The major reasons for the pasha's removal were Commander Williams' extremely negative views of Zarif Pasha and British Ambassador Sir Stanford Canning's late but

⁹² Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 231.

⁹³ Kozma's and his lesser partner Manuk's interrogation reports are located in the Ottoman archives. They include important details about methods of corruption, the role of directors of army granaries and networks that included commanders and these non-Muslim merchant/entrepreneurs. *B.O.A.*, A.M., 15-7; A.MKT.NZD 232-85. As the accusations against Kozma and Manuk were different in content than those against Kürkçübaşı Agop, their cases are not examined in this chapter in detail, but will be used while reconstructing Kürkçübaşı's case.

⁹⁴ Charles Duncan, *A Campaign with the Turks in Asia* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1855), I:115–116, quoted in James J. Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire: Prelude to Collapse, 1839–1878* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2000), 279.

⁹⁵ Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 232, n. 375.

strong support for Williams.⁹⁶ Thanks to this removal and the following interrogations, Mustafa Zarif Pasha left behind memoirs, rare for an Ottoman commander. In his memoirs, the pasha spoke about his deeds as the governor of Erzurum and commander-in-chief, and he pointed out failures of other Ottoman and European commanders in the army.⁹⁷ In short, all the major commanders of the Caucasian front and the army contractors were accused of embezzlement and corruption during and after the war. Kürkçübaşı Agop stood in the middle of this network of army provisioning and corruption during the war.

Kürkçübaşı and Army Logistics

Armenian merchant/entrepreneurs (*matakarar* in Armenian) had played an important role in supplying Ottoman Armies with provisions from the early modern period. Especially in the long campaigns, their role was essential. Hovhannes Bey Khanazad's position as an army supplier during Sultan Murad IV's (1622–1649) campaign to Baghdad and Abraham Çelebi Abroyan's similar service during the Ottoman siege of Crete in 1646 are known historical cases.⁹⁸ During the Crimean War, Hacı Ohan[nes] Yaghcıyan (Yağcıoğlu Ohan in Ottoman-Turkish sources) of Kharput and Harutyun Balakcıyan of Sivas (Sebastia) are known to have played important roles in supplying the Ottoman armies.⁹⁹ However, nothing is known beyond their names—and these are from Armenian sources only—despite their fundamental importance for social and economic and military history. Neither the exact functions of these contractors nor the organization of the logistics of the Ottoman army on the Caucasian front during the war, as

⁹⁶ Ibid., 14; Virginia Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700–1870*, 471–472. Aksan gives the place of the battle as Kurudere. Here I should also mention that Colonel Williams' ability as a commander and his honesty are far less questioned than those of his Ottoman counterparts and are taken as the most trustworthy accounts.

⁹⁷ Enver Ziya Karal, "Zarif Paşa'nın Hatıratı 1816–1862," *Belleten* 4 (1940): 442–494. For a critique of the memoirs see Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 193–194. Aksan claims that Zarif Pasha wrote his memoirs to put the blame for his failures on the front and the corruption allegations on lesser officials. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700–1870*, 481, n. 22.

⁹⁸ Anahit Astoyan, "Hayern Osmanyanyan Banakum 14. Darits minchev 1918 (urvakits)," *Haykazyan Hayagitakan Handes* 28 (2008): 99–101.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 100–101.

already noted, are examined in the literature. The interrogation reports (*istintâknâme*) of the accused contractors and officials, when examined critically, can offer solutions to fill this lacuna as they provide details about provisioning of the army.¹⁰⁰

The government in Istanbul passed a regulation to fight against corruption in the army in early 1855, demanding stricter application of the existing rules on corruption.¹⁰¹ Thanks to these concerns and to foreign pressure, the government carried out an investigation of corruption in the army in the East after the war in the autumn of 1856. The special committee began its investigation by examining allegations of bribery and official peccadillos (*irtikâbat ve mektumat*) voiced against the chief accountant of the army (*ordu defterdarı*) Abdülvahab Efendi—who was deceased by then—and his associates (*müteallikat*).¹⁰² Later the investigation included commanders of the army such as Raşid and Edhem Pashas, major and minor officials including Sabri Efendi who was the chief scribe at the accountant office (*muhasebe başkâtibi*) of Erzurum, Behzad Efendi who served as the chief scribe of Sivas, and Mehmed Agha, the director of the granary in Yeni Köy village, and the previously mentioned army contractors, Kozma the chief bread-maker, his partner Manuk, and Kürkçübaşı Agop.¹⁰³

Kürkçübaşı Agop's case followed a different path than the others, as he had already been sent to internal exile for having Russian proclivities when the investigation for corruption in the army began after the war. In September 1856, Kürkçübaşı was summoned to Istanbul from Siverek, his exile-town in interior Harput. Before the interrogation, Kürkçübaşı submitted his

¹⁰⁰ See footnote 23 in this chapter.

¹⁰¹ Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 400.

¹⁰² B.O.A., MVL., 303-24, 4 Rebîü'l-âhir 1273 (2 December 1856).

¹⁰³ Many of the interrogations reports of the accused—except that of Behzad Efendi—are located at B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 232-85. Most of the accused, including Kürkçübaşı Agop, pointed to Army Accountant Abdülvahab Efendi as the main person orchestrating the widespread corruption in the army. One wonders whether the accountant really held chief responsibility or was turned into a scapegoat as he had already passed away when the investigation had begun, and therefore was unable to defend himself.

version of events in a memorandum (*müzekkere*) describing, in his words, “his previous humble services in Erzurum and the ways in which he had obtained contracts.”¹⁰⁴

Kürkçübaşı’s first major “service” (i.e. contract) to the government in the context of the Crimean War was preparations of the Eastern Army. The Grand Assembly (*Meclis-i Kebir*) of Erzurum, at the specific order of Hayreddin Pasha, the inspector of the army, and Mustafa Zarif Pasha, still governor of Erzurum at the time, had decided that the city of Erzurum (*nefs-i Erzurum*) would contribute to the war effort by supplying the army with 1500 *somars* ($\cong$ 460,500 kg.) of grain. Each *somar* of wheat would be purchased for 140 guruh, whereas the price of each *somar* of barley was set at 130 guruh. According to the testimony of Kürkçübaşı Agop, the local government requested him to supply 800 *somars* ($\cong$ 245,600 kg.) of grain of the 1500 *somars* requested from the entire city, as he was “prestigious in the locality” and known to have stored some grain.¹⁰⁵ These 1500 *somars* of grain from the city of Erzurum were probably part of Zarif Pasha’s preparations for war, 5000 *somars* in total for the whole province, which he was asked to gather by commanders on the front.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ “...Erzurum cânibinde mesbuk olan hidmet-i bendegânemle olunan kontratolar ne vechle mukâvele olduğunu su’al olunmaktan nâşi sûret-i hidmet ve kontrato-i bendegânemle...” B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 194-83, 18 Muharrem 1273 (18 September 1856). Although Kürkçübaşı was fluent in Turkish, one gets the impression from certain details in his memorandum and the interrogation reports that his memorandum was written in Armenian and translated into Ottoman Turkish.

¹⁰⁵ B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 232-85, “Kürkçübaşı Agop’un istintâkı,” 18 Muharrem 1273 (18 September 1856) also A.MKT.NZD., 194-83, 18 Muharrem 1273 (18 September 1856). It should be noted that, due to the problematic nature of these interrogation reports (*istintâknâme*) and testimony, it is not possible to be sure about the statements. For instance, in this report the sentence “... you are a prestigious [merchant] in the locality and from the grain at your possession...” is crossed out and replaced by “... from the grain which I stored..” as “... ~~memleket içinde mu’tebersin elinde olan zahâirden~~” is replaced by “...zahâir-i müddehare-i çâkerânemden...”. Not only is a reference to the social position of the Armenian notable omitted, but also the narrative has shifted from third person to first person. As it is not known who changed the original sentence it is not possible to make any further claims about strategies involved in such changes, yet they are important to note.

¹⁰⁶ Enver Ziya Karal, “Zarif Paşa’nın Hatıratı,” 475. Karal’s mistransliteration of *somar* as *himar* is repeated by Aksan as well. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700–1870*, 470.

His second business with the army and particularly with Mustafa Zarif Pasha took place after the latter was appointed as the marshal of the army in Kars. The Pasha had asked the Armenian notable to submit more grain, this time 5000 *somars* (1,535,000 kg), to the army in Kars. According to the notable's testimony, the Pasha told the notable that "it is heard that you have grain in Toprak Kale and Pasin, after you complete 800 *somars* [Kürkçübaşı's previous contract] you will give 5000 *somars* of grain for Kars and this will be something very good for you in the eyes of the state and a new concession [to you] will be necessary."¹⁰⁷ There are no details about what was meant by the "new concession"—whether it is a right of monopoly over a good or a set of privileges—but, as I will show in the following section, the promise of concessions and their non-fulfillment were brought up by the notable when criticizing the state authorities. The contract included additional transportation fees to be paid to the notable, 75 guruh of each *somar* of barley and 80 guruh for each *somar* of wheat, and the notable sent around 2000 *somars* of the promised 5000.¹⁰⁸ Kürkçübaşı also provided "probably 350–400 *batman* [2660 kg–3040 kg] of butter and a large amount of timber" to the army.¹⁰⁹

The mass purchases of grain and their transfer to Kars is also mentioned in the memoirs of Mustafa Zarif Pasha, who claims to have organized a Temporary Council (*Meclis-i Muvakkat*) upon his arrival in Kars and purchased grain alongside other provisions; eventually enough grain was stored to last for 30–40 days.¹¹⁰ From these two early deals conducted with Mustafa Zarif

¹⁰⁷ B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 194-83 "...Toprak Kale ve Pasin'de zahirelerin varmış sekiz yüz *somarı* tekmil ettikten sonra Kars için dahi beş bin *somar* zahire verceksin ve bu senin hakkında devletçe pek iyi şey olub imtiyâz-i yeni mücib olacaktır."

¹⁰⁸ B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 232-85, "Kürkçübaşı Agop'un istintâkı," 18 Muharrem 1273 (18 September 1856) also A.MKT.NZD., 194-83

¹⁰⁹ B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 232-85, "Kürkçübaşı Agop'un istintâkı," 18 Muharrem 1273 (18 September 1856). *Batman* was a measurement equal to approximately 7.6 kilograms used in Anatolia in the 19th century.

¹¹⁰ Enver Ziya Karal, "Zarif Paşa'nın Hatıratı," 485. Ideally battalions and regiments were expected to fulfill the needs of their troops either through a contractor or extracting goods and provisions from the local population under the name War Tax (*tekâlif-i harbiyye*) however in most circumstances governors found means to meet the demands of the troops. Süel, *Osmanlı Devri Osmanlı-Rus Kırım Harbi*, 157.

Pasha, it can be easily understood that Kürkçübaşı Agop had hoarded an immense amount of grain in Erzurum and its hinterland before and in the early period of the war.¹¹¹

Yet, these contracts were relatively small when compared to the main contract that Kürkçübaşı signed with the authorities as the war went on. The new governor of Erzurum, İsmail Pasha, and the chief accountant of the army, Hacı Abdülvahab Efendi, had approached Kürkçübaşı Agop and asked for suitable merchant/entrepreneurs who could carry out a massive contract for the army; 90,000 *somars* (27,630,000 kg) of grain, a great amount of butter, onion, rice, soap and other provisions.¹¹² Upon bargaining, according to the notable's testimony, they agreed to receive 10,000 *somars* of barley and 5000 *somars* of grain, 130 guruh per *somar* of barley and 140 guruh per *somar* of grain, plus 108 guruh for transport from Erzurum to Kars, including a monopoly over the means of transport in the valley for the merchant. Besides the grain, the merchant had agreed to provide 120,000 *kıyye* (3,072,000 kg) chick peas and dried beans and 8000 *kıyye* (204,800 kg) of candles. The candles were provided at the low price as they were produced from the fat of slaughtered animals which was commandeered by the army. The meat consumption so the fat production was high in Erzurum as "...1500 cows were slaughtered to produce *pastırma* (dried meat) for the army".¹¹³ In addition to grain and salt these were all parts of a daily diet of a soldier during the war.¹¹⁴ The details of the business of dried

¹¹¹ For instance, Kürkçübaşı Agop claimed that when Feyzullah Pasha became the new governor of Erzurum after Zarif Pasha's appointment to Kars, the governor ordered the [Muslim?] notables of Erzurum (*vücut-ı memleket*) to go to villages of Erzurum and with the help of local imams and village-headmen open up private storages. Allegedly Kürkçübaşı's 500 *somars* of grain stored in a village of Erzurum was also taken by the authorities and was transported to Kars in that way. However, these 500 *somars* were later considered as a part of the amount Kürkçübaşı delivered to Kars. B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 194-83. The chronicler Lütfi is highly critical of the governor Feyzullah Pasha, whereas modern historians' views on the governor differs. Candan Badem claims that the Pasha was more successful than his predecessors. See Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 192.

¹¹² B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 194-83

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ideally a soldier should receive the following provisions on a daily basis: Approximately 900 grams of bread, 240 grams of meat, 80 grams of rice, 9 grams of plain butter, 21 grams of chickpeas, 20 grams of onion, 20 grams of salt,

meat, which became the major product of Erzurum in that period, is examined in the next chapter.

The allegations of corruption directed against the chief accountant of the army, Hacı Abdülvahab Efendi, allow us to reconstruct the details of these transactions and the corruption involved in them. According to Kürkçübaşı, for finalizing the contract the accountant asked for a bribe of 100,000 gurush.¹¹⁵ As reconstructed from Kürkçübaşı's and others' testimonies, the bribe was to be derived from a complicated plot based on profiteering on high transport fees. The contractor aimed to make a profit by submitting grain found in nearby private granaries to army granaries, and receiving reimbursement for transportation costs as if the grain had been transferred from faraway provinces. The accountant Vahab Efendi demanded that the Armenian notable obtain a notice from Mehmed Agha, the director of the granary at Yeniköy, for having submitted 500 *somars* of grain without actually submitting them. Then, the Armenian notable would approach Sabri Efendi, the chief scribe at the accountant office of Erzurum, with a demand for 500 *somars* from the grain sent from Sivas with the claim of submitting them to the Yeniköy granary in return for his debt. The contractor and the officials involved in the case were able to send around 216 *somars* of the 500 *somars* of grain to the Yeniköy granary. This grain belonged to Behzad Efendi, the chief scribe of Sivas, from whence they had allegedly transferred the grain to Yeniköy. In reality, 150 *somars* of this grain were in the district of Pasin-i Ulyâ and 66 *somars* of it were in Köprüköy, both on the way from Erzurum to Kars.¹¹⁶

3 grams of candle, 3 grams of soap, 3 grams of olive oil and 650 grams of timber. Süel, *Osmanlı Devri Osmanlı-Rus Kırım Harbi*, 158.

¹¹⁵ "...defterdar müteveffâ Hacı [Abdül]Vahab Efendi tama' ve irtikâb-i zâtiyyesi icrâ' etmek sevdasını mu' ahharen ortaya koyarak bu kontratodan bize ne hayır olacak demesiyle..." B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 194-83.

¹¹⁶ B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 232-85. 24 Muharrem 1273 (24 September 1856) tarihiyle Kürkçübaşının icrâ' olunan istintâkı-Salı.

According to the calculations of the army accountant, there would be an excess of 130,000 guruh due to transportation fees, money taken as if grain had been transported from Sivas, although in fact they were taken from nearby private storage houses of Behzad Efendi in the region.¹¹⁷ 100,000 guruh were given to the army accountant as a bribe and the fate of the remaining 30,000 guruh is not known. Each of the accused offered a different narrative while defending themselves during the interrogations.¹¹⁸ The importance of the size of 500 *somars* of grain might be better comprehended when it is compared to the stores at Yeniköy. According to a British report, in the early months of 1855, the granary had 2,100 *somars* of wheat and 821 *somars* of barley.¹¹⁹ As Russians soon occupied the region including the granary, it became impossible to further investigate the claims of different parties—a situation which no doubt benefited the accused.

Despite the fractured nature of the evidence at hand, one can point out basic points of the army contracting business on the Caucasian front during the Crimean War. First, and most important, the entire system was dependent on local businessmen in the war-zone. Kürkçübaşı Agop, being one of the most important merchants of Erzurum, was among the first to strike a

¹¹⁷ B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 232-85, “Merkûm Kürkçübaşından su’al,” 25 Muharrem 1273 (25 September 1856).

¹¹⁸ These different views could be summarized in the following way. According to Kürkçübaşı he would receive 30,000 and the rest, 100,000, would be shared among the officials. After the death of the *defterdar* [Abdül]Vahab Efendi, Kürkçübaşı paid 40,000 to Mehmed Agha and Sabri Efendi, as the latter claimed that he held the bill (*senet*) of Kürkçübaşı and paid the notables’ debt to the granary. B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 232-85, “24 Muharrem 1273 (24 September 1856) tarihiyle Kürkçübaşının icrâ’ olunan istintâkı-Salı.” Mehmed Agha claimed Sabri Efendi and the *defterdar* Abdülvahab Efendi had a deal between themselves. After Abdülvahab Efendi’s death, Sabri Efendi became the deputy-*defterdar*, and sent Kürkçübaşı Agop to Mehmed Agha’s residence with 10,000 guruh, threatened the granary director not to follow up the issue, and paid only 7,500 of the 10,000. (“merkûm [Kürkçübaşı] senin neğe lâzım biz Sabri Efendi ile bitirdik sana da şu parayı gönderiyor kabul etmediğin takdirde şâyed canı sıkılır ve kendisi burada nüfuzlu bulunduğu cihetle sana bir zararı dokunabilir...”) A.MKT.NZD., 232-85, “25 Muharrem 1273 târihiyle tekrar merkûm celb ile münferiden Mehmed Ağa’ya su’al-Çarşamba”; Sabri Efendi claimed that Kürkçübaşı sent some of his debt to the granary in cash to the officials, 10,000 to Mehmed Agha and 30,000 to Sabri Efendi. B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 232-85, “Sabri Efendi’nin istintâknâmesi 13 Safer 1273-Cumaertesi. (13 October 1856).”

¹¹⁹ “Brigadier-General Williams to the Earl of Clarendon, from Erzerum, January 28, 1855, Inclosure 2 of dispatch no. 139,” in *Papers Relative to Military Affairs in Asiatic Turkey, and The Defence and Capitulation of Kars* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1856), 135–136.

contract with the army. Second, based on Kürkçübaşı's and others' testimonies, these contracts did not seem to be the direct result of auctions. Instead, Kürkçübaşı Agop was directly contacted by governors and army commanders and asked to provide a certain amount of provisions at a fixed price. This is further supported by the fact that there are no references to negotiations between contractors and officers about prices of grain or transportation costs, hinting that the offer was already a profitable one. Third, the contracts were never completely fulfilled and, interestingly enough, this was considered normal. For instance, when Mustafa Zarif Pasha asked Kürkçübaşı Agop to provide 5000 *somars* of grain to Kars, he had not even fulfilled his previous obligation to provide 1500 *somars* to Erzurum. After the fall of Kars and the Russian advance into Ottoman territory, the contract became void. Contracts with other contractors had similar fates.¹²⁰ Last but not least, the whole business of army contracting necessitated very strong social and economic capital. Only the very rich merchant/entrepreneurs could orchestrate the purchase, transfer and storage of an immense amount of grain over a vast geography. The corruption case examined above, which included various officials, was one example of such relations. In the next section I will examine the structure of army contracting based on Kürkçübaşı's networks.

Structure of army contracting and Kürkçübaşı's social capital

According to the final report of the investigation by the High Council of the State

(*Meclis-i Vala*) on the issue, Kürkçübaşı's testimonies on cases of corruption and bribery were

¹²⁰ For instance, according to the testimony of Manuk, who was chief baker Kozma's partner, they could only furnish half of the contracted 30,000 *somars* of grain. The reason was lack of grain in the province of Mush. Thus, their contract became null. Of the 15,000 *somars*, Manuk claims to have submitted the following to his senior partner Kozma. *B.O.A.*, *A.MKT.NZD.*, 232-85, "5 Safer 1273 (5 October 1856) tarihinde kozmanın icrâ' olunan istintâkı-cumaertesî"

[price in guruh]	[Amount in] <i>somars</i>	[Type of grain]	[Explanation]
981,297	4163	barley	Submitted to granary of Erzurum and bakeries
841,000	3351	wheat	Submitted to granary of Erzurum and to Kozma, the chief baker
1,822,297 (total)	7514 (total)		

Source: *B.O.A.*, *A.MKT.NZD.*, 232-85.

found unconvincing. Behzad Efendi, on the other hand, was not found guilty for his relations with the notable, however, he was guilty of having hoarded the aforementioned grain illegally. Behzad Efendi's position prior to Sivas had been at the scribal office in Erzurum. There he had illegally tax farmed the tithe of the town of Pasin-i Süfla and the villages of Teke Deresi, Süngeric and Armaşen (Çamlıalan) for three years between 1269 and 1271 (1852/53–1854/55).¹²¹ His action as a tax farmer contravened the regulation which forbade officials from engaging in tax farming.¹²² The reason Behzad Efendi was not found guilty for his relations with the notable was simple: although the official and the notable corresponded with the intention of forming a partnership to fulfill Kürkçübaşı's contract of 15,000 *somars*, it was never ratified.¹²³ A letter from the official to the notable, probably one of those correspondences referred to in the investigation report, clearly shows that the two were about to strike a deal, if only the governor of Sivas would work hard to transport the grain from Sivas to the front. Collection of tithe directly by provincial governments and their transfer to the front was a policy employed during the wars.¹²⁴ The governor had accepted the tax arrears of the people of Sivas from the year of 1270 (1853–1854). The arrears amounted to 65,000 *kile-i İstanbulî* ($\cong$ 1,573,000 kg.) of grain, transferred as a donation to the army.¹²⁵ The deal was broken due to the governor's insistence on collecting and transferring the grain to the front, and the abundance of animals to transport them, which did not give the notable and the scribe the time they needed to carry out their plan. For the potential partners, the only hope "for making business as much as [they] wanted" was purchasing

¹²¹ B.O.A., MVL., 303-24, 04 Rebü'l-âhir 1273 (2 December 1856), article 33.

¹²² With a regulation that passed in 1855, the government forbade participation of state officials in auctions for collection of tithe through tax farms. Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli*, 55. It seems that the rule was applied retrospectively in this case.

¹²³ "merkûm [Kürkçübaşı] ile olan muhâberatı kuvvede kalıp henüz fiile çıkmamış olduğu anlaşılmış...", B.O.A., MVL., 303-24, 04 Rebü'l-âhir 1273 (2 December 1856), article 33.

¹²⁴ Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli*, 54.

¹²⁵ 1 *kile-i İstanbulî* was equal to approximately 24.2 kilograms.

the coming year's harvest, and they were quite optimistic about it.¹²⁶ The episode also gives us ideas about the actions of provincial governments during the war and their financial situation and tax collection systems.

There were other networks which only a well-connected notable like Kürkçübaşı Agop could mobilize, made up of partners, agents, and assistants. In terms of partners, he collaborated with one of the other chief army contractors, chief baker Kozma. For instance, Kürkçübaşı submitted his purchases in Ardahan, around 2,700–2,800 *somars* of grain, to an agent of Kozma in the same region.¹²⁷ Kürkçübaşı used his family members in the business: Manas, his son-in-law, Karapet, his son, and Margar, his brother-in-law, worked as agents and carried out business in the provinces. For instance, a letter written to Manas from one of their agents in the countryside gives details of such networks. The letter was written by Kaspar, who was responsible for maintaining the works of Manas Efendi's private granary. He reported how Kubat Agha of Gub (?) (كوب) village where Manas had another granary and Abdurrahman Agha, the scribe (*kâtib*), took very good care of Manas' business in those regions. The aforementioned Abdurrahman Agha, himself also wrote a letter to Manas complaining about two partners/agents of the notable, Karapet and Martiros, who, despite advice to the contrary, left just after Manas left the village for Erzurum. The author of the letter also praised the work of Kaspar in helping Kubat Agha maintain the granary.¹²⁸ Thus, besides enjoying close relations and forming illegal partnerships with government officials, Kürkçübaşı controlled other social networks composed

¹²⁶ “Yetmiş bir [1854–1855] senesine mahsûben Sivas'dan matlûb olunan yirmi bin bu kadar somar zahâiri Sivas ahâlisi hiç bir sûretle kaldıramaz, ol vakit istediğimiz kadar ticâret ederiz... bu defa hazırlanmış ve uğraşılmış işimizi vâli-i eyâletin ısrarı ve hayvânâtın kesret üzere gelmesi bozdu. Hoş imdi her vakit böyle olmaz, hakk-i te'âlâ işimizi rast götürür...” B.O.A., AM., 13-85, 23 Şâban 1271 (11 May 1855).

¹²⁷ B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD., 232-85, Kürkçübaşı Agop'un istintâknâmesi fi 10 Safer 1273-Perşembe (10 October 1856).

¹²⁸ B.O.A., AM., 14-7, both letters are dated 27 Şevvâl 1271 (13 July 1855). It is highly possible that Kaspar and Abdurrahman Agha, with their complaints about other partners/agents, were trying to replace them and obtain a better position, at least in the eyes of Manas.

of lesser bureaucrats and village elders, all of which were necessary to carry out the army contracting business.

Direct purchases from the local population: Kürkçübaşı's control in Mush during and after the war

Apart from transferring other notables' and his or his family's hoarded grain to the front, Kürkçübaşı also purchased provisions from the local population, particularly from Armenian inhabitants of the region. Again, such details are reconstructed from later documents which were mainly complaints about delays in the notable's purchases from the populace. The notable's power as a community leader suppressed many grievances against him, which were not to be voiced until mid-1860s. Here, I will describe the notables' financial transactions in Mush during and after the war, which were unanimously considered notorious.

In May 1870, the General Assembly of the province of Erzurum convened, including Muslim and non-Muslim representatives from its sub-districts to discuss the problems of the province. The main problem of the sub-district of the province of Mush was banditry by some Kurdish tribes and their plundering of Armenian villages and monasteries. As examined in the fourth chapter, in 1869 the government took some measures with the participation of local Armenian notables to suppress the Kurdish bandits, but did not enjoy permanent success. Thus, when the representative of the Armenian community in Mush, *aradjnord* Kirakos Aghavaryan, approached the governor during the General Assembly, he is said to have carried a special note to the governor. According to a local correspondent of the Istanbul Armenian daily *Masis*, a reliable source reported that the first point in the letters was about the failure of reform and suppression of Kurdish bandits. The second point was about the debt of Kürkçübaşı to the people of Mush; namely 37 *bers* [*yük* in Ottoman Turkish]—the immense amount of 3,700,000 guruh. Although a few years earlier an order had been prepared requiring that 500,000 of the notable's

debt be paid, that sum never reached the people. What the people received through an “Armenian Agha,” according to the correspondent, was some grain worth hardly 30,000–40,000 gurush.¹²⁹ An undated document from the internal correspondence of the Armenian Apostolic church (and probably written by locals due to its colloquial Armenian with many Turkish words) from this period attests to the disastrous effects of the war on the region of Mush and the role of Kürkçübaşı. Some of the problems of the people of Mush were longstanding—such as the tax farm on tobacco already noted.

Table 1: Complaints from the region of Mush about government failure to pay for its purchases during the Crimean War

H.1271 (1854–1855)	
“They took <i>zahîre</i> [grain] worth 37 <i>yük</i> [loads, 1 load being equal to 100,000 gurush], they returned around 4 <i>yük</i> to the people of the region.”	
Keranligh	“They gathered grain from the region, they didn’t give anything to the locals.”
Khunus	“They took stuff from the <i>ambars</i> [granaries] of Mush, but didn’t leave anything or give anything to the people.”
Tadvan	“No money is received by the locals for the few thousand of pairs of socks [given to the army].”
Erzurum	“They took the oil that came from Mush under the authority of the <i>meclis</i> [local assembly] nothing was left to the locals.”
Bulanık	“The people of Bulanık claim that, [Kürkçübaşı] Hacı Hakob [Agop] Efendi of Karin had contracted grain worth 570,000 gurush from region but they did not receive any money.”
Year of H. 1272 (1855–56) [Mush]	
Due to difference in prices [<i>fark u fiyat</i>], the people of the region faced extensive damage [<i>külliyyatli zarar</i>] at the hands of Hacı Hakob Efendi and his friends.	
Year of h. 1274 (1857–58) [Mush]	
“The <i>meclis</i> decided to levy [kat] the tithe on tobacco [<i>tütün ashar</i>] at 1070 <i>lidre</i> at Mush, six months later by the hands of Hacı Hakob Efendi increased in to 2200 <i>lidre</i> by force.”	
Year of h. 1278 (1860–61) [Mush]	
“The tithe on tobacco was being sold based on a price of 12 gurush to 20 gurush; Hacı Hakob Efendi increased the tithe from 32 gurush to 46 gurush.”	

Source: “Mshoy majlisi yeresen aghqat zhoghovryan hasatz yegherner” [Calamities which reached the poor population because of the Mush Assembly], in *Divan Hayots Patmutyan, girq 13: Harstaharutyunner Tajkahayastanum*, ed. Gyut Aghanyants, (Tiflis [Tbilisi]: N. Aghanyantsi Tparan, 1915), columns 459–60.

¹²⁹ *Masis*, no. 977 (30 May 1870), 3.

As the correspondent of *Masis* stated, that was not the first time that the Armenian inhabitants of Mush asked for their money from the Kürkçübaşı Agop. In 1866, in the Armenian Assembly of Erzurum, in the midst of political turbulence in the community mainly due to the dominance of notables like Kürkçübaşı, the Armenian inhabitants of Mush tried to demand the repayment of 4,000 Ottoman Liras of debt from the notable.¹³⁰ It was claimed that the clergy of the region such as Vardapet Mkhitar had complained against the notable. Kürkçübaşı responded not only by using his social and economic capital to stop the people from submitting a common petition of complaint but also had the *vardapet* put in prison.¹³¹ Likewise, the reformist notable Vardapet Mkrtych [Hayrik], the *aradjnord* of St Karapet of Mush, is said to have submitted a report to investigate Kürkçübaşı's deeds in Mush. Documents from the archives attest the struggle between the local population of Mush and the notable, this time represented by the Vardapet Mkrtych [Hayrik]. In the *vardapet*'s petition of complaint, the notable was detested as much as the bandit Kurdish tribes. The petition stated that "the population of Mush was 80,000 in the year of [12]64 (1848). Due to oppression and tyranny of members of the local council, Kurdish bandits, and people named Kürkçübaşı Hovhannes and Manas, they [the people of Mush] were dispersed and now 25000 people remained."¹³² The petition was taken seriously both by the provincial bureaucracy and the Porte, however the measures that were taken, such as

¹³⁰ *Zhamanak*, no. 83 (26 February 1866), 35.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *B.O.A.*, MVL., 462-55, 16 Şâban 1281 (14 January 1865). Unfortunately this was only a summary of Khrimyan Hayrik's petition and the original is not located in the folder. However, among the documents found in the *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, there is an undated report written by Khrimyan Hayrik on the plight of the Armenian population of Mush. He lists the causes of their suffering as: (1) Hasnanli, Cibranli and other Kurdish tribes, (2) nomadic Kurds from Diyarbekir region which come to Mush valley in May, (3) problems in the tax farming of the tithe, particularly insistence on payments in cash, and members of the Government Assembly being tax farmers (4) as a result of out-migration increasing tax burden on the populace who remained, 5) the local government of Mush which is not bound by law. Gyut Aghanyants, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan, girq 13: Harstaharutyunner Tajkahayastanum*, (Tiflis [Tbilisi]: N. Aghanyantsi Tparan, 1915), columns 461–470. This report was penned between 1862–1868 when Khrimyan Hayrik held the posts of the abbot of the St. Karapet Monastery and the *aradjnord* of Mush intermittently. A reference to the plundering of the St. Hovhan Monastery in the report indicate that it was towards the end of his tenure there, as that event resulted in major turmoil in the region. See Chapter 4 for more details on those events.

sending an investigator, directly targeted the Kurdish tribes, not the Armenian notables.¹³³ In the official correspondence it was stated that people did not go to court because of their fear of Kurdish reprisals but again there was no mention of the Armenian notables.¹³⁴ Kürkçübaşı not only had not paid his debt to the people of Mush but he was also still the tax farmer of region, who took 1% for himself.¹³⁵ Some payments made to the people of Mush in the following period probably were intended to release some of the pressure on the notable. However, as noted in the introduction of this chapter, Kürkçübaşı was still being referred to as an oppressor of the [Armenian] people of Mush in 1872 by Bishop Tevkants.

Other Business during the War

Kürkçübaşı continued his “regular” business of various forms of moneylending during and after the War as well. For instance in January 1855, a certain Es-seyyid Mehmed Emin wrote to Kürkçübaşı to complain about another Armenian moneylender, Hoca Poghos. Mehmed Emin had loaned 10,000 to the *Serkerde* [head of an irregular band] Hacı Temur Agha with the guarantee of Poghos. Mehmed Emin, who failed to get an order from Istanbul to enforce the payment, asked Kürkçübaşı to intervene and make Hoca Poghos obey the conditions of the contract.¹³⁶ It should be noted that Hacı Temur Agha was no ordinary person. He was the head of a band of irregular soldiers (*serkerde*) from the Diyarbekir region. He fought on the side of the Ottomans in 1854 and 1855 and turned out to be one of the most important military commanders

¹³³ B.O.A., MVL., 706-1, 5 Zilhicce 1865 (1 May 1865). In the official correspondence written to the Porte by the governor of Mush, the names of Armenian notables are stated as Kürkçübaşı and Hovhannes and Manas; whereas in the above-mentioned [summary of the] petition of Khrimyan Hayrik, it was Kürkçübaşı Hovhannes and Manas.

¹³⁴ “...Ekrâdın ba‘dezîn haklarında vukû‘ bulacak te‘âdîlerinden ihtirâzan gelüb tasrîh-i dâ‘vâya cesâret edememiş...,” B.O.A., MVL., 706-1, 5 Zilhicce 1865 (1 May 1865).

¹³⁵ *Zhamanak*, no. 83 (26 February 1866), 35.

¹³⁶ “[matlûbun]....tahsîliyle tarafımıza irsâl edeceği ve edemediği sûretde ‘aynen akçe tarafınıza teslim eyleyeceğine müte‘ahhid olmuş ancak bu ana değin mahsûbiyeti icrâsına dâir irâdenâme-i sâminin adem-i zuhûru misûllü taraf-i dostânelerine dahi teslim olmadığı bu defa Hoca Bogos [Poghos] tarafından tarafımıza ifâde kılınmış...” B.O.A., A.M., 13-40, 26 Rebîü'l-âhir 1271 (16 January 1855).

on the Caucasian front.¹³⁷ Asking assistance from Kürkçübaşı to obtain money from this military figure and his moneylender is yet another example of the extensive networks that the Armenian notable enjoyed with different segments of the population, including heads of irregular bands.

Another example dates from the summer of 1855, when Kürkçübaşı corresponded with the governor of the sub-district of Bitlis, Es-seyyid Ahmed Bey. He asked the governor to intervene on his behalf to collect the debt of tax farmers of the tithe of Khunus (Hınıs) for the year 1269 (1852/53). They were indebted because they had borrowed money from the notable to make the down-payment for the tax farm.¹³⁸ Cases of this sort might be easily multiplied.¹³⁹

War profiteering took different forms; some types took place during the war, others afterwards. One of these forms was the “purchase” of the bills of debt that community leaders received from the government in return for services or provisions their communities provided during the war. The case of Mir Hüseyin, a notable with the honorary rank of *Istabile-i Amire*, is such a case. Mir Hüseyin had asked Kürkçübaşı to purchase a bond of government debt worth 50,000 guruh, and Kürkçübaşı would collect the money from the government later.¹⁴⁰ Thus there was a market of government bonds which circulated among the affluent members of the society, however they needed some social capital when the time came to cash them. Not only did Muslim notables apply to Kürkçübaşı to purchase the government’s bills of debt from them,

¹³⁷ Fahrettin M. Kırzioğlu, *100. Yılı Dolayısıyla 1855 Kars Zaferi* (Istanbul: Işıl Matbaası, 1955), 222. Kırzioğlu refrains from making any references to the ethnic origins of Hacı Temur Agha, who was probably of Kurdish origin.

¹³⁸ The correspondence took place between Kürkçübaşı Agop and the governor of Bitlis, as Abdal, İsmail and Receb Aghas, the tax farmers of the sub-district of Hınıs, were residents of Bitlis. They declined to pay their debt on the basis that they had handed over their business to a certain Hacı Rüstem Agha, and suggested that Kürkçübaşı should solve his debt problem with Hacı Rüstem Agha and his son, Yaşar Agha, who was a deputy of the former in Erzurum. *B.O.A., A.M.*, 13-87, 25 Şevvâl 1271 (11 July 1855).

¹³⁹ For instance, in another case Mustafa Bey, the governor of the sub-district of Pülümür, had approached Kürkçübaşı to talk to Poghos Agha about the new customs’ rate. *B.O.A., A.M.*, 13/95, 11 Ramazan 1271 (28 May 1855).

¹⁴⁰ Mir Hüseyin did not forget to salute Kürkçübaşı’s son and son-in-law in this letter: “Mahdûmunuz Hoca Karapet dostumuza husûsî selâm ve hâtırlarını su’âl ederiz. Damadınız hürmetlü dostumuz cenâblarına pek çok selâm ederim...” *B.O.A., A.M.*, 13-88, 29 Şâban 1271 (17 May 1855).

Armenian notables followed the same path. One such case was related to the sub-district of Pasin-i Ulyâ, a region with a substantial Armenian population. The people of the sub-district had submitted government grain and other provisions worth 290,000 guruh, in return for which their representatives (*vekils*) received bills of debt. After the war, Kürkçübaşı purchased those bills from the representatives, probably lesser notables of the district, for the relatively small fee of 60,000 guruh. The government of Erzurum asked their superiors in Istanbul what course of action they should follow in such cases; if they paid the total amount of the bill, the treasury would be damaged, and they acknowledged the fact that regardless of whether they paid or not, the people of Pasin-i Ulyâ were the absolute losers in this deal.¹⁴¹ The lesser notables like those of Pasin-i Ulyâ, who had made deals with the state during the war and with Kürkçübaşı after the war, were the ones who profited from such deals. It was also probably the case that only a notable like Kürkçübaşı with strong social and economic capital could cash the bills of debt from the government at such a high amount. These and other examples show that Kürkçübaşı fulfilled the role of connecting people of different social status and ethno-religious groups with each other.

After the Trial: Kürkçübaşı Back in Power, the French Consul and the “*İhtisabiye*” Issue

Kürkçübaşı was acquitted of the accusations. First the Armenian Patriarchate intervened on his behalf, petitioning the government for his release on the condition that he would surrender whenever the government asked for him.¹⁴² Upon his return to Erzurum, the notable also obtained Russian subjecthood right after his trial. There is no indication that he had had it before; the French consul claimed that the notable had received protection from the Russian Consulate in

¹⁴¹ “akçeyi kâmilten mâl sandığından i ‘tâ’ ettirilmiş bulunduklarına nazaran olmakûle erzak ve sâire vermiş olan ahâli ve neferatın ellerine bir akçe geçmediği cihetle onların mağdur oldukları misüllü...” B.O.A., MVL., 615-108, 1 Safer 1278 (8 August 1861).

¹⁴² The Patriarchate did not make any references to the exile of the notable, and wrote as if he was sent from Erzurum to Istanbul directly for the investigation. “Erzurumdan celb buyrulub yedi mâhdan beri Bâb-i ‘Âlî tomruğunda mahbûs bulunan Makar oğlu Kürkçübaşı Hacı Agop bendeleri...” B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 262-59, 8 Şevvâl 1273 (1 June 1857).

the city and obtained a Russian passport. And despite the recent instructions of the Porte not to use the rights granted by a foreign passport, he managed to use it, thanks to his powerful supporters at Erzurum and in Constantinople.¹⁴³ He kept that passport until 1862 when he reobtained Ottoman subjecthood with the great support of local authorities, as will be discussed in chapter four. Until that time, Kürkçübaşı Agop stayed in Erzurum except when he traveled to Istanbul for business.¹⁴⁴

Right after the petition of the Patriarchate, as we know from the complaints of the French Consul in Erzurum, the notable was back in Erzurum and holding the office of customs officer once again. The reason for the consul's complaints was over-taxation and confiscation of goods from a French merchant, Mr. Schilizzi, who traded between Persia and Marseilles.¹⁴⁵ His commercial firm was trading silk, the most important Persian export until the mid-1860s.¹⁴⁶ The crisis grew, as the governor in support of Kürkçübaşı yielded neither to diplomatic pressure nor to the order of the Ottoman government to pay attention to the commercial rights of foreign nationals.¹⁴⁷ The problem was solved a year and a half later and the goods belonging to the

¹⁴³ C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no. 37, addressed to Ambassador Antoine Thouvenel in Constantinople, 27 December 1858.

¹⁴⁴ For instance in the letter of the Governor Arif Pasha to the French Consul in Erzurum on the topic of the notable's actions, Kürkçübaşı was referred to as being in Istanbul. "Asıl gümrük mültezimi dahi orada [Dersa 'adet] olup keyfiyyet buradaki gümrükçü tarafından Dersa 'adette bulunan asıl gümrük mültezimine yazıldığı misillü..." C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no. 40, addressed to Ambassador Antoine Thouvenel in Constantinople, 7 February 1859.

¹⁴⁵ According to the petition of Pierre Emmanuel Schilizzi, Kürkçübaşı forced the merchant to pay 5% tax on the goods he possessed. This was contrary to the commercial treaty between the Ottoman Empire and France, as the customs duty for the goods in transit trade was fixed at 3%. The goods in question were 374 bales of thread. The French merchant's partner in this trade was a Greek, Hacı Yanko in Erzurum. C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no. 26, addressed to Ambassador Antoine Thouvenel in Constantinople, 21 October 1857.

¹⁴⁶ European and Greek firms were involved in the silk trade. Silk was the most important export item before its cultivation came to a halt due to silkworm disease in the late 1860s. After that its premier place was taken over by the carpet trade. L. Berezin, *Puteshevie po Severnoi Persii* (Kazan, [n.p.] 1852), 58–66 quoted in Charles Issawi, ed., *The Economic History of Iran, 1800–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 105–108.

¹⁴⁷ C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no. 37, addressed to Ambassador Antoine Thouvenel in Constantinople, 27 December 1858.

French merchant were returned.¹⁴⁸ However, this was not the only problem between the French consul and Kürkcübaşı.

Another field of contestation between the two concerned a tax on the production and retail of spirits in Erzurum, which was tax farmed by none other than Kürkcübaşı Agop. The French consul was concerned about four French protégés of Italian origin who were nonetheless Ottoman subjects and subject to this tax.¹⁴⁹ Probably as retaliation for the French consul's involvement in the case of Mr. Schilizzi, the notable requested an immediate payment of two years of arrears, 50,000 gurush in total.¹⁵⁰ In a later dispatch the consul explained this tax in detail, which was requested from all producers and retailers of spirits, not only from French protégés.

According to the consul, the tax on spirits was originally part of the *ihtisab* tax, a monthly fee collected from artisans of the town.¹⁵¹ Its rates were low, varying between 1.5 and 7.5 gurush depending on the profession. Kürkcübaşı was also its tax farmer. However, a new tax, *tezkere parası*, was also introduced after the war, to compensate the deficits in the local treasury. Business owners, workers, and apprentices were subjected to that personal tax at annual rates of 10, 7.5 and 5 gurush.¹⁵² The *ihtisab* on spirits emerged out of this tax but changed over time. According to the consul, the tax was not fixed but rather arbitrary, based on the will of the tax

¹⁴⁸ C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no. 41, addressed to Ambassador Antoine Thouvenel in Constantinople, 4 April 1859.

¹⁴⁹ This was “*müskirat resmi*” known under different names, including “*rûsûm-i müctemian*,” its rates and collection were standardized after 1861. Şener, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Vergi Sistemi*, 163-165.

¹⁵⁰ C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no. 37, addressed to Ambassador Antoine Thouvenel in Constantinople, 27 December 1858.

¹⁵¹ The Consul's statement is confusing because of its terminology. The tax on spirits may have its origins in *ihtisab*, which was a tax on goods sold in the market. Therefore, *ihtisab* was levied on goods. The collection of the *ihtisab* tax was never standardized during the Tanzimat period, and this might have resulted in collection of different fees from artisans under this name. For more information on *ihtisab*, see Şener, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Vergi Sistemi*, 156–158.

¹⁵² C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no. 39, addressed to Ambassador Antoine Thouvenel in Constantinople, 31 January 1859.

farmer, Kürkçübaşı Agop. The tax was introduced for the first time in 1851 in the vast region of Erzurum, Kars, Van, Mush and Bitlis. Kürkçübaşı Agop was the successful bidder and obtained it for 24,000 gurush although the revenues amounted to 48,000 gurush in Erzurum alone. The tax farmer had the support of the governor to break down any resistance to its payment.¹⁵³

Since its inception, the amount collected had been increasing and in 1857 it was tax farmed for two years, for the price of 50,800 piasters, to be collected from the towns mentioned above. Only in Erzurum, according to the consul, with its 15 factories and retail stores engaged in the spirit trade, the tax to be collected exceeded 100,000. Finally the artisans, including foreigners who produced and sold spirits, were able, with the support of the bishop and consuls, to receive an imperial order to fix the tax at a moderate level.¹⁵⁴ Kürkçübaşı was accused of continuing to demand taxes at high levels despite the imperial order: "...in most cases, to that of their gross income, that is to say, to purely and simply remove their [spirit producers' and retailers'] industry."¹⁵⁵ The consul who asked for further instructions from his ambassadors concluded his dispatch with the following words:

*On ne peut équitablement, je pense, exiger d'eux qu'ils [nos administrés] considèrent comme tels des abus contre lesquels les Rayas, eux-mêmes n'hésitent pas à se révolter et qui, grâce à la connivence et à l'appui de l'autorité locale, dégénèrent en véritables avanies.*¹⁵⁶

The consul's words about a potential revolt by the *reaya*, that is mainly the artisans of the town, soon proved true, as I examine in the last chapter of the dissertation. Throughout the 1860s they carried out an immense struggle against the notables who controlled the economy. The Armenian Constitution with its administrative mechanisms and communal institutions would

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ The new rates were not introduced throughout the empire until 1278 (1861–62). See footnote 149 in this chapter.

¹⁵⁵ C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no. 39, addressed to Ambassador Antoine Thouvenel in Constantinople, 31 January 1859.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

provide the artisans a venue to express their discontent against the notables like Kürkçübaşı Agop and others.

The Crimean War: “Ottomanness” of Kürkçübaşı and Strategies for Claiming Loyalty

Kürkçübaşı Agop, as demonstrated above, was an active member of the social and economic imperial order in the region of Erzurum. One of the most important constituents of the new imperial order, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, was a new set of relationships between the imperial state and its subjects. These relationships were based on the negotiations on the rights and obligations of the subjects and the state, and revolved around the issues of patriotism and loyalty. Kürkçübaşı adopted different strategies to express loyalty to the imperial state during the war. His strategies, however, were different from that of the Allahverdiyans, who wrote a family history. In that history, the family was depicted as an active participant in the consolidation of Ottoman rule in the eastern provinces and assistant to the government in times of crisis, for example during the *Celali* Revolts of the seventeenth century. The family represented itself as having participated in the foundation of the imperial rule, without any reference to its Armenianness. Kürkçübaşı’s form of expression was different. He explicitly showed that he was in a position to bargain with the state as an *Armenian*, through the new concept of patriotism.

Kürkçübaşı, due to his economic and social capital, was one of the main figures who constituted and shaped the new imperial order in the region. However, his “loyalty” had to be emphasized specifically in a distinct way in the context of the Crimean War, because Kürkçübaşı articulated his loyalty in a language that evoked his Armenianness and emphasized his loyalty to

the Ottoman state as a non-Muslim subject. The war provided the context and the interrogations the venue to express his identity in that distinct way.

The notable had employed different strategies in the process of bargaining. For instance during his interrogation when he stated that he did not give his stockpiled grain to the army “willingly,” the investigators were irked and asked the notable to clarify what he meant by that statement. The notable’s unwillingness was due to low rates of transport paid by the state and thus a potential loss. However, he also added that

it was not only me [Kürkçübaşı Agop] who refrained from giving their grain [to the government] as they receive the money [for the grain] and transportation [fees] with difficulty and [the fees are] low. Nobody touched the grain of those influential *efendis* but wherever there was Armenian property like mine, they sealed and gathered. I did not put forward these words when I was there. Even if I had done, nobody would have listened.¹⁵⁷

This was a deliberate strategy, to emphasize the vulnerable nature of Armenians and double-standards in the Ottoman administration. The point the notable was trying to make was that despite these disadvantages he had worked in the service of the government. Of course, he mentioned neither the fact that his family had full granaries from which they sold grain to the army, nor that he had organized partnerships with the very same *efendis* whose granaries were not touched.

Kürkçübaşı’s Exile

That was only one of the instances in the interrogations in which the notable evoked his Armenianness and loyalty to the state simultaneously. Indeed the whole affair of corruption began at the end of December 1855, when five notables, Muslim and Armenian, were exiled

¹⁵⁷ “...yalnız ben değil sâirleri de zahîresini vermekten ictinab ederler idi, akçe ve nakliyesini güc ve dûna aldıklarından ama nüfuzluca efendilerin zehâirine kimse el uzatmayıp nereden benim gibi Ermeni malı var ise onları mühürleyüb bu sûretle topladılar bu sözleri de orada iken meydana koyub şikâyet etmedim etsem de kimse ısgâ’ etmez idi.” A.MKT.NZD., 232-85, “Kürkçübaşı Agop’un istintâkı,” 18 Muharrem 1273 (18 September 1856).

from Erzurum to the interior provinces. Among them were Kürkçübaşı Agop, his brother-in-law and partner, Margar from Alaşkert, and three Muslim members of the Local Administrative Assembly of Erzurum, namely Selim Agha, Namık Agha, and Şeref Efendi, a *müderres*.¹⁵⁸ Agop and Margar were exiled to the town of Siverek in the province of Harput as they were accused of having “proclivity towards Russians,” whereas the aforementioned Muslims were exiled to another town due to “certain mischievous acts.”¹⁵⁹ The evidence for Kürkçübaşı’s and Margar’s proclivity towards Russians consisted of two letters in Armenian which were intercepted by the state authorities. One of them was sent to the “Hayots [Armenian] Agha Kürkçübaşı” from a certain Major Yereshchiditskin in the Russian Army, dated 29 September 1855. The major, who was “a Christian and loved the [Armenian?] nation just like you [Kürkçübaşı]” asked the notable to pay attention to his letter and give him some information on the Ottoman army, such as the condition and positions of troops.¹⁶⁰ The author of the other letter is not known. It was about the amount of grain in a granary and purchases in a village in the region. However, it was believed to be a correspondence between Margar and his brothers in different places in Caucasia, to provide information to the Russians. The brothers of Margar were also Kürkçübaşı’s partners. Upon discovering these letters, the governor-general and governor of Erzurum wanted permission to send all these notables into exile. There was no evidence to prove the guilt of the Muslim notables who allegedly gathered at night to share seditious thoughts. Also there were no seals on

¹⁵⁸ B.O.A., A.MKT.MHM. 81-68, 19 Rebî‘ü'l-evvel 1272 (29 December 1855).

¹⁵⁹ “Erzurumlu Kürkçübaşı Agop ve Eleşkirdli Margar’ın Rusyalıya mûmâyelet ve Erzurum meclisi â‘zâ’sından Kapucubası Hacı Selim Ağa ile Namık ve müderresînden Şerif Efendiler dahi bazı gûne mefsedetleri anlaşılmış olduğundan...” B.O.A., A.MKT.MHM., 81-68, 19 Rebî‘ü'l-evvel 1272 (29 December 1855).

¹⁶⁰ “...inch besdes khachabashd Kristona em nmanabes duk havadarem Azge...” letters and translations into Ottoman Turkish are both located in B.O.A., ID. 00335-21925, 13 Rebî‘ü'l-âhîr 1272 (23 December 1855).

the captured documents to prove the notables' "proclivity" completely. However, their exile would be an example to the others.¹⁶¹

The British consul's dispatch on the exiles accepted that the rumors about Kürkçübaşı might be true, as the notable "has long been suspected of holding communications with the Russians, but that has not prevented him having been accepted as contractor for the supply of the troops..."¹⁶² And although the consul was reserved until "the whole truth is allowed to transpire," he claimed that the general opinion in the city was that "they [the exiled notables] in some way encouraged the Russians to attack Erzerum by betraying its weaknesses, and the little opposition they would meet with from either the military authorities, or the people."¹⁶³ Indeed a few months later the British Embassy inquired into the details of the issue and the government authorities told them that the exiles were about nothing but the corruption case.¹⁶⁴ The three Muslim notables, who were also exiled, allegedly protested "against their being placed in the same category as a man so infamous as the Kurkgeebashee" and were sent to exile due to the governor's enmity towards them.¹⁶⁵ Kürkçübaşı's papers and registers were examined by the Military Council in Erzurum, and some were sent to Istanbul, but, according to the consul, the papers were very properly kept and the accounts which might be used against the notable were not sent to Istanbul. More importantly, the governor-general and the governor attended a dinner

¹⁶¹ "...ve evrâk-i mezbûrenin mühürleri olmadığından mersûmanın mümâyeletlerine tamamıyla hükm olunamaz ise de şu maddenin şuyu' u vukû'undan ziyâde mahzûru mü'eddî bulunduğuna mebni gâ'ile-i hâliye üzerine bazı efkâr-ı bâtıla ashâbının ıslâh-i efkârıyla bunların dahi te'dibi..." Ibid.

¹⁶² N.A., F.O., 195-493, no. 10, From Consul Taylor in Erzurum to Sir Stanford de Redcliff, 22 January 1856.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ N.A., F.O., 195-493, no. 23, From Consul Taylor in Erzurum to Sir Stanford de Redcliff, 10 March 1856.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

at Kürkçübaşı's house right at the time of the examination of the papers, which caused great suspicion.¹⁶⁶

Kürkçübaşı stayed in exile in Kharput until the end of the summer of 1856—that is, well after Istanbul had initiated the investigation into corruption during the war.¹⁶⁷ During his exile Kürkçübaşı petitioned the Porte, and in his petition he underlined his “services” to the government, mentioned the difficulties he had faced on the road to Kharput in deep winter, and not surprisingly rejected all allegations about his relations with the Russians. Interesting enough, he did so by adhering to Islamic rhetoric, evoking his “loyalty to the caliph of the earth as a loyal (non-Muslim) subject since time immemorial.”¹⁶⁸ Among the notable's official and personal correspondence, this was the second time that he used openly Islamic rhetoric. The first one was in his comments on the advance of the allied troops in Sevastopol. On that occasion, Kürkçübaşı had noted “God willing, from now on the defeat of the infidels will become apparent” [*inşallah artık küffarın mağlûb olması pedîd olacak*].¹⁶⁹ This Islamic rhetoric did not necessarily conflict with the notable's main strategy of emphasizing his loyalty to the state as an Armenian subject. Indeed, as I describe below, it was used to support it.

Patriotism during the War: Armenians of Erzurum and the Role of Kürkçübaşı

“Ottoman” patriotism during the Crimean War is one of the relatively well-studied aspects of the war. The Ottoman society witnessed patriotic propaganda through different forms

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Order to send Kürkçübaşı and his documents to Istanbul for the investigation of the accounts of the Army was sent to Kharput on June 12, 1856. *B.O.A., A.MKT.UM.*, 248-67, 18 Zilhicce 1272 (10 August 1856). However, the notable stayed there until late August/early September. *B.O.A., A.MKT.MHM* 95/86, 4 Muharrem 1273 (4 September 1856).

¹⁶⁸ “halife-i rû-i zemîn efendimiz hazretlerinin min el-kadîm re’âyâ-i sâdıkasından bulunarak...” *B.O.A., MVL.*, 179/61, 14 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1273 (10 January 1857). The petition is undated but the date for the document in the catalog (1273) must be wrong, as Kürkçübaşı was no longer in Kharput at that time. It should be 1272.

¹⁶⁹ *B.O.A., A.M.*, 13-90, 7 Şevvâl 1271 (23 June 1855). The addressee of this letter is not known but it is addressed to a *Ri'fatlu Efendim Hazretleri* and it was about some transactions of Manas, who was the son-in-law of Kürkçübaşı. It is highly probable that the receiver was a Muslim bureaucrat of some rank.

of literary expression, such as poetry and legends about the heroic acts of the soldiers and Ottoman victories.¹⁷⁰ The vast coverage in the newspapers, the importance of means of communication such as the telegraph, and the emergence of a new intelligentsia in the 1860s, led historians to attribute to the Crimean War a major role in the emergence of the state's efforts to control public opinion (*efkar-i umumiyye*).¹⁷¹ Both developments—propaganda of Ottoman patriotism and attempts to control public opinion—indicate changes in the governmentality of the Ottoman government and the different forms of relations with its subjects. One may recall that the emergency war-time tax was renamed as donation/assistance. The donation campaign was one of the measures taken by the Ottoman government to cope with the increasing burden of expenditures during the War.¹⁷² According to one foreign observer the “donations” reached the amount of 1.5 million pounds cash and an equivalent amount in-kind as supplies to the army, a very high number—albeit difficult to verify from other sources.¹⁷³ The campaign was another indication of the new type of relations based on consent, persuasion and negotiation, which the state was trying to establish between itself and the population. The war provided an apt context for such developments.

However, as historians point out, Ottoman patriotism in the period was mainly a religious—and in this case a Muslim—endeavor. For instance, at the beginning of the war when the Ottoman navy did not surrender to the Russians, they resisted on grounds of religious

¹⁷⁰ Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 394.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 394–398. Of course this does not mean that public opinion (*efkar-i umumiye*) did not exist in the previous periods. As Kırılı aptly shows, the Ottoman state took a distinct interest in public opinion at least from the 1840s onwards. Cengiz Kırılı, “Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, eds. Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 75–98.

¹⁷² Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 319–322; Besim Özcan, *Kırım Savaşında Mali Durum ve Teb'anın Harb Siyaseti (1833–1856)* (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1997), 33f.

¹⁷³ Adolphus Slade (Mushaver Pasha), *Turkey and the Crimean War: A Narrative of Historical Events* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1867), 197 quoted in Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 322.

patriotism (*hamiyet-i diniye*).¹⁷⁴ The recruitment of non-Muslims into the Ottoman army was a hotly debated issue at the time, and it was rejected probably on the grounds of the equation of Islam with military service and heroic valor. For instance when Cevdet Pasha was commenting on the issue of military service of non-Muslims, he criticized the idea on the basis that patriotism (*gayret-i vataniyye*) could not replace religious enthusiasm.¹⁷⁵ These discussions give important insights into the development of Turkish nationalism and “official” views on it, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. However they leave out questions like how the non-Muslim populations participated in the war effort and what “patriotism” meant for them. Kürkçübaşı Agop’s testimony concerning the war effort of Armenians in Erzurum provides us with clues about non-Muslims’ understanding of patriotism and support to the Ottoman cause. Moreover, his strategies in narrating his and “his community’s” efforts show a distinct understanding of patriotism as a negotiation between non-Muslims and the state.

Kürkçübaşı Agop was the first among the contractors and officials who were accused of embezzlement and corruption to be summoned to Istanbul for the investigation. As already noted, he submitted a memorandum to the commission of investigation on the day of the interrogation. The document was his defense against the accusations. Unlike other types of document with similar intents, such as his petition while in exile or the actual interrogation reports, the notable followed the strategy of underlining the participation of the Armenians of

¹⁷⁴ Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 143. This of course does not mean that the Muslim masses’ views on the war are examined, it is quite the contrary. Due to lack of sources and some methodological issues, their “patriotism” and participation in the war effort have also not been questioned. One reason for this lack of interest is probably the particular understanding of Ottoman/Turkish history in which the state and its (Muslim) population is thought to form a natural unity in evolution into the nation-state. Until recently, this view has left out both the masses’ existence outside the history of the state, and any possibility of integrating non-Muslims’ experiences into the historical narrative as “Ottoman.” For a study that challenges this dominant historiography through memoirs of an Ottoman Armenian officer, see my *Mülâzım-ı Sâni Kalusd Sürmenyan’ın Birinci Dünya Savaşı ve Tehcir Anıları*, translated from Armenian with an introduction (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015).

¹⁷⁵ Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War*, 340.

Erzurum, and through them his own role, during the war. And interestingly enough, he did so in a separate section, after concluding his memorandum. The notable demanded his acquittal and forgiveness as he “repented with tears in his eyes,” but not failing to mention once again the privilege that he had been promised by Mustafa Zarif Pasha.¹⁷⁶ Then he writes “what follows from here is a presentation of the summary of my various humble services, which I showed as community [Armenian].”¹⁷⁷ This is a very rare testimony, which describes the services of Armenian notables to the Ottoman state during the Crimean War either directly or through orchestrating the assistance of the Armenian community in Erzurum. Besides its importance in providing factual information on the non-Muslim Ottomans’ positions during the Crimean War, it shows how notables, in this case Kürkçübaşı Agop, negotiated loyalty with the imperial state. The notable retrospectively used the support of his community as a tool in bargaining for his acquittal on accusations of corruption.

“As I hold a high status in my community,” began Kürkçübaşı Agop in his memorandum, he and the Bishop Grigoris had preached in the churches and “taking it as an obligation to show great care in respecting the feelings of our Muslim neighbors,” they helped the Ottoman army by different means.¹⁷⁸ Among the material support they gave, they provided the provisions sought by the army and the payment of war assistance/donation (*iâne-i harbiyye*). The Armenians of

¹⁷⁶ “...vukû‘ bulan cerâ‘im ve günahım gözümünden yaş akıtarak tövbe edeceğimden artık kusurumun afvıyla habsden tahliye-i sebilimi mev‘ûd olan imtiyâzatın icrâ’sı husûsuna müsâ‘ade buyrulmak bâbında emr ü ferman efendilerimizindir.” B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD 194-83, 18 Muharrem 1273 (18 September 1856). “Etmekçibaşı Agop’un Komisyona takdim eylediği müzekkerenin tercümesidir.”

¹⁷⁷ “bundan aşağısı dahi milletce ibrâz eylediğim hidemat-i mütenevvi‘a-i çâkerânemin icmâlen arz...” Ibid. The strange wording used in the text, “I showed as a community”, might be a scribal mistake. However, given that Kürkçübaşı promoted himself as the leader of the community in Erzurum, the ambiguous language might be a conscious choice.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

Erzurum contributed to the “donation” campaign and some of the non-Muslim notables were decorated for their services to the government during the war.¹⁷⁹

In addition to their material support, there were other things showing the Armenians’ respect for their neighbors, such as avoiding playing music during the war. The bishop preached that the Armenians of Erzurum should “fulfill their duty of obedience” because not only had “our [Armenian’s] ancestors protected their honor comfortably under the imperial rule” but also “for our full safety.”¹⁸⁰ Then the notable lists the services of the Armenians of Erzurum to the army. According to him each day for nine months 400-500 Armenians worked in the fortifications for free, carrying away the soil and stones of the fields. Three hundred eighty houses around the fortifications were emptied and their people moved to other houses, so that soldiers could stay there in the winter; they provided public speakers/preachers (*hatib*) to the army when it ran out of them, they gave tents when needed, and they donated livestock. Besides these, the notable said, “as prominent ones of the community,” they donated animals for transporting cannons, and they dispersed their shops and *hans* to accommodate soldiers.¹⁸¹ In all these sentences, the notable equated himself with his community (Armenians in Erzurum), and constructed the sentences as questions asked in first person plural “we.” They were either in negative forms such

¹⁷⁹ In his book, *Kırım Savaşında Mali Durum ve Teb’anın Harb Siyaseti*, Özcan examines the donations received by the government from different constituents of the Ottoman society, namely the pashas, bureaucrats, Muslim and non-Muslim notables and people. For the donations from the provinces there is no specific information except it is donated by people (ahâli) and the amount donated. For Erzurum, see Özcan, *Kırım Savaşında Mali Durum*, 77. However, there were non-Muslim notables who received decorations for their “services” to the government as I examine in the chapter 4 of the dissertation.

¹⁸⁰ “zirâ âbâ ve ecdâdımız saltanat-i seniyyede âsûde hal olarak ‘ırz ve namuslarını setr ve vikâye etmişlerdir ve bu misülli dahi hukuk-i saltanat-i seniyyenin istikmâli ve bizim âsâyîşimizin hakkıyla istihsâli için olduğundan bunu bilip ona göre biz de vazîfe-i ‘ubûdiyetlerimizi icrâ’ etmeliyiz.” *B.O.A., A.MKT.NZD.*, 194-83, 18 Muharrem 1273 (18 September 1856). “Etmekçibaşı Agop’un Komisyona takdim eylediği müzekkerenin tercümesidir.”

¹⁸¹ “...bunlardan başka millet-i mu’teberlerimiz tarafından...” Ibid.

as “did we not give/donate/do?”¹⁸² or in the form of “what deficiency did we have in doing...”¹⁸³ And finally, the most important notion of the Tanzimat, the protection of life, honor and property, is turned upside-down, saying ‘they’ fulfilled their debt of loyalty and servitude “as the honor and property of our community belongs to our Sultan.”¹⁸⁴ He also asked the state authorities to prove his disloyalty and inclination towards Russia—following the procedures put forward by the Tanzimat.¹⁸⁵

There are a few issues here that require attention. First, the first part of Kürkçübaşı’s memorandum—in which he only talked about his business with the army—attests that the accusation of corruption was his priority. So why did he bring up the issue of loyalty and the services of the Armenian community in Erzurum in the second part? The most plausible explanation of the shift in his focus is that Kürkçübaşı wanted to reformulate the whole trial as an accusation of disloyalty to the empire rather than as an investigation into corruption and embezzlement of public funds, as he was in a much better position to defend himself against the former charges than the latter. Likewise, if he disproved the accusations against him on the grounds of disloyalty, he might use that to weaken accusations of corruption against him. The most interesting point here is not, however, the notable’s strategy of mixing accusations against him and strengthening his hand, but rather his motivation for doing so. He aimed to use his loyalty and services as elements to bargain for his acquittal. The rhetoric of servitude of the subject is kept, but the emphasis is on the negotiable character of the loyalty, and more

¹⁸² For instance, “Tabyalara yakın olan mahallelerde üç yüz seksen hâneyi boşaltub sükkânını diğer hânelerine yerleştirerek hâlf kalan haneleri kış günü asâkir-i şâhâneye mi vermedik ve cünûd-i mülûkâninin hâtibleri tükendiği vakitlerde i’âne sûretiyle hâtib mi vermedik ve çadır idâre etmediği vakitlerde çadır mı vermedik...” Ibid.

¹⁸³ “...ve kurârlardan araba ve saman tedârikiyle i’tâ’ında ne kusur ettik, kenisalarda piskoposumuzun cehdiyle devlet-i ‘aliyyeye farz olan du’a’yı ifâ’da ne kusur ettik?” Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ “...milletimizin ‘ırz ve namus ve emvâl [ve] eşyâsı padişahımız efendimiz hazretlerinin olduğu cihetle” Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ “bu bâbda varakalarımız var ise ortaya koyub bi’l-istintâk usûl-i Tanzimat-i Hayriyye’ye tevfiķan ru’yet olunarak” Ibid.

importantly on his role as a notable who ensures the loyalty of his local community. He positioned himself as the main actor in the Armenians' participation in the war efforts. With the bishop, he was the one who mobilized “we,” i.e. the Armenians in Erzurum, and as a loyal subject to the empire, he did not deserve the treatment he received. It is also noteworthy that Kürkçübaşı did not refer to Armenians in other regions of the empire, not even in the neighboring regions, but mentioned only the services of Armenians in Erzurum. Last but not least, the notable expected that there would be a mutual understanding between him and the addressee of his memorandum on the definition of loyalty, chiefly as something that is open to bargaining; the more loyal you are, the more privileges you (should) get. And Kürkçübaşı's main complaint was that he did not get those privileges.

This is a nuanced understanding of patriotism not as a top-down state policy that aimed to mobilize its Muslim population through mainly religious enthusiasm. Instead it is a venue for negotiation of rights and obligations of both the subjects and the state. The Reform Edict of 1856 and the following developments which worked towards engendering legal equality between Muslims and non-Muslims could be seen from this perspective. This does not contradict the fact that the allies of the Ottoman state, Britain and France, had exerted pressure on the Ottoman government to implement reforms regarding its non-Muslim subjects. On the contrary, it complicates this view, by attributing some agency to the Ottoman government in this diplomatic game, in making the most out of that pressure. By giving some “concessions” to its non-Muslim subjects, the Ottoman government not only appeased the Great Powers and aimed to forestall the risk of Europeans' intervening in its domestic affairs on the pretext of concern for the condition of its non-Muslims Ottoman subjects. The government also sought to strengthen its ties with its subject population by emphasizing its justice and benevolence (expressed in terms of

“concessions”). At the same time, through this interactive process, it redefined loyalty and patriotism as the ideological basis of the new imperial order. Alongside the articles of the Reform Edict on the conditions of non-Muslims, permission to build and rebuild churches throughout the empire can be considered as “concessions” in return for their assistance and services during the war.¹⁸⁶ The Ottomanist project of the 1860s and the reform in the administration of the Armenian community, which I examine in the following chapters, should also be understood as parts of this new set of relations between the imperial state and its subject populations.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the making of an Armenian notable, Hacı Agop Makaryan, known as Kürkçübaşı, from the application of the Tanzimat in the mid-1840s to the aftermath of the Crimean War. The chapter had three main axes, namely tax farming contracts, provisioning of the army during the war, and the notable’s definition of loyalty. I discerned the ways in which Kürkçübaşı was able to build immense social and economic capital throughout the period, rising from the rank of local partner to a major moneylender to become one of the most important notables in all the eastern provinces of the Empire. In the business portfolio, five forms of investments stand out as the notable accumulated his immense wealth. Each of these required involvement in social networks of different types and magnitude.

The first type was obtaining tax farms for the collection of taxes from the Armenian Apostolic community while acting as an intermediary between the local government and the

¹⁸⁶ Besim Özcan states that the number of applications to restore and reconstruct churches grew immensely right after the war. He argues, “it may be seen as that the Ottoman government did not see any error in accepting the request of non-Muslim citizens [sic.] as a gesture to their compatriotism before and during the war.” Özcan, *Kırım Savaşında Mali Durum*, 152.

local Armenian community. In that network, his position would have been socially approved by the community, because if it were not, then the claim to be an Armenian notable (*kocabaş*) would have been void. The second set of investment was moneylending, which also included a function to work as a distinct type of financial activity, purchasing state bonds from their owners and later cashing them. In these kinds of relations he worked as a businessman shuttling between wealthy members of Muslim and non-Muslim communities and the local authorities. The mutual understanding between those notables and Kürkçübaşı, and the fact that he could receive some payment from the state, shows his social prestige in addition to his financial capital.

As a third type of investment, Kürkçübaşı invested in land, especially in the hinterland and surrounding districts of Erzurum. In this regard, he was no different from other Armenian notables, for instance the Allahverdiyans or Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi, whose biography I examine in the next chapter. The peculiarity of the case of Kürkçübaşı was that he was a latecomer to the region, having migrated only in the 1830s, and thus he had no ties to the land and its people except his economic and social capital to dominate them. To do so, the notable had to rely on state authorities for making transactions, either the pashas in Istanbul to obtain title deeds (*tapu*) for the purchased lands, or lesser bureaucrats in Erzurum to make his illegal land purchases legal, as in the case of İlice village.

The fourth type of business was tax farming of various state revenues, ranging from collection of tithe of villages and towns, to the tax on production and sale of spirits in the eastern provinces, to the tax from salt-pits in the province of Erzurum and timber in the sub-province of Kars. Among these various tax farms the most notable and lucrative one was the tax farm of the customs of the province of Erzurum, which included various subordinate customs in the province. In order to obtain these tax farms, Kürkçübaşı established close relations with

governors of the province and the sub-provinces, as well as local Muslim magnates. The nature of these relations, due to the amount of money involved, was highly dubious, and often included allegations of corruption. Besides, these tax farms also located him in a different network of local and regional elites. In personal correspondence between these governors and Kürkçübaşı, the notable was not only praised with kind words but also treated as an equal. This was a clear manifestation that class was the main determining factor in the interpersonal relations between the elites of high economic and social standing. Their relations were carried out according to the rules of courtesy and a shared culture. And, even before the reaffirmation of the idea of equality throughout the empire by the Reform Edict of 1856, there were a few—very privileged—members of non-Muslim communities who were accepted as equals in the provincial social order. In other words, similar to the grand elite of the Armenian Apostolic community in Istanbul (the *amiras*), there were provincial notables like Kürkçübaşı Agop who participated in and shaped the Ottoman imperial social order outside the imperial capital. In the 1860s, as I examine in the following chapters, their participation was justified and legitimized through the reforms and discourses of Ottomanism.

The fifth type of investment Kürkçübaşı made was provisioning the army. The contracts he struck with the army during the Crimean War reached enormous amounts. A gigantic undertaking like the provisioning of the imperial army necessitated mobilization of all the networks mentioned above to fulfill the conditions of the contracts. He sold the army not only the grain he accumulated from his time of tax farming of tithe and from his own lands, but also salt and timber, his other investments. Besides his own property, he had agreements with local village elders to maintain his granaries, agreed with local aghas to assist him, and sent his kinsmen to carry out his business in the hinterland of Erzurum. He struck (corrupt) deals with

important bureaucrats to purchase their grain and sell it to the army, or to overlook his fraudulent acts. Finally, at the top of the hierarchy of such relations stood the governor-general of Erzurum and the army commanders who wielded immense power and authority in the region. The provisioning of the army can be considered as a cosmos of Kürkçübaşı's various social networks: it was an opportunity to establish himself as the hub connecting them with each other. Only very few notables could have the capacity to do so, and Kürkçübaşı, with his accumulation of social and economic capital over the years, became one of the few.

This period, particularly the period of the Crimean War, witnessed the development of a new governmentality on behalf of the imperial center and a new set of relations between the government and the subject populations. Kürkçübaşı's testimony against the accusations and declaration of his "services" to the government was a manifestation of this newly-developing set of relations. His emphasis on the services of Armenians which he orchestrated to be carried out in Erzurum during the war stands out as a major component of his testimony. Through his role as "a prestigious one" among the Armenians of Erzurum, the notable was able to bargain his position during the trial and to "negotiate loyalty." He considered the assistance of the Armenians of Erzurum to the imperial army as his own asset *vis-à-vis* the state, and thus saw himself in a position to ask for privileges (i.e. acquittal from the trial of treason). What is important in the negotiation was the mutual understanding that these negotiations could only be carried out by Armenian notables on behalf of their local communities. This instance was different from the example of the Allahverdiyans who also participated in the making of the Ottoman social and economic order in the region. The Allahverdiyans evoked the memories of a distant past as participants of the Ottoman imperial order, rather than claiming an active and contemporary participation as leaders of "we"—as a part of but still distinct from the rest of the

society. In other words, both the state and the local notables considered the latter not only the legitimate representatives of the community but also their absolute leaders. Kürkçübaşı's bargaining with the state over the definition of loyalty was also different from that of Bisiloğlu Grigor, who revoked his previous services to the government. He used "I" while referring to his services while Kürkçübaşı used "we." The use of the first person plural pronoun while referring specifically to the Armenians of Erzurum, as opposed to all people of Erzurum, was meant to underline the role of the notable as their leader. These negotiations were materialized in different ways. In the case of Kürkçübaşı, he was reinstalled in his former capacity as a major tax farmer. The reciprocal dependence of the imperial state on their social and economic capital and the notables' dependence on the state for augmenting their power worked well for both parties.

This interdependence between state authorities and notables has also resulted in overlooking certain developments that challenge some of the truisms in the scholarship. One such case is the status of those Ottoman subjects who obtained foreign passports. Apparently, Kürkçübaşı Agop obtained Russian subjecthood right after his trial and return to Erzurum. In the meanwhile, the notable was able to obtain title deeds in his name and was granted tax farms—both illegal actions for a foreign subject. Interestingly enough, these took place a year after he was accused of being a Russian spy. These were not among the extraterritorial rights granted to protégés in the Ottoman lands, but were simply cases which were intentionally overlooked by the local authorities. And the notable reobtained Ottoman subjecthood a few years later, after all these scandals and with the backing of the local government. Once again the notable negotiated his loyalty to the Ottoman state.

Erzurum society in general and the Armenian community in particular was constantly changing in the period following the Crimean War. A different type of notable, a

merchant/entrepreneur, emerged in that context, ultimately sharing the power of notables (*eşraf*) like Kürkçübaşı Agop whose source of income was mainly different forms of tax farming and provisioning the army with grain. The new type, exemplified in the personality of Pastırmacı Khachatur Efendi, was a product of that period, and his biography reveals other opportunities open to certain Armenians, as well as the reactions to them. He engaged in a variety of investments, but the production and trade of another commodity—livestock and dried meat—was the most important among them. Merchant/entrepreneur Armenian notables reached the ranks of the new lesser-notables, the *eşraf* of the Tanzimat.

Chapter 3: “The Infidel has run wild”: Livestock Trade and Manufacturing, and Impermeable Social Boundaries: Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi

The 1840s and 1850s saw the rise of a new type of Armenian notable, the local *eşraf*. Kürkçübaşı Agop’s life exemplified the main qualities of one type among these new notables. His intensive local connections were bolstered by links with the pashas and big moneylenders in the capital, yet, unlike the notables of the earlier age, Kürkçübaşı remained regional. He accumulated immense wealth through provisioning the army during the Crimean War and he negotiated with the state authorities over the issue of his loyalty and patriotism as the leader of Apostolic Armenians in Erzurum. He was not the only notable to emerge in the context of the Tanzimat reforms, particularly during the social and economic changes in the eastern provinces of the Empire. The Crimean War and the decade following it gave rise to other types of local notables. These notables also rose to prominence thanks to their powerful social networks—like those of Kürkçübaşı Agop—but they were also dependent upon certain changes in the Ottoman economy. In this chapter, I will turn my attention to one of these social and economic developments, namely the growing importance of production for domestic markets and the type of notable this change created, manufacturer-entrepreneurs. I examine these developments through the biography of Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi.

This chapter examines the history of the region’s most important mercantile good, livestock, and—closely related—the city’s most important manufactured product, *pastırma*. It focuses on how the livestock trade and *pastırma* together became and remained the primary constituent of the region’s economy into the middle of the nineteenth century, also linking the countryside to the city and the city to the rest of the empire through commerce. By showing the growing importance of inter-regional trade in this “traditional” commodity, and its impact on the

society and economy, the chapter questions the validity of several assumptions about the nineteenth-century Ottoman economy. It examines, too, the rise of one of the most important Armenian notable families of the region, the Pastırmacıyans, in the context of the livestock trade, *pastırma* production, and related regional economic developments.

Unlike Kürkçübaşı Agop, Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi was not primarily a moneylender; he was a merchant and an entrepreneur. He came from artisan origins, which allowed him to cross class boundaries more easily than other Armenian notables. The business ties he maintained with villagers and Kurdish tribes in order to obtain livestock for trade certainly placed him in a more diverse sets of social networks than other notables, whose control over the countryside was limited to their relations with the peasants in the Erzurum valley. Khachatur Efendi seemed to have a different personality, perhaps related to his humble artisan's background, which was attested by his cross-communal charity activities. Thus he was, one can easily claim, more connected to the broader Ottoman society than Kürkçübaşı Agop and others. However, such upward social mobility and “boundary-crossing” was not liked by many in the town.¹ His life ended with his murder in 1872 and encapsulates many changes that the economy and society underwent in the period, including especially the local—and mainly but not exclusively Muslim—reaction to the rise of *eşraf* like the Pastırmacıyans. The more Khachatur Efendi crossed the traditional borders of local society, the louder and more violent reactions became. The new imperial order presented more opportunities, but also new limits.

With fast access to social prominence both in his community and outside it, Khachatur Efendi turned into an example of the new rich of the period. He was involved in the livestock

¹ For importance of border- or boundary crossing in Armenian history, see Sebouh D. Aslanian, “The Marble of Armenian History: Or Armenian History as World History Studies,” *Études arméniennes contemporaines* 4 (2014): 137.

trade, *pasturma* production, investment in urban properties, the construction business, and had some control over land in the countryside as well as in urban real estate. His social relations ranged from relations with the governor-general of Erzurum to Kurdish tribal chiefs, and when he was murdered the notable was sitting, as a matter of fact, next to the director of telegraph of the city. Khachatur Efendi held power in the province, not to mention his social position as one of the most prominent members of the Armenian community and the great charity works he carried out for both Armenians and Muslims. His visibility in local society, literal and metaphorical, rendered him an easy target for his opponents. The people who organized his assassination were among the religious dignitaries of the city who also controlled endowed property—one of Khachatur Efendi's fields of investment. Khachatur Efendi's murder had political, economic and religious motivations. Very similar to what Michael Stanislawski concludes on the murder of a reformist rabbi in Lemberg (Lviv) in the wake of the revolutions in the Habsburg Empire—that it was “analytically both impossible and fruitless to try to distinguish between a ‘religious’ and a ‘political’ motivation for this assassination—” the reasons behind Khachatur Efendi's murder were manifold and interdependent.² The society of Erzurum was in flux throughout the 1850s and particularly the 1860s, albeit not quite dramatically as in the Europe of 1848. As I will argue, while certain developments in the social and economic spheres in that period allowed notables like Khachatur Efendi to rise to prominence, the same developments also placed limits on their integration and acceptance into the broader society. Some notables' symbiotic existence with the new order had its downside, as reaction to one became reaction to the other.

² Michael Stanislawski, *A Murder in Lemberg: Politics, Religion, and Violence in Modern Jewish History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 118.

In addition to focusing on the notable's life, considering the hitherto underexamined "social lives" of the commodities—livestock, *pastırma*, and their by-products—will shed light on the social relations embedded in their production, exchange, and consumption, as well as on linkages among economic, political, and cultural factors that determined both the meanings of a particular commodity to different social groups and its trajectory through space and time.³ The "social lives" of these commodities, which linked urban centers and the countryside and connected the city to the broader region, not only attest to the control of cash-crop production, land, and land revenues as manifest in relations of interdependence between city and countryside in the region, as earlier chapters have discussed. They also show that such relations of interdependence and control included the trade and manufacturing of other commodities. Here, I will focus on different aspects of the demographic and economic context—that is, the growing need for food and cheap goods to supply rapidly growing populations in the imperial capital and other major cities, on one hand, and the increasing demand for Ottoman raw materials abroad, on the other—and how they expanded the relations of interdependence.⁴ If one consequence of such developments was greater control of urban actors over rural ones, the other was, as Fattah rightly argues, the rise of borderless regions through regional trade networks and the integration of markets—family firms acting as agents being the main actors in that process.⁵ A new look at trade networks, particularly those of livestock, *pastırma*, and by-products, proves that during the age in which the Ottoman market was integrating into the world economy by transforming its administrative and economic institutions, a parallel integration of regions on the "periphery" into

³ Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 12.

⁴ Sarah Shields, "Interdependent Spaces: Relations between the City and the Countryside in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Urban Social History of the Middle East, 1750–1950*, ed. Peter Sluglett (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 45–47.

⁵ Hala Mundhir Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745–1900* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997).

other regions of the empire also took place, creating not only regional and interregional economies but also social institutions with new elites in control. The question of who controlled these new networks will be the main question of this chapter. Case studies of the Ottoman Armenian elite like this one challenge certain truisms in the scholarship. Among these the often-cited “comprador” characteristic of the Armenian elite in the second half of the nineteenth century—that is, that they served the interests of Europeans rather than those of Ottoman society—is the most common and dangerous one.⁶

Structure of the Chapter

This chapter is divided into three sections: An introduction to the history of livestock trade and the role of Erzurum in that trade; a biography of Khachatur Efendi, his rise from a son of a butcher to a major notable with investments in many economic fields; and lastly an account of his murder showing the impermeability of local boundaries and the persistence of the local “moral” order, despite the reforms.

The first section of the chapter is on the history of the live-stock trade, *pastırma* production and its by-products. The section is an attempt to make an intervention in the current scholarship on the history of the Ottoman economy which focuses on international trade and manufacturing.⁷ As I will show, despite the efforts of Donald Quataert and others who have expanded the boundaries of Ottoman social and economic history, issues like production for local and regional markets and commodification of products like livestock and dried meat still do not receive attention in the scholarship on the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. One of the reasons for this lack of interest is a particular and limited understanding of modernization in explaining change in the Ottoman society, which leaves out developments in many of the

⁶ For an evaluation of this question, see Reşat Kasaba, “Was There a Compradore Bourgeoisie in Mid-nineteenth Century Western Anatolia?,” *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center* 11 (1988): 215–228.

⁷ See “Looking for the Armenian notable in the Tanzimat” in the introduction.

“traditional” sectors. The livestock trade, dried meat and its by-products like soap, had a central and ever-growing role in the economy of the province of Erzurum throughout the nineteenth century. The main components of this major business were the local and regional trade, with capital investment in the organization of manufacturing, distribution of goods, and the collection of revenues. In this way Erzurum was linked to its hinterland through the purchase of animals, and non-Muslim notables and Muslim notables, merchants and tribal leaders, all collaborated. Some of these developments were results of modernization of the Ottoman society in the nineteenth century.

The biography of Khachatur Efendi permits us to examine these changes in detail. His rise to power from humble origins and the economic power that he attained through the livestock trade and *pastırma* making in the post-Crimean War period capture the trends in the Erzurum economy and its transformation over time. Khachatur Efendi also played an intermediary role between the government and the Armenian community, respected by both parties. He also had relations with other elements of Ottoman society. For instance, his relations with a Kurdish tribal leader, consolidated through a fictive kinship, included mutual trust and support, and extended beyond his death. As the notable accumulated wealth through livestock trade and *pastırma* production, he engaged in other types of business, such as land ownership in the hinterland of the city, as well as investment in urban real estate. This was particularly interesting, as he was an “urban developer,” obtaining Muslim pious endowments’ properties in the city, renovating and selling them at a higher price. His dealings with the endowments’ properties was yet another challenge to social boundaries, which were in constant flux during the Tanzimat period.

Such challenges to the social order by Armenian notables like Khachatur Efendi did not pass without reaction from those elements of the society who considered themselves defenders of

the previous order, like the religious elite of Erzurum. However, this ideological position was not without economic roots, as they were also the ones most affected by property transfers from the endowments to the Armenian notable. The notable's perceived transgressions were first challenged by burning down his properties and then finally by his murder in 1872. For many observers, the murder was only a harbinger of the escalation of anti-Armenian violence in the coming decades in the Ottoman East. But I claim that the perpetrators' attempts to reaffirm their social position were a blow against the new imperial order, in which non-Muslim notables, if not the masses, had obtained visible privileges and support. It was not a prophecy for the future, but rather a reflection of the political and social and economic aspects of the "new order" in the town. To the extent that the "new imperial order" placed Armenians in new social, economic and political positions, it provided a basis for resentments that could be inflamed later. This contradiction, inherent in the new order, is apparent in Khachatur Efendi's life.

Dynamics of a Local Economy in the Nineteenth Century: Livestock Trade and *Pastırma* Production in Erzurum

Despite the relatively developed scholarship on the livestock trade within the empire, particularly in the context of provisioning the capital city in the preceding centuries, the trajectory of trade in the second half of the nineteenth century remains understudied. The main reasons for this lack of interest are, on the one hand, scholarship's aforementioned bias toward international trade and, on the other, the relative unavailability of sources for studying domestic trade in the nineteenth century. The most notable exception is Sarah Shields's examination of the nineteenth-century sheep trade between Mosul and the Syrian provinces which shows the

importance of nomadic production and nomads' central role in the economy of Mosul.⁸ She also brings attention to the flourishing of local manufacturing activities, such as tanning and textile production, in the age of Ottoman integration into the world economy.⁹

The following section shows that this phenomenon was not unique to Mosul's trade: strengthening and growth—and on a greater scale—occurred in Erzurum during the same period. However, I also aim here, in contrast to the work of Shields, to demonstrate not only that these developments took place as a result of changing relations between the Ottoman and the European economy but also that they emerged within an imperial framework and resulted from interdependent developments, regional and imperial, economic and social. Moreover, the production of *pastırma* also reached very high levels owing to changes in the domestic economy.

Studies on Livestock Trade in the Ottoman Empire

Scholarly considerations of the Ottoman livestock trade are dominated by studies on provisioning the imperial capital between the sixteenth and the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁰ The reasons for giving Istanbul primacy were manifold: On the one hand, the city was the empire's political center and housed a huge population; on the other hand, rich archival sources have enabled researchers to examine that trade in great detail. Historians' focus on the provisioning of the capital also related directly to the dominant opinion among them that the economic mentality of the early modern Ottoman world was one of *iâşecilik* (a politics of provision), alongside traditionalism and prioritizing the well-being of the fisc over that of the economy.¹¹ Antony Greenwood's dissertation on the capital's meat provision, however, described provisioning of the

⁸ Sarah Shields, "Sheep, Nomads, and Merchants in Nineteenth-Century Mosul: Creating Transformations in an Ottoman Society," *Journal of Social History* 25 (1992): 773–789.

⁹ Sarah Shields, "Regional Trade and Nineteenth-Century Mosul: Revising the Role of Europe in the Middle East Economy," *IJMES* 23 (1991): 23–25.

¹⁰ Ahmet Uzun, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Şehir Ekonomisi ve İaşe," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 3 (2005): 213.

¹¹ Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve Ekonomi* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2000), 45–51.

capital as a part of the “command-system” in which the needs of the state or the population (in the capital) constitute the main concern.¹²

For these reasons, studies have concentrated on explaining the highly developed systems of supplying the capital with meat under the state control that was established in the fifteenth century and remained in place until 1858. The first of these was the *celepkeşan* system, in which a *celep* (sheep drover) was responsible for bringing a specific number of livestock, particularly sheep, into the city from certain districts in the Balkans and selling them at a preset price.¹³ The sheep drovers were selected from among the wealthy, either business people or sheep traders; however, the most important criterion for selection was that they had obtained their wealth through illegal means, such as usury or by holding a *timar* without being entitled to do so.¹⁴ Thus the imperial state used this system to transfer capital from these individuals to the treasury while simultaneously securing the meat supply of the capital.

The system for provisioning the capital was in constant flux, reflecting changes in the Ottoman economy. By the end of the sixteenth century, a new tax, *zarar-i kassabiyye* (butcher’s loss), was added to customs to compensate butchers for their losses owing to the discrepancy between preset prices (*narh*) and market prices during an era of high inflation. However, the real transformation in the system accompanied the taxation of sheep, paid first in kind and later in cash, paid to the state by towns that the sheep drovers used to provide sheep to the capital.¹⁵ Butchers were responsible for running the system, and a *koyun emini* (superintendent of sheep) in Istanbul oversaw the whole process. As the state began collecting the obligations in cash

¹² Antony Warren Greenwood, “Istanbul’s Meat Provisioning: A Study of the Celepkeşan System” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1988), 2.

¹³ Ibid., 62.

¹⁴ Ibid., 76–77.

¹⁵ Ibid., 218.

rather than in kind, tax farming became prominent.¹⁶ The next change in the system was the introduction of the post *kassabbaşı* (chief of butchers) in the mid-eighteenth century; this official was responsible for the purchase and distribution of meat in the capital. Recent studies highlight that many actors, particularly butchers—a term applied not only to those who ran butchery shops and slaughtered animals but also to those who acted as meat contractors—accumulated wealth through their special role in this trade.¹⁷ The last system in place before state control over the capital's meat supply was abolished in 1858 was that of the 10 percent sheep tax (*ondalık ağnam*), in which each sheep producer or trader was to pay 10 percent in kind in order to guarantee a supply of meat to the *askerî* class in the capital at low prices. In its last years, this also became a cash tax, and after 1858 only the sheep tax (*ağnam rûsûmu*), set at the level of two piaster per head, remained to be collected from sheep farmers.¹⁸

Earlier studies focus on the role of the non-state actors such as meat traders, the merchants, the moneylenders who financed the trade whereas members of guilds involved in slaughtering and delivering meat are mentioned only in passing, if at all.¹⁹ One notable exception is Minna Rozen's study of the politics of the meat trade in the Jewish community of Istanbul in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in which she examines the Jewish butcher guilds and the social struggle that the meat trade created between social classes through the taxes imposed upon the commodity.²⁰

¹⁶ Ibid., 224.

¹⁷ İrfan Kokdaş, "Celeps, Butchers, and the Sheep: The Worlds of Meat in Istanbul in the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries" (MA thesis, Sabancı University, 2007), 66.

¹⁸ Ahmet Uzun, *İstanbul'un İaşesinde Devletin Rolü: Ondalık Ağnam Uygulaması, 1783–1857* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2006), 221–223.

¹⁹ Mehmet Sait Türkhan, "18. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında İstanbul'un Et İaşesinin Temini: Hassa Kasabbaşı Kurumu" (MA thesis, Marmara University, 2006), 93–97.

²⁰ Minna Rozen, "A Pound of Flesh: The Meat Trade and Social Struggle in Jewish Istanbul: 1700–1923," in *Crafts and Craftsmen of the Middle East: Fashioning the Individual in the Muslim Mediterranean*, eds. Suraiya Faroqhi and Randi Deguilhem (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 195–234.

The other problem in the historiography treating the meat trade is that the system of distribution is examined only in certain districts in the Rumelia; therefore other suppliers—namely, those of the Danubian Principalities and herders in Anatolia—are not considered in any meaningful way. Thus it is difficult to reconstruct the historical background of *both* the trade between these areas and the capital *and* the meat trade between various regions of the empire. As the following section demonstrates, there was in fact a lively trade in the nineteenth century between imperial regions: between eastern provinces of the empire and the Syrian provinces in terms of sheep trade, and between Erzurum and Istanbul in *pastırma*, the only alternative to mutton. Taking into consideration the actors on the supply side of this trade—that is, nomads and merchant-entrepreneurs in Erzurum—will provide a more complex and more complete picture.

Production, Taxation, Financing

The livestock trade between Erzurum and other regions of the empire involved many actors: nomads who owned sheep, peasants who raised sheep either on their own or for local entrepreneurs, merchants who came from outside Erzurum (e.g., Aleppo) to purchase sheep, local merchants who served as intermediaries and financed the affair, and local Muslim and Armenian elites who invested in tax farming the levies on sheep.

On the supply side were the nomads in the pastures of Erzurum. The sheep they raised reached markets in one of three different ways. First was the direct purchase of sheep by merchants from the nomadic Kurds. In this case, merchants from distant districts, after arriving in the city, would visit the surrounding countryside and purchase sheep directly from nomads. In the case of the town of Van, merchants from Aleppo went to the countryside to purchase sheep from Kurdish and Nestorian tribes.²¹ Whether this was also the case for Erzurum is doubtful, for as shown in the first chapter examining the city's immediate hinterlands, Erzurum was located in

²¹ CR: *Report by Consul Everett on the Trade and Commerce of the Districts Composing the Kurdistan Consulate for 1884, 1933–1934.*

a valley and had a sedentary population; no nomadic populations frequented its vicinity.

Therefore the second method of production and purchase might have been used more often in Erzurum: wholesale merchants of Erzurum would purchase the animals from nomad *merchants* and then take them into the city, or the wholesalers could buy from local entrepreneurs who had raised the sheep on their own or as part of a larger nomadic herd. A French traveler to the region in the early 1890s mentions the second method in observations on the region's sheep trade:

The real richness of the region is the excessively considerable sheep exchange, which takes place every year. [The sheep are] sold by the Kurds to nomadic merchants who bring them into the city; they are bought by wholesale traders who send tens of thousands into Trabzon, Samsun, Aleppo, and sometimes even to Jaffa to be transported to Europe or Egypt.

The poor beasts are often up to three months away, grazing along the road and losing around 14 percent of their weight before reaching the sea, but they are purchased so cheaply that despite the losses due to fatigue and illness, traders of Erzurum will still earn huge sums. This traffic is so important that it amounted to an annual average of 1,200,000 Turkish liras (about 27 million Francs), much of which remains in the hands of the Armenians in the city.²²

In Erzurum, the wholesale merchants (also known as *celeps*), who were exclusively Muslim, controlled the entire livestock trade. The heart of the livestock trade in the city was at the Mal Meydanı, toward the eastern end of the city, where livestock from the countryside and upland pastures to the east were brought and transactions were carried out in the bazaar and the cafés around it.²³ But why did so much revenue remain “in the hands of the Armenians,” if the wholesale sheep merchants were Muslims? This relates to the employment of the third method, which involved the *kom* system of raising sheep and its financing.

²² Armand Pierre comte de Cholet, *Voyage en Turquie d'Asie: Arménie, Kurdistan et Mésopotamie* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1892), 182–183.

²³ The late nineteenth-century Armenian author Vrtanes Papazian, in a story named after these figures, “Celep,” highly critically depicts the economic life of the city's livestock wholesale merchants and the illegal means they employed in doing business. See Vrtanes Papazian, “Djeleb,” in *Patmvtzqner Turqahayeri Keyanqits* (Tiflis [Tbilisi]: M. Vardanyantsi, 1904), 55–135.

In the *kom* system of Erzurum, capital owners from the city either raised sheep in the nearby countryside on their own account or paid a certain amount of money to the nomads to raise sheep on their behalf. In the former case, the entrepreneur would purchase a pasture in the uplands large enough to graze eight hundred sheep in spring and summer, pay for dried fodder for winter (a half-piaster per sheep), and provide a shelter for the animals and a cabin for the shepherd. He would also pay one piaster for other expenses, such as salt and medicines, and eventually pay the sheep tax. In an ideal contract between entrepreneur and shepherd, the latter, along with two assistant boys paid by him, was responsible not only for raising the animals and taking them to market but also for milking them and making cheese. He would receive not money but a number of newborn lambs and certain rights, such as grazing animals free of charge.²⁴ If the entrepreneur did not have grazing lands and hired nomads to raise his sheep, they would charge him extra for grazing; thus if an entrepreneur had only a small number of sheep, he would entrust them to a villager in the surrounding area rather than to nomads.²⁵ The British Consul at Erzurum, James Brant, who prepared a report on the sheep trade in general and on these agreements in particular, advised the small scale capitalists to engage in this business, “the profits derived from them being, generally speaking, with ordinary care and attention, the steadiest and most lucrative.”²⁶ Armenians (as well as Muslims) had access to other ways of acquiring wealth besides raising and marketing sheep—most notably, issuing credits and investing in the farming of the sheep tax.

²⁴ For every twenty sheep, one lamb; for every twenty lambs born, one lamb; for every twenty full-grown sheep, a half-bushel of wheat and the same of barley; the wool of all lambs up to twelve months old; a piece of ground, rent free, that could be sown with three quarters of wheat; a cottage rent free; and for every one hundred sheep in his charge he was allowed to keep ten of his own on the proprietor's land free of charge. In return, the shepherd provided a certain amount of butter, cheese, and wool and a specific number of lambs to the entrepreneur. *CR: Report by Consul Taylor, on the Trade and Sheep and Cattle Farming of the Consulate of Koordistan during the Year 1870*, 1076–1077.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1081.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1083.

One of the most important aspects of the sheep trade was the cash flow it provided to the cities engaged in it, and the nomad-urban economy was based on that flow. For instance, in the early 1860s, when the trade between Aleppo and Diyarbekir was cut off due to the “Syrian crises,” (i.e., ethnic violence and anti-Christian pogroms), Kurdish nomads received only £15,000 instead of £60,000 from Damascus for sheep. Moreover, this had a snowball effect on the local economy, as nomads neither paid their debts to the merchants nor made purchases in the markets in the urban centers like Diyarbekir and Erzurum.²⁷ Yet in a year with no obvious payment problems—such as 1872, when merchants from Egypt, Syria, and Kayseri (the latter for the purchase of cattle for *pastırma* production) filled Erzurum’s livestock market to purchase three hundred thousand sheep and three thousand cattle—£186,000 was reported to have entered the city and to have been divided among the Kurdish pastoralists.²⁸ However, Syrian merchants who had not brought money with them to purchase sheep obtained credit from local bankers. One way to form an idea about this aspect of the trade is to examine cases of unfilled payments. The financial dealings of Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi examined later in this chapter touch upon this. In those instances, the amounts were immense, reflecting the volume of the trade and the flow of capital to the nomads.

The other aspect of the sheep trade that drew local elites to it involved the opportunities afforded by farming out the tax collected from this sector. The sheep tax, which was two piasters per head, was one of the most important sources of revenue for the province, second only to the tithe. Sheep-tax revenues, about £44,000 in 1865, showed steady growth and reached the level of £90,000 by 1872, in line with the increased trade.

²⁷ CR: *Report by Mr. Consul Taylor on the Trade of Diarbekir for the Year 1861*, 362.

²⁸ CR: *Report by Mr. Consul Taylor on the trade of Koordistan during the Year 1872*, 1125. However, this did not mean that the livestock trade was completely monetized, for Aleppo merchants used barter in transactions with the nomads of Van as late as 1888. CR: *Report for the Years 1887–1888 on the Trade of the District of Erzeroum*, 6.

The steady development of the trade and the rise of sheep-tax revenues attracted the local elite—the Muslim and Armenian capital holders as examined in earlier chapters. For instance, in 1845 a partnership between Cennetzade Abdullah Efendi and Muradoğlu Karapet, heads of the two major elite households in the city (before their simultaneous demise in the 1850s) obtained the tax farm for 250,000 piasters.²⁹ The system persisted in the form of alliances between a provincial Muslim tax farmer (*mültezim*) and his partner tax farmers in sub-provinces, who knew the market very well, and Armenian moneylenders, either local or imperial, who financed the whole affair. It should also be noted that despite the high profits that such alliances suggest, they were not without problems. When a partnership was formed, for example, among the famous Istanbul-based Armenian moneylender Beğleroğlu Agop Efendi, Halet Efendi, and Osman Bey of Erzurum in 1859, problems arose when Halet and Osman also subcontracted the tax collection to their partner (and subordinate) tax farmers in the province's subdistricts. The subcontractors Lütfullah Efendi in the district of Khunus (Hınıs) and Hacı Ahmed Efendi in the district of Pasin refused to pay their outstanding debt of 180,000 piaster to Beğleroğlu Agop Efendi,³⁰ while the moneylender also filed another complaint about an unnamed subcontractor in Bayburt who had not paid him a single cent.³¹ This fraught partnership not only shows the growing importance of the sheep trade in Erzurum (both the amounts mentioned and the number of agents had increased since 1840s), but it also demonstrates that members of the imperial elite, such as Beğleroğlu Agop, and probably also even the lesser Armenian moneylenders in the city, were investing in

²⁹ B.O.A., A.MKT.MHM., 197-63 24 Rebi'ül-evvel 1277 (12 November 1857).

³⁰ Unfortunately, the petition written by the moneylender Beğleroğlu Agop mentions only the amount that is owed to him, not the total amount that he had financed. B.O.A., A.MKT.DV., 224-13 30 Zilka'de 1278 (29 May 1262).

³¹ "Ve Bayburd kazâsı ağnam ve rüsûmatı der'uhde eden mültezim tarafından henüz bir akçe ahz ü istihsâl olmadığı." B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 6 Şâban 1276 (28 February 1860), 398–29.

the trade.³² Thus, apart from the trade relations that connected Erzurum to other provinces, such financial relations connected Erzurum to the imperial capital.

Trade and Trade Networks

Most of Erzurum's sheep were sent to Aleppo, where they were redistributed to Damascus and Egypt or, to a lesser extent, were shipped to the imperial capital. These two routes must have existed already in the eighteenth century, during which Anatolia became more important for the needs of the capital. This owed in part to structural changes in the system of provisioning the imperial capital from the Balkans that resulted in a search for new sources of livestock, and in part to the growing autonomy of the two Danubian principalities, which began to provide Istanbul with sheep, probably at market prices.³³ Nevertheless, the Balkans, Bulgaria in particular, remained the main supplier of sheep to the imperial capital until they gained independence in the later decades of the century. Interestingly enough, the local elite (*çorbacı* /*chorbadzhiia*) who were in close contact with nomadic populations in that lucrative trade amassed great sums.³⁴ For instance, earlier in the nineteenth century, certain members of the *chorbadzhiia*—most notably, those of the Chalikov family—managed to build a fortune by supplying the needs of the new army of Mahmud II.³⁵ That might be the reason why even in 1860 the number of sheep exported from Erzurum to the capital was limited to twenty thousand, a small figure compared to trade with the Syrian provinces.³⁶ Alternatively, trade with the

³² Beğleroğlu Agop invested money in tax farming the title of the Sancak of Hüdavengidar through the Muslim elite of the region during the same period. Emre Satici, "Meclis Üyeliğinden Paşa'lığa [sic] Tahir Ağa (Tanzimat Sonrası Yerel Yönetimde Eşrafın Rolüne İlişkin Bursa'dan Bir Örnek)," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 25 (2006): 238n18.

³³ Bruce McGowan, "The Age of the Ayans, 1699–1812," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, eds. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 720.

³⁴ Michael Palaioret, *The Balkan Economies, c. 1800–1914: Evolution without Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 61.

³⁵ Andreas Lyberatos, "Men of the Sultan: The Beğlik Sheep Tax Collection System and the Rise of a Bulgarian National Bourgeoisie in Nineteenth-Century Plovdiv," *Turkish Historical Review* 1 (2010): 55–85.

³⁶ In a complaint filed by the Ağnam Tüccarı, Halil of Erzurum, who was forced to pay four piaster instead of two at customs, claims to have been transporting fifteen thousand of the predetermined twenty thousand animals to be exported from Erzurum to the capital. B.O.A., A.MKT.DV., 164-49, 5 Muharrem 1277 (24 July 1860).

southern provinces might have furnished producers and traders with higher profits. The sheep trade between Erzurum and the southern provinces, particularly Damascus, was already established in the eighteenth century, though its details remain unknown.³⁷ Nevertheless, its value must have been significant even then, since a late nineteenth-century local historian claims that the first Kurds to settle in the Damascus region were sheep merchants.³⁸

What is certain is that in the second half of the nineteenth century, the sheep trade reached massive levels. In 1855 the British Consul in Aleppo claimed that two hundred thousand sheep from Erzurum, worth ten million piaster, were brought into the city and “consumed one-half in Aleppo and one-half in Damascus”—a very high number if the Crimean War is taken into account.³⁹ Yet consular reports show a steady increase in the sheep trade and indicate that it played a vital role in the city’s economy, particularly Erzurum’s exports, until the end of the empire.

Various reasons could lie behind the growth of the sheep trade between Erzurum and the Syrian provinces. One reason, as Shields has argued regarding Mosul, might be the importance of the wool trade with Europe during the same period. However, there were other factors driving the trade’s development, particularly conjunctural ones. Crucial were the effective use of Syrian natural resources to meet the needs of Ibrahim Pasha’s regime in Egypt, and the integration of the region of Syria into the world market beginning in that era, a process that continued after its re-incorporation into Ottoman domains. The intensification of export-oriented grain cultivation

³⁷ James Grehan claims that Turkoman and Kurdish nomads who grazed their flocks around Erzurum took them to south to the “Syrian deserts” in summer. See James Grehan, *Everyday Life and Consumer Culture in Eighteenth-Century Damascus* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 97.

³⁸ James Anthony Reilly, “Origins of Peripheral Capitalism in the Damascus Region, 1830–1914” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 1987), 255 n19.

³⁹ “Report from Mr. Acting Consul Barker on the Trade of Aleppo with Europe and Turkey for the Year 1855,” 1 March 1856, F.O., 78-1221; quoted in *The Fertile Crescent, 1800–1914: A Documentary Economic History*, ed. Charles Philip Issawi (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 170.

and sericulture in certain localities, accompanied by urban growth in the region of Syria in the second half of the century, might have driven a growing demand for sheep from Anatolia. It is estimated that in 1865, for instance, 220,000 sheep were to be taken to Damascus alone from Anatolia; 80,000 were consumed in Damascus and the immediate vicinity, and the remainder was sent on to other parts of Syria or to Egypt.⁴⁰ It should be noted here that works on the transformation of the region's economy, much like the historiography on the Anatolian economy, tend to focus on the cultivation of cash crops and on international trade, leaving aside various questions, including those related to the growing livestock trade between regions.⁴¹ Despite a lack of specific data on this phenomenon, it is fair to say that while the Syrian economy was incorporated into Europe, it was simultaneously also incorporated into Anatolia; at least, its ties with Anatolia were intensified through the sheep trade.

The livestock trade and its financing were not the only opportunities opened up to the merchants and entrepreneurs of Erzurum. Another development of the same period was peculiar, if not unique to Erzurum: the increased production and trade of *pastırma*.

Manufacturing Meat: Pastırma Production in Erzurum

Pastırma, an Anatolian delicacy of Central Asian origin, is a slice of beef, ideally from fine sections of the animal, that is seasoned with garlic and local herbs and dried in the sun. It was made in autumn to be consumed throughout the winter. Pastırma was the only alternative to mutton before the age of refrigerators, and thus beef, if consumed, was mostly consumed in

⁴⁰ Reilly, "Origins of Peripheral Capitalism," 106.

⁴¹ Peter Sluglett, "Aspects of Economy and Society in the Syrian Provinces: Aleppo in Transition, 1880–1925," in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, ed. L. Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 144–157; Linda Schatkowski-Schilcher, "The Grain Economy of Late Ottoman Syria and the Issue of Large-Scale Commercialization," in *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East: Globalization, Revolution, and Popular Culture*, ed. Çağlar Keyder and Faruk Tabak (New York: SUNY Press, 1991), 173–195.

pasturma form.⁴² Before it attained the status of an expensive delicacy in Turkey, Armenia and Lebanon, however, *pasturma* had been a food mainly of the lower classes in the countryside that did not have access to fresh mutton.

Travelogues reporting from Ottoman Anatolia never fail to notice the consumption of this rather strange form of meat: “It is customary for every family who can possibly afford it to purchase a cow, rarely an ox, this useful animal generally dying a natural death; they kill it in the autumn, and prepare the meat with various strong-scented herbs, such as garlic, &c., and dry it in the sun. This constitutes their provision of meat for the winter,” wrote Rev. Van Lennep of his visit to the central Anatolian town of Gürün in late 1860s. He added, “it is called *pastoorma*, and is very disagreeable stuff to those who are not accustomed to it.”⁴³ Colonel Sandwith, who was in Kars during the siege of that town in the Crimean War, observed that *pasturma* was an important part of the peasant diet: “Preparations of milk ... form the staple diet of the poorer peasantry, but they do not confine themselves to these. During the winter much animal food is consumed in the form of two varieties called *pastoorma* and *kavoorma*. The former consists of slices of meat seasoned with garlic and sun-dried, and a most atrocious aliment it is.”⁴⁴ Whereas those who lived through great difficulties—such as Anthony N. Groves, who saw Baghdad ruined by plague and famine in 1831—appreciated *pasturma* more than did the writers quoted above. For him it was the only means to vary his food during those difficult times.⁴⁵ However, *pasturma* consumption among the lower classes was only one part of the picture: it was

⁴² Greenwood, “Istanbul’s Meat Provisioning,” 8.

⁴³ Henry Van-Lennep, *Travels in Little-Known Parts of Asia Minor; with Illustrations of Biblical Literature and Researches in Archaeology* (London: J. Murray, 1870), 213.

⁴⁴ Humphry Sandwith, *A Narrative of the Siege of Kars, and of the Six Months’ Resistance by the Turkish Garrison under General Williams to the Russian Army, together with a Narrative of Travels and Adventures in Armenia and Lazistan, with Remarks on the Present State of Turkey* (London: Murray, 1856), 200.

⁴⁵ Anthony Norris Groves, *Journal of a Residence at Bagdad, during the Years 1830 and 1831* (London: J. Nisbet 1832), 250.

consumed by upper classes as well. Records from the Ottoman imperial kitchen indicate that the meat had been used in the palace since the sixteenth century, and it was served as “a special delicacy in the 1800s as well.”⁴⁶ The details of its consumption among the rich are not known well. An important contribution to the field of Ottoman and Turkish culinary history mentions *pastırma* as the “only form of consumption of beef at the palace” but says nothing more.⁴⁷ Thus one wonders, taking into account that peasants produced their own *pastırma*, how this became the most important manufactured item to be exported from Erzurum in the nineteenth century.

On the culture of *pastırma* in the nineteenth century and its transformation

One might wonder then how a “peasant food” like *pastırma* reached such importance in the mid-nineteenth century as a staple for the poor and middle classes of Istanbul, creating immense opportunities for its producers, such as Khachatur Pastırmacıyan, and still more how it morphed into an expensive, sought-after delicacy by the middle of the following century. Its transformation from part of a daily winter diet to an almost ritualistic product of great value—one that might be the top item on the table during Ramadan during the second half of the twentieth century—stemmed from interrelated demographic, technological, economic, and most notably cultural reasons. Examining these factors extensively lies beyond the scope of this dissertation and constitutes a research topic of its own; they are vital to understanding *pastırma*’s central role in the nineteenth century and how it changed a distant local economy.

In discussing relations between the economic and cultural reasons for *pastırma*’s changing status into the first half of the twentieth century, the concepts of *intensification* and

⁴⁶ Özge Samancı, “Culinary Consumption Patterns of the Ottoman Elite during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Illuminated Table, the Prosperous House, Food and Shelter in the Ottoman Material Culture*, ed. Suraiya Faruqi and Christoph Neumann (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag), 170.

⁴⁷ Arif Bilgin, “Osmanlı Döneminde İstanbul Mutfak Kültürü,” *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi* 12 (2010): 233.

extensification, used by Sidney Mintz to describe uses of sugar in British society, are helpful.⁴⁸ It is true that unlike sugar, which was first an exotic and then a colonial good, *pastırma* was a staple food for Ottoman peasants. But this does not mean that its consumption simply increased and spread during the nineteenth century; indeed, I have demonstrated the mercantile basis of *pastırma*'s transformation, which made the food item available to more consumers—among them, the urban masses.

Demographic pressure by the growth of capital combined with the ease with which *pastırma* could be transported from Erzurum through the port of Trabzon, paved the way for its wider and probably more democratic consumption. In the late nineteenth century, its price was low: for instance, in 1870 a maund ($\cong$ 7.5 kilograms) of *pastırma* cost thirty-five piaster in Erzurum and fifty-five in Istanbul. With prices falling due to modern communications and problems in the supply of fresh meat to Istanbul, *pastırma* turned into an item of mass consumption. However, in the twentieth century, improvements to communication facilities in Anatolia which led to the steady increase of beef consumption in urban centers resulted in *pastırma*'s (re)gaining ceremonial and ritualistic status, associated with its former use in the imperial palace.⁴⁹ Rather than the invention of a tradition of eating *pastırma* as a banquet food, this shift reflects an extensification of existing cultural codes associated with the imperial palace and upper-class Ottomans that began to disappear as the century progressed. The *pastırma* economy of Erzurum in the second half of the nineteenth century should be understood in this context.

⁴⁸ Sidney Wilfred Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985), 221–222.

⁴⁹ The ratio of slaughtered sheep and goats to cattle in the 1920s was one to sixteen, whereas it was almost one to one in the 1970s in Istanbul. See Greenwood, "Istanbul's Meat Provisioning," 8 n2.

Pastırma production and trade in Erzurum

In his trade report for the year 1909, the British Consul McGregor stated that in Erzurum, “none [i.e., no industry] exists in the European sense of the word, if the manufacture of *pastırma* for the Constantinople market be excepted.”⁵⁰ The foundations of that industry had been laid in the city by a single man, Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi, almost a half-century earlier. This figure is examined at some length in the next section.

There are no records of when *pastırma* was first produced on a massive scale in Erzurum. It might have begun during the Crimean War, as the Allied troops on Russian soil had to be fed; however, the earliest records, which date to the 1860s, indicate that its production was directly intended for the market of the imperial capital. Consul Taylor, in Erzurum in 1865, claimed that there was a “universal” demand for *pastırma* in the Ottoman Empire; only Diyarbekir and Kayseri were competing with Erzurum, but the last had the advantage because cattle were exported from Erzurum to them.⁵¹ Records for 1867 show that 1,454 boxes of *pastırma* from Erzurum were transported from the port of Trabzon to Istanbul in Austrian, Ottoman, and Italian ships.⁵² In 1869 the French Consul in Erzurum gave the range three to four thousand as the number of cattle that were slaughtered for *pastırma* production in the city.⁵³ The figure given by the British consul in 1871 was 4,500 cows and cattle, which produced 22,500 maunds ($\cong$ 168,750 kilograms) of *pastırma*, worth £7,159.⁵⁴ The value of the *pastırma* that was exported was around £5,000 in 1883; it reached a peak in 1890 of £17,000 and settled at the level of £15,000 afterward.

⁵⁰ CR: Report for the Year 1909 on the Trade of the Consular District of Erzurum, 2.

⁵¹ CR: Report of Mr. Consul Taylor on the Trade of Erzeroum for the year 1865, 222.

⁵² Austria: Wochenschrift für Volkswirtschaft und Statistik 39 (28 September 1867): 1109. Unfortunately, the volume or weight of a box is not provided in the report.

⁵³ Annales du commerce extérieur, no. 1889: Turquie (1869), 150.

⁵⁴ CR: Report by Consul Taylor, on the Trade and Sheep and Cattle Farming of the Consulate of Koordistan during the Year 1870, 1085.

The sources are silent regarding the production of *pastırma* and the way such great quantities were produced. What can be inferred is that the cattle, often allegedly weak and even diseased animals, were brought into Erzurum from the surrounding countryside in summer and early autumn. Then they were slaughtered in large facilities, where the process of drying the meat also took place; the final product was shipped to Istanbul, where it would be consumed during the winter. The only account of the process comes from a highly critical account penned by an American doctor visiting the region of Kayseri, Erzurum's chief rival in *pastırma* production. Owing to the scarcity of such accounts, it deserves a long quotation:

The sanitary condition of Cesarea [Kayseri] being as it is, the marvel is not that frequent epidemics attack the inhabitants; rather we wonder that the whole populace is not wiped out by disease. For instance, each summer and continuing into the fall months the chief industry of Cesarea is the manufacture of "basdirma," a kind of dried beef, which is mixed with spices and garlic and eaten raw. Many thousands of cattle are slaughtered for this purpose every year, and this without the slightest attempt at system or order. All through the city, in the streets or in open places, the cattle are slaughtered, and, the drainage being abominable, the resulting stench and the myriads of flies may be imagined better than written. With the breaking out of the typhoid epidemic the city officials gave orders to cease the manufacture of basdirma, but within a few days, on the plea that the business of the city was being ruined, the work was resumed and went on as usual. I was called to a case of typhoid; the patient having been sick for six weeks, developed meningitis and was in a hopeless condition. The house was that of one of the well-to-do basdirma manufacturers, house and factory being in the same stonewalled enclosure. While I examined the patient, the relatives left their work and came in to sit around and discuss the case with me, while the swarms of flies had free communication between patient and the great piles of exposed dried meat waiting shipment to Constantinople. The great need seems to be some means of spreading a more general knowledge of the common facts of healthful, hygienic living among the people that they may come to realize their lack in this respect."⁵⁵

Scholars have no information about what *pastırma*-manufacturing facilities looked like in Erzurum; however, it seems that production was more centralized there than in Kayseri and took

⁵⁵ "Sanitary Conditions in Turkey in Asia," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 63 (1914): 424.

place in relatively larger enterprises. The French Vice-Consul at Erzurum in 1888 claimed that in the city, “ten factories are dedicated to the preparation of *pastırma*. The number of cows and bulls slaughtered each year in these facilities averages ten thousand. The production of *pastırma* has followed up to this day a progressive course and is currently the principal item of export in the trade of this city.”⁵⁶ Likewise, a map of the city of Erzurum prepared by an officer in the early twentieth century notes the existence of seven *pastırma* “factories.”⁵⁷ These were different from traditional workshops, described with the term *fabrika* (derived from the Italian *fabbrica*) rather than with Turkish words for traditional workshops in the contemporary documents.⁵⁸ These usages confirm Consul McGregor’s words, quoted at the beginning of this section, attesting that *pastırma* production was a developed manufacturing activity in the city; *pastırma* production and trade were vital to the Erzurum economy. In fact, the product also contributed to other manufacturing activities by providing raw materials.

By-products: leather, soap

The active livestock trade and *pastırma* production in the city of Erzurum contributed to the survival of other traditional manufacturers, including tanners and soap makers. The tanneries in the city, with their great access to the skins of animals newly slaughtered for *pastırma*, remained an active sector throughout the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ Erzurum’s export-oriented production, particularly aimed at manufacturers in France, allowed these tanneries to compete with those in other Anatolian provinces, which were gradually becoming less competitive. For

⁵⁶ “Turquie d’Asie, commerce d’Erzeroum en 1888,” in *Bulletin consulaire français, recueil des rapports commerciaux*, vol. 18, 2^e semestre (1889), 62.

⁵⁷ Hüseyin Yurttaş, “Fuat Bey’in Erzurum Haritası,” *A.Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* 15 (2000): 56. This map is produced by an Ottoman army officer and includes details about the pre-genocide urban topography of Erzurum. In the summer of 2015 I attempted to see the original map which was located at the Archeology Museum of Erzurum at the time when Yurttaş published his article. However, my inquiries about the current location of the map were not successful.

⁵⁸ For a similar point on the issue, see Leila Erder, “Factory Districts in Bursa during the 1860s,” *MTSU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 1 (1975): 95.

⁵⁹ This was also true of their counterparts in Mosul, where livestock trade was similarly very important. Sarah Shields, “Regional Trade and 19th-Century Mosul,” 23–24.

instance, tanneries in the province of Ankara had lost their value as tax farming investments as early as the eighteenth century because they produced goods only for domestic consumption.⁶⁰ Thus Erzurum proves to be an exception to the prevalent opinion in the Turkish scholarship that a decline took place in the production of hides in the face of European competition during the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶¹ The number of tanneries in Erzurum, although it did not increase, remained very stable throughout the nineteenth century. There were 337 men working in five tanneries throughout the city in 1844,⁶² and official yearbooks indicate that the number of facilities remained consistent until the end of the century: there were five tanneries in 1887, four in 1896, and five once more at the turn of the century.⁶³ Trade records corroborate this pattern: toward the end of the century, the value of the hides and skins exported followed a steady path, beginning at £16,500 in 1882, falling during the depression to about £6,200 in 1891, but rising once more to £19,990 in 1907.⁶⁴ This export-oriented trade resulted in increased numbers of merchants, both Armenian and Muslim. In the late 1890s, the Saatchiyan Brothers, Israel Saraydarian, Mısıryan, Gazazyan, the Alemdarzade Brothers, Hovhannes Zopunyan, Derviş Egavyan, and the Hanessyan Brothers were listed as wholesale leather merchants who were in the business of either production or export in Erzurum.⁶⁵

Tracing the trajectory of soap making is more difficult because this product was directed toward domestic consumption. Each cow or cattle slaughtered for *pastırma* yielded an average of

⁶⁰ Özer Ergenç, “XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Sanayii ve Ticaret Hayatına İlişkin Bazı Bilgiler,” *Belleten* 52 (1988): 522.

⁶¹ Zeki Tekin, “Deri (Türklerde Dericilik),” *Diyanet İşleri Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*.

⁶² Haydar Çoruh, “Erzurum: A Border City of East Anatolia,” in *The Ottoman State and Societies in Change*, ed. Kayoko Hayashi and Mahir Aydın (New York: Kegan Paul, 2004), 182–183.

⁶³ *S.V.E.*, 10 (1304 [1886–1887]): 241; *S.V.E.*, 13 (1314–1315 [1897–1898]): 162. In a map of Erzurum/Karin drawn in 1904 by Fuad Bey, an officer of the Ottoman army, the number of tanners (*debbags*) is given as 106. See Hüseyin Yurttaş, “Fuat Bey’in Erzurum Haritası,” 56. However, this probably refers to the number of *debbag* artisan shops rather than to *debbaghane* complexes where several workshops existed.

⁶⁴ Based on *CR* for the years 1882, 1891, and 1907.

⁶⁵ “Business Houses in Erzerum,” *US Consular Reports: Commerce, Manufacturers, etc.* 53 (1898): 383–384; *Annuaire oriental du commerce* 16 (1900), 1258.

two maunds ($\cong 15$ kg) of fat, which was mixed with marrow to be made into soap. In the 1870s from the average of 4,500 cows and cattle slaughtered for *pastırma* production each year, twenty-five thousand maunds ($\cong 187,500$ kg) of soap worth £4,000 were produced in the city. Soap was produced in workshops (*sabunhane*), and on the eve of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877–1878, there were six such facilities in the city, serving the whole province of Erzurum.⁶⁶ The province was self-sufficient in terms of soap, for that item is never listed among the articles exported to Erzurum from abroad until the end of the empire. The most important wholesale merchant of soap was the firm of the Cermakyan Brothers, which was dominant in the 1880s, when the city's soap workshops served the entire province.⁶⁷ Although soap manufacturing was an important economic sector in Erzurum, producers in Erzurum never gained the social and economic prominence that their counterparts gained in other places such as Nablus.⁶⁸ There were structural reasons behind this difference. First it related to the fact that the soap trade in Erzurum never attained importance in international trade and targeted primarily the regional and inter-regional market. Second, soap producers in Erzurum obtained the raw material for soap, animal fat, from slaughter houses. This was in sharp contrast to producers in Nablus who made soap from olive oil and thus established strong economic and social control over the olive producers and olive oil merchants. Thus soap producers in Erzurum established fewer contacts with other segments of the society compared to their counterparts in Nablus and exerted less control over them. It was *pastırma* producers not the soap makers who gained social and economic power in the city and the region.

⁶⁶ S.V.E., 8 (1294 [1877–1878]), 131.

⁶⁷ *L'indicateur Ottoman: Annuaire-almanach commerce* 4 (1883): 613.

⁶⁸ Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 211–212.

The production and trade of *pastirma* and the related crafts of tanning leather and making soap were central to Erzurum's economy; leather and soap ranked as the city's most important export items after livestock. The purchase of the raw materials (i.e., cattle), the slaughtering of the animals in the city, and the manufacture of these products resulted from the interrelated trade networks that linked the countryside to the city and that linked the city to the region, to the imperial capital, and to points abroad. The manufacture and trade of soap, leather and *pastirma* predominantly by Armenians also shows that these mercantile elites engaged in a variety of economic activities not limited to selling goods imported from abroad, as much scholarship argues. The next section reconstructs the biography of Khachatur Efendi, Erzurum's main *pastirma* producer, to demonstrate how these trades intertwined with the dynamics of mercantile elite in the city.

The Rise of Khachatur Efendi in Erzurum

Khachatur Efendi, patriarch of the prominent Pastirmacıyan *gerdastan*, was one of the city's leading personalities in the 1860s and 1870s. He had a short but enormously successful business career in the thriving livestock trade and *pastirma* production, complemented with other trades and personal relations. Bishop Tevkants, an inspector sent from the Apostolic Patriarchate to the region, who was in Erzurum in 1872, stated that Khachatur Pastirmacıyan Efendi had started his business with scarce means: He began as a butcher and then moved into the *pastirma* business, later opening a factory and then adding sheep trade to his portfolio.⁶⁹ Bishop Tevkant's testimony is very valuable for us, and I will discuss it in detail below, as it includes details about Khachatur Efendi's murder, which occurred while the bishop was in the city.

⁶⁹ Yeremia Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan 1872–1873 tt.*, ed. Hakob Poghosyan, (Yerevan: Hayastani GA Hratarakchutyun, 1991), 40.

Khachatur Efendi was born into a relatively humble family in Erzurum. His father, Hovhannes, lived in the Mumcu Süfla neighborhood, east of the old city, and worked as a butcher. The son of a certain Martiros, Hovhannes was forty years old when the Ottoman census was taken in the mid-1840s. In terms of the poll tax they paid, his household was categorized as middle rank (*evâsıt*). Khachatur Efendi was nineteen years old when he was registered; he was of middle stature and had recently begun to grow a mustache.⁷⁰ From this record and other sources, it is possible to deduce that Khachatur Efendi was born in the mid-1820s.⁷¹ The significance of this information is that his father's was among the very few families that did not migrate from Erzurum to Russia following the 1828–1829 War. According to Kirakos Ghazancıyan, a native of the neighboring town of Erzincan (Yerzinka) and deputy in the first Ottoman Parliament, being a native of Erzurum was a characteristic rarely observed among the Armenian elite of the city later in the century. Most of the notables had migrated to Erzurum from other areas of the empire, whereas the Pastırmacıyans were among the very few notables of local origin.⁷²

A tax report from the same period indicates that “Ohannes [Hovhannes], the butcher son of Martiros, has no real estate other than the one he resides in and has no livestock etc., [and] is occupied with butchery.” The estimated income attributed to Hovhannes Efendi was 500 *gurush*, plus he possessed three head of animals, making his estimated net worth 620 *gurush* in total.⁷³ This data suggests that he was a significant member of society, with a level of income that was 2.5 times higher than the average income of his co-religionists in the ethnically mixed

⁷⁰ B.O.A., NFS.d., 02750, 10.

⁷¹ According to Kosean, his tombstone displayed the year 1824 as his birth date. The Armenian cemetery of Erzurum was destroyed during or after the genocide. Hakob Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq: hator A: Karin Qaghaqi; Teghagrutyun, Patmutyun yev Sovorutyun*, (Vienna: Mkhitarian Tparan, 1925), 192.

⁷² Among the elite families of Erzurum, the Ballaryans, the Pastırmacıyans, and the Der Azaryans were the only natives of Erzurum who had not fled to Russia after the 1828–1829 war. Kirakos Ghazanjan, *Harn Namakner Ugherutyun*, (K.Polis: Sarıyan, 1887), 49.

⁷³ B.O.A., ML. TMT, 06850, 12.

neighborhood.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, this amount was incomparable to Khachatur Efendi's wealth when he was murdered about thirty years later.

Khachatur Efendi may have inherited social capital from his father, such as personal networks with other artisans and even some state authorities, resources crucial to starting (or taking over) a business. He must also have had some connections either with the surrounding villages or with the livestock merchants who bought animals from the nomadic tribes. There were about sixteen butchers in the entire town at the time of the registry who needed animals to be imported into the city.⁷⁵ In short, Khachatur Efendi's early career was modest compared to those of the other Armenian elites; however, his connections with the rest of society as an Ottoman Armenian artisan were crucial to his business.

It was not by chance that Khachatur Efendi, ultimately a supremely successful business owner, got his start as a butcher's son and entered *pastırma* production, for these, as the preceding sections have shown, were major elements of Erzurum's economy during this period. Khachatur Efendi became actively involved in the sheep trade as a great financier, if not as a producer. Records of debt found in the Ottoman archives show that he was active in the inter-regional trade between Erzurum and the Syrian provinces. For instance, in May 1867, an official dispatch sent from the government of Erzurum to that of Syria inquiries about the money—a great sum of 14,302.50 Ottoman Liras—that certain livestock merchants owed Khachatur Efendi.⁷⁶ Likewise, in 1870 Khachatur Efendi petitioned the governor to intervene in order to

⁷⁴ For a table of income distribution among the neighborhoods, see Haydar Çoruh, "Erzurum: A Border City of East Anatolia," 200–201.

⁷⁵ For a table illustrating the occupations that produce foodstuffs, see Haydar Çoruh, "Temettüat Defterlerine Göre Erzurum Şehri (1260/1844)" (MA thesis, Marmara University, 1997), 42–43 (table XV).

⁷⁶ It is interesting to note here that in the official register of that dispatch (*tahrirat*), Khachatur Efendi is referred to as B[p]asdırmacızade, employing the *-zade* suffix, which was commonly reserved for Muslims. See B.O.A.,

force livestock merchant Hüseyin Agha to pay his debt of 4,000 Ottoman Liras.⁷⁷ These two cases, which involve significant sums, indicate the importance of that trade and its financing by the Armenian elite in the city.

Khachatur Efendi's rise in the *pastırma* business began in the 1860s, if not earlier, when the product's exports to Istanbul were growing, as shown earlier. In an 1862 petition, Khachatur Efendi complained to government authorities about an attempt by customs officials to tax his herd in Erzurum, despite the fact that the animals had been already taxed through the local customs office where they were initially purchased. Khachatur Efendi introduced himself in his petition in the following terms: "this humble person, who [is] a resident of Erzurum and one of the *pastırma* producers, purchases cattle from the city of Erzurum and from [its] other towns and villages, produces *pastırma* in his humble factory, and sells it to Dersa'adet [Istanbul] after paying a 12 percent customs tax."⁷⁸ These words, together with the records of trades from the period, clarify the extent of Khachatur Efendi's business, and bring into sharper focus the trade networks that connected hinterland villages to Erzurum and Erzurum to the imperial capital.

Interethnic Relations Based on Fictive Kinship Trust, Mutual Interests

Khachatur Efendi's engagement in the sheep trade and cattle purchases placed him in close contact with livestock merchants and nomadic tribes—that is, with the producers of livestock. Circumstantial evidence supporting this includes a eulogy written after his murder that

BEO.VGG.d.122, 192. Taking into account that the average price of a two-year-old ewe was forty-five piaster at the time, the amount claimed was equal to the price of thirty-one thousand sheep.

⁷⁷ B.O.A., BEO.MKT., 1311–47; also in the register B.O.A., BEO.AYN.d., 1864, [no page number]. Hüseyin Ağa was also referred as Kom/Gem Almaz (کم الماز). *Kom* is originally an Armenian term for a shepherd's shack. *Gem Almaz*, on the other hand, means free spirit.

⁷⁸ B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 550/62. The 12% tax mentioned here was most likely a tax paid for domestic trade between commercial centers in the empire.

mentions Khachatur Efendi's "being surrounded by every nation and tribe."⁷⁹ A historical episode recorded in the memoirs of Garegin Pastırmacıyan, the entrepreneur's grandson, offers interesting details about relations between the Pastırmacıyan *gerdastan* and a Kurdish notable. According to Garegin Pastırmacıyan, his grandfather had achieved immense power in Erzurum and great influence among government officials. In one case, Khachatur Efendi intervened on behalf of a Kurdish tribal leader named Taltan [Suqunu ?] Bey of Hınıs who was sentenced to execution. After being released from prison thanks to Khachatur Efendi's intervention, closer relations developed between the Pastırmacıyans and the family of Taltan Bey.⁸⁰ In the 1860s Khachatur Efendi's brother Sarkis was present during ceremonies held by Taltan Bey's family, and individuals from both families acted as *kirves* for one another—a tradition particularly among Kızılbaş Kurds in which a person covers in full the expenditures for a boy's circumcision ceremony or participates in other important family events, such as weddings; the relationship is considered one of kinship.⁸¹ The tradition of establishing spiritual relationships was also observed in Epirus, Greece, where semi-nomadic Sarakantsani shepherd communities had similar relationships with people of some standing outside their community. Both parties win in this relationship by introducing moral codes into a usable relationship by which "friendship and trust replace hostility and suspicion."⁸²

The close affiliation between the Pastırmacıyans and the family of Taltan Bey, based on this spiritual kinship, proved to be very important in the following decades. Six years after Khachatur Efendi's death, during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877–1878, his son Harutyun

⁷⁹ "He was born there [Erzurum/Karin], he was living there / His name was remembered in city in village / He was surrounded by every nation and tribe / All Asia knew him." "Khachatur Pastırmacıyanı Kensagrutyunits," in Qosyan, *Bardır Hayq*, 1:193.

⁸⁰ Armen Garo, *Aprvatı Ozer* (Boston: Hayreniq Tparan, 1948), 45.

⁸¹ Pertev Nail Boratav, *100 Soruda Türk Folkloru*, (Istanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1973), 162.

⁸² John Kennedy Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 223–224.

Efendi was accused of treason against the state after refusing to sell grain from his stocks to the army. When authorities arrived to arrest him, it was none other than Taltan Bey who forcefully protected him.”⁸³ It is not known whether Khachatur Efendi and Taltan Bey knew each other before the incident, but this episode suggests that the complex set of relations between an Armenian urban elite family and that of a Kurdish tribal leader might have included mutual protection based on trust.⁸⁴

From the Sheep Trade to Army Contracts, Land Ownership, investment in Urban Real-Estate

There were other reasons behind Khachatur Efendi’s rise to political and economic power; these related to the other businesses that he was engaged in, and they grew from the specific context of Erzurum in the decades following the Crimean War. According to the British Consul in Erzurum, Khachatur Efendi

commenced life as a retail butcher and sausage maker; by which trades he obtained a considerable competence and such influence, owing to the latter, with Government, that, though illiterate, coarse man, unable to read and write, he received, most unworthy it must be confessed, the high grade of “Sanieh.” With the active countenance of the present Minister of War, Mustafa Pasha (then in command here), he, eight years ago, entered largely into government building and victualing contracts, and was fortunate enough to amass thereby a vast capital. The most part with a laudable desire of improving his native town, he invested in city property of a mean description wherever it was offered for sale.⁸⁵

Thus the butcher became a great merchant. Gaining contracts to provide for the army was obviously related to Erzurum’s geographical location in the borderland and its role as the

⁸³ Armen Garo, *Aprvatz Orer*, 47.

⁸⁴ An interesting pamphlet on Kurds and Armenians in Eastern Anatolia states the following about economic relations between Armenian merchants and Kurdish nomads: “In Kurdistan, Armenians and Kurds cannot live one without the other[;] both peoples, so to speak, complete each other ... In the bazaars—principally Armenians—of Bitlis, Van, Erzeroum, etc., the shops contain only stuffs and all sorts of goods for the use of the Kurds. The wool or the cattle, or the scanty harvest are taken by the Armenians.” Saturnino Ximénez, *Kurds and Armenians* (London, 1895), 12.

⁸⁵ “Dispatch of the British Consul at Erzurum J.G. Taylor to Sir H. Elliot, date October 3, 1872”, in *Reports by Her Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Agents in Turkey Respecting the Condition of the Christian Subjects of the Porte: 1868–75*, 75. Hereafter, “Dispatch of the British Consul at Erzurum J.G. Taylor,” 75.

headquarters of the Fourth Imperial Army. As one of the great livestock merchants and *pastırma* producers in the region, Khachatur Efendi was in a position to supply food for the army.

Probably, he was among the local producers mentioned in the previous chapter, who supplied the Ottoman army great amounts of dried meat during the War. A Russian journalist traveling in the region after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1878–1879 met the Pastırmacıyan brothers in the village of İlice [Ilıca], where they had “tremendous properties and a factory, in which they prepare dried meat for the Anatolian army. That meat is distributed to Turkish soldiers, who for long time keep it without [its] decaying.”⁸⁶ The construction contracts were probably one (or many) of the great building projects initiated in the period mainly by Mustafa Pasha, the governor-general of Erzurum. The projects included *Harbiye Kışlası* (Military Barracks), *Taş Anbarlar*, the restoration of the walls of the citadel and the strengthening of the city walls.⁸⁷ Like Kürkcübaşı Agop Efendi (discussed in the previous chapter), Khachatur Efendi was not the only Armenian notable of Erzurum who was involved in military endeavors, but the extension of his contracts over decades made him one of the most prosperous merchants in the region. He was also decorated with an official rank, as discussed below, due to his services to the army.

A local observer who wrote to *Masis* after Khachatur Efendi’s murder, claimed that the businessman had been liked by many because of his charitable works; moreover, not only did he assist the government, but his role was necessary to its functioning because he was a tax farmer who collected revenues worth between ten and fifteen thousand liras per year. However, the observer, criticizing the deceased notable, continued, “forgive us for saying this, but his harsh rules in commerce, open speech, and controlling the credit for every profitable enterprise in the province harmed the lesser entrepreneurs. Although it is wrong, naturally he gained their

⁸⁶ From *Голосъ* (Golosü/Voice) newspaper, quoted in *Mshak* 170 (9 October 1880), 3.

⁸⁷ Sebahattin Bulut, *Erzurum: Çarşı Pazar*, (Erzurum: Kültür Yayınları, 1997), 43.

enmity.”⁸⁸ Thus besides his role as a creditor in the livestock trade, Khachatur Efendi had also been a creditor to government enterprises in the region.

Further, Khachatur Efendi had engaged in agricultural production. The accusation that his family hoarded grain during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877–1878, along with the huge amount of the government’s debt to the Pastırmacıyan family after their grain was sold to the army (thirty-six thousand Turkish Liras), might be taken as strong proof of this. Khachatur Efendi’s grandson recalls war-ridden city folk in front of the Pastırmacıyans’ mansion asking for grain.⁸⁹ Khachatur Efendi had also rented land from the St. Lusavor Monastery of Erzurum, three hours away on horseback from the monastery. It was a sizable property of thirty *somar*.⁹⁰ Moreover, again in his memoirs, Khachatur Efendi’s grandson mentions the *marabas* (sharecroppers) in the villages of İllice and Vozni.⁹¹ He also refers to Pülür, in the Erzurum valley, as “our village” administered by a certain Vahak Kahya.⁹² It is important to note that Khachatur Efendi’s brother Sarkis Agha, who was an elected member of the commercial tribunal council in the years preceding his brother’s murder,⁹³ was also a tax farmer who collected the tithe in certain districts of the region Çıldır (then a part of Erzurum province), in partnership with a local Muslim notable.⁹⁴

Khachatur Efendi also engaged in the construction business and owned urban property. Another section of the eulogy mentioned earlier reveals that “He bought [and] sold his real estate justly / He built with great talent / He had great genius and capability / ... He built two two-story

⁸⁸ *Masis*, no. 1297 (5 October 1872), 3.

⁸⁹ Armen Garo, *Abrudaz Ozer*, 49.

⁹⁰ Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*, 44.

⁹¹ Armen Garo, *Aprvat Ozzer*, 51.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 44.

⁹³ *S.V.E.*, 1 (1287 [1871]): 49; *S.V.E.*, 2 (1288 [1872]): 133.

⁹⁴ *B.O.A.*, BEOAYN.d. 832, 6.

hans / A marble bath ... well utilized / Built across the *meydan* / ... He had built 150 shops.”⁹⁵ A native of the neighboring city of Erzincan recalled the urban properties of Pastırmacıyan, including his mansion, as the most important edifices in the city, adding that Khachatur Efendi had constructed a row of shops on the lands where the citadel walls had fallen.⁹⁶ These were the most lucrative properties in the city and were rented to entrepreneurs who built shops on them.⁹⁷ One document from the Ottoman archives gives important details about how Khachatur Efendi got these properties under his possession. At least in this case, he used the method of *istibdal*, transfer of properties of a Muslim pious endowment in exchange of other properties or for cash. This exchange could only take place when the property of the endowment could not fulfill its endowed purpose due to its ruined condition and could not be repaired, and the court verdict permitting the transfer had to be ratified with an imperial warrant. This was a hotly debated issue in the Islamic law concerning jurisdiction over endowments, as the practice was open to corruption. The Hanafi School of theology, to which the Ottoman state adhered, was the most flexible among the Islamic schools of law on *istibdal*.⁹⁸

An imperial warrant addressed to the *nâiblik* of Erzurum dated 23 July 1873 permitted the transfer. Es-Seyyid Mehmed Sakıb, descendant and superintendent of the endowment of El-Hac Mustafa son of el-Hac Ömer, transferred the following properties of the foundation to Khachatur Efendi: land for an apartment in the Çukur Mahalle, a haymow and three shops in the Gürcü Kapısı Neighborhood were exchanged for three shops in the same neighborhood belonging to Khachatur Efendi, who held them as private property. Based on the report of an

⁹⁵ “Khachatur Pastırmacıyanı Kemsagrutıyını,” in Qosyan, *Bardır Hayq*, 1:194.

⁹⁶ Ghazanjyan, *Harn Namakner Ugherutyán*, 47.

⁹⁷ Murat Küçükogurlu, *Erzurum Belediyesi Tarihi: Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e (1866–1930)*, (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2008), 132–133, 135.

⁹⁸ Nazif Öztürk, *Türk Yenileşme Tarihi Çerçevesinde Vakıf Müessesesi* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995), 267–268.

investigative committee, the estate of the foundation was approximately 1350 m² and including the property on it, its total estimated value was 8,700 gurush, whereas Khachatur Efendi exchanged properties of 1,012.5 m² but due to the good condition of the buildings, its total value was 9,401 gurush. The difference in their value was also the reason for the transaction and explains the logic of Khachatur Efendi's urban development project: the value of one *zirâ* ' square (approximately 0.56 m²) of the foundation's buildings was calculated to be 5 gurush, whereas one *zirâ* ' square of Khachatur Efendi's was 17 gurush—which also meant higher rent revenues. Khachatur Efendi purchased such empty tracts of land and buildings in bad condition in one particular district, Gürcü Kapısı and Çukur, which were two adjacent neighborhoods separated by the citadel wall. He built new edifices and earned high rents in return. This was the “urban renewal” of its day, a topic that has not received much scholarly attention.

The fact that the permit was issued ten months after the murder of Khachatur Efendi shows both Khachatur Efendi's success in using various legal mechanisms in the Ottoman state and society, and his active engagement in the construction business in the period before his death. Indeed his murder, as examined below, was connected to a transaction that he had with another pious endowment.⁹⁹

Khachatur Efendi had given the revenues from these rental properties to his daughters as sustainable income.¹⁰⁰ His vast holdings are also attested by the Russian Consul in Erzurum, who called him an “owner of large lands through a variety of means and even a neighborhood in the

⁹⁹ B.O.A. A.DVN.AHK.ER.d. 19, 52-53.

¹⁰⁰ Nurhan Becidyan, personal communication, New Jersey, 15 December 2012.

city.”¹⁰¹ A map of the city from early twentieth century speaks to the existence of “Pastırmacı Neighborhood” in the district where his properties were located.¹⁰²

Other buildings once owned by Khachatur Efendi were still in use during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth. Following a fire in its previous location, the government rented the Pastırmacı Hanı as its chief office in the province for the period 1902–1903, paying an annual rent of 25,750 piaster (approximately £283).¹⁰³ A list attached to a map of Erzurum drawn in 1904 names the Pastırmacı Oteli as one of four hotels and shows the Pastırmacı Hamamı among the ten functioning baths in the city.¹⁰⁴

The Pastırmacı Hamamı still exists in Erzurum today, albeit under the new name it acquired during the Republican period. It was classified as an abandoned property (*emlâk-ı metrûke*), and it changed hands repeatedly for a long period until it found an owner in the late 1930s.¹⁰⁵ The *hamam* was located close to the Pastırmacı Hanı, which had a similar fate: it was transformed into a marketplace in 1929.¹⁰⁶

Social Status: The Pastırmacıyans as Benefactors of the Local Armenian Community

Khachatur Efendi, owing to his wealth, possessed ascendancy not only among the Armenians of the town but also with the wider public. One may claim that the basis of his economic and social capital—that is, his having taken advantage of the age of Ottoman reform, economic opportunities, and local dynamics—was inscribed on his tombstone: *Vsemashuq Khachatur Efendi Mahtesi Hovannesian Pastermajean Veh Ishkhan* (The most eminent

¹⁰¹ Azat Hambaryan, *Agrararın Haraberutyunnerı Arevmtyan Hayastanum (1856–1914)*, (Yerevan: GAH, 1965), 140.

¹⁰² İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Atatürk Kitaplığı, catalog no. Hrt.Gec.000539.

¹⁰³ B.O.A., MF.MKT., 729-50, 29 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1321 (23 August 1903).

¹⁰⁴ Hüseyin Yurttaş, “Fuat Bey’in Erzurum Haritası,” 53–54.

¹⁰⁵ Murat Küçükkuşurlu, *Erzurum Belediyesi Tarihi: Tek Parti Dönemi (1930–1950)*, 538–539.

¹⁰⁶ Murat Küçükkuşurlu, *Erzurum Belediyesi Tarihi: Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e*, 381–382.

Khachatur Efendi, son of Hovhannes the pilgrim, the *pastırma* maker, the high notable). The term *vsemashuq*, which might be rendered in English “most eminent” or “most excellent,” has a special meaning in the Ottoman context. It was *izzetlu*, a high honorary title given to high state dignitaries who attained a second rank (*sâniye*) in the Ottoman administration.¹⁰⁷ This was the honorary rank that Khachatur Efendi was granted in 1865 at the request of the commander of the Fourth Imperial Army and the governor of Erzurum at the time, *Müşir* Mustafa Pasha.¹⁰⁸ It is also important to underline that his official rank and relations with the army were mentioned by locals as a symbol of his status.¹⁰⁹ And, even the Patriarch of Apostolic Armenians in Istanbul had congratulated Khachatur Efendi for attaining such a high status.¹¹⁰ One may therefore conclude that imperial Ottoman titles and honors were important in Armenian provincial society and they may have been employed in order to emphasize these Armenians’ “Ottomanness” and to maintain their privileged social and economic status. A similar case is to be seen among the non-Muslim notables of Ottoman Bulgaria, who obtained similar social capital and prestige through honorary ranks and medals.¹¹¹

Khachatur Efendi was a leading figure in the local Armenian elite and had a prominent role in “exclusive events.” For instance, the election of Gevorg IV Gonsdantnubolisetsi (Kerestecian) as the Catholicos of Edjmiatzin was celebrated with a mass in Erzurum in December 25, 1865. The ceremony in the church was well attended by the local Armenian notables who were dressed “in [Ottoman] official uniforms and decorated with ribbons,”

¹⁰⁷ Petros Zeki Karapetyan, *Metz Bararan: Hayerene Osmaneren* (Constantinople: V. yev H. Ter. Nersesyan, 1907), 782.

¹⁰⁸ For the request of the *müşir* to honor Khachatur Efendi with the *sâniye* class (second order), see *B.O.A.*, A.MKT.MHM., 345-76, 24 Cemaziü'l-âhir 1282 (14 November 1865).

¹⁰⁹ *Masis*, no. 1293 (26 September 1872), 2.

¹¹⁰ *B.N.U.*, *Correspondance Provincial* (C.P.), Karin, # 98. Letter of Khachatur Pastirmacıyan to the Patriarch of Constantinople, date 30 December 1865.

¹¹¹ Milen Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2006), 224–225.

Russian-Armenian merchants, and the Russian consul, who were also in official dress. On the same evening “on the honor of the *hayrapet* [Catholicos], an expensive feast was organized by Khachatur Pastirmacıyan Efendi, where the aradjnord, the [Russian] consul and a group of Armenian prominent figures were invited.”¹¹²

Khachatur Efendi, as one of the most powerful notables of the city, engaged in various and monumental charity works in Erzurum. According to his eulogy he aided the needy and students, donated money for candles in the churches, and had established some funds for his charity.¹¹³ He built the bell tower of the central church in Erzurum in 1859 from scratch, as it had been completely destroyed by an earthquake; a wooden section was added to it in 1879, also by the sponsorship of his descendants.¹¹⁴ He assisted, with his brothers, Mahtesi Stepannos and Sarkis, in the building of the church of the St. Lusavorich monastery. A local wanted to publicize his deeds in Istanbul, by sending a letter to the newspaper *Masis*.¹¹⁵ Likewise, in 1869 he rebuilt the church courtyard. In the same year, he paid seventy thousand piaster to master masons Arapian Manuk and Gheven to rebuild the bell tower in stone.¹¹⁶ An Armenian visitor to the city almost twenty years after the businessman’s death specifically mentioned Khachatur Efendi as one of the great benefactors of Erzurum.¹¹⁷ Much like the case of his assistance to Taltan Bey, in his charitable activities Khachatur Efendi did not distinguish between Armenians and Muslims. His grandson Garegin Pastirmacıyan claims that he delivered meals on Sundays to

¹¹² *Pundj*, no. 155 (14 January 1867), 3.

¹¹³ “Khachatur Pastirmacıyanı Kensagrutyunits,” in Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:194.

¹¹⁴ Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:149–150. The earthquake of 1859 is known to have caused damage throughout the region. For more details, see Selahattin Tozlu, “Erzurum Tarihinde Depremler” in *Tarih Boyunca Anadolu’da Doğal Afetler ve Deprem Semineri*, (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2002), 100–112.

¹¹⁵ *Masis*, no. 553 (15 September 1862), 2.

¹¹⁶ Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:172.

¹¹⁷ Manuel Mirakhoryan, *Nkaragrakan Ughevorutyun i Hayabnak Gavars Arevelyan Tajkastani*, volume 3, (K. Polis: M. K. Sarıyan, 1885), 3:145–146.

Christians and on Fridays to Muslims.¹¹⁸ His impartiality in charity was also reflected in his renovation of a mosque in Gürcü Kapısı, the northern section of the citadel district where his *hans* and bath were located.¹¹⁹ Khachatur Efendi was among those prominent personalities who donated one thousand piaster for the foundation of a model *ıslâhhâne* (House of Improvement-orphanage) in 1869 where homeless children in the province could be taught a trade and learn to produce goods like shoes and textiles.¹²⁰ Khachatur Efendi was not unique in his benevolence towards Muslims. For instance, the Greek Mavromatis family of the port city of Mersin on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, which earned a quick fortune in that port-city approximately at the same time as Khachatur Efendi's rise, assisted in the construction of a mosque alongside two churches built in their home city.¹²¹ This shows that not only did the sultans and imperial bureaucrats act as benefactors to their non-Muslims subjects, but there were at least some non-Muslim elites in the provinces who assisted their Muslim countrymen during the same period, contrary to all national(-ist) historiographies.

However, it is worth noting that Khachatur Efendi's engagement in charity during the same period might have stemmed not only from a desire to show his goodwill but also and more probably from a wish to justify in the eyes of his fellow residents of Erzurum his quick

¹¹⁸ Armen Garo, *Aprvatz Ozer*, 44.

¹¹⁹ "Dispatch of the British Consul at Erzurum J. G. Taylor to Sir H. Elliot, date October 3, 1872," 75. This mosque was probably the Gürcü Kapısı Mosque, which, according to the inscription on its wall, was renovated in 1859. The name of the benefactor is not mentioned in the inscription. İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, *Abideleri ve Kitabeleri ile Erzurum Tarihi* (Istanbul: Ercan Matbaası, 1960), 206.

¹²⁰ *Envar-i Şarkiye*, no. 97, 28 Safer 1286 (9 June 1869), 2. Khachatur Efendi was not the only non-Muslim to donate money to the project, but all the other non-Muslim donors were members of the local assembly; Khachatur Efendi, being illiterate, never became a member of the council. Petrov discusses in detail the workings of a reform school in Vilayet of Tuna in his dissertation. Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside*, 150–156. I disagree with Petrov's primary emphasis on the social-control aspect, which he argues reflects an "ethic of discipline". I contend, rather, in agreement with Nazan Maksudyan that the economic functions of these institutions are equally if not more important. See Nazan Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 78–115.

¹²¹ Meltem Toksöz, "A Migrant-Merchant Family from Mersin: the Mavromatis," in *Economy and Society on Both Shores of the Aegean*, eds. Lorans Taratur Baruh and Vangelis Kechriotis, (Alpha Bank Historical Archives, Athens, 2010), 347.

acquisition of fortune. Archadius Kahan argues in the case of Jewish entrepreneurs in Russia that this group of people with humble origins bore the brunt of the people's wrath when the former obtained significant amounts of wealth.¹²² And Khachatur Efendi might have used charity to soothe a similar disgruntlement among his neighbors. For instance, his renovation of the church at the St. Lusavorich Monastery and the fact that he had rented a very large tract of land from the same monastery cannot be mere coincidence. Nevertheless, after his death, all the letters sent from Erzurum to Istanbul about Khachatur Efendi praised his philanthropy.¹²³

Khachatur Efendi's philanthropic activities might be seen to legitimate what I claim to be his crossing of the "traditional" communal and even class boundaries. This was in sharp contrast to Kürkçübaşı's activities. It is true that both notables had obtained economic power through their social networks and personal relations with government officials. There were, however, remarkable differences between them. Khachatur Efendi was of local origin and had established relations with people of different communal background and socio-economic status, whereas Kürkçübaşı's relations were limited to governors, generals, bureaucrats and village heads. Khachatur Efendi, as not only a merchant but also an entrepreneur and producer, was in touch with working people and artisans, while Kürkçübaşı was chiefly a merchant and a moneylender, which necessitated different kinds of power relations with the ordinary residents of the city. Last but not least, Kürkçübaşı's symbolic power was based upon his connections with officials, whereas Khachatur Efendi built and expanded his symbolic power from below, namely by giving charity to poor segments of the population, including criminals both Christian and Muslim. His philanthropic activity put him in daily contact with the lower classes. Khachatur Efendi was the

¹²² Archadius Kahan, "Notes on Jewish Entrepreneurship in Tsarist Russia," in *Entrepreneurship in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union*, eds. Gregory Guroff and Fred V. Carstensen (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 111.

¹²³ *Masis*, no. 1288 (14 September 1872), 3.

first notable to transgress such communal and class boundaries in the Tanzimat-era Erzurum. His murder in 1872 should be understood in this context.



The Murder of Khachatur Efendi: Violence and Impermeable Social Boundaries

In 1862, Khachatur Efendi was “butcher and Native of Karin Makhdesi Hovhanes’ son, most honorable (*metzahark*) Khachatur Agha.”¹²⁴ By the time he was murdered in 1872, he had become “the most eminent (*vsemashuq/izzetlu*) Khachatur Efendi, son of Hovhannes, the pilgrim, the *pastirma* maker, the high notable.” Khachatur Efendi represented a change in the social and economic order of the town. He was an Ottoman-Armenian notable, rather than merely an important Armenian merchant/entrepreneur living in the Ottoman Empire. He was able to attain wealth and prestige both in the Armenian community and in the larger Ottoman society. Alongside his economic success—which was a direct outcome of the changes in the period—the political order of the day made such boundary crossings possible. The major issue here, I contend, was not that Khachatur Efendi became a very rich person in a brief period of time. Moreover, he was not the only Armenian to attain great wealth. However, as I have mentioned, he was the first Ottoman Armenian notable to cross long-established boundaries so vividly and explicitly that he was identified with the new imperial order and the social change it brought. It was only in this period of time in Ottoman history, in the late 1850s and 1860s, that Khachatur Efendi could have attained such political and social power outside the Armenian community, not through the traditional ways, such as tax farming and moneylending, but through production and urban estates, all of it justified by a philanthropy that was blind to communal differences. More importantly, his rise was supported by the local government at the expense of the “traditional”—and for many the “Islamic”—social order. These were the sources of hostility and disgruntlement towards him. The political order of the era, the reform in the provinces and within the Armenian Apostolic community, will be discussed in detail in the next chapters.

¹²⁴ *Masis*, no 553 (15 September 1862), 3.

Reactions to the New Order: Assaults on Christian Merchants

The Crimean War and its immediate aftermath, as examined in the previous chapter, had resulted in tremendous change in the relations between the state and its non-Muslim subjects. These changes did not pass unmarked, with reactions coming particularly from the groups identified as “conservative” in the scholarship.¹²⁵ It was to a certain extent true that “conservatives” such as members of the religious establishment (i.e. local ulema) and members of prominent families that were left out of the new imperial order were among those who reacted most sharply to these changes. However, in many cases these “ideological” responses had economic backgrounds. Those who could not or did not accommodate to the new imperial order politically and economically were left out.

Due to their cooperation with the modernizing state and its bureaucrats, non-Muslim merchants grew in economic and social and, most importantly, political power in the period of the Crimean War and its aftermath. They were among the most visible representatives of the new order. They were vulnerable to assaults, beatings and even murders. The motives of the murderers—whether they aimed primarily to eliminate a merchant or to change the existing social conditions or to send a message to the political elite in Istanbul—are not known. Probably incidents shared each of these goals to varying degrees. What is known is that these assaults began over time to take the form of organized plots. Assaults on Christian merchants and tax farmers were so widespread that one thinks of them as a form of social protest, organized by disgruntled elements of the new social order.

¹²⁵ For instance Carter Findley states, “The concessions to non-Muslims offended conservative Muslims, who resented being deprived of the superior status that the *şeriat* assigned them.” Carter Vaughn Findley, “The Tanzimat,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, v. 4, *Turkey in the Modern World*, Reşat Kasaba, Ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 28.

To give a few examples, a major Greek merchant was killed in Trabzon in October 1853. His murderer, a Muslim, was caught and executed. In reaction a mob of allegedly 400 armed Muslims gathered in front of the governor's office, and dispersed only when bullets were fired upon them.¹²⁶ Likewise in the context of the Cretan Revolt, when the Aegean island was in turmoil against Ottoman rule in the second half of the 1860s, an angry mob in the central Anatolian city of Isparta, organized "secretly for months" before they beat the main Greek tax farmers of the region.¹²⁷ In the case of the murder of Khachatur Efendi, the notable was assaulted before he was murdered and local Armenians shared the view that the notable's murder was the act of a "secret" Muslim association, as well.¹²⁸

Background of the Assaults on Khachatur Efendi and His Property

Some lesser notables had expressed their discontent with the changes in Erzurum society in different ways. For instance, when some non-Muslim notables received decorations and honorary ranks from the state due to their services to the Ottoman government during the war, some Muslims had expressed their displeasure at being left out of this imperial honor. In 1862, when Mehmed Said Efendi had reached Erzurum as a substitute-judge (*nâib*), he wrote to Istanbul, stating how he found "the Muslim members of the provincial assembly and local notable households extremely desperate and saddened."¹²⁹ The reason for this was that, although both non-Muslim and Muslim notables were promised honorary ranks and decorations, it was only Christian notables who received them. The substitute-judge submitted an additional list of five names belonging to the Muslim prominent households who had desired to receive an

¹²⁶ Eyyub Şimşek, "Kırım Savaşı'nın Trabzon Eyaleti'ne Toplumsal Etkileri," *History Studies* 5 (2013): 288.

¹²⁷ Stefo Benlisoy, "19. Yüzyıl Ortasında Osmanlı'da "Sorumlu" Gazetecilik Tartışması Anatoli ve Vatan Kavgası," *Toplumsal Tarih* 236 (Ağustos 2013), 52–53.

¹²⁸ "M. Ballaryan's letter to G. Srwandztyan, dated 19 September 1872 at Karin," in *Divan Hayots Patmutyan, girq 13: Harstaharutyunner Tajkahayastanum*, ed. Gyut Aghanyants (Tiflis [Tbilisi]: N. Aghanyantsi Tparan, 1915), 258.

¹²⁹ "...bu bâbda a 'zâ' -yı meclis ve hânedân-ı İslâmı pek aşu[ı]rı me'yûs ve mahzûn gördüm..." B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 588-65, 11 Muharrem 1279 (9 July 1862).

honorary rank, a recognition, from the state. They all came from not-very-prominent families and could only ask for fourth degree (*râbia*) and even lower (*hâcegânlık*) orders.¹³⁰ What is important here is the fact that these figures voiced their discontent through a holder of an Islamic office, namely the substitute-judge, and in language that emphasized the difference between Muslims and Christians.

As such struggles developed in the symbolic sphere of Ottoman society, there were also developments related to the material world of these formerly prominent figures and ulema- the endowed properties. As I have already mentioned, Khachatur Efendi had made various investments in the city including dealings with endowed property by the time of his murder. His last investment and the turning point in his life was his acquisition of property rights to a small body of water for his *hamam*. It was underground water, allegedly originating in Şeyhler Street, located in the southern part of the citadel, the inhabitants of which, according to the British consul, were “Muslim fanatics” including the high Muslim clergy of the city.¹³¹ This incident was described in Khachatur Efendi’s eulogy in the following way: “He thought about the water of the public bath that he had built/ From the city that is abundant with water he picked [the] good and cold [one]/ He controlled the clean, abundant and sweet [one] / That water became his property/ The water was endowed for a goal/ He knew, the *mütevellî* [superintendent of a pious foundation] would find that suitable/... When he [the *mütevellî*] sold the water, they resisted/ They organized councils and went mad...”¹³² The “Muslim fanatics” claimed that the water was the property of a pious foundation, therefore its alienation was illegal. However, the secular

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ “Dispatch of the British Consul at Erzurum J.G. Taylor to Sir H. Elliot, date October 3, 1872,” 75.

¹³² “Khachatur Pastirmajyani Kensagrutyunits,” in Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:195.

Nizamiye court, a novelty of the Ottoman Tanzimat, agreed to its sale and the water source came into Khachatur Efendi's possession.¹³³

Control over “endowed waters” was a complicated issue in the Ottoman jurisdiction. Waterways, fountains and similar non-movable properties related to water could be endowed but not the water itself.¹³⁴ Khachatur Efendi was able to use the secular *Nizamiye* courts for his own advantage despite the fact that cases related to endowed properties were not under the jurisdiction of the *Nizamiye* court—such cases should be heard in *sharia* court. This was the period of a “test-run” of the *Nizamiye* courts before the system was fully established in the later period of the century.¹³⁵ A powerful local figure like Khachatur Efendi might have affected the course of the trial. The passage indicated a double boundary-crossing: a non-Muslim getting the water rights of a Muslim pious endowment, and a secular court taking precedence over a religious one, especially over such an “Islamic” issue. These transgressions drew a violent reaction from certain sections of the local society.

After the takeover of water rights, one of the commercial inns (*han*) that Khachatur Efendi had built was set on fire on the 26th of August. In seven hours approximately thirty shops and a small house burned down. This was not the first time that commercial properties were burned down in Erzurum. For instance, in 1859 a great fire had ruined the major *han* of Erzurum, destroying merchandise worth 6 million gurush. The French consul had attributed the cause of the fire to a case of vengeance without giving any further detail.¹³⁶

¹³³ “Dispatch of the British Consul at Erzurum J.G. Taylor to Sir H. Elliot, date October 3, 1872,” 75.

¹³⁴ Tanju Uygur, “Suların Hukuki Rejimi,” *Ankara Barosu Dergisi* 2(1975): 165

¹³⁵ Avi Rubin, “From Legal Representation to Advocacy: Attorneys and Clients in the Ottoman *Nizamiye* Courts,” *IJMES* 44 (2012): 113.

¹³⁶ *C.A.D.N.*, 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no. 5, addressed to Ambassador Antoine Thouvenel in Constantinople, 19 November 1859.

The fire in Khachatur Efendi's *han* was started purposefully. On the evening of the 26th of August at half past eleven the *han*, which was built recently by Pastırmacı Khachatur Efendi at the Gürcü Gate, was burnt down. The governor Samih Hasan Pasha and the military commander reached there to prevent the spread of the fire. There was great plundering and, according to the Bishop Tevkants, while some soldiers came, half were trying to extinguish the fire with two old *tulumbas* (water pipes) and the rest were plundering the merchandise. More than 20–30 shops and a few houses were burnt down in seven hours.¹³⁷ According to the British consul, about 20,000 liras worth of merchandise was ruined despite Samih Pasha's "heroic long-continued efforts, at the repeated risks of their lives, to stay the conflagration in that handsomest quarter of the town."¹³⁸

A crowd gathered, first Persians, then Turks. Bishop Tevkants claims to have heard them saying "the infidel has run wild, let the property of the infidel burn" [*gâvur azmış idi, yansın gâvurun malı*]" and there were non-Armenian women in the crowd, swearing "Oh! The property of the infidel burned[?]" [*Oh! Kan[lı]dırın kafirin malı!*]. "There were some among the Christians who were happy because of their ignorance but many were deeply moved."¹³⁹ Khachatur Efendi was murdered within a month of this event. According to the eulogy, when the Muslim ulema expanded their plot to murder Khachatur Efendi, "there were Armenians, of other nations, Kurds, Greeks, Catholics" who ignited the event.¹⁴⁰

The Murder of Khachatur Efendi

Khachatur Efendi was murdered in Gürcü Kapısı square (*meydan*) of Erzurum. It was early afternoon, 21 September 1872. He was sitting in front of his property, which was near the

¹³⁷ Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*, 50.

¹³⁸ "Dispatch of the British Consul at Erzurum J.G. Taylor to Sir H. Elliot, date October 3, 1872," 75.

¹³⁹ Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*, 50. Quotes of Muslims' swearing are given in Turkish in Armenian letters in the original text.

¹⁴⁰ "Khachatur Pastırmajyani Kensagrutyunits," in Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:196.

mosque that he had renovated. He was with his brother Hacı Sarkis Agha and the director of the telegraph office, Mustafa Efendi. All of a sudden, a man whose face was covered with a *turban* approached them on horseback and shot him in the head. The murderer fled on his horse, uncaught. According to the British consul in the city, this was more than an ordinary murder. It was distinguished by “the facts [which are] linking it with the fixed fanatical jealous rancour all Moslems bear Christians here, and the easy impunity with which they can act.”¹⁴¹ The murder and “envy of Muslims” were rephrased and repeated by many of the European visitors to Erzurum, particularly in the context of the Armenian Massacres in 1895, in order to show the envy of the Muslims for the wealth of Christians and the resulting maltreatment of Armenians.¹⁴² The first reaction of the central government, a week after the telegraph of the murder, was to investigate this very regrettable and reproachable event, if it is true.¹⁴³ The mood of the people in the city was quite different.

Right after the murder, the Armenian residents of the city were reported to have been in fear of an attack by a Muslim mob. Rumors of continuing violence in the city, although not confirmed, became the main topic of talk. A Muslim mob allegedly attempted to burn down the houses of two other non-Muslim notables of the town, the Armenian Ballaryan and the Greek Yorgi Efendi, and marched towards the Pastırmacıyan house for a massacre. People in the city feared that violence would spread to the surrounding towns. However, it was quiet for the time being thanks to the head of the police force, Süleyman Agha.¹⁴⁴ As the rumors of potential

¹⁴¹ “Dispatch of the British Consul at Erzurum J.G. Taylor to Sir H. Elliot, date October 3, 1872,” 74–76.

¹⁴² Humphry Sandwith, “How Turks Rule Armenia,” *The Nineteenth Century* 3 (January–June 1878), 324–325; Edward Arthur Brayley Hodgetts, *Round About Armenia: The Record of a Journey Across the Balkans through Turkey, The Caucasus, and Persia in 1895*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1896), 129–130; J. Castel Hopkins, *The Sword of Islam or Suffering Armenia, Annals of Turkish Power and the Eastern Question*, (Brantfort [Ont]: The Bradley-Garretson Co., 1896), 300.

¹⁴³ B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 1221-95, 25 Receb 1289 (28 September 1872).

¹⁴⁴ *Masis*, no. 1302 (17 October 1872), 3.

violent strife in Erzurum reached Istanbul, the Apostolic Community administration took affairs into its own hands, and decided to write a memorandum (*takrir*) about Khachatur Efendi's murder. The Patriarch himself, accompanied by some bishops, would submit it to the Porte alongside the Patriarch's famous "Report on Provincial Oppressions."¹⁴⁵ The murderer, as later discovered thanks to governor Samih Pasha's efforts, was a Dagestani immigrant named Muhiddin. He had murdered Khachatur Efendi on the order of "Muslim fanatics" in a plot in which many Muslim notables of the town and the police chief took part.¹⁴⁶ The murder of Khachatur Efendi was a well-organized political act, the reaction of a group who had been constantly losing their symbolic and economic capital. One of the pillars of the new Ottoman order was destroyed.

The "murderer" and "the local order"

The murderer agreed that it was a plot in which many Muslim notables of the town and the police chief himself had participated; he also confessed that he was to be paid 600 liras for the murder.¹⁴⁷ The choice of a Dagestani immigrant as the hitman in this plot was no coincidence.¹⁴⁸ There are many petitions written by these Dagestani immigrants to the Ottoman government requesting assistance with their settlement problems in this period.¹⁴⁹ These Northern Caucasian immigrants began to come to Erzurum province in the 1860s in very small groups of a few households and tried to establish roots in their new land. What is most striking in the investigation of the murder—besides the involvement of many important figures of the local

¹⁴⁵ *Pundj*, no. 745 (7 October 1872), 1; *Masis*, no. 1298 (7 October 1872), 1.

¹⁴⁶ "Dispatch of the British Consul at Erzurum J.G. Taylor to Sir H. Elliot, date October 21, 1872," *Reports by Her Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Agents in Turkey*, 77. Please note the different roles attributed to the police chief in the newspaper account and the consular report.

¹⁴⁷ "Dispatch of the British Consul at Erzurum J.G. Taylor to Sir H. Elliot, date October 21, 1872," *Reports by Her Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Agents in Turkey*, 77.

¹⁴⁸ Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*, 74.

¹⁴⁹ For instance, see B.O.A., BEOAYN.d. 832, 13, 20, 24, 30, 36, 51, 62 etc. For a general overview of the history of the Muslim migrants from Russia to the Ottoman Empire see Alan Fisher, "Emigration of Muslims from the Russian Empire in the Years After the Crimean War," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 35 (1987) 356–371.

Muslim society—was the apathy of the chief investigator of the affair, a Greek judge from the Aegean Islands. According to the British Consul Taylor, “this silly renegade openly declares the assassin to have been a Moslem phantom saint in disguise, Khizr Elieas [Khidir], *in revenge for the sacrilege done to a mosque by a Christian repairing it.*”¹⁵⁰ Although sayings like “infidel going wild” and “Khidir’s revenge” may seem irrational motivations for violence, they indicated the loss of symbolic power of a group of people and their attempt to restore the old order. Someone who did not “know his place” in the traditional order was murdered.

As mentioned above, there were Armenians and members of other non-Muslim communities among those who, if not active participants in the murder, were nevertheless content with the notable’s death. Envy of the wealth of the notable seems to be a strong but simplistic reason. It does not explain why the violence was directed against Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi. This might be related to the struggle within the non-Muslim elite. If we revisit the murder of the rabbi in Lemberg in 1848, we can see clues to solve this puzzle. One of the “orthodox” Jewish notables of the town who was accused of participating in the plot had stated that he opposed the rabbi: in addition to his lack of proper education and his preaching in German, he was very close to the governor “and was therefore not trusted by the Orthodox Community.”¹⁵¹ The case of Khachatur Efendi was very different than that of the rabbi, but they both felt the wrath of the “conservative” members of their communities due to their potential to change the order. Reaction to the changes in the Tanzimat period was not limited to the Muslim clergy and some lesser notables, but had a wider base.

¹⁵⁰ “Dispatch of the British Consul at Erzurum J.G. Taylor to Sir H. Elliot, date October 3, 1872,” 75. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵¹ Stanislawski, *A Murder in Lemberg*, 102.

Right after the murder, to restore order in both meanings of the term, the governor, Samih Pasha, was replaced by his predecessor in the office, Fosfor Mustafa Pasha. The British consul claimed that the pasha was commonly called “Molla Mustafa” not because of his learning but for the “rigid attention he pays to the numerous petty ceremonies ignorant bigoted Moslems deem indispensable to a proper profession of their outward faith, and the dictates of the native ulema.”¹⁵² It seems unlikely that Fosfor Mustafa Pasha was part of the plot, as Khachatur Efendi’s wealth increased particularly during the pasha’s tenure in Erzurum as the commander of the Forth Imperial Army. However, it should be noted that Fosfor Mustafa Pasha and Samih Pasha had competed with each other throughout their careers. Between 1869 and 1874 Fosfor Mustafa Pasha served as the governor of Erzurum three times, whereas Samih Pasha held the office for two terms, and they succeeded each other in the office of minister of Navy in between these appointments.¹⁵³ Khachatur Efendi’s ability to thrive in business and establish good relations with both pashas was an indication of his social capital, but it should be kept in mind that the plot to murder him took place in the context of rivalry between those same pashas.

Conclusion

The social and economic transformation of Ottoman (Armenian) provincial society took place in a context of interacting developments through Ottoman reform in a variety of fields from the administrative to the military, as well as in communal structures (particularly after the Armenian Constitution of 1863 as discussed in the last chapter), and changes in the regional and world economies. This chapter’s examination of the “social lives” of the commodities, livestock

¹⁵² N.A., F.O., 195-1005, no. 7, from Consul Taylor in Erzurum to Ambassador Sir Henry George Elliot, 25 March 1873. Fosfor Mustafa Pasha had obtained the nickname Fosfor (phosphorus) due to his interest in modern chemistry, and he had translated many books on military strategy from French.

¹⁵³ Mehmet Süreyya Bey, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, Seyit Ali Kahraman, and Mehmet Süreyya Bey, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996), 2: 1194.

trade, *pastırma*, and by-products, has demonstrated the social and economic realities in a local society that stemmed from the interaction of these developments.

First, tracing the commodity reveals patterns of domestic and regional trade in the economy of an inland city during a period when the Ottoman economy as a whole was integrated into world markets. The production of these commodities influenced local social structures in the places where they were produced; at the same time, domestic and regional trade created local and regional networks linking the countryside to the city of Erzurum, and tied that city to its countryside and other cities nearby (e.g., Erzincan) and farther afield (e.g., Aleppo), as well as to the imperial capital and beyond.

The livestock trade between Erzurum and the provinces of Aleppo and Damascus in the south intensified from the middle of the nineteenth century and had reached a peak by the last years of the empire. A simultaneous development—namely, the increase in *pastırma* production—took place in Erzurum. This booming commodity, which was produced in what contemporary observers referred to as factories in Erzurum, was sent to the imperial capital. Demand was fueled by a need to feed Istanbul's growing population with meat at a time when traditional provisioning systems were gradually giving up their place to elements of a free-market economy. *Pastırma* further contributed to the economy of Erzurum through its by-products, which facilitated the manufacture of leather and soap products.

In this chapter I have presented the case study of an Armenian provincial notable. Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi accumulated economic capital thanks to his success in these particular trades. As I showed, notable merchants also successfully transformed their economic capital into social and cultural capital by engaging in charity. The life of Khachatur Efendi, the

pastırma maker of Erzurum, is a microcosm of developments in the economy and society of Erzurum during this period. He engaged in a wide range of economic and social activities: livestock trade, *pastırma* production, army contracts, and land ownership; he was officially decorated and spent huge amounts in charitable donations—in short, he was a late nineteenth-century self-made Armenian provincial elite. Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi's life also shows the limits of the historiography on Ottoman Armenians in the nineteenth century inasmuch as he does not readily fit into scholars' simplistic categories of a comprador bourgeoisie serving European interests to increase his own wealth, of an Armenian nationalist who selflessly served his people, or of a victim of a treacherous murder (not the best example of the much-touted "Ottoman culture of tolerance"). Khachatur Efendi leaves scholars facing the complexities of the social history of Armenian provincial society. He was not only a successful merchant, but also a notable and the founder of an *eşraf* family/*gerdastan* coming from artisan background. His success in business was related to his relations with the pashas in addition to his business acumen. Khachatur Efendi's biography is an example of boundary-crossing by the Ottoman Armenian elite during the peak of Ottomanist ideology in the 1860s. However, his was not a success story. The more he occupied space in hitherto Turkish/Muslim fields of Ottoman society as an Armenian, the more attention he attracted and the more envy was directed at his success and wealth. He was murdered not because of the envy of the people for his wealth, but because of the social and symbolic capital accompanying that wealth.

This is especially important given the fact that many accounts of anti-Armenian acts, as discussed in the introduction, claim that Muslim envy of Christian wealth was the main motivation for violence. This has a certain truth to it. However, as I have shown in this chapter, history is too complicated to explain through one single assertion. Khachatur Efendi was only

one of the Armenian notables of Erzurum and he was probably no richer than Kürkçübaşı Agop. What was different in Khachatur Efendi's murder case—and what complicates our historical understanding—is that he transgressed culturally perceived social boundaries which were, from another perspective, examples of integration of an Armenian notable into the local society and the new imperial order. I claim that the new imperial order, which created certain opportunities for Armenian notables in the provinces, also set the stage for social and psychological consequences, especially among the Muslims who did not benefit from the order as they thought they should have. It was not the envy of Christian wealth, but rather a perception of how they had gotten it and whether their wealth had resulted in a change in their social standing in the new imperial order.

Interestingly enough, Khachatur Efendi, for all his social, economic and political status in the city, never took an active role in the community administration. It might be because of the fact that he was illiterate, since the reforms in the community administration required a different kind of elite who were not only successful in business but also—and more importantly—fluent in the language of reform, both figuratively and literally. Only a few of the elite were successful in this realm, and so turned into leaders of the local community. The murder of Khachatur Efendi was a missed opportunity for integration of Armenian notables as accepted leaders of the broader society, whereas the emergence of the reformers of the 1860s and 1870s signified the consolidation of ethnically-conscious and active notables in the context of Ottoman and community reforms. The next chapter examines the development of the new elite in the context of reform in the Ottoman Empire in the 1860s and 1870s. It will also focus on how the policy of “Ottomanism” was practiced in the provinces and the role of local Armenian notables in its application.

Chapter 4: Reform in Practice: Armenian Notables in the 1860s

One word began to encapsulate the expectations for profound political and social change in the Ottoman public during the period following the Crimean War: reform. As already noted in the previous chapters, Ottoman society had undergone major changes in the period following the Crimean War. The emergence of Armenian lesser notables as major constituents of the new order in Erzurum was only one, but a very important development. The 1860s witnessed the institutionalization of the new role of these notables in society. Their participation in governance became official, as seats began to be allocated to them in the “reformed” provincial assemblies (*Meclis-i İdare-i Vilayet*, *Meclis-i İdare-i Liva*, and *Meclis-i İdare-i Kaza*) after 1864¹ and in the judicial system, the *Nizamiye* courts.² These institutions were among the most important organs of the modernizing state, which tried to interfere in the lives of all of its subjects in various aspects, regardless of religious and ethnic affiliation. As this chapter examines, some Armenian notables gained enormous power in the local society in the 1860s. Khachatur Khan (not to be confused with Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi, examined in the third chapter) and Daniel Kharajyan Efendis, who became long-time members of the administrative councils and courts respectively, bolstered their position in the community, ousted their rivals and played a role in the shaping of imperial reform in the provinces. Besides this “bureaucratic” track, there were others open to aspiring notables. Hamazasp Ballaryan Efendi, from the influential Ballaryan family of the city, was an adherent of reform within the Armenian community, particularly its

¹ Carter Vaughn Findley, “The Evolution of the System of Provincial Administration as Viewed from the Center,” in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period. Political, Social, and Economic Transformation*, ed. David Kushner, (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 10–11.

² Carter Vaughn Findley, “The Tanzimat,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, v.4, *Turkey in the Modern World*, Reşat Kasaba, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 20–21, 30; Avi Rubin, *Ottoman Nizamiye Courts: Law and Modernity*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 27–29.

educational aspects. His activities to raise the level of education among the local population as a part of the liberal program of Armenian reform within the Ottoman(ist) context consolidated his role both in the community and in the broader society. All these notables enjoyed personal relations with the other local bureaucrats in addition to their official roles. The notables' interdependent official and unofficial networks not only linked the state with their community but also changed them through the course of their interactions.

There were major developments within the Armenian Apostolic community in the same period and Armenian local notables played major roles in those developments. As Roderic Davison remarked some fifty years ago and Richard Antaramian reemphasized and further developed recently, reform within the Armenian Apostolic Community took place under the context of broader reforms in the Ottoman Empire following the proclamation of the Reform Edict.³ However, different parties had different expectations as to what community reform should mean. Some sought the expansion of Istanbul's power in the provinces, hoping that it would alleviate the plight of Armenians there. This was, as I will examine below, in line with the goals of the imperial government carried out by notables like Daniel Kharajyan. Some others interpreted reform primarily as growth of the power of the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate in Istanbul over the historically "rival" religious centers in the Ottoman Empire, namely the Catholicates of Sis and Aghtamar and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, a development the power holders in the latter centers actively resisted. Khachatur Khan, as will be discussed below, in addition to his "official" roles in bureaucratic institutions—and probably thanks to them—was deeply engaged in the intricacies of such developments in the region, and tried to bolster his position by means of that engagement.

³ Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 114–135; Richard Edward Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State: Armenians and Ottoman State Power, 1844–1896," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2014).

Others saw the solution to the contemporary problems of Armenians in the provinces in education. Reform-minded clergy and young and energetic notables like Hamazasp Ballaryan followed that course. Education was expected to extend beyond the level of simple literacy, although the ability to read was a major component. As a part of their middle-class liberalism, the Armenian merchants and intellectuals of Istanbul showed firm belief in progress and education from the 1840s onwards—a belief that culminated in the 1860s with the development of communal institutions in the capital.⁴ Associations to promote education were established with the reading halls where lectures were given, promoting a form of cultural nationalism aimed at preserving the community through literature and education. Thus, in the 1860s a new element entered into the inventory of notables in the provinces: providing public education. It differed significantly from Khachatur Pastirmacıyan Efendi's charity in building a church tower or feeding the poor. This was a major shift from traditional charity to (politicized) philanthropy, and it showed great similarity to changes that were under way among many Jewish groups, both in Europe and in the Ottoman Empire.⁵ Hamazasp Efendi was quick to understand both those changes and the developments in the capital. Thus his family's great wealth was transformed into cultural capital during his generation, maintaining their status as notables in the society.

The new imperial order was bolstered by an ideology, namely Ottomanism (*Osmanlılık*). What I called “bargaining” in the previous chapters—a new set of relations between the imperial state and her subjects and definition of rights and obligations—was in the 1860s consolidated into the new imperial project of Ottomanism which aimed at creating a new socio-political order based on civic citizenship and equality of all Ottoman citizens regardless of ethnic and religious

⁴ Gerard Jirair Libaridian, “Nation and Fatherland in Nineteenth-Century Armenian Political Thought,” *Armenian Review*, 36 (1983): 75–76.

⁵ Aron Rodrigue, “Abraham de Camondo of Istanbul: The Transformation of Jewish Philanthropy,” in *Profiles in Diversity: Jews in a changing Europe, 1750-1870*, ed. Frances Malino and David Jan Sorkin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 55–56.

background. In this chapter, I question the state-centered and top-down perspective on Ottomanism and I examine the ways in which it has been practiced through its participants' agencies.

From the perspective of the non-Muslim notables, Ottomanism had functions other than findings solutions to the “ethnic” problems of the empire. The official recognition of their position as intermediaries and power brokers in assemblies and courts provided them another arena to negotiate their power with the state authorities. Ottomanism had created a field in which the notables aimed to attain further social, economic and political power. In order to benefit from this new political asset, however, the notables had to possess some interdependent qualities. Two qualities, in particular, stand out. First they had to possess the necessary social, economic and cultural capital to carry out the functions of a notable. Occupying official posts in the administrative assemblies and working in imperial and patriarchal investigative missions and engagement in cultural activities became main goals of the notables in this new period. These were quite different from the roles they had sought in the previous age, such as acting as the personal financier of a governor or a grand notable (ayan).

Second, they should have the ability to speak the imperial language of reform, both literally and metaphorically. Only a handful of notables in Erzurum qualified for this new position. It is no coincidence that all three notables examined in this chapter, Khachatur Khan Efendi, Hamazasp Ballaryan and Daniel Kharajyan, were fluent in Ottoman Turkish and experienced in administration and the practice of law.⁶ The notables not only had to know Ottomanism, but also had to have the social and intellectual capacity to practice it.

⁶ Elke Hartmann points out the importance of knowledge of Ottoman Turkish for the Armenian deputies in the first Ottoman Parliament in 1876. See Elke Hartmann, “The ‘Loyal Nation’ and Its Deputies: The Armenians in the First Ottoman Parliament,” in *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy*, eds. Christoph Herzog and Malek Sharif (Würzburg: Ergon, 2010), 202.

Therefore, through the biographies of these notables, this chapter examines how a group of new notables emerged in the 1860s in the context of Ottoman reform and Ottomanism, and different facets of “reform” in the provinces. As I argue, reform was not a top-down project initiated from the center and disseminated to the provinces. Instead, it was a result of ongoing negotiations in which a variety of actors participated. Among those actors, local Armenian notables played a central role as power brokers between different segments of the society. They shaped the new Ottoman imperial order in the provinces, translated the imperial and communal reform projects into local circumstances, and gave them their final forms. The notables in the provinces and the reformists in Istanbul were interdependent; as this chapter shows, both could reach their goals as long as they cooperated.

By focusing on how the Armenian notables’ lives were related to the various reform projects, and how those projects were redefined in practice, this chapter puts forward two interrelated arguments. First, local Armenian notables were as important as the state and patriarchal institutions in Istanbul in the particular articulation and implementation of the reform projects in the provinces in that period. The direction of both the imperial state’s and the Apostolic Patriarchate’s reform projects was dependent on the local notables’ participation. The notables’ networks based on personal, social, and political relations determined the outcome of reform projects in tandem with the power and willingness of the imperial center and the Patriarchate to carry out reform.⁷ Second, the reformist notables in the provinces were able to

⁷ Although the notables’ social networks are very fundamental in my analysis, I do not particularly apply any network theory. My emphasis on networks is both to show the importance of non-institutional aspects of Ottoman history and to provide a loose framework for analyzing the practices of individual actors and their interaction with broader forces of history (e.g. the making of the imperial state, reform projects and changes in the economic system). Here my position is very close to what Christine Philliou suggests about the importance of networks but not necessarily network theories for explaining the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century. Christine Philliou, “The Ottoman Empire’s Absent Nineteenth Century,” in *Untold Histories of the Middle East: Recovering Voices from the 19th and 20th Centuries*, eds. Amy Singer, Christoph Neumann and Selçuk Akşin Somel (London: Routledge, 2011) 156, n. 5.

bolster their position both within their community and broader Ottoman society through the roles they played in reform projects, and their adherence to Ottomanist ideology. At the same time the reform projects and Ottomanist ideology allowed them to attain effective political power outside their communities and as agents of the imperial government. Daniel Kharajyan's mission to Mush as an investigator to redress the oppression by some Kurdish tribes of local Armenians, and Khachatur Khan's significant role in local administration were major examples of how imperial and communal reform projects converged, were implemented, and gained their final shape through the agency of local notables. By focusing on these points, the chapter gives the provincial Armenian notables their deserved position in the making of the Ottoman imperial order in the 1860s.

The provincial perspective given here aims to deepen our understanding of the social history of "Ottomanism." I claim that while such great Armenian intellectuals as Servitchen and Otiyan Efendis were influencing the reform-minded Ottoman pashas in the imperial center, local notables assumed a similar, and no less important, role in the provinces. These notables believed that the plight of Armenians in the provinces, namely the growing insecurity occasioned by raids by some Kurdish tribes and problems rising from the settlement of Caucasian immigrants, could be remedied through close cooperation with the government, with whom the notables had already formed close economic and social relations. This cooperation was not "Ottomanism" imposed from the center as a state ideology, but it was "Ottomanism" as practiced by its target groups, an Ottomanism whose boundaries were negotiated in the face of local and imperial challenges. Julia Cohen, in her examination of Sephardic Jews' adaptation to Ottomanism in the period following the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878, framed this aptly as "grafting models of patriotism and new forms of belonging onto expansive and diverse [Ottoman] imperial

landscapes.”⁸ This chapter contributes to that stream of scholarship by focusing not only on the notables’ adherence to centrally defined Ottomanism but also on their ability to give direction to imperial policy and to reinterpret it according to the needs of their communities, all while benefitting from this intermediary role. The notables participated in this new form of “patriotism” so long as it served their interests, the interests of their community and those of the imperial state. This was “Ottomanism in practice.”

Structure of the Chapter

With these goals in mind, the present chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section constructs biographies of three important notables of Erzurum, who were active during the reform era.⁹ These notables are Khachatur Khan Ter Nersisyan Efendi, Hamazasp Ballaryan Efendi, and Daniel Kharajyan Efendi. They had enormous social and economic capital in the period. However, Khachatur Khan, Hamazasp and Daniel Efendis differed from other notables in the city in one important aspect: they combined their economic power with official posts not only in the community administration but also in the government of the Tanzimat era, namely the provincial administrative assemblies (*İdare Meclisleri*) and secular courts (*Nizamiye Mahkemeleri*).¹⁰ Their biographies clearly show how Armenian notables established their political and economic power in the period, and they constitute different but complementary examples of power-brokerage between the community, the Patriarchate and the state in the

⁸ Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 18.

⁹ Christine Philliou’s work on Ottoman-Greek Phanariots is an important intervention to the scholarship in terms of once more proving the importance of biography for understanding and explaining history. Philliou examines changes in the Ottoman governmentality in the first half of the nineteenth century through the biography of an elite Ottoman-Greek bureaucrat and his attempts to accommodate to the changing world, a world that has been completely lost to us in the age of nation-states. Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Philip Khoury, in a critique of his own book *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism*, lists points including but not limited to “the ways notable politicians mobilized and/or dominated local society” as a research agenda that needs to be followed in study of notables. Philip Khoury, “The Urban Notables Paradigm Revisited,” *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 55-56 (1990): 217. I agree with Khoury’s statement and aim to develop this study in that direction.

1860s. The notables fulfilled important socio-political roles expected by the populace from a notable, ranging from philanthropy to payment of communal debts and defending the rights of the ethno-religious community when needed.

The three notables under discussion here came from different backgrounds. Khachatur Khan was a self-made man, while the other two were sons of local notables. He was a renegade who worked in all three empires, Ottoman, Russian, and Qajar, whereas Hamazasp Efendi would boast of never having taken a Russian passport—a sign of his loyalty to the Sublime Porte. Khachatur Khan and Hamazasp Efendi were merchants, whereas Daniel Efendi was primarily associated with his service to the imperial state despite involvement in commerce. Notwithstanding these differences in personal, political and social backgrounds, they shared the trait of attaining great economic and political power in the context of imperial reform and reform within the Armenian community. The first section, the biographies of the three notables, examines the dynamic nature of social and political relations in the region and in the Armenian community, and shows that the making of Armenian notables was intricately linked with the making of the modern Ottoman state in its borderlands and its reform projects. I will pay particular attention to Khachatur Khan's becoming a notable in the political context of the 1860s, and Hamazasp Ballaryan's efforts to develop education by establishing a reading hall in the city.

The second part of the chapter examines expansion of both the imperial state and the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate in the countryside while focusing on the notable's roles in giving the final shape to these reform projects. The notables negotiated over the application of these projects with the imperial and local authorities, and in the course of these negotiations they mobilized networks that included both government circles and Armenian clergy.¹¹ The main

¹¹ We should not infer from this that the clergy formed a fully autonomous institution apart from the Ottoman central government. On the contrary, as shown throughout the dissertation, both the Patriarch in Istanbul and the bishops in

focus of this section will be on a project to alleviate the deteriorating conditions of Armenians in the face of oppression by some Kurdish tribes in the region of Mush and Taron (Bitlis) in the first half of 1869. The case, as I argue, is a prime example of “reform in practice,” and shows how the ideology of Ottomanism was materialized in a reform project under the authority of an Armenian notable. The reform in Mush and Bitlis was a showcase of Ottomanism; the state’s eyes and hands in the field during the operation were two inspectors, one a Muslim and the other an Armenian notable. The Armenian notable, Daniel Kharajyan, was entrusted with great political power. He stayed in Mush for the entire time of the operation and co-led it. This phenomenon—the execution by an Armenian of a state operation which targeted a Muslim group, namely Kurds—was a development in the new imperial order of the Tanzimat era.¹² Likewise, in the same period Khachatur Khan was lobbying the provincial governor—utilizing his double position as a member of the provincial assembly and an Armenian notable—to solve many problems of the Armenian community, while he deliberately defined the problems according to his own interests. His involvement in the Patriarchal reform in the district of Van and his function as a hub in various social networks attests to the important role of the notable in the reform movement.

the provinces were, on the personal level, government officials. On the institutional level, however, one can argue that the Patriarchate and the Community Administration had a degree of autonomy in certain communal affairs defined by the communal (*millet*) constitution. The reforms within the community both permitted the modernizing government to regulate community affairs and allowed the community administration to preserve communal autonomy based on law. In that context, due to their official position, the bishops consolidated their power while linking state institutions with community affairs. In some ways their growing power in the Tanzimat era resembled the process that the provincial Armenian notables experienced under the new imperial order.

¹² Yektan Türkyılmaz, in his dissertation on Eastern Anatolia during the Armenian Genocide, examines a “historically unique situation” in which an Armenian public prosecutor had arrested some members of the security forces on charges of murder in 1913. Yektan Türkyılmaz, “Rethinking Genocide: Violence and Victimhood in Eastern Anatolia, 1913–1915,” (PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 2011), 92. Although I agree that certain developments in the Second Constitutional Period before the Genocide (1908–1915) such as publicly visible signs of Ottomanism and powerful positions granted to non-Muslims should be understood in the context of post-revolutionary politics, I think they were not unique developments in the history of the empire, but had predecessors in 1860s and 1870s, as I discuss in this chapter.

Khachatur Khan Ter Nersisyan Efendi

Khachatur Ter Nersisyan Efendi's biography reveals that some Armenians, not necessarily coming from notable families, were able to rise to the highest ranks of the local society in the mid-nineteenth century. His political and business career in the borderlands of the Ottoman, Russian, and Qajar Empires earned him success and fame in all three empires before he settled in Erzurum and reached the top echelons of the local society. Over the course of his career, he transformed himself from a priest in the imperial capital to a merchant traveling in the borderlands of empires, and finally to a local notable whose status was officially recognized by membership in the provincial administrative assembly. He was also a member of the communal representative institutions that were created by the imperial reform project and the reform of the Armenian Apostolic Community—all of which shows the dynamism within the Armenian community at the time. Khachatur Ter Nersisyan's career also highlights the political and economic opportunities provided to some Armenians, and the importance of personal and social networks for advancing in the Ottoman society of the period. In this part, the focus is on Khachatur Ter Nersisyan's background, his rise to economic, political, and social power in the region, and his evolution into a local grandee, all of which were interrelated with the opportunities of the reform era.

Khachatur Ter Nersisyan's full name, Khachatur Khan Ter Nersisyan Efendi, includes the honorific forms of address "Khan" and "Efendi." These titles indicate opportunities open to some Armenians in the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly for those who lived at the borderlands and showed talent in business and politics. Khachatur Khan had obtained these epithets from the Qajar and Ottoman Empires, respectively, as a result of his services to those governments at different times. An erstwhile subject of the Russian Empire, he worked as a

translator at the Russian Consulate in Erzurum between his services to the other two empires. His activities in Erzurum after 1862, as a significant actor in the reform movement, only further complicate his biography.¹³

A Life between Three Empires

Khachatur Khan was born into a priestly family in Baghesh (Bitlis) in 1810. He moved to Istanbul when he was sixteen because of the second marriage of his father, Avedik. This shows that Avedik was not a celibate priest (*vardapet*) but a priest of lower standing, a *kahana*. Avedik's father had the family name Ter Nersis (Father Nersis), indicating that the family had produced non-celibate priests for some generations. Khachatur Khan initially pursued the same path as his ancestors. While he was in Istanbul, he was taken into the service of Bishop Hovhannes Movsesyan, the vicar of Jerusalem at the time and later Patriarch. Khachatur received education from the bishop with the intention of becoming a clergyman.¹⁴ This was probably a manifestation of a particular practice, known as child ecclesiastics (*pokravorner*), at the Armenian St. James order in Jerusalem. In this practice, older priests built political cliques around themselves by “adopting” a child and taking him into the monastery where they would learn the politics and culture of clerical life. These cliques resulted in the formation of rival factions within the monastery. Another “child ecclesiastic” who occupied an important position

¹³ Unlike Hamazasp Ballaryan and Daniel Kharajyan, whose biographies I will construct based on Armenian and Ottoman sources—and unfortunately only partially—a short biography of Khachatur Khan, not without some problems, is found in manuscript and print forms. His biography was published some years after his death, as a famous provincial an exemplary community leader and a state official whose achievements should be hailed. Teodik [Teodoros Lapjinyan], *Amenun Taretsuytsi*, v.6 (K.Polis: V yev H. Ter Nersisyan, 1912), 404–405. To my knowledge it is Elke Hartmann who draws attention to this biography for the first time. See Hartmann, “The ‘Loyal Nation’ and Its Deputies,” 204–205. Also Bibliothèque Nubar (*B.N.U.*), Correspondance générale des personnalités religieux XIXe–XXe (C.G.P.R.), Paris, XIX/201 contains a manuscript on Khachatur Khan Ter Nersisyan's biography which is published in Teodik, probably written by him. But the manuscript contains some more details. Although Teodik's “Almanacs” and the biographies in them are of great value for historians, they should be used critically and with care. For an excellent study based on a biography published in Teodik, see Vazgen Khachig Davidian, “Portrait of an Ottoman Armenian Artist of Constantinople: Rereading Teotig's Biography of Simon Hagopian,” *Études arméniennes contemporaines* 4 (2014): 11–54.

¹⁴ Teodik, *Amenun Taretsuytsi*, v.6 (1912), 404.

in Erzurum society in this period was Harutyun Vehapetyan, the archbishop of Erzurum.¹⁵ I will revisit the life of Vehapetyan in the next chapter. Here, however, it should be said that Khachatur Khan pursued a different career path than that of archbishop.

Khachatur Khan left Bishop Movsisyan's service in 1834 and went to Gyumri (Alexandropol), a major trade hub in the Russian southern Caucasus on the border with the Ottoman Empire, to work as a merchant. It is not clear whether he benefited from some of the social networks of the religious order he belonged to, but he is likely to have at least benefited from the education he received. He became a Russian subject in this period and was engaged in the leather and tobacco trades while in Gyumri. He maintained his relations with Erzurum through these trades.¹⁶ In Gyumri he worked with Astvatzatur Hovasapyan, whose daughter, Iskhuni, he married on 20 October 1841.¹⁷ From this marriage the couple had five boys: Agheksandr (b. 14 October 1842), Tigran (b. 10 April 1847), Smpat (b. 6 February 1852; d. 10 December 1853), Mihran (b. 28 June 1855), Smpat (b. 15 May 1858; d. 20 August 1859).¹⁸ The fact that all of these children were born in Erzurum shows that Khachatur Khan had settled his family in that city though he himself was in Gyumri. Following his return to Erzurum, he joined the firm of Hakobjanyan and Gazazyan in that city. He soon began to act as the Tabriz branch of that firm. In Tabriz Khachatur rendered services to the Persian government, monitored the commercial activities of merchants and regularized them. In return for these services he received the honorary title "khan" from the government of Nasreddin Shah.¹⁹ Khachatur, now a Khan,

¹⁵ Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 72.

¹⁶ *B.N.U., C.G.P.R., XIX/201.*

¹⁷ Teodik, *Amenun Taretsuytsi*, v.6 (1912), 404. *B.N.U., C.G.P.R., XIX/201* gives the date as 19 November 1841.

¹⁸ *B.N.U., C.G.P.R., XIX/201.* It is possible that the couple might have had girls but they might not have been recorded them in the manuscript.

¹⁹ Teodik, *Amenun Taretsuytsi*, v.6 (1912), 404. *B.N.U., C.G.P.R., XIX/201.* Antaramian claims that "either he [Khachatur Khan] or his father immigrated to Anatolia from Iran in the early nineteenth century, allowing the family to retain the honorific 'khan.'" Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 29, no. 40. On the basis of the evidence provided here this statement is not to be likely.

became one of the several important Armenians who carried that title and worked in the service of the Shah.²⁰

After spending four years in Tabriz, Khachatur Khan returned to Erzurum and firmly established himself in the city, where he resumed his commercial activities. From the 1830s onward, the transit trade between Europe and Persia increased enormously, due to steamships calling at the port of Trabzon. Travel time from Europe to Persia was considerably shortened, turning the Trabzon-Tabriz land route via Erzurum into quite an active commercial link.²¹ These developments had diverse effects on the merchants of the region: by the late 1840's the dominance of merchants from Anatolia was replaced by Greek firms and Persian merchants conducting business in Istanbul. A local observer claimed that the group in Tabriz which was most severely hit by the growing competition was Armenian merchants from Erzurum.²² These changes might have resulted in Khachatur Khan's settlement in the Ottoman Empire and reorientation of his career.

Upon returning to the empire, Khachatur Khan added tax farming of custom houses, namely revenues from taxation of certain commodities in international, transit and domestic trade, to his business portfolio. First, Khachatur Khan obtained the right to tax farm some items in the customs of Erzurum, then in that of Van.²³ He must have been commercially active in Van,

²⁰ There are a number of Armenian Khans in nineteenth-century Qajar Empire. Among them the most famous were Malkom Khan and Malkom Khan's brother Mikayel Khan, Hovhannes Khan Masehyan and Movses Khan Khachatryan who occupied important positions in the ministries of foreign affairs and finance respectively. Dzanet Tigranuhi Lazaryan, *Iranahayots Hanragiratan: Anvani Iranahayeri Kensagrakanneri*, (Yerevan: VMV-Print, 2012), 73–79. Services of figures like Khachatur Khan Efendi are less known but examination of will definitely improve our knowledge about the period.

²¹ Charles Issawi, "The Tabriz-Trabzon Trade, 1830–1900: Rise and Decline of a Route," *IJMES* 1 (1970): 21–22.

²² Nazar Goroyants, *Parkastani Hayeri*, (Tehran: Modern, 1968), 130.

²³ *B.N.U., C.G.P.R.*, XIX/201.

as his relations with the local merchants of Van continued in the following years.²⁴ While he was in Erzurum in the late 1850s and early 1860s, Khachatur Khan was still a Russian subject. In that period he worked as the honorary and primary translator of the Russian Consulate in Erzurum. He was a local intermediary agent between the Russian and Ottoman governments and earned decorations from the Russian government for his services.²⁵ He also acted as partner in a larger network of Russian merchants linking Gyumri to Istanbul through Erzurum and Trabzon.²⁶ There is evidence that Khachatur Khan was turning into a local grandee with his own entourage, some of whom might have had criminal proclivities.²⁷

It was in this period, in 1862, that Khachatur Khan took Ottoman subjecthood under obscure circumstances.²⁸ Before moving to that significant turn in Khachatur Efendi's life, it should be added here that neither this nor earlier changes of subjecthood are mentioned in Teodik's 1912 biography of Khachatur Khan. Teodik's omission of details about Khachatur Khan's change of subjecthood aimed to avoid suspicion about this notable's political allegiances in the past and probably of his desire to be remembered as an exemplary provincial Armenian leader and a state official in the Ottoman Empire. In the following pages I will examine

²⁴ A rare document from the Ottoman archives concerning business activities in the provinces is a proof of such relations. When a certain Makdesi Malhas declared his bankruptcy in the summer of 1862 with an unpaid debt of 173,648 gurush to various people from different ethnic groups in Istanbul and Van, he owed 7,440 gurush to "Khachatur Khan, Russian subject, of Erzurum". *B.O.A., A.MKT.UM* 613-60, 13 Safer 1279 (10 August 1862).

²⁵ *B.N.U., C.G.P.R.*, XIX/201.

²⁶ In the fall of 1859, when a post carriage was struck by bandits two hours away from Erzurum, Khachatur Khan lost two pieces of gold worth the very large sum of 75,500 gurush. This was money that the Russian-Armenian merchant Cerciyan Bonyakof in Gyumri had sent to his business-partner and brother in Istanbul. Khachatur Khan Efendi had transferred that amount through his partner in Trabzon, Ayvazoglu Karapet, another important merchant. *B.O.A., HR.MKT.*, 321-82. Bonyakof's petition, dated 8 Rebi'ül-âhir 1276 (4 November 1859).

²⁷ Interestingly enough, when the government carried out an investigation in 1861, it was the *kır serdari*, officer responsible for chasing bandits, a certain Arab Cafer, who was accused of complicity in the robbery. In his defense, Arab Cafer accused Khachatur Khan and his two men of having been partners in the crime. Although the final outcome of the investigation is not known, Arab Cafer was removed from his position until the investigation was finalized, and it was decided to question Khachatur Khan's men. *B.O.A., A.MKT.UM.*, 449-8, 3 Receb 1277 (15 January 1861).

²⁸ Whether Khachatur Khan's alleged involvement in the robbery and loss of money had an impact on his decision to become an Ottoman subject is not clear. As I will examine in the next chapter, it might have been a result of an article in the Armenian Constitution which required an Ottoman passport to be members of community assemblies.

Khachatur Khan's acceptance of Ottoman subjecthood in 1862 and his active participation in the reform movement. His participation in the politics of the community and how he changed its dynamics are the topic of the next chapter.

Khachatur Khan: A Community Leader and a “Reformist” Notable

Khachatur Khan's acceptance of Ottoman subjecthood is followed by two concurrent developments: his rise as a leader of the local Armenian Apostolic community and his adherence to reform and growing importance for the Ottoman state.

In July of 1862, Hayreddin Mehmed Pasha, the governor of Erzurum, sent dispatches to the Porte, asking for decorations to be conferred upon two Armenian notables who “as a result of their loyalty and (patriotic) zeal” wished to “proudly announce their desire to re-enter and return to their former subjecthood.”²⁹ These were Kürkçübaşı Agop (discussed in detail in chapter 2) and Khachatur Khan, who was serving as the chief dragoman at the Russian Consulate in Erzurum at the time.

The governor made many claims in support of his request in the dispatch, most crucially their importance for the empire. He brought up the issue of these notables' political and social influence on the Armenians of the province. If influential people like Kürkçübaşı Agop and Khachatur Khan were won over the Ottoman side, many ordinary people would follow them. The governor's argument was not based primarily on security, but rather on economic grounds. The loss of many peasants—according to the governor, some 700–800 families who still lived in the Ottoman Empire—to Russian subjecthood and their possible flight to Russia represented a considerable loss of revenue for the imperial government. Hayreddin Pasha's concern was related to the pressing question of subjecthood on the borderlands, as many Armenian peasants

²⁹ B.O.A., MVL., 635-28, 12 Muharrem 1279 (10 July 1862). “Sadâkat ve hamîyyetleri îcâbınca tâbî'îyyet-i ecnebiyyeden ferâgatla metbû' -i kadîmîlerine mine'l-iftihâr dehâlet ve ri'cat etmek emelinde bulunduklarından...”

had obtained Russian passports in this period. The issue had an economic aspect, particularly as concerned the fate of the lands belonging to Armenian peasants who became Russian subjects and eventually left the country. The British minister had inquired into the issue with Ali Pasha, minister of Foreign Affairs, in connection with the right of foreigners to own property in the Ottoman Empire. Ali Pasha's reply was that subjects whose subjecthood was in question were allowed to sell land unless it was state land (*arâzi-yi mîrîye*). As Armenian peasants in the Erzurum province and elsewhere, like all Ottoman peasants, used state land, this meant in practice that they were not allowed to sell it—and not allowed to hold it, either, if they became foreign subjects.³⁰ The British Consul at Erzurum claimed that in the province of Erzurum it was “by no means rare to find *rayahs*, natural born subjects of the Sultan, possessing Russian or Persian passports or patents of protection.”³¹ Under the circumstances the governor did not have many options other than using notables to attract Armenians to Ottoman subjecthood and increase revenues, as the Joint Commission (*Muhtelit Komisyon*) at the Porte on subjecthood on the borderlands had decided not to interfere in matters related to individuals who renounced their Ottoman subjecthood.³² Indeed the governor claimed that around 200 families had already accepted Ottoman subjecthood and more would follow *if the notables received the honorary ranks*.³³ The British consul even claimed that there were rumors about Hayreddin Pasha's removal from his post and one of the reasons might be the Russian ambassador's efforts to

³⁰ N.A., F.O., 195-728, no. 5, dispatch from Consul Taylor to Ambassador Henry Lytton Bulwer, 18 March 1862. The British interest in the issue was not related to the subjecthood question but lay in the problem of payment of Ottoman debts to European powers. England, France, Russia, Austria and Prussia had delivered a diplomatic note to the Porte on this issue on 15 February 1862. The law concerning rights of foreigners to possess property in the Ottoman Empire (*Uyruk-i Ecnebiyenin Emlâka Mutasarrıf Olmaları Hakkında Kanun*) was passed in 1868. The property rights for foreigners of Ottoman extraction was regularized by a special law (*kanun-i mahsus*) in 1883 which distinguished between former citizens who obtained permission from the Ottoman government and those who did not. Only the former had the right of making transactions of their property in Ottoman domains.

³¹ N.A., F.O., 195-728, no. 6, dispatch from Consul Taylor to Ambassador Henry Lytton Bulwer, 23 March 1862.

³² B.O.A., MVL. 641-1, 3 Rebi'ü'l-evvel 1279 (28 August 1862). “...işbu tâbi'iyet maddesi Bâb-i 'Âlî'de teşkil olunan muhtelit komisyonunda derdest-i tezekkür olduğundan karar ve netîce-i müzâkerata değin bu makûle hamîyyet ve tâbi'iyet iddi'a'sında bulunanlar hakkında bir şey denilmemesi emr ü iş'âr buyrulmuş.”

³³ Ibid.

replace the Pasha with another governor who would be more submissive to Russian influence on the matter of subjecthood.³⁴

Hayreddin Pasha on the other hand claimed that Khachatur Khan, “translator of the Russian consulate for more than 30 years,” had been told by his employer, the Russian consul, that renouncing his passport and leaving his Russian subjecthood was not only a decision of Khachatur Khan himself. Taking this step would have repercussions for the Russian state and therefore open to Khachatur Khan to possible reprisals. Moreover, the governor reminded the Porte that “leaving aside the embarrassment of his humble servant [Khachatur Khan], if imperial approval is not given for the granting of the requested honorary ranks, this will result in his humiliation before the officials and subjects of the aforementioned state (i.e., the Russian Empire) and the utter ruin of the affairs which were put in order in His Imperial Domains.”³⁵ Meanwhile, the archbishop of Erzurum, Bishop Vehapetyan, followed an alternative path and requested the Patriarchate to intervene on behalf of the governor and the notables and have the requested ranks granted.³⁶ The requests made by the Patriarchate and governor were accepted by the Grand Vizier and were forwarded for Sultan Abdülaziz’s approval on 30 August 1862.³⁷ The newspaper *Masis* gave the news about their decoration on 7 September 1862.³⁸ Thus Khachatur Khan with an honorary third rank (*sâlise*) joined the top-level Armenian notables of Erzurum who, alongside their Muslim counterparts, possessed honorary ranks in this period.

³⁴ N.A., F.O., 195-728, no. 6 [7] dispatch from Consul Taylor to Ambassador Henry Lytton Bulwer, 27 March 1862.

³⁵ B.O.A., MVL. 641-1, 3 Rebi’ü'l-evvel 1279 (28 August 1862). “...bunların iltimâs olunan rütbelerinin tevcîhi hakkında müsâ’ade-i ‘alî buyrulmamasından dolayı çâkerlerince olacak mahcûbiyyet şöyle dursun kendilerinin devlet-i müşârünileyhâ me’ mûr ve teba’ası yanlarında hacâletlerini müceb olarak sâye-i hazret-i şâhânede yoluna girmiş olan işin külliyyen bozulmasını mu’cib olacağı...”

³⁶ B.O.A., I.HR., 195-11036, 3 Safer 1279 [31 July 1862].

³⁷ B.O.A., I.HR., 195-11036, 4 Rebi’ü'l-âhir 1279 [30 August 1862].

³⁸ *Masis*, no. 550 (7 September 1862), 1.

The governor based his request for decorations for those notables on many grounds, which included hints of the entangled relations between local Armenian notables and the Ottoman social order. The governor first claimed that the notables were moved to enter Ottoman subjecthood by the fact that Aghadjan Ballaryan Efendi, who had a lower social status compared to theirs, was granted the honorary rank of *kapucubaşı*, so Kürkçübaşı Agop and Khachatur Khan, if they should receive ranks they ought to be awarded higher ranks since they were of higher social status. Agop Efendi should receive the second rank (*sâniye*) and Khachatur Efendi should receive the third rank (*sâlise*).³⁹ These, they eventually received.

Possession of such honorary ranks indicated the official recognition of their social and economic power and the intermediary position they occupied between the Ottoman state and the local Armenian Apostolic community.⁴⁰ As the debates around Khachatur Khan's acceptance of Ottoman subjecthood and the rhetoric used in support of it indicates, Armenian notables were indispensable for the policies of the state regarding Armenian populations in the borderlands, especially in the period of high spatial mobility and jurisdictional ambiguities in the years following the Crimean War. The rhetoric employed there also highlighted the importance of reciprocity in relations between the notables and the state authorities. Granting honorary titles to these notables, which raised them to the level of their Muslim peers in return for their services to

³⁹ B.O.A., MVL., 635-28.

⁴⁰ B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 387-11, selh-i Rebi'ül-âhir 1283 [10 September 1866]. The list was compromised of 34 Muslim and 17 Armenian notables who had been granted honorary ranks and decorations by the time the list was prepared. Among the Armenians in the order they appear were Kürkçübaşı Makaryan Agop, Pastırmacı Khachatur, Bishop Artin Harutyun, Khachatur Khan, Poghos Kharajyan, Ballar Aghadjan Efendis and others. Also I should note here that in some Armenian sources some notables were particularly referred to as first class notables (*aradjin hark ishkhane*), questions of whether there was a semi-official hierarchy among notables and whether this hierarchy is related to the honorary ranks they received from the state are important questions to bear in mind while thinking about social hierarchies in the provinces. Based on this and other documents, Teodik's claim in his biographical entry on Khachatur Khan that his decorations had "almost no precedent among the Christians of the provinces" seems to be an exaggeration. Teodik, *Amenun Taretsuytsi*, v.6 (1912), 405.

the state, was framed as a manifestation of the Ottomanist ideal of equality between different ethno-religious citizens and was an important part of these relations.

Khachatur Khan's public image: What makes a notable?

While Khachatur Khan benefited from good relations with the governor and played his role as an intermediary between the imperial government and local Armenian community, his image as an exemplary person in community affairs was being disseminated through newspapers. Fulfilling the social and economic roles and expectations of the local community complemented Khachatur Khan's status as a notable. Some of these roles could only be fulfilled by someone like him who enjoyed close relations with the governor—hinting at the interdependence of relations that went into the making of a notable.

For instance, in 1864 and 1865 two letters concerning Khachatur Khan sent from Erzurum appeared in the Istanbul-based Armenian newspaper, *Kilikia*. The first of these is about Martiros Bey Arekelyan's death while he was visiting Khachatur Khan in Erzurum. Martiros Bey, a merchant from Van, was traveling in the region for business and stayed in the mansion of *vsemashuq* [very exalted] Khachatur Khan, "a renowned and patriotic person." Martiros Bey's brother, Karapet, also of Istanbul, came and stayed in Khachatur Efendi's house, as well. Martiros Bey had a heart attack on his way to church with his brother. "Khachatur Efendi, hearing the sad news, hastened there," but to no avail. When a mass was held for the deceased on the following Sunday, money was collected for charity to help the poor and build schools. Khachatur Khan, now also an *efendi*, distributed the money, underlining his high status in the local community.⁴¹

Likewise, a letter from Erzurum dated 6 April 1865 praises Khachatur Khan for his public deeds and claims that members of the Armenian community of Erzurum themselves asked

⁴¹ *Kilikia*, no. 51 (19 December 1864), 1.

that the letter be published in the newspaper: “[One of the] First class notables of our city, is T.[er] Nersisyan *vsemashuq* Khachatur Khan Efendi, who always works to help the community with altruism and zeal. This time he made another beneficence, with which he made many people from his homeland happy.”⁴² The governor had demanded a payment of 4,000 guruh as a tax on Thursday.⁴³ The deputy-*aradjnord*, who tried to postpone the payment until after Easter, was not successful. That day many Armenians would have been put in jail “if it were not for Khachatur Khan Efendi,” who, as the notable, “upon hearing [that], hastened to the governor, asked for and persuaded [him] to lower the payment from 4,000 guruh to 1,000, and paid that amount from his own purse, with which he set many free and preserved the honor of the community.” The writer of the letter wanted to convey the gratitude of the population to “that magnificent *efendi*,” and the newspaper editor thanked Khachatur Khan “for his patriotic deed” and hoped that “his example is followed by capable members of the community.”⁴⁴ As I will show in the next chapter, taxation of non-privileged classes in Erzurum was a major source of discontent among the populace and the discontent was usually directed against certain notables. It is remarkable that Khachatur Efendi manifests two significant characteristics of a notable. First, the extent of his social capital in the form of his network empowered him to bargain with the provincial governor over the collective amount of taxes to be paid. Second, he possessed the material means and economic power to bear the tax burden of the whole Armenian Apostolic community of the city.

⁴² *Kilikia*, no. 69 (24 April 1865), 3.

⁴³ Քաղաքական տուրք (*Qaghaqakan turq*) can be translated as government or civic tax, however I was not able to find out which tax it corresponds to in Ottoman Turkish. It might be the so-called “*ihtisabiye*” tax which was farmed by Kürkçübaşı Agop as discussed in the second chapter.

⁴⁴ *Kilikia*, no. 69 (24 April 1865), 3. Another conclusion that can be derived from this event is that the provincial government was in need of cash and preferred an immediate payment of a reduced amount to later payment of a higher amount.

This was the public image of Khachatur Khan, as a notable: a patriotic provincial Armenian who worked for the community (e.g. distribution of charity money) and made sacrifices (e.g. paying the community tax out of his pocket). Moreover he was socially and economically powerful enough to rush into the governor's office to make a bargain with the governor over the community's taxes. His house was a hub where provincial merchants from different places met, and he had personal relations with the government authorities. He was well versed in community affairs and had an important position within exclusively Armenian social networks.

The position that linked the Armenian community to the broader Ottoman society—a notable—was reflected in the titles he used. Besides being a khan and an efendi, after resuming his Ottoman subjecthood, he began to be referred as *vsemashuq*, a “very exalted” man. This was the Armenian translation of the Ottoman honorific forms of addresses of *izzetlu* and *ri'fatlu*, and was used for holders of the second (*sâniye*) and third (*sâlise*) honorary ranks respectively.⁴⁵ The use of Ottoman honorary titles by Armenians and references to them in their exclusively Armenian correspondence (as I have already shown in the case of Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi in the previous chapter) indicate both the importance of such symbolic capital for provincial Armenian notables and the connectedness of provincial Armenian society to imperial rule, at least through their notables.

Khachatur Khan: Official, Reformer, Merchant

The previous sections have highlighted two important parts of how Khachatur Khan became a local Armenian notable: by acting as an intermediary between the government

⁴⁵ Khachatur Khan was granted the third degree (*sâlise*) in 1862 after his acceptance of Ottoman subjecthood. Later he was promoted to the second degree (*sâniye*). The hierarchical re-organization and systematization of the honorary ranks (*rütbe*) and the honorific forms of addresses associated with those ranks is closely linked with the expansion of the central and provincial bureaucracy during the Tanzimat era. Thus the growing number of non-Muslims possessing these ranks and honorific titles, and the development of the honorary ranks were simultaneous developments.

authorities and Armenian community and by addressing the social and economic needs and grievances of the community. His function as a trustworthy government official complemented his role as a notable in this period. This path was opened to non-Muslims in the later Tanzimat period. Simultaneously, he took part in the reform movement within the Armenian Apostolic Church, held positions within the Armenian assembly of the town, and was sent to lead investigations both by the church and the state.

Khachatur Khan occupied seats in both governmental and communal assemblies. He was also sent on missions to investigate questions related to Armenians. He was a member of the Provincial Administrative Assembly (*Meclis-i İdare-i Vilayet*) by 1866, a position he continued to hold intermittently throughout the following decade.⁴⁶ Already by 1869 he had been promoted to the second rank (*sâniye*), and that office marked his very high position in the local society.⁴⁷ Khachatur Khan also became a member of the Armenian local assemblies which existed *ad hoc* before the Armenian Constitution of 1863 and were regularized after that date, developments which I will examine in detail in the next chapter. However, it should be mentioned here that Khachatur Efendi was the only member of the assembly whose seal had only Arabo-Persian letters on it, as opposed to the Armenian script of the others.⁴⁸ The seal was probably a reminder of his service in Persia, as the style was different from its Ottoman counterparts. Likewise his use of the title Khan and reference to him as either Khachatur Khan or simply as Khan indicates the

⁴⁶ S.V.E., 1 (1287 [1870–1871]): 41; S.V.E., 3 (1289 [1872–1873]): 45; S.V.E., 4 (1290 [1873–1874]): 52; S.V.E., 5 (1291 [1874–1875]): 52.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Those who held *sâniye* rank were considered equal to *miralay* in terms of military ranks and were allowed to wear special decorations in the official holidays and meetings. For more information on the *sâniye* rank, see Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1972), 3: 123–124.

⁴⁸ For instance, B.N.U., *Correspondance Provincial* (C.P.), Karin, # 76, 27.8.1857,

pride and prestige associated with that title.⁴⁹ Khachatur Khan's position within the Armenian community grew simultaneously with his rise in government circles. While he was serving in the Provincial Administrative Assembly in 1872, he was elected chairman of the General Assembly of Armenians in Erzurum. This development was part of the reforms of Bishop Tevkants in the province.⁵⁰ (These reforms are examined in more detail in the next chapter.)

This position probably stemmed not only from Khachatur Khan's adherence to reform in the Tanzimat era but also his higher social prestige and political power, compared to other Armenian notables in the city. For instance, Bishop Tevkants compared Khachatur Khan to Kürkçübaşı Makaryan Agop Efendi and concluded that Khachatur Khan would have been a great patriot if he were as wealthy as Agop Efendi, and if Khachatur Khan had not had other considerations—which the bishop does not explain. The bishop added that Khachatur Khan would have defended the community more than other notables, but he did not profit personally as much as he might have.⁵¹ Interestingly enough, despite this rather positive image portrayed by the bishop, the notable was in the opposite camp from Bishop Tevkants and Khrimyan Hayrik in two major affairs related to the expansion of the power of the Apostolic Patriarchate in the region: the Aghtamar question and Vardapet Poghos Meliqyan of Van's rivalry with the reform clergy. His opposition was connected to various local networks he was involved in. I will return to these issues later.

Using the Provincial Assembly for personal interests

Membership in the local assemblies had economic benefits alongside their political and social ones. Some notables who participated in the provincial assemblies abused their position

⁴⁹ It might be speculated that Ottoman authorities never accepted Khachatur Efendi's use of the title "Khan." In all of the Ottoman Turkish documents consulted for Khachatur Khan's biography, his name was spelled as خان and attached to his name, rather than خان and separate from his name, as it should have been.

⁵⁰ Yereima Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan 1872–1873 tt.*, ed. Hakob Poghosyan, (Yerevan: Hayastani GAH, 1991), 99–100.

⁵¹ Ibid., 41.

for personal gains. Khachatur Khan was no exception; his close relations with government circles provided him many opportunities. Such an opportunity came in mid-March 1874, when a French commercial agent, Monsieur de Breuil, arrived in Erzurum “disguised as a journalist” to purchase and export wheat to France. He agreed on a contract with three notables of the town: Khachatur Khan, Grigor Shabanyan and Ali Bey [Arabzade]. They all belonged to different confessional groups—Apostolic Armenian, Catholic Armenian, and Muslim, respectively; however, they shared a common characteristic: all three were members of the Provincial Administrative Assembly.⁵² The amount that was contracted for export was 8,000 *somars* of wheat and had a value of £13,000 (around £600,000 in contemporary value). According to the consul, the contractors used their position in the assembly to “exercise illegal measures contrary to the principle of free open trade” and “deterred other competitors entering the field,” some of whom were able to undertake the same contract for 20 shillings less per *somar*.⁵³ Regarding the multi-ethnic partnership of Khachatur Khan with others, it is important to underline that such rare but important partnerships are usually ignored or downplayed in the historiography, despite their potential contribution to the history of Ottoman economy and particularly of inter-ethnic relations within it.

To sum up, Khachatur Khan was a self-made man, a successful merchant on the borderlands of the empire. He was able to convert his success in trade into social and political power both as an intermediary between state authorities and the local community and within the community itself. He *became* a notable within the context of reform—the various institutions, assemblies, projects, and missions which helped him on this path had not existed before. I will revisit Khachatur Khan later when I discuss his active role in the “politics of reform.” He linked

⁵² N.A., F.O., 195-1005, no.3, From Consul Taylor to Sidney Locock, 15 March 1874.

⁵³ Ibid.

many sides of the reform projects while putting the projects into practice and simultaneously shaping them. Khachatur Khan's non-notable background and his ever-lasting interest in trade and making money distinguished him from two other Armenian notables of the town in the 1860s, namely Hamazasp Ballaryan and Daniel Kharajyan Efendis.

Hamazasp Ballaryan and Daniel Kharajyan Efendis

Information on the lives of Daniel Kharajyan Efendi and Hamazasp Ballaryan Efendi is relatively scarce compared to that of Khachatur Khan. Unlike Khachatur Khan, both Daniel Efendi and Hamazasp Efendi came from the notable families of Erzurum. Despite their similarity in background, there were differences between Daniel and Hamazasp Efendis. The Kharajyans had moved to Erzurum from the district of Chemishgezek in the 1840s, whereas the Ballaryans were an old established family in the region. Daniel Efendi was first and foremost associated with his position in the state as a bureaucrat, as opposed to Hamazasp Efendi, who inherited his social prestige and networks from his father's high position in the administration of the local Apostolic Armenian community and expanded through the education he received.

The Ballaryans: First Generation

The Ballaryans appear in the census and tax records of the 1840s as a leading family in the region whose patriarch was Aghadjan Agha. Aghadjan Agha was among the leading personalities of the Armenian community in Erzurum when Khachatur Khan became an Ottoman subject in 1862. The Ballaryans then lived in the Ali Pasha neighborhood of Erzurum in an extended family of two brothers, Aghadjan and Manik, sons of Karapet. In the mid-1840s when the census was taken, Aghadjan Agha was 40 years old, father of two sons—15-year-old Khachatur and 3-month-old Karapet—whereas Aghadjan Agha's brother Manik was twenty

years old and had no sons.⁵⁴ Both in census and income tax (*temettuat*) records roughly from the same era, Aghadjan Agha was recorded as a *beratlu tüccar*, that is, a merchant who had received privileges from the Porte to trade on favorable terms, including but not limited to not paying the poll-tax.⁵⁵ Aghadjan Agha was engaged in trade as a merchant with capital and credit (*sermayelu ve itibarlu tüccar olarak*). His yearly income was 2,750 guruh, 2,300 of which was derived from his business activities. He also possessed animals in his mansion in the city, most probably to feed the extended family. He had also invested in land as he held a plot in the İşhi [Ağcaşar?] village of Pasin-i Ulyâ district where he had sown 10 *somars* of wheat seed and possessed a mill.⁵⁶ It is not known whether the Ballaryans were from that region originally. Interestingly, in the tax record, the neighborhood where the Ballaryans resided was recorded as having been named after them—the Ballaryan Corner of the Ali Pasha neighborhood.⁵⁷ The family’s social prestige, exceptionally high income and ancient roots in the city were probably the reasons behind this practice.

Aghadjan Efendi never accepted Russian subjecthood, a fact that his nephew would voice in the Ottoman Parliament as a sign of his family’s loyalty to the empire. However, even in the late 1850s Aghadjan Efendi asked the state to acknowledge his loyalty and services. As an act of reciprocity for his loyalty, Aghadjan Efendi received a *mecidiye* decoration of the fifth rank for his “beneficent services and deeds during the [Crimean] War.”⁵⁸ His decoration ceremony took place alongside other non-Muslim notables, Armenians and Greeks of Erzurum who “were originally residents of Erzurum [and] formerly had been under Russian protection and at this

⁵⁴ B.O.A., NFS.d. 2775, 48. Due to the nature of the tax record, it is impossible to guess whether the Ballaryans had daughters at that time.

⁵⁵ B.O.A., ML.VRD.TMT.d.6894, 13

⁵⁶ Ibid. The revenues from these estates were not included in his income from trade and farm animals in the city. Unfortunately *temettuat* tax registers of Pasin-i Ulyâ district either have not survived or not been catalogued.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ B.O.A., A.DVN.MHM., 19-25, evâil-i Cemaziü'l-âhir 1273 (27 January–5 February 1857).

time had entered under the wings of the empire.”⁵⁹ Only two of the notables in a list of seven,—Aghadjan Efendi and Poghos [Kharajyan] Agha of Chemishgezek—had never possessed a Russian passport and were “originally subjects of the Sublime State.”⁶⁰ The decoration with the *mecidiye* did not, however, suffice as a reward and promotion for Aghadjan Efendi, as he had his eyes set on attaining an official rank. Hayreddin Mehmed Pasha, governor of Erzurum, requested from the Porte in 1861 that official ranks be conferred upon Ballaryan Aghadjan, representative of the Armenian Apostolic community, Hacı Yorgi, representative of the Greek Orthodox community, and Karapet, the treasurer of the province, all of whom were members of the Provincial Grand Assembly (*Meclis-i Kebir*). The request was based upon the social status and wealth of these figures in their respective communities and the potential benefits of granting ranks to the leaders of communities and encouraging loyalty and service from local notables in such a vulnerable district of the imperial borderland. According to the governor they were unhappy because while those “who did not show gratefulness to the Sultan and accepted a foreign subjecthood, received decorations and ranks [after becoming Ottoman subject] again by the Sultan” the aforementioned figures did not receive ranks, despite their economic power and landholdings.⁶¹ At this point one sees a changing attitude towards the issue of subjecthood and holding foreign passports.

In the period following the Crimean War, various departments of the Ottoman state had instituted policies which both aimed to attract people of certain social standing in the borderlands to the empire and to clearly define who belonged to which empire. In the same period, crossing

⁵⁹ B.O.A., A.DVN., 120-87, 9 Cemaziü'l-âhir 1273 (4 February 1857). Other notables on the list were: Kazzaz [Gazaz] oğlu Hacı Artin (Apostolic), Avedisoğlu Hachatur (Apostolic), Hacı Save? (Greek), Hacı Balhi (Greek), Kundakcı oğlu Agop (Catholic) and Çemişgezekli Boğos Agha.

⁶⁰ Ballar Aghadjan “originally subject of the Sublime State and a prominent personality of the Armenian community [Apostolic Armenian Community],” and Poghos of Chemishgezek, “a prominent personality of the same community.” Ibid.

⁶¹ B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 527-76, 5 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1278 (8 November 1861).

imperial borders, both figuratively and literally, became more difficult, as in addition to demarcation of boundaries and increasing controls on the borders, debates concerning loyalty (as examined in the second chapter) became more pronounced. The case of Khachatur Khan, who settled in the Ottoman Empire after serving the Qajar and Russian Empires, is an example of this development. By the mid-1860s his services in the neighboring empires had become an exception due to changing social, political and administrative environments on both sides of the border.⁶²

Aghadjan Agha was soon granted the honorary rank of *kapucubaşı* on 22 June 1862.⁶³ Such a request by the governor Hayreddin Pasha indicates his goal of integrating the notables of non-Muslim communities into Ottoman rule and probably encouraging greater participation of non-Muslims through their notables while increasing revenues. These notables and their sons not only controlled the Armenian community in the subsequent years, but also worked for the government in different capacities either as army contractors or as bureaucrats. Their service in the Parliament as deputies and provincial representatives shows the success of this integration process.

Going back to Ballaryan Aghadjan Agha and his business, besides some investment in land as indicated in the tax record, the family was also engaged in moneylending and issuing credit for tax farming. For instance, Aghadjan Agha submitted a petition in 1861, asking the government to intervene for the payment of a 25,000 guruh debt of two important notables of Van, who had tax farmed the customs of Van under his credit and contract for the years 1856-1857 and 1857-1858. The government responded by ordering the authorities in Van to facilitate

⁶² One can also argue that study of the protégé system, in which many Ottoman subjects took the protection of foreign powers and benefitted from certain extra-territorial privileges, should not be bound to legal regulations about official status and rights, but should be contextualized in the social history, particularly of the empire's borderlands.

⁶³ B.O.A., A.MKT.UM., 387-11, selh-i Rebi'ül-âhir 1282 (11 September 1866).

the payment of the debts as Aghadjan Agha had requested.⁶⁴ Whether Aghadjan Agha's "services" during the war had a role in obtaining the aforementioned tax farming agreement in 1856 is not known but seems probable.

The notable's request was probably related to his other business transactions and settlement of debts.⁶⁵ Likewise, a document from 1871 shows that Aghadjan Agha's moneylending network extended well beyond the province of Erzurum; 800 gold Ottoman Liras of his money was stolen in Syria and three monks were convicted of the theft.⁶⁶ Bishop Tevkants, who spent some time in the region in 1872 to undertake reforms in the community, made the following observations about the family, placing them at the top of all notable families:

The Ballaryan family (*gerdastan*), who through engaging in trade and agricultural production obtained great wealth, have estates and vast lands in their villages. The head and the patriarch of this family is Aghadjan Efendi, an old man of seventy years of experience who is a genius by birth, he is respected by all for his abilities. From this very same family is the Aghadjan Efendi's nephew Hamazasp Efendi, son of Manuk Agha the pilgrim, 25 years old, a patriotic young man who is the most honest and honorable among the youth of the Karin city. The family in itself has discipline and obedience to their old patriarch through whose genius the entire family is being governed as a small town. Everyone is pious, faithful, and respects clergy. This prosperous family was able to be a model and example to be envied by the Armenian families of Karin.⁶⁷

Hamazasp Ballaryan Efendi had accompanied Bishop Tevkants on his trip from Istanbul to Erzurum.⁶⁸ The bishop had stayed in the mansion of the Ballaryans upon his arrival⁶⁹ and

⁶⁴ B.O.A., A.MKT.DV., 208-23, 20 Rebi'ü'l-âhir 1278 (23 December 1861). The indebted Armenian notables were Kalcıoğlu Hacı Grigor and Peynircioğlu Hacı Agop of Van.

⁶⁵ In this period Mısırlıoğlu Poghos of Erzurum who had given a loan of 75,000 guruh to Aghadjan Agha and his partner Mıgırdich, had demanded his money back. Aghadjan Agha had paid his part, 50,000 guruh, whereas Mıgırdich could not pay the remaining 25,000 guruh, as he had passed away. B.O.A., A.MKT.DV., 212-79. 7 Cemaziü'l-âhir 1278 (10 December 1861). Examination of this and other instances of non-fulfillment of contracts and renegotiations of debts in tax farming agreements discussed in the dissertation, leads one to think about the dynamics of the whole system. The constant failure of tax farmers to fulfill their obligations might be among the main reasons for the central government's repeated attempts throughout the nineteenth century to change the tax collection systems.

⁶⁶ B.O.A., BEO.VGG.d.122, 359.

⁶⁷ Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*, 40.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 22.

Aghadjan Agha had organized a feast for the guest, who then heaped the aforementioned praise on Hamazasp and Aghadjan Ballaryan.⁷⁰ Aghadjan Agha remained active in community affairs, such as the dispute between the Apostolic and Catholic communities over the use of the city's Armenian cemetery. According to Priest Grigor Artznayan, a very close figure to the Ballaryans, the notable had a key role in the solution of the problem in favor of the Apostolic Armenians in 1868.⁷¹ Aghadjan Agha died in 1881.⁷²

Hamazasp Efendi, nephew of Aghadjan Agha, received Bishop Tevkants' praise for his activities in support of the Armenian community in the city. However, what Hamazasp Efendi did was not a simple achievement. He was able to produce a *modus vivendi* with the rest of Ottoman society, reconciling the reformist agenda of the imperial state with the governance of the Armenian community.

Hamazasp Ballaryan and the Artznayan Association

Hamazasp Ballaryan appears as one of the most energetic Armenian notables of the younger generation in the 1860s. Before him Khachatur Agha, Aghadjan Agha's son and Hamazasp's cousin, took an active role in community affairs. Khachatur Agha Ballaryan was an elected member of the first Armenian Local Council in late 1863.⁷³ Information about Khachatur Agha Ballaryan's activities after that is limited. He disappeared from the political scene—he might have moved to a more vibrant center like Istanbul or Trabzon, or might have passed away.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Ibid., 32.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁷¹ Grigor Artznayan's letter to Garegin Srvandztyan, 11 August 1868 in Gyut Aghanyants, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan, girq 13: Harstaharyunner Tajkahayastanum*, (Tiflis[Tbilisi]: N. Aghanyantsi Tparan, 1915), column 116.

⁷² Hakob Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq: hator A: Karin Qaghaqi; Teghagrutyun, Patmutyun yev Sovorutyun* (Vienna: Mkhitaryan Tparan, 1925), 290.

⁷³ *Masis*, no. 612 (2 November 1863), 2.

⁷⁴ My attempts to conduct an oral history with the surviving generations of Ballaryans proved vain. Richard Ballaryan, one of the oldest surviving members of the family, was not able to provide information on the history of

Hamazasp Efendi replaced his cousin as the representative of the notable family of the Ballaryans. He was able to combine his wealth with his leading role in the community and good relations with the local government. He was eventually elected as representative of Erzurum in the first session of the parliament in 1876. He was very young even then: if we are to believe Bishop Tevkants that Hamazasp Efendi was 25 years old in 1872, the notable was born around 1847.

Hamazasp Efendi first began to work for the community by actively fulfilling one of the most important goals of the reform movement: raising the level of education among Armenians in the provinces. This was the period in which the Armenian intellectual and middle classes, as opposed to the *amiras*, were arguing for the expansion of education to the community, yet the community was still defined as the Armenians of Istanbul.⁷⁵ Reform-minded clergy like Khrimyan Hayrik, who shared liberal Armenians' views about progress and education, made major efforts to increase the level of literacy and education of provincial Armenians, including women.⁷⁶ From the institutionalized point of view, the National Administration aimed to expand education to the provinces under the centralized authority of the "Educational Council;" however, it would not attain success until the mid-1870s.⁷⁷ These efforts were followed, also in the 1870s, by societies which concentrated their energies on promoting female education and the spread of education in the provinces. In 1880, different societies united under the name "United

the family as his father had moved to the USA earlier in the century. His knowledge of the older generation of Ballaryans examined in this chapter was very limited, except for a story of their survival during the pogroms of 1896. Richard Ballaryan and his wife Pia le Moal, personal communication, Paris, 12.17.2013.

⁷⁵ Libaridian, "Nation and Fatherland...", 77.

⁷⁶ Dzovinar Derderian, "Mapping the Fatherland: Artzvi Vaspurakan's Reforms through the Memory of the Past," in *Ottoman Armenians: Life, Culture, Society*, ed. Vahe Tacjhian, (Berlin: A Houshamadyan Publication, 2014), 144–169.

⁷⁷ Pamela Young, "Knowledge, Nation, and the Curriculum: Ottoman Armenian Education (1853–1915)," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2001), 94–98.

Society of Armenians” (*Miatsyal Inkerutyun Hayots*).⁷⁸ However, alongside the works of Istanbul-centered societies and the Community Administration in Istanbul, there were developments in the provinces led by provincial notables.

Hamazasp Ballaryan was not outside of this movement. He was one of the founders of the Erzurum-based Artznayan Association, together with Priest Hamazasp of Erzurum and Mkrtich Khacikyan, and they established a reading hall in Erzurum in October 1868.⁷⁹ The Artznayan Association led by Hamazasp Ballaryan was the third of similar attempts in the 1860s in Erzurum.⁸⁰

The association and the reading hall relied on personal networks to function. For instance, administrators at *Masis*, the main Armenian newspaper in Istanbul, and other periodicals were asked to send a copy of their issues to a merchant, Karapet İncicyan at Kürkçü Hanı in Istanbul, who would forward them to the reading room in Erzurum. This request to the publishers in Istanbul provides hints about how social networks were used for non-commercial purposes and the development of educational facilities in the provinces.⁸¹ Within a year after its establishment, the Artznayan Association established a Sunday school to reach uneducated people

⁷⁸ Ibid. 105–107.

⁷⁹ *Masis*, no. 874 (9 November 1868), 3.

⁸⁰ This was not the first association and reading hall opened by an association. In 1862, the Arsharuni reading hall was established and remained open for some time. Another reading room also named Artznayan was active in 1864. Ghazar Charig, *Hushamatyan Bardzr Hayqi Karinapatum* (Beyrut, Mshak Tparan, 1957), 309–311. There is further information to be found on these reading halls. One can speculate however that the (first) Artznayan reading hall might have been affiliated with the Artznayan School that was rebuilt in the same era by donations of Kürkçübaşı Agop. Ibid., 240. It would be very interesting to examine the founders of these reading halls and see whether they belonged to competing factions within the Armenian notables or represented a continuity of activities by a single reform-minded elite.

⁸¹ The newspapers requested were Armenian (A) and Armeno-Turkish (A-T): *Masis* (A), *Manzume [-i Efkâr]* (A-T), *Mecmua [-i Havadis]* (A-T), *Arshaluys Araratyan* (A), *Zhamanak* (A), *Yerevak* (A), *Kilikia* (A), *Varaka-yı Havadis* (A-T), *Sion* (A), and *Tzilh [Avarayri]* (A). *Masis*, no. 879 (14 December 1868), 3. For more information on these newspapers see Manuel Babloyan, *Hay Parberkakan Mamuli: Matenagitakan Hamahavaq Tsutsak (1794-1980)*, (Yerevan: GAH, 1986).

and offered to collaborate with the Andznver Association in Istanbul.⁸² The Andznver Association was established in the imperial capital with the goal of enlightening the masses in the provinces.⁸³ The association soon began to organize well-attended Sunday lectures, which were delivered by prominent religious and lay personalities of the city. Information about the lecture and the speaker was announced in the garden of the church. Not surprisingly, the first speaker was Hamazasp Ballaryan Efendi.⁸⁴ By that time, the president of the association was Priest Grigor Artznayan, who had replaced Priest Hamazasp of Karin. Interestingly enough, a certain Hripsime, a woman from the Ballaryan family, was married to Mkrtich Ter Artznayan, who was probably related to Grigor Artznayan, therefore establishing an organic link between the reformist intelligentsia of the city and wealthy elite.⁸⁵ Ter Grigor Artznayan was a major educator in the province from the mid-1850s until his death in 1897.⁸⁶ Likewise, the Artznayan Association soon merged with the Andznver Association of Istanbul under the latter's name. The founders of the Artznayan reading hall opened the Andznver Association's Erzurum branch in the spring of 1869. The reform project led by Hamazasp Ballaryan had come under the control of the philanthropic Armenian elite of Istanbul. The reformist clergyman Garegin Srvandztyan, who

⁸² *Masis*, no. 908 (8 July 1869), 3.

⁸³ Pamela Young, "Knowledge, Nation, and the Curriculum: Ottoman Armenian Education (1853–1915)," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2001), 105–106.

⁸⁴ *Masis*, no. 977 (30 May 1870), 3.

⁸⁵ Hripsime Ballaryan was born in 1845 and died on 14 December 1883. Qosyan, *Bardzr Hayq*, 1:293. The marriage links between the notables of Erzurum and intelligentsia gained more importance as the century progressed. I believe this was a part of the transformation of the meaning of "notable" and "prominent personality" in the city in which Armenian "elites" with different capitals, economic and cultural, merged and consolidated themselves as a distinct group. This might also be interpreted as attempts to control different aspects of the social sphere in the city by forming such organic ties.

⁸⁶ Ter-Artzyan was a member of the Spiritual Council of Erzurum, director at the mother Artznayan National School sometime in mid-1860s (which was taken over by Garegin Srvandztyan in 1867) and was appointed as the vicar-*arajnort* when Bishop Vehapetyan was removed temporarily in 1868–1869. Ghazar Charig, *Hushamatyan Bardzr Hayqi Karinapatum*, 176–178. It is difficult to confirm the accuracy of Charig's biography since, as a part of the Houshamadyan genre, he refrained from giving references. However, I think based on this information that it is also difficult to confirm Antaramian's claim that Grigor Artznayan, "another Erzurum-based lay reformer," was used by Khrimyan Hayrik as a check on Bishop Vehapetyan. Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 168. It is true that Artznayan and Srvandztyan communicated, but as I will show in the next chapter, Artznayan, who was the bishop's vicar, was not happy about the bishop's removal.

was present in Erzurum at the time, was among the members of the new society.⁸⁷ In the same period, in letters about the activities of the association, locals mentioned “obstacles” put in the way of the association’s activities, which indicates that some opposition came from different factions in the community.⁸⁸

In what ways did promotion of education by notables fit into the political and social framework, particularly that of Ottomanism, in the 1860s, and how did it bolster the notables’ position in the society? First of all, education provided notables yet another venue to increase their symbolic capital by engaging in philanthropic work. Instead of building churches, feeding the poor or even constructing schools, education through reading halls gave them control over what was read and spoken in those places. Thus, they were in charge of intellectual life in the provinces and even led it by giving public speeches, as seen above. Hamazasp Efendi’s involvement in the reading hall was thus quite different from the activities of other notables examined in this dissertation. The reading hall increased his social capital in a unique way. Hamazasp Efendi not only mobilized his business networks to bring newspapers to Erzurum, but also communicated closely with local intellectuals, reformist clergy in the provinces, and the elite in Istanbul. His use of Istanbul newspapers was another sign of the growing importance of educators and intellectuals outside the institutional frameworks of education, such as the church and later the Community Administration in Istanbul.

The relation of education with Ottomanism in the 1860s was complex. The education envisioned by liberals was far from revolutionary. It underlined the importance of obedience to the state for the survival of the Armenian community. Armenian intellectuals in Istanbul stressed

⁸⁷ Ghazar Charig, *Hushamatyan Bardzr Hayqi Karinapatum*, 320.

⁸⁸ See for instance, a letter by the pseudonymous “Sur” [sword] from Garin, dated 14 May 1870. *Masis*, no. 977 (30 May 1870), 3–4.

obedience to the laws of the state as the best way to defend people's liberties; they needed "soldiers of light [enlightenment]" as opposed to "soldiers of arms."⁸⁹ Nor did the education promoted by Khrimyan Hayrik envision the overthrow of the Ottoman government, but rather it aimed to resist the challenges of the period, including changing government structures and laws, by capturing the traditions and history of his people.⁹⁰ The liberal world view which dominated the intellectual horizons of the Ottoman Armenian intellectuals of the time was concerned primarily with preservation of the "national" culture and of the community through culture. Cultural nationalism among the Armenian elite, as in the case of the family history of the Allahverdiyans, well suited the goals of the state. The main difference between Hamazasp Ballaryan and the Allahverdiyans was that, as a provincial notable in the 1860s, the former reached the local public directly—another example of the changing relations between the state, its subjects, and the notables.

Hamazasp Ballaryan, apart from his activities for the advancement of education within the community, began to fulfill the role of power broker. One such instance occurred in 1872 when Khrimyan Hayrik, Patriarch of Istanbul at the time, tried to find a way to stop banditry practiced by some Kurdish tribal groups. These groups were led by Ibo and Falamaz in the regions of Bulanık and Khunus (Hınıs). The Patriarch thought of using Hamazasp Efendi, taking advantage of the notable's social capital and good relations with the governor. Hamazasp Efendi, said Khriyman Hayrik, "has become very cordial with the governor and we can complete many works through his hands."⁹¹ Hamazasp Efendi received the high honorary rank of *sâniye* in

⁸⁹ Libaridian, "Nation and Fatherland," 77.

⁹⁰ Derderian, "Mapping the Fatherland," 165.

⁹¹ Khrimyan Hayrik's letter to K. Srvandztyan, dated 15 December 1872, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 267.

1871/72 and his nephew Karapet Efendi was granted the honorary rank of *kapucubaşı* in 1877/78.⁹²

Daniel Kharajyan Efendi

Daniel Kharajyan Efendi was neither a self-made man like Khachatur Khan nor the scion of an established notable family with ties to the state like the Ballaryans. His father, Poghos Agha of Chemishgezek, a district in the east of Dersim, was a relative newcomer to Erzurum society. Poghos Agha was a merchant who had established a branch in Erzurum in the mid-1830s and settled there in 1853, where he was recognized as a “first-class notable.”⁹³ He was on the list of non-Muslim notables of Erzurum who were granted decorations after the Crimean War. Indeed, the order for Poghos Agha’s decoration was sent as a note at the bottom of the same order as that of Aghadjan Ballaryan Agha.⁹⁴ Bishop Tevkants described the family and Poghos Agha in 1872 as “Kharajyan family, who came to Karin from Chemishgezek, obtained a large sum of wealth through trade, has quite a bit of land at the Kharberd (Kharput) valley. The leader of the family, Poghos Agha, is timid and heedful, and somewhat indifferent about the works of the community. However in their work they are always watchful and alert, and benevolent and pious, show respect to clergy, particularly to the Bishop Harutyun.”⁹⁵ His support for the Bishop Harutyun, the *aradjnord* of Erzurum, carried much significance during the upheavals in communal politics in Erzurum throughout the 1860s, which is the topic of the next chapter.

Of the two sons of Poghos Agha, Daniel and Arakel, Daniel was the politically active one. He was born in 1869, when Poghos Agha was in his mid-30s, and he was already a major notable in Erzurum.⁹⁶ In the 1860s, like other important Armenian notables, he had taken

⁹² S.V.E., 12 (1312 [1894–95]): 88, 94.

⁹³ *Masis*, no. 890 (1 March 1869), 3.

⁹⁴ B.O.A., A.DVN.MHM., Safer 1275 (September–October 1858), 19–25.

⁹⁵ Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*, 41.

⁹⁶ *Masis*, no. 890 (1 March 1869), 3.

important positions simultaneously within the government circles and community institutions. In 1863, when Armenians organized elections for a local assembly as part of the constitutional reforms, Daniel Khrajjyan received the most votes, 168 out of around 250 votes cast—about 30 votes more than Khachatur Agha, a member of the Ballaryan family.⁹⁷ While he was the chairman of the Armenian Local Council he also worked in the newly established secular jurisdictional institutions: he served as a member of the Provincial Jurisdictional Assembly (*Dava Meclisi*), to which he was appointed “upon the decision of the [Armenian] community,” and the Court of Appeal (*Temyiz-i Hukuk Mahkemesi*).⁹⁸ It was in this period that he occupied a very important position in the reform initiative in Mush to end Kurdish bandits’ oppression of Armenians in the region.

“Reform in Practice”: Investigation in the Mush region (1869) by Daniel Kharajyan
and Politics of Reform by Khachatur Khan

This section seeks to understand the ways in which the reform project was put into practice and the role of the Armenian notables in shaping it. The focus first will be on a case which gives details about how Daniel Kharajyan used his position as a notable in both government posts and community institutions in the service of reform. I will then examine the indispensable role Khachatur Khan played as a power broker between the local government and the Armenian community, particularly on issues related to the suppression of Kurds and the plight of Armenians.

These instances show that putting Ottomanism into practice and alleviating the plight of Armenians in the provinces was a field in which Armenian reform and broader Ottoman reform movements intermingled. In such a conjunction the role of Ottoman-Armenian notables gained

⁹⁷ *Masis*, no. 612 (2 November 1863), 2.

⁹⁸ *Masis*, no. 890 (1 March 1869), 3.

immense importance, as they were power brokers influential in both spheres. One such conjunction, indeed the most important, was the enactment of reforms to increase the security of subjects. In the case of Armenians, this meant ending the atrocities committed by Kurdish tribes in the provinces. For putting “Ottomanism into practice,” Daniel Kharajyan was chosen by the government with the support of clergy, due both to his past services to the government and to his social networks, which could facilitate the cooperation of different spheres of power, imperial and communal. However, as the cases of Khachatur Khan’s involvement in the daily politics of the region and the reform plans of the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate show, the politics of reform was highly complex. Armenian notables, who were at the center of various networks, had to make numerous calculations to satisfy all parties while thinking about their own well-being. Examining the notables’ exercise of agency allows us to closely examine how reform was put into practice in the period.

Investigation in the Mush Region

A petition signed by the Vardapet Mkhitar, who was the representative of the Apostolic Patriarchate in the district of Bitlis and deputy of Khrimyan Hayrik, together with abbots and vardapets from the monasteries and prominent personalities of the region, protested the attacks and raids against Armenians in the region. After expressing their gratitude for the Tanzimat and then *Teşkilat* (reforms in provincial administration) which “confirmed...freedom and peace,” they claimed that “unfortunate Mush has enjoyed the benefits of neither the Tanzimat nor the *Teşkilat*.”⁹⁹ Then the petition lists the complaints: thefts from churches, violation of girls and women, their forced conversion to Islam, and the plundering of St. Ho[v]han Monastery, during which *vardapets* were also fatally wounded. Four copies of the petition were prepared and sent to

⁹⁹ Petition by the people of Taron [Mush-Bitlis region], dated 15 December 1868, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 143.

the Apostolic Patriarchate, to the *aradjnord* and notables of Erzurum, to Khrimyan Hayrik, and to the new governor of Erzurum, İsmail Pasha. The petition sent to the governor also included a more detailed account of a recent incident.¹⁰⁰ The petitioners asked these power holders to intervene on their behalf with the Porte and have inspectors dispatched to the region to investigate the situation and find out its causes, and to stop the oppression.¹⁰¹

Khrimyan Hayrik, one of the recipients of the petition, was in Erzurum in the winter of 1868. He was on his way back from Edjmiatzin, where he had been ordained as an *episkopos* (bishop) and was assigned to Mush by the Catholicos. Bishop Tevkants was accompanying him; he had also been ordained as a bishop and assigned to Kharpert.¹⁰² While in Erzurum, Khrimyan Hayrik waited for the coming of the newly appointed governor, İsmail Pasha, with whom he hoped to find a solution to the problems of the Armenian population in Bitlis. Meanwhile, he asked his disciple Srvandztyan, who was in the region, to send all documents and petitions regarding the troubles in Bitlis to Erzurum in order to present them to the governor. Also, he asked Srvandztyants to compile a report, which was later published in *Manzume-i Efkar*, a newspaper based in Istanbul.¹⁰³ The report raised public awareness both in the Armenian community and government circles of Istanbul. The Grand Vizier had the report translated and made an inquiry with the governor of Erzurum about its veracity. Upon hearing that it was true and “even incomplete,” Ali Pasha gave the order to the governor of Erzurum to take action in the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 146.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 144.

¹⁰² Kostandyan, “Taroni Hogeavor Aradjnordı,” *Lraber Hasarkakan Gitutyunneri* 1 (1999): 71.

¹⁰³ The report, *Mshetsvoy Vra Indhanur Tesutyun Mı* (A General View on People of Mush) was published in *Manzume-i Efkar*, no. 892, 895, 898, 902, 918, 921, 923 (1869). It was reproduced in, *Garegin Srvandztyants, Yerker*, eds. V. Bdoyan and A. Kostandyan, 2 vol., (Yerevan: Gitutyunneri Akademiayi Hratarakchutyun, 1982), 2:123-149. Although *Manzume-i Efkar* was an Armeno-Turkish (Turkish in Armenian script) newspaper, the report in question was in Armenian.

region, find out who had plundered the St. Hovhan Monastery, and punish them.¹⁰⁴ Thus was the political will necessary to undertake such action shown by the imperial government—even though some contemporaries and modern historians were skeptical of the government’s real intentions, such deluding European diplomats.¹⁰⁵

Ismail Pasha was not the first governor who was asked to deal with the problems in Mush. In 1865, Emin Muhlis Pasha, the governor of Erzurum at that time, had faced similar demands for intervention on behalf of the Armenians in the region. The governor stated that all he wished was “peace and comfort for the subjects of my state” and then sent detachments to the region to suppress wandering Circassians refugees.¹⁰⁶ The governor was successful in dealing with the Circassians in the region and captured some Kurdish leaders who had been troubling the local Armenians. The Armenian and Greek communities celebrated the Pasha’s successful campaign, and met him half an hour away from the city with songs celebrating his return.¹⁰⁷

Ismail Pasha had already taken some action in this period, but as of February of 1869 the plight of Armenians had not been alleviated despite his efforts.¹⁰⁸ He wanted to send investigators to look into the plunder of the St. Hovhan Monastery in Taron (Mush-Bitlis region) by Kurdish tribes and to capture troublesome Kurds. What was different in this investigation from the campaign of Emin Muhlis Pasha, was the new governor’s appointment of two inspectors from local notable families, one Muslim and one Armenian, to investigate the situation. It is striking that on this occasion local notables were commissioned as inspector, a departure from the usual practice of sending a high-ranking official from Istanbul. The notables

¹⁰⁴ Garegin Srvandztyants, *Yerker*, 1:71.

¹⁰⁵ Kostandyan, “Taroni Hogeavor Aradjnordi,” *Lraber Hasarkakan Gitutyunneri*, 72.

¹⁰⁶ *Masis*, no. 712 (23 October 1865), 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Kilikia*, no. 97 (27 November 1865), 3.

¹⁰⁸ *Masis*, no. 888 (15 February 1869), 3.

were Ispanakçızade Osman Bey who was the governor of the sub-province of Çıldır, and Daniel Kharajyan Efendi. Daniel Efendi was in the field for five consecutive months, although his Muslim counterpart was replaced with others in the meantime, and with his Muslim counterpart Daniel Efendi arrested many Kurdish bandits during the investigation. This was a showcase for the Tanzimat and the *Teşkilat* reforms and Ottomanism put into practice in favor of local Armenians.

On the local level, in Erzurum, a will to carry out reforms did exist. But as events show, actors who participated in the reform also had their own agendas and were able to negotiate the execution of the reforms. Khrimyan Hayrik stated his involvement at the organizational level and probably in the selection of the inspectors. He wrote to Garegin Srvandztyan, who was in Mush, that “for the S.[urb] Hovhan monastery, after trying every kind of means, finally Osman Bey and Daniel Efendi were sent as *memurs* [officials].”¹⁰⁹ He also claimed that Ispanakçızade Osman Bey would work hard to solve the problem as he wanted to be promoted to the position of *mutasarrıf* (governor of a sub-province). He was hopeful of Daniel Efendi for other reasons: “he is well-versed in Turkish, prudent and dedicated to his community.”¹¹⁰ Khrimyan Hayrik also asked Srvandztyan to join with Agop Hovasapyan and advise Daniel Efendi in every matter because “he [Daniel], in this mission, has equal authority with Osman Bey.”¹¹¹ The emphasis on equality was important, as events show Daniel Efendi was indeed in full power in the field and determined the course of the investigation. This was a significant change from earlier periods and it was an effect of Ottomanism. Moreover, the government also undertook some changes in the region at the administrative level. The governor of Mush was dismissed and a new governor,

¹⁰⁹ Khrimyan Hayrik’s letter to G. Srvandztyan, dated 12 February 1869, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 159.

¹¹⁰ “...inqn tajkaget, khohakan u bavakan yeys azgaser andzn mi e,” *ibid.*, column 160.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, column 160.

Ahmed Bey, appointed. Until his arrival, Dede Bey, the governor of Bitlis, who was “attested to be skilled and prudent in administration,” was appointed *locum tenens*.¹¹² Towards the end of the operation in July 1869, the administrative structure of Mush was changed “to completely put a halt to the occasional oppressions and inauspicious events by violent and wandering [and itinerant] Kurds” and villages were combined under two new sub-governorates.¹¹³ Thus the investigation, from its beginning in February 1869 to its finalization in the summer of 1869, was turned into a showcase in which different parties mobilized their powers and demonstrated their willingness for reform.

The investigation got off to a good start thanks to that collaboration and willingness to implement reform. Even before the arrival of Osman Bey and Daniel Efendi, some of the stolen goods, mainly liturgical vases, from the monastery were recovered with the help of some local merchants.¹¹⁴ According to a summary of the actions of the investigative committee, probably written down by Srvandztyan, the inspectors arrived on 22 February accompanied by Vardapet Mkhitar. They immediately proceeded to the village of Kızılağaç, where the Council for the Investigation of Crimes (*İstintâk Meclisi*) had been moved from Mush. Suspects were also brought there.¹¹⁵ On 26 February, the inspectors went to the St. Hohan Monastery and then returned to Mush, where they established their tribunal and investigations began. Under a clod of earth near Til village (the contemporary town of Korkut) some more goods which belonged to the monastery were discovered. Two investigators working under Osman Bey and Daniel Efendi, again one Muslim and one Armenian, Dede Bey and Vardan Agha, were sent to Hizan. They

¹¹² Letter received by Garegin Srvandztyan from Mush, dated 10 February 1869, *ibid.*, column 152.

¹¹³ *Envar-i Şarkîye*, no. 105, 23 July 1285 (1869).

¹¹⁴ *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 152.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, column 153. Kızılağaç (Kezlaghac in Armenian) was a major village before the Genocide. In 1914 it had 157 Armenian households, had 2 churches and 1 school. Raymond H. Kévorkian and Paul B. Paboudjian, *1915 Öncesinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeniler*, translated from French to Turkish by Sosi Dolanoğlu (Istanbul: Aras, 2013), 489.

were accompanied by two locals who confessed that they were keeping all of the stolen goods there. Contrary to the expectations of the local populace—who thought the robbers would be set free after returning the goods to the monastery—the criminals were arrested and further inquiries were made.¹¹⁶ Dede Bey and Vardan Agha discovered more goods belonging to the robbed Armenian monasteries in a village in Hizan.

Dede Bey's success was welcomed by the governor and he replaced Osman Bey, who was suspected of inactivity.¹¹⁷ At the end of March, Ahmed Bey, the new governor of Mush, arrived and "immediately began to put into effect his wise and strong government."¹¹⁸ In April, Ahmed Bey had a major Kurdish bandit named Falamaz and his son Mahe arrested, treated them with great dishonor and sold their weapons at auction.¹¹⁹ On May 3, two Kurds of Khoyt, who had murdered two Armenians and fatally wounded another one, were captured. On May 9, the governor of Erzurum sent a detachment to capture Kmsortsi Kurds who had attacked an Armenian church during the Christmas mass earlier that year. After skirmishes with the soldiers, their leader was captured. The governor of Erzurum ordered houses of Kurds to be demolished, properties to be confiscated and sold, and the revenues were given to the soldiers who had captured him.¹²⁰ On May 18, Zindon of the Elman Kurds, who had been questioned by the investigators and had been denying his role, finally confessed. Halid Agha and Vardan Agha discovered goods where he told them they were hidden. On 6 June, Ismail Pasha, the governor of Erzurum, came to Mush after making great preparations. On 20 June, the governor sent a telegram to Khachatur Khan Efendi, informing him that more of the stolen goods from St.

¹¹⁶ *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 153.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, column 154.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, column 154.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, column 154.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, column 155. The army dealt with the Kurdish bandits with great severity in that episode. It requires further research and comparison with similar cases to see whether the treatment in this case was special due to the circumstances surrounding it.

Hovhan Monastery had been discovered, and on June 28, Falamaz and his men were sent to prison in Erzurum.¹²¹ On 14 July, the governor ordered the capture and exile of a certain Kurdish leader, Alaaddin Bey, and his family in other regions of the empire, who upon hearing the order, burned down his properties and fled to Iran. The governor captured Zankon who was notorious in the Tatvan region. On 27 July, 18 Kurds from Ciprank were sent to prison in Erzurum in chains. On August 18, the operation ended and the governor returned to Erzurum with Daniel Efendi.¹²² The local official gazette, *Envar-i Şarkiye* occasionally published news about the successes of the investigation committee, aiming to inform its readers and, one assumes, positively influence public opinion about the reform movement undertaken by the government.¹²³ The whole investigation was a deliberate effort to improve the conditions of Armenians. What made the investigation different from previous ones—and to a certain extent successful—was the involvement of local notables, most importantly Daniel Kharajyan.

The role of Daniel Kharajyan

The investigation was a major success. It relieved the peasants from banditry of certain unruly Kurdish tribes and expanded the political and social power of Armenian notables. Daniel Kharajyan achieved this through his participation in the investigation. He was an active agent who executed the goal of the imperial state and was also active in improving the conditions of their community. All of this attests to the new authority and prestige granted to the notables by the central government. For instance when the governor of Mush, Ahmed Bey, arrived in late March 1869, there were locals who were not very happy about the course of events, including the arrests of Kurds, and tried to convince the new governor that their crimes were minor. Khrimyan

¹²¹ Ibid., column 156.

¹²² Ibid., 156.

¹²³ For instance, see *Envar-i Şarkiye*, no. 96, (21 May 1265 [1869]). Unfortunately the collection of this newspaper, like many other local official gazettes published in the provinces, is far from complete. The first issue available to me was the issue used in this reference. Earlier issues of the newspaper might have more details about the actions of the investigation committee.

Hayrik had asked Priest Agop Hovasapyan, who had accompanied Daniel Efendi, to advise him to work towards stopping the locals' efforts. The solution the priest and the notable came up with was as follows: "a trustworthy, statesmanlike [knowledgeable in politics], erudite man of our community should become a representative [and] interpret the difficulties of the people before the government,"¹²⁴ probably referring to Daniel Efendi himself. Daniel Efendi's efforts were acknowledged by observers: "Daniel Efendi is putting zealous effort against the unruly and various bad events which took place in this place, and accomplishing his mission in an illustrious way for the love of his community," wrote Agop Hovsapyan in another letter to Srvandztyan. However, he added, "that is not enough. The enemies of Armenians are vast and many."¹²⁵ Daniel Efendi was active in the investigation process, as he pressured the Zindon Kurds and brought some of them to Mush for questioning.¹²⁶ As mentioned above, the captured Kurds would confess their crimes within a month thanks to the investigators' efforts.¹²⁷ Important details such as the governor giving information to Khachatur Khan on the course of events and his return to Erzurum with Daniel Khrajyan also showed the centrality and the social prestige of the notables.

This episode and the government action in Mush show how "reform," that is increasing security and stopping oppression, was carried out in the provinces in the period. The success of reform was dependent on the social networks and the ability of notables and reformist clergy to influence government policies. It was also an example of how the dominant state ideology at the time, "Ottomanism," was put into practice: Authority was shared equally between the two inspectors, one of whom was an Armenian notable.

¹²⁴ H. Hovsapyan's letter to G. Srvandztyan, 31 March 1869, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 166.

¹²⁵ H. Hovsapyan's letter to G. Srvandztyan, 5 April 1869, *ibid.*, column 168.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹²⁷ Of course there is always the possibility that not all of the captured parties were guilty. They might have been forced to confess to some of the allegations to render the investigation greater success.

However, these were sufficient only to implement reformist projects. The durability of the reforms required more than the persistence of these social networks, which were based on personal ties. This was the challenge before the reforms. During the reformist action in 1869 there were three important personal factors which led to success, albeit not a permanent one. The first was the effort of Daniel Khrajyan, who was not only well acquainted with judicial affairs thanks to his years of service in government positions but also well respected in the local Armenian community. The second factor was the presence of Khrimyan Hayrik in Erzurum, coordinating the actors in the field by direct communication with the governor and assistance to Daniel Khrajyan through the intermediacy of Apostolic clergy who were familiar with the region. Last but not least was the personal prestige of Khachatur Khan, who had substantial social power and influenced the governor on many policies regarding Kurds and Armenians at the local level.

Khachatur Khan Revisited: Politics of Reform

Khachatur Khan was very much involved in the Mush affair. Locals thought of him as having a very important role in the decisions of the government in Erzurum: “thanks to *vsem[ashuq]* Khan Efendi, the government of that place [Erzurum] has been put under secret superintendence,” said one of the locals in a letter to Garegin Srvandztyan.¹²⁸ Also the clergy had communicated with each other through him. When Hovsapyan tried to get Khrimyan Hayrik to immediately depart for Mush in the middle of the operations (at the end of March 1869), he had telegraphed Khachatur Khan, who replied: “If you don't explain the reason why you are giving importance to Khrimyan's arrival, he won't be able to come. If it is possible, provide us with a

¹²⁸ Letter received by Garegin Srvandztyan from Mush, dated 10 February 1869, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 152.

full explanation first with a telegraph and then with a letter.”¹²⁹ As already stated, when some of the stolen goods were recovered by the governor, he had sent a telegraph informing the notable about the developments. The fact that Hovsapyan had emphasized this detail in his letter could be taken as proof of his pride that an Armenian notable such as Khachatur Khan could exert such influence and authority.

Armenian notables controlled social networks and they had the ability and political experience to use their position in governmental institutions for the benefit of their community, and sometimes even for other communities. In the late 1860s and early 1870s, as already mentioned, Khachatur Khan was a member of the administrative council of the province of Erzurum. He was very influential in government policy and had intervened in various issues: for instance, when the governor of the sub-district of Khantris (Խանթրիս?) who was known to be a “friend of Armenians” was removed from his office, Khachatur Khan intervened to prevent the appointment of the person who had been proposed by the dismissed governor’s superior, and achieved a compromise whereby a third person, who would continue pro-Armenian policies, was appointed instead.¹³⁰ Likewise, when the government decided to settle some Lazes in the Armenian Hasanova village in the south of Erzurum province, Khachatur Khan intervened, this time on behalf of the Laz people who did not want to be settled there, but preferred to move to Adana.¹³¹ His position in government circles provided him a parallel if not an alternative source of authority in the Armenian community. For instance, in 1872, when the government of Mush, had sent an official dispatch asking for the release of Falamaz, who was captured during the military operation in Mush in 1869, people of the region through the St. Karapet Monastery

¹²⁹ H. Hovsapyan’s letter to K. Srvandztyan, 31 March 1869, *ibid.*, columns 165–166.

¹³⁰ Khachatur Khan’s letter to G. Srvandztyan, 9 August 1871, *ibid.*, column 208.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

asked Archbishop Harutyun and Khachatur Khan to intervene and postpone his release.¹³² These instances show how his social and political power and networks were used to intervene for the community, and in the case of Lazes, on behalf of others.

Khachatur Khan's deep understanding of the local and imperial political machinery provided him with the ability to take critical decisions on behalf of the community in consultation with the reform-minded clergy, especially when serious political maneuvering was necessary. This was the case with Ibo, the leader of the Cibranlı Kurds of Varto, who had caused great trouble to Armenians of the region in the period under discussion.

In an undated letter, Khrimyan Hayrik asked Srvandztyan to entreat Daniel Kharajyan Efendi to find a way to stop that “devastating animal.”¹³³ It was not easy to achieve Ibo's capture, which would be a major step in increasing security in the region. So the reformist clergy and Khachatur Khan thought of another solution—to motivate Ibo to surrender by promising him that there would be no complaints from Armenians against him. Agop Hovsapyan, who had consoled Daniel Kharajyan during the judicial and military operations of Mush in 1869, wrote a letter to Srvandztyan on behalf of Khachatur Khan concerning the issue on 23 September, 1870. It is interesting that in a note attached to that letter he explains the reason for his reply in the name of Khachatur Khan: “Today the messenger came and *vsem[ashuq]* Khan Efendi ordered me to reply to your letter in his name, also to ask your pardon for not seeing his signature,” Hovsapyan writes, “I bear witness that for sure he is very busy, especially today they are very busy at the government assembly with very important matters.”¹³⁴

¹³² Poghos Tumanyants' letter to G. Srvandztyan, 22 February 1872, *ibid.*, column 226.

¹³³ Khrimyan Hayrik's letter to G. Srvandztyan, undated, *ibid.*, 376.

¹³⁴ H. Hovsapyan's letter to G. Srvandztyan, 14 november 1870, *ibid.*, column 196.

Srvandztyan's letter to Khachatur Khan inquired about his opinion on compelling Ibo to surrender. Hovsapyan's reply on behalf of Khachatur Khan suggested that Armenian institutions not intervene on Ibo's behalf, as local Armenians had sent numerous complaints against him in the past. Rather he proposed:

[B]ecause [he] himself shows such repentance, and the Armenians of Vardo guarantee this, he should surrender to the government, being sure that if there are no complaints about him in the future, the government has already decided to pardon his previous deeds... [if] he is afraid of Mush for any reason, let him come to Karin, we, thinking [together] with the holy aradjnord, will defend him, on the condition that in the future his behavior will be satisfying for the community. You can guarantee him this. And be assured that this is the most proper way both for the community and for Ibo. What will Ibo do wandering as a fugitive, the end will be prison if he continues like this. Therefore it will be good if he surrenders, and puts his affairs into order. He will find comfort and sympathy both from the government and from the community. For people of Vardo [what] I said is also good, because such news will convince Kurds that Armenians can protest and complain freely.

Only two days after this letter, on 25 September, the people of Vardo, in a petition with multiple signatures addressed to Srvandztyan, claimed that “for about these two years we have never seen a vice from him [Ibo], he has changed and repented, [by] changing his behavior he is ruled by complete civility and love...” and asked him to intervene on Ibo's behalf with the government.¹³⁵ This was a result of the discussion between Srvandztyan and Khachatur Khan. In less than two months, after these exchanges and a petition by the people of Varto, Khachatur Khan expressed his happiness to Srvandztyan about the capture of Ibo in a private letter.¹³⁶ This episode, alongside other cases, shows that projects of “reform” in which Khachatur Khan was involved were not unconditional applications of a policy that was decided by the political center,

¹³⁵ People of Varto's petition (*mahser*) about Ibo, dated 25 September 1870, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, columns 194–195.

¹³⁶ H. Hovsapyan's letter (in the name of Khachatur Khan) to G. Srvandztyan, 14 November 1870, *ibid.*, column 196.

but rather they were negotiated by various actors, most notably the notables at the local level who had their own set of agendas.

Patriarchal reform unbounded within local networks and personal interest

Another aspect of reform was that led by the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate. Just as with the reform-minded bureaucrats in Istanbul, the Patriarchate had to rely on the notables' networks in the application of its reform schemes, and thus was subject to various negotiations and subsequent modifications on the ground. In the 1860s and 1870s the Patriarchate of Istanbul aimed to expand its powers at the expense of the "rival" Catholicates of Sis and Aghtamar.¹³⁷

The Apostolic Patriarchate tried to take advantage of a murder case in the Catholicate of Aghtamar, in which the Archbishop Khachatur (a different one) appeared as prime suspect in the killing of his rival, Catholicos Petros. The investigation committee, made up of Bishop Harutyun of Erzurum and Bishop Ignatios of Van, acquitted the suspect, allegedly taking large amounts of bribes.¹³⁸ Teodik in his biography of Khachatur Khan claims that the notable was assigned as an inspector in the "Aghtamar Question."¹³⁹ Based on his relations with local notables and clerics of that region, this appointment was an interesting one.

Reform-minded clerics such as Khrimyan Hayrik also aimed to expand of the power of the Apostolic Patriarchate through the elimination of bishops and monastery abbots who were resistant to reform. Among the most notable of these "non-reformist" bishops was Poghos Meliqyan of Van, who had built a power base in the region with strong links to other conservative bishops such as Archbishop Khachatur of Aghtamar, with Kurdish tribal leaders, and with some Ottoman-Armenian notables of Van. Khrimyan Hayrik and his associates

¹³⁷ For a detailed examination of the "Aghtamar Question," see Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 87–99.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 96.

¹³⁹ Teodik, *Amenun Taretsuytsi*, v.6 (1912), 505.

struggled for decades to remove the bishop from his post in Van and break down these alliances, with only temporary successes.¹⁴⁰ Even Khrimyan Hayrik's order for Bishop Meliqyan's exile during his own patriarchate (1869–1873) was considered an act overreaching patriarchal authority and violation of the Armenian Constitution, and eventually served as an opportunity to unseat the Patriarch from office.¹⁴¹ What is important for us in these political contestations in the high echelons of the church hierarchy is that Khachatur Khan did not side with Khrimyan Hayrik and his party. His embeddedness in the local lay networks proved more important than his adherence to the reformists' cause.

Bishop Tevkants openly states this, after comparing Khachatur Khan with the other notables of the town. He claims that “he [Khachatur Khan] with words and deeds is an advocate of Vardapet Poghos of Van and [Archbishop] Khachatur of Aghtamar for the sake of love of Sharan Bey and others.”¹⁴² Sharan Bey [Sharanyan] was one of the most important merchants of Van. Sharan Bey was an active supporter of Poghos and also an ally of the conservative cleric Vardapet Kolot, who was the director of one of the six Armenian schools of Van—the latter was used by conservative notables to disgrace reformers such as Topuzian.¹⁴³ But later, in the 1870s, Sharan Bey made peace with the reformers.¹⁴⁴ According to the testimony of monks of the Aghtamar Order, Sharan Bey together with another notable, Kaloyan Gevorg Bey, defended the Archbishop Khachatur in the above-mentioned murder case. In return for their support, the two

¹⁴⁰ Related sections in chapters four and five of Antaramian's dissertation give details about this struggle. Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State,” 117–191.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 177–178

¹⁴² Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*, 41.

¹⁴³ Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State,” 129. Antaramian does not give more details about the means by which Kolot was used to discredit reformers. However a work on Van, based on manuscripts in the Matenadaran Library, Yerevan, shows that Sharan Bey was in close relations with Topuzian, a reformer, who came to Van in 1847 with orders from the Patriarch to open parish schools in the region. Moreover, in the same period an association with the name “Artzunyants” was established with the goal of collecting donations for schools and Sharan Bey was its treasurer. Haykaz Poghosyan, *Vaspurakani Patmutyunits (1850–1900)*, (Yerevan: GAH, 1988), 294–296.

¹⁴⁴ Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State,” 172.

notables allegedly received 90,000 guruh with which they built a commercial inn in the Norkugh (Hasbey) village of Rshtunyan (Vostan in Armenian, contemporary Gevaş) district on the shores of Lake Van facing the island of Aghtamar.¹⁴⁵ Khachatur Khan's "love" for Sharan Bey and other notables was probably related to his work in the Van region as a tax farmer in the early 1860s and commercial relations he had developed and fostered over the years with the merchants of the region, as I outlined above. This was an important example of the complex relations within multiple networks in the region—clerical and lay and different factions within them—which ran alongside formal relations established in government and communal assemblies. Reform was negotiated and put into practice (or failed) within these networks and Khachatur Khan was an important participant in these negotiations thanks to his position as a notable.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the biographies of three Armenian notables of Erzurum, Khachatur Khan, Hamazasp Ballaryan and Daniel Kharajyan, and their role in the implementation of different aspects of "reform" in the region in the 1860s. Reform, as I have argued, was an interdependent set of projects: efforts by the imperial center to increase the security of imperial subjects, by the Armenian Patriarchate to centralize its power, and by liberal intellectuals and the middle classes to expand education. These were all closely related to *Ottomanism*, which constructed an imperial model of belonging based on the equality of all subjects. For the local Armenian notables in the provinces, these projects together constituted a field in which, by actively participating, they might expand and redefine their power.

¹⁴⁵ Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*, 187. Such testimonies should always be taken with a grain of salt as the testifiers, monks, in this case could have aimed to obtain such properties by putting their origins into question. Besides political motivations, financial considerations for a religious order in economic decline could be important.

What qualified these figures as notables were both their fulfillment of traditional roles and their reaction to specific developments? Some expectations of a notable were based on precedent, such as being an economically and socially powerful figure and taking responsibility for their communities in the form of giving charity to the poor, and also using political influence to mediate between the government and the community, which included the collection of communal taxes under the aegis of imperial authority. As I have shown above, these expectations were fulfilled by Khachatur Khan, who became a major notable in the city in the mid-1860s. However, the role of notables in society in this period was directly related to broader historical changes and particularly the reform projects developed in Istanbul.

By the late 1860s and early 1870s when the reform movement was unleashed, at least partially, the notables became active elements of reform both within their community—through the expansion of the power of the imperial state and the Patriarchate—and reform in the Apostolic Armenian community. Hamazasp Ballaryan’s establishment of a new educational society provides a good example of the new roles and responsibilities assumed by the notables. To improve the level of education of the community, he created an entity that was organically linked with the church through the priests among its founding members, but fell outside of its direct control. His role as connector of local reform-minded clergy with the philanthropist elite in Istanbul through the reading hall is an example of how the many-layered “politics of notables” was not limited to so-called state-society relations. Notables’ roles in the broader society were also redefined in the context of “reform” and the challenges posed by the change. They included dealing with the problems of security as promised by the Tanzimat state, settlement of Muslim immigrants who were pouring into the region, and putting a halt to some Kurdish tribes’ banditry in Armenian villagers, exemplified in the cases of Daniel Kharajyan’s mission in Mush, and

Khachatur Khan's role in local politics and politics of the religious establishment. What differed most from earlier decades was that these notables acted in an official capacity, as members of administrative councils, judges, and as investigators alongside their multilayered personal networks. In short, while the state became more visible in the countryside through its centralizing policies, so did Armenian notables, fulfilling and expanding the expected roles of a power broker from within the institutions of an expanding state. They found more venues to access and exercise power during the expansion of the state and the Armenian Patriarchate in the provinces. They began to represent these imperial institutions.

Based on the findings of this chapter, it is safe to claim that from the perspective of notables who were engaged in the reform project, defending the rights of the Armenian Apostolic community and Ottomanism were not contradictory. On the contrary they were interdependent and complementary. This was due to the interactive nature of various projects of reform, exemplified in the action in the Mush region, where concerns about security, the material conditions of Armenians and Ottomanism were intertwined. The notables felt the privilege of connecting these seemingly diverse fields: that was their new role, and fulfilling that role defined their status as notables. This was a new definition of the ideology of Ottomanism. When it was put into practice through the agency of notables it was reinterpreted, combining the rights of subject communities with the goals of the empire, all the while promoting the notables' personal interests. As I will examine later, when they served as deputies in the Ottoman Parliament and their children as bureaucrats of the empire, they saw no conflict between their various roles.

Thus reform—Ottoman imperial reform, reform within the Armenian Apostolic community and Ottomanism—allowed these figures to become notables in the 1860s. Simultaneously, it was the notables that gave shape to the reform. The two most important

characteristics of the reform period, that is, interaction between different segments of society and negotiation between different groups, were carried out through notables. However, their role as power brokers, which also elevated them above the others, was not uncontested. As reform opened up new venues for the notables to expand their power, it also opened political and ideological venues for others to challenge their growing power. This was the period in which members of Ottoman society were in transition from subjecthood to citizenship; Christians and Jews demanded equal treatment with Muslim subjects of the empire. Members of the Armenian Apostolic Community were discussing the Armenian Constitution and its promises for a better administration of their community. In that context, like many other groups in the empire, non-privileged Armenians began to demand more rights and equality, both within their community and in the broader society. The conflicts that were caused by these tensions due to the discrepancy between ideal and practice, exemplified in the growing power of notables despite the reform's promises of equality, is the topic of the following chapter.

Chapter 5: **“We Want Justice!”: Conflict between the Notables, the Bishop and the Artisans in the Context of the Armenian Constitution**

In the previous chapter, the focus was on the interaction between the local Armenian notables, the reform movement initiated by the imperial government, the idea of Ottomanism as it was practiced during such reform acts as the investigation in Mush and Taron in 1869. This chapter examines a third aspect of Reform, the reform in the Armenian community of Erzurum. It seeks to elucidate how the Armenian Constitution was put into practice in the city, and what was the nature of inter- and intra-group struggles between different power-holding groups in the community. It is an inquiry into the social, political and economic consequences of Reform in Armenian Apostolic communities in the provinces.

The social history of Armenian communities in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the period of the Armenian Constitution—the 1860s and 1870s—has not received sufficient attention in the scholarship. Whenever it does appear, as I have observed in previous chapters, it takes the form of an examination of ethnic conflict and the implementation (or failure) of reforms in the region *as they were disseminated from the center*. In this chapter I show, by scrutinizing intra-community tensions and the close relation between imperial rivalries and local politics, that histories of local communities are worthy of study in order to understand local, imperial, and even inter-imperial developments. I contend that observing the differences between ideal and practice in the Armenian Constitution’s application in the provinces provides historians a key to understanding the internal dynamics of a local community, which are otherwise not easily accessible to them. This is especially valuable if one seeks to reinterpret developments in the provinces in the 1860s and 1870s not through prioritizing the agency of intellectuals and community leaders in the Ottoman capital, but through the actual experiences of

the people living there. This chapter thus aims to recover their voices, feelings, ideas and struggles in the context of reform within the Armenian community.

In this chapter, I will focus on how the Armenian Constitution of 1863 raised expectations in the local Armenian population of Erzurum, particularly by its promises of establishing a communal Civic Council and a communal General Assembly (later other sub-committees and lesser councils were added), thus allowing for the participation of non-privileged members (i.e. non-notables) in the administration of community affairs. However, the reform in the Armenian community failed to satisfy such expectations and those who were left out of the newly established institutions began to criticize the power holders in the society. The struggle was mainly over the question of who would control the communal institutions and administrative committees which were established after the reform. Historians who have examined reform in the Armenian Apostolic Community either in Istanbul or elsewhere have interpreted the struggle as strife between “reformist” and “anti-reformist” (also read as modernist vs. conservative) camps.¹ This was the discourse used by the contemporaries for accusing rival parties in the power struggle over certain communal institutions. The Bishop (*aradjnord*) of Erzurum, Bishop (later Archbishop) Harutyun Vehapetyan was the main actor in this struggle. He was considered to be the reason for the failure of reforms in Erzurum and the “people” aimed to remove him from his post, albeit unsuccessfully. Also, as the struggle between rival parties grew, some

¹ One of the reasons for the persistence of this dichotomy in the scholarship is related to sources. Works on the Armenian Constitution in Western languages, such as the studies of Vartan Artinian and Aylin Beşiryan, readily accept the views of historians from the early twentieth century, such as Arshak Alpoyacıyan (1910) and Sarukhan (1912)—both analyse the constitution as a product of struggle between rival reformist/modernist and anti-reformist/conservative/reactionary groups. Works produced in the Soviet Republic of Armenia also make a similar analysis, but with more emphasis on the reactions of the feudal/feudalist (oppressor) class. For instance, in his survey of the era between 1800 and 1870, Hayk Ghazaryan claims that “[class of] clergy and *Amiras* who expressed [the] interests of *Amiras* of Istanbul and the high-rank clergy who had business transactions with the amiras, were against the constitution from the beginning. In the new regulation [i.e. Armenian Constitution], they saw not only limitations of the rights of *Amiras* and Patriarch but also reform of the Medieval Armenian Church—which they considered terrifying.” See Hayk Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri Sotsial-Tntesakan yev Qaghaqakan Katsutyuni, 1800–1870* (Yerevan: GAH, 1967), 463.

notables were considered natural *aides-de-camp* of the aradjnord. However, as I show below, the explanation based on the dichotomy between “reformist” and “anti-reformist” camps was an over-simplification of historical developments in the Ottoman-Armenian communities. The focus on of these categories as analytical tools to understand reform and its consequences misses the impact of ongoing—and equally important—social and economic tensions within the Armenian community. Instead of treating the ideology of reform and social and economic relations within the community as two separate phenomena, here I focus on the ways in which those tensions were translated into the dominating political language of reform.

In this chapter, I argue that reform in the local community was closely knit with social conflicts based on class (in a broader sense of the term including status groups) and economic interests of different parties in the city. Thus the Armenian Constitution with its administrative organs and committees (or sometimes its lack of them) turned into a *field* within which different social-economic groups voiced their grievances about how the community was run. The most obvious outcome of this development was artisans’ (*esnaf*) resistance to the growing dominance of notables in politics and the economy. For the artisans, the constitution had been turned into a tool in the hands of the notables for consolidating their power and control over the local community. This was a double bind for them, as previous chapters have observed, since the local notables simultaneously attained power through their posts in the community structures and in governmental circles. The *esnaf* welcomed the Armenian Constitution as a tool through which they would increase their political power in the local community, or at least stop its decline—which was closely linked to their deteriorating financial situation. Therefore “pro-reform” and “anti-reform” stances and discussions of the success and failure of reforms in the local Armenian communities in the context of the Armenian Constitution should be reinterpreted, taking into

account the social positions of the adherents of these views and their social, economic and political interests.

However, examining an individual's view of reform in the context of his (it is always his) socio-economic position offers only a partial explanation of developments. Each interest group attributed a different meaning to the Armenian Constitution and reform era. For instance, from the perspective of the Armenian notables, their attempts to open educational institutions—which I touched upon in the previous chapter and examine more in this one—and to strengthen their community vis-à-vis other confessional groups such as Catholics were considered “successes” of the reformed community administration which they governed. Whereas for the non-privileged, it is difficult to say how they felt about schools, reading-halls and winning over Catholics on certain issues, but what is certain is that, for them, the constitution brought with it a growing dominance of notables over local politics at the expense of their own position. Notables still controlled the local economy; the imperial reforms that gave Armenians a voice in local administration, gave that voice only to the privileged. For instance, Kürkçübaşı Makaryan Agop was allowed to monopolize the grain market as long as he also served the urgent needs of the imperial state, and Bishop Harutyun Vehapetyan was favored when he stopped out-migration of Armenians of another province to Russia, while his and the notables' unfair treatment of his own community was not an issue for the local authorities. Everybody agreed on reform in the community, but interpretations and practice—and thus the forms it took—were dependent on the agents who participated in it. This chapter examines the social and economic struggles behind those variations. It also touches upon the impact of imperial rivalries on local politics and vice-versa. Mr. Antoine [Antuan] Maghack's relations with his wife and his desire to marry Kürkçübaşı Agop's daughter became subjects of major consular interest, as they took place in

the context of Mr Maghack's open criticisms of the social order in the city and particularly of the bishop. Likewise, the dragoman's marriage with the notable's daughter, which galvanized the opposing camps in the city—namely notables, artisans and the bishop—was fiercely defended by none other than the dragoman's employer, the British consul.

Structure of the Chapter

I will first examine how the Armenian Constitution was applied in Erzurum right after its ratification by the Porte in 1863, giving *aradjnords* considerable power over local communities. Then I will focus on the economic problems of artisans in the 1860s with special attention to the role of notables as their cause. These institutional and economic developments form the basis for understanding the case studies to be examined in this chapter. The chapter focuses on three major events which took place during the period. These case studies might be easily considered as exemplary for understanding the existing conflicts between groups and consolidation of their members. The first two of these cases are related to the *aradjnord* Harutyun Vehapetyan's unpopular rule in the province. They focus on the circumstances of his temporary removals from his position, first in 1865 and then once again in 1868–1869. The first removal was based on accusations made against him of not applying the articles of the constitution in the province, whereas his second removal was due to his pro-Russian sentiments. Tracing how his alleged and real relations with the Russian consul turned into a tool in the hands of his opponents, I will show how easily a personal and local conflict could be transformed into an imperial and inter-imperial one with much broader political repercussions.

The third event that I will examine is the case of a marriage between Mr. Maghack, an Armenian who worked as the dragoman of the British Consulate in Erzurum, and the daughter of Kürkçübaşı Agop, one of the most powerful notables of the town, who began to be referred as

the “first and main enemy of Khrimyan.” The examination of this case allows us to discuss two issues. First, the the dragoman’s role in local politics, whose brief biography contributes to the dissertation’s general discussion of the history of notables and power-brokers in Erzurum. Second, it allows us to discern how alliances were made and remade in this period, and also how the notables consolidated their ranks when needed. The marriage—which was opposed by Agop and the other notables of the town—turned into yet another field of struggle between different social-economic groups, as the *esnaf* capitalized on the opportunity to fight against the notables and therefore stood on the side of Mr. Maghack. This marriage between two prominent Armenians of Erzurum resulted not only in mobilization of rival social-economic groups and their consolidation but also, due to one of the parties involved—the dragoman—brought the dynamics of imperial competition once again into this borderland. It was no other than the dragoman Mr. Maghack who would accuse the bishop of being pro-Russian.

These two cases, the removal of the bishop with some role of Mr. Maghack in that and his marriage with Kürkçübaşı Agop’s daughter, both of which took place in 1868, further question the validity of dividing the society into “reformist” and “anti-reformist” parties for the sake of analysis. As the chapter shows, alliances were made and remade in the face of challenges these socio-economic groups faced. “Reformist” notables like the Pastırmacıyans and Daniel Kharajyan, for instance, sided with the bishop and Kürkçübaşı when they felt their power was under threat. At the same time Khachatur Khan, whose relations with some anti-reformist clergy and notables were examined in the previous chapter, sided with the Armenian *esnaf* of Erzurum in their struggles. This chapter therefore brings a fresh perspective on reform in the Armenian Community by integrating social and economic history with political history, showing how the three were interrelated in the histories of Ottoman Armenian local communities.

The Armenian Constitution in the Provinces: Legal Framework and First Election in Erzurum

The Armenian Constitution of 1863, which was the ratification of the 1860 draft with amendments, confirmed the *aradjnords*' place at the top of the communal administration in the provinces. The *aradjnords*' power did not bypass that of the existing communal provincial assemblies but, as one historian argues, the constitution prioritized the personality of the bishop rather than the assemblies in communal administration.² Articles 94–98 of the Armenian Constitution defined the duties of the *aradjnord* and the structure of the communal administration. The *aradjnord* was the head of the local national administration in the provinces and chairman of the both Spiritual (*Kronakan Zhoghov*) and Civic Assemblies (*Qaghaqakan Zhoghov*) in their dioceses (art. 94). The *aradjnord* had to reside in the center of the diocese, not in a monastery—unless he was also an abbot of a monastery that was not far from the center (art. 95). The center of the diocese was to have Spiritual and Civic Assemblies and a treasury under the Civic Assembly, and each church community was to have a Local Council (*Taghakan Khorhurd*) (art. 96). A General Assembly formed in the diocese was to be responsible for the election of the *aradjnord* and through the Joint Assembly (Spiritual and Civic combined) send the election results to the central administration for ratification (art. 97). Assemblies in dioceses were to be formed in line with the assemblies in the center, but the number of their members was dependent upon the population of the diocese. Those eligible to vote for the membership of the general assembly, until the amount of national tax was declared, would be those who paid taxes in the first, second, or third degree to the state (art. 98).³ As seen, the constitution provided a way

² Aylin Beşiryan, “Hopes of Secularization in the Ottoman Empire: The Armenian National Constitution and the Armenian Newspaper, *Masis*, 1856–1863,” (MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007), 173.

³ *Azgayin Sahmanadrutyun Hayots–Nizamname-i Millet-i Ermeniyan*, (K.Polis-Stanpol: H. Mühentisyen, 1863).

to elect the *aradjnord* and remove him when needed through the General Assembly. This article was to prove particularly important in the future struggles in Erzurum.

The Erzurum diocese had Spiritual and Civic Assemblies even before the constitution of 1863.⁴ However, whether these earlier assemblies were constituted by popular vote, as should have been the case with the Assemblies after the Armenian Constitution of 1863, is highly questionable. In the late 1850s, the notables Aghadjan Ballaryan, Poghos Kharajyan, and Harutyun Gazazyan were permanent members of the Civic Assembly of Erzurum, whereas Khachatur Khan and Makaryan [Kürkçübaşı] Agop's names also showed up in documents signed in the name of the community.⁵ The appearance of the last two notables as members shows the flexible (and semi-official) nature of the assemblies before the constitution, as these two notables were not Ottoman citizens at the time of their membership in that Assembly.⁶ The necessity of being an Ottoman citizen to be eligible to participate in the national administration—to elect and be elected—was a rule stipulated in the 1860 Draft (art. 65) and in the 1863 Constitution (art.66, 68). As I showed in the previous chapter, some notable's change of subjecthood from Russian to Ottoman in the summer of 1862 might be related to this development, as talks between the government and the Apostolic Patriarchate and public pressure over the ratification of the 1860

⁴ Due to its focus on developments in Istanbul, historiography did not thoroughly examine the existence of communal assemblies in the provinces. The communal councils in the provinces may be linked to developments in Istanbul which took place earlier in the century—when a lay assembly was established in 1844 after much political and economic struggle between the *esnaf* and *amira* classes. Vartan Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1863: A Study of Its Historical Development* (Istanbul: n.p., 1988), 52–58. Alternatively the communal councils might be products of the Reform Edict of 1856 which stipulated the internal organization of community affairs and provided the official framework for the development of the Armenian Constitution. Whichever was true, the establishment of replicas of the assemblies in Istanbul in the provinces before the constitution indicates close links between the center and the provinces in terms of administration of the Armenian Apostolic community, and they can provide details about how the administration of the community developed outside Istanbul. Moreover such examination will definitely contribute to the body of knowledge produced by the constructivist approach to *community* administration which claimed that ethno-religious communities (*millets*)—as we define them today—were creations of the nineteenth century.

⁵ Bibliothèque Nubar (*B.N.U*) *Correspondance Provinciale* (C.P.), Karin, # 34, 16 November 1851 ; # 76, 27 August 1857; #82, 26 February 1857 , etc.

⁶ See chapter 4 for more on the politics of subjecthood as practiced by local Ottoman government and Armenian notables.

Constitution grew in the first half 1862.⁷ Likewise when Harutyun Gazazyan, member of the assembly and business partner of Khachatur Khan, died in July 1863 his membership in the assembly was not mentioned in the eulogy written for him, whereas his position as superintendent of a school and a charity fund were emphasized.⁸ This lack of interest on the part of contemporaries in the communal assemblies of the pre-constitution period also contrasts with writings about the next generation of notables, whose positions in the communal assemblies were underlined. The notables whose biographies were examined in the last chapter are a case in point.

The Armenian Constitution was ratified by the government in March 1863 and in September the newly elected assembly held its first meeting. In mid-September 1863, a week before the meeting of the General Assembly in Istanbul for the elections, the *aradjnord* of Erzurum received an order from the Provincial Administration requiring him to establish a Local Council. Lists were prepared, an announcement was made about who was eligible to be elected and to vote, and within a week the elections took place. The Local Council was made up of ten prominent city notables. It included people like Daniel Kharajyan and Khachatur Ballaryan, sons of members of the Civic Assembly; likewise Yeghishe Gazazyan from the Gazazyan family was elected.⁹ A figure like Varzhapet Karapet Zakaryan, a long-time instructor of the Artznayan School (the national school of the city related to the church) was also included, while there was only one representative explicitly coming from the artisans, Mkirtich Agha Der Stepanyan, “the goldsmith.”¹⁰ According to Petros Martirosyan, director of the Arsharunyan reading room, “the election of these [candidates] to the neighborhood council caused great happiness as they all are

⁷ Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire*, 87–91.

⁸ *Masis*, no. 599 (3 August 1863), 2.

⁹ *Masis*, no. 612 (2 November 1863), 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

well educated people and most of the population has confidence in them;” however, he added that organizing councils in the countryside was a difficult task as “[i]n the village there are no literate men to be found, so voting seems to be impossible. They have asked for orders from Istanbul about this.”¹¹ It is not known whether elections for the local Civic Assembly took place or not, as this was the only news in the press on any elections carried out in the town.¹² What is certain, however, is that, with this election and the following ones the notable families of Erzurum confirmed their position in local society: they were the ones who decided upon the list of electors and the list of candidates, and it comes as no surprise that members of the same families dominated the assemblies. Also, Martirosyan did not mention one important detail: Erzurum had only one Apostolic Church, Surb Astvatzatzin, which was very rich as it was the only church in the center of a vast diocese. This meant that there was only one Local Council in Erzurum, as each local council was made from a single church community. The constitution was applied in Erzurum, but in a narrow way—to the exclusion and dissatisfaction of many. Artisans, who were the main dissatisfied group, were trying to overcome other problems in this period.

Armenian *Esnaf* in Erzurum in the 1860s

The main party dissatisfied with developments in the period, as I will show shortly, was the *esnaf*, who were struggling with economic problems. Works on the economic history of the eastern provinces of the empire, including Erzurum, are far from sufficient to reconstruct the provincial economic life in its totality, but there is strong evidence that the *esnaf* were experiencing hardship. Competition in the face of European manufactured goods, a topic well known to historians of the empire, was among their complaints but not at the top of their lists. The effects of this competition for the economy of Erzurum are not known—and some cases of

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Works in the *Houshamadyan* genre also only mention this election. Compare with Ghazar Charig, *Hushamatyan Bardzr Hayqi Karinapatum* (Beyrut: Mshak Tparan, 1957), 147–148.

successful adaptation to changing economic circumstances, such as the Pastırmacıyans, who grew in wealth during this period and joined the ranks of the notables, are recorded. Nonetheless, it is fair to argue that most of the artisans failed to accumulate sufficient capital to transform themselves into entrepreneur-merchants.

In this period Erzurum had also turned into a hub in the transit trade between Qajar Persia and Europe, thanks to its location in the middle of the Tabriz-Trabzon route. The trade definitely brought some economic vitality to the city, but a traveler who visited the city in the period examined here was pessimistic about the future of the town, due specifically to state policies:

Abundant traffic of its [Erzurum's] trade comes not only from the surrounding cities but from far lands and particularly infinite caravans from Persia, which pass through it and go up to Trebizond and return from here. [They] pass through here [Karin] and go to Davrej [Tabriz]. It [Erzurum] is considered as the center of its surrounding district...Because of the good trade many people left their ancestral lands and began to inhabit here, and also many people who had fled to Russia [in 1828–29] came back...It should be known that earlier abundance of other eastern cities is lessened due to the frequency of European manufactured goods; the city of Karin suffered in the same way. Although now there are forty inns full of traders, and its vast bazaar and artisans of various nations, due to the changes in legislative policies of the government, the zeal of the former economy declined.¹³

One of the “changes in the legislative policies” of the government was the increase of tax on personal income (*temettuat*) and collection of fee in lieu of military service (*iâne-i askeriye* or *bedel-i askeriye*) which caused great problems for the *esnaf* in the period. Tax levied on income of each Ottoman subject was a part of the Ottoman taxation system's attempts at individualization. That tax was first levied in the 1840s as a part of the Tanzimat reforms but could not be collected successfully. Only in the 1860s, after a cadaster and a tax census, was the government able to enforce its collection efficiently. The tax was levied at 3% of individual

¹³ Nersisi Sargisyan, *Teghagrutyunq i Poqr yev i Metz Hays*, (Venetik [Venice]: Srbotn Ghazaru, 1864), 78. Similar views of the vitality of the town are expressed by Western travelers to the city. Nersis' command of one of the native languages, Armenian, might be considered as an advantage in his examination of local affairs.

income.¹⁴ The government once again passed a “Regulation on Census and Property Registers” in 1866 and immediately began recording the people and their income and properties. The census was either completed or being carried out in most of the empire—including Erzurum—by 1867, with the significant exception of Istanbul.¹⁵ In this period the collection of taxes, the division of revenues between the central government and provincial administration, and the compensation of provincial expenditures through provincial revenues were regularized in laws which formed part of the broader reform in the provincial administration after 1864.¹⁶

Collection of the new tax soon became a problem. In the Armeanian Apotolic Patriarchate’s “Report on Provincial Oppressions” dated 1872, there is a sub-section on complaints related to collection of property and income taxes. The main complaint was that the distribution of taxes among the population was not fair; it was based on suppositions about one’s wealth, and Armenians paid higher taxes than Muslims.¹⁷ Although these might be considered generic complaints about heavy taxation in any multiethnic community, there is evidence that the *esnaf* of Erzurum struggled particularly with taxation in this period.

For instance in 1867, when income tax was levied in the city after a new census for taxation purposes carried out, some artisans in Erzurum applied to the governor with claims of being subjected to over-taxation, two to six times more than what their share should have been. The artisans later shut down their shops and threatened the governor that they would take

¹⁴ Coşkun Çakır, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Maliyesi* (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001), 51.

¹⁵ Alp Yücel Kaya and Yücel Terzibaşoğlu, “Tahrir’den Kadastro’ya: 1874 İstanbul Emlak Tahriri ve Vergisi ‘Kadastro Tabir Olunur Tahrir-i Emlak’,” *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 9 (2009), 25–27.

¹⁶ Yakup Akkuş in his dissertation on Ottoman provincial budgets in the second half of the nineteenth century scrutinizes these developments in detail. See Yakup Akkuş, “Osmanlı Taşra Maliyesinde Reform: Merkez Taşra Arasındaki İdari-Mali İlişkiler ve Vilayet Bütçeleri (1864–1913),” (PhD Dissertation, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2011).

¹⁷ “Teghekagir Gavarakan Harstaharutyants Qnnutyen Handznazhoghovoy,” in *Atenagrutyunq Azgayin Indhanur Zhoghovoy*, (Konstandinopolis: Mühentisyan, 1871), 469.

Russian or Iranian passports if their problems were not solved.¹⁸ The governor barely managed to calm the artisans down through “guild masters, elders and prominent ones” (*esnaf şeyhleriyle ihtiyarları ve sâir söz sahipleri*), persuaded them to open their shops, and ordered an investigation into the allegations. The investigation revealed that some records had been “increased with [using] another pen and ink, for instance a person for whom a 4,000 guruh income tax was levied, with an additional *elif* [1] under his name, it was made into 14,000 guruh.”¹⁹ In order to solve the problem, “four prominent persons from the community” were added to the committee which was responsible for taxation. The committee on taxation now included Muslim and non-Muslim members, most probably notables.²⁰ Likewise, the commission decided the amount requested from the populace—after the deduction of some excess taxes—was still more than 300,000 and beyond the level that they could pay. The governor asked for a solution from the central government.²¹ The Patriarchate of Istanbul also pursued the matter in Istanbul, which was not solved by the end of June, 1867.²² With their position as “intermediaries,” which meant being members of tax commissions and having a say in the distribution of taxes, the notables were less affected by—and in some cases even benefited from—these developments in the taxation system.

The artisans had other reasons to feel embittered both at the taxes and (indirectly) at the notables who worked as tax farmers and dominated the local economy through their connections with state officials. One such issue was the tax paid by non-Muslims in lieu of military service (*iâne-i askeriye bedelatı*, the former *cizye* tax). Officially, until 1875 the *bedel* to be collected for every 180 non-Muslim males was 5,000 guruh (approximately 27.8 guruh per person) and

¹⁸ B.O.A., MVL., 1052-97, 6 Zilka‘de 1283 (11 April 1867).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ B.O.A., MVL., 1053-30, 5 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1284 (4 September 1867).

²¹ B.O.A., MVL., 1052-97, 6 Zilka‘de 1283 (11 April 1867).

²² B.O.A., MVL., 1053-8., 26 Safer 1284 (29 June 1867).

after that date it was fixed at 50 guruh per person.²³ Problems with the military tax were also mentioned in the *Report on Provincial Oppressions* as an additional burden on the local populace, especially for those who had many male children.²⁴ Middle- and lower-class people of Erzurum felt the problem fell disproportionately on them, and that it only increased after the census. The new census counted 4454 male Christians (mainly Apostolic Armenians), 1656 of whom had not been recorded in the previous one. 1656 extra males meant an additional burden of 46,036 guruh on the male Christian population. This was part of the unpaid total 330,186 guruh which was levied after the new census and tax register.²⁵ As I will touch upon below, when the artisans confronted Kürkçübaşı Makaryan Agop in 1869, a local commentator—unfortunately without giving any details—would link the conflict directly to the collection of the military tax (*bedelat*).²⁶

The artisans had other reasons to feel bitter about Kürkçübaşı and other notables who not only had a role in determining tax levies and their collection but also dominated the local economy. For instance, Kürkçübaşı Agop acted as tax farmer in the 1840s and 1850s, and provided wheat to the imperial army during the Crimean War, as examined in chapter 2. The notable continued to be a major economic actor thanks to his relations with local government. For instance in 1863, as I will examine in detail below, Kürkçübaşı alone was permitted by the governor to monopolize the wheat market in the province during the drought—at the expense of the bakers. This is one example that we know of where the artisans had to yield to the power of a notable and his networks.

²³ Akkuş, “Osmanlı Taşra Maliyesinde Reform...,” 315.

²⁴ “Teghekagir Gavarakan Harstaharutyants Qnnutyanyan Handznazhoghovoy,” 469.

²⁵ B.O.A., MVL., 1052-97, 6 Zilka ‘de 1283 (11 April 1867), figure #1 [nefs-i Erzurum kasabasının hülâsa pusulasıdır].

²⁶ Grigor Artznayan’s letter to G. Srvandztyan, dated 8 June 1868, in Gyut Aghanyants, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan, girq 13: Harstaharutyunner Tajkahayastanum*, (Tiflis[Tbilisi]: N. Aghanyantsi Tparan, 1915), column 84.

In the following sections, I examine the struggle between artisans and notables for control of community institutions after the Armenian Constitution of 1863 and the debates about reform, which was closely related to the political and economic background touched upon here. The artisans, who did not benefit from the political promises of the Armenian Constitution, also could not join the ranks of notables economically. The result was a decade-long struggle within the local community, which divided it along social, economic and political lines—of course with exceptions like Khachatur Khan, who did not side with his notable peers. When the artisans began to use political language to express their social and economic grievances, their struggles were heard by the authorities in Istanbul and even abroad.

Disputes about the Bishop Harutyun Vehapetyan and His Temporary Removals

The period of Armenian Constitution in Erzurum, roughly from 1863 to the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878, is identified with problems around one person, Bishop (later Archbishop) Harutyun Vehapetyan, who acted as the *aradjnord* of Erzurum between 1858 and 1880. Maghaqia Ormanyan, who succeeded Bishop Harutyun as the *aradjnord* of Erzurum, gives a detailed account of the bishop's life up to 1858 in his *Azgapatum*.²⁷ Bishop Harutyun was born in Egypt to a non-Armenian family in 1819 (or in 1817 or in 1823), with the name Abraham. His father was the guard of the Mar Mina (St. Minas) cemetery of Cairo. Harutyun was “adopted” by Bishop Kirakos of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, who was an inspector in Egypt at that time, and they returned together to Jerusalem in 1834. Bishop Harutyun (at that time Abraham) worked in the printing house of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem; his patron Kirakos had returned to

²⁷ This paragraph is based on Patriarch Ormanyan's magnum opus on Armenian history, the *Azgapatum*. See Maghaqia Ormanyan, *Azgapatum: Hay Ughghapar Yekeghetsvoy Antsgeri Skizben Minchev Mer Ozeri* (Edjmiatzin: Mayr Ator Surb Edjmiatzin, 2011), 3: columns 4500–4505. Antaramian in his dissertation also provides a shorter summary of Bishop Harutyun Vehapetyan's early life, but he emphasizes the bishop's networks. Antaramian's summary is also based on Ormanyan's work. Richard Edward Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State: Armenians and Ottoman State Power, 1844–1896,” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2014), 72–75.

Istanbul by 1836 to act as overseer of the recently opened Seminary (*Jemaran*) of Üsküdar. Abraham was able to go to Istanbul to study in the Seminary only in 1839, and traveled from Jerusalem to Istanbul together with Harutyun Sahatciyan of Marsovan (Merzifon), who was also a protégé of Kirakos. By the time of his arrival in Istanbul, Abraham had adopted the name Hovsep Kirakosyan. Bishop Harutyun (now called Hovsep) was not accepted into the Seminary as a student but took a position as an assistant to Bishop Kirakos. Hovsep left Istanbul to enter the Mesropyan Vardzaran in Izmir to study under the famous teacher of the day, Ter Hovhan Vanandetsi. Finding his studies difficult, however, he returned to Istanbul to study at the Protestant Missionary Seminary at Bebek, where he would learn English. With an unknown English traveler he traveled in the European provinces of the empire and then was in Beirut with the same traveler, after which he returned to Istanbul. In 1845 he was sent to the United States to study medicine and stayed for eight months. So as “not to lose his religion in the land of errors” he returned to Istanbul, where he was appointed by the Patriarch Matteos to work as a teacher of English and arithmetic. That year Hovsep’s patron Bishop Kirakos was elected Patriarch of Jerusalem and Hovsep (Bishop Harutyun) was present at his installation. Hovsep returned to Istanbul but sometime later he was back in Jerusalem as the personal scribe of Patriarch Kirakos, who also wanted to free Hovsep’s mind from non-ecclesiastical work, and made him a deacon in 1849. Patriarch Kirakos also took Hovsep into the order of St. James, but could not be ordained as a monk, as Kirakos died in 1850. When Hovhannes of Smyrna was elected as the new Patriarch of Jerusalem, Hovsep went to Istanbul to meet him, and with the new Patriarch he travelled back to Jerusalem. Hovsep’s ordination as a monk—which was Kirakos’s initial goal—was postponed for more than a year as the new Patriarch of Jerusalem aimed to avoid gossip and submitted the ordination to the Patriarch of Istanbul, Hakobos III (1839–1840, 1848–1856), who

further delegated it to Stepanos Aghani, the abbot of Armash Monastery and a former Patriarch of Istanbul. During the ordination, which took place on the Feast of the Conception, Hovsep took the name Harutyun Vehapetyan (son of supreme head), in honor of his “father,” the Patriarch of Jerusalem; he stayed in Armash Monastery for a few months where he became a *vardapet*. In 1852, Vardapet Harutyun returned to Istanbul, he was appointed as crosier of Patriarch Hakobos III, and the *zhamorhnogh* (i.e. who leads the mass) of the mother church. In 1853 Harutyun was appointed as the vicar of the Patriarch, a position which he held until 1857, including the first year of Gevorg II (Patriarch of Istanbul, 1856–1860). In 1857 he was the *aradjnord* of Kharberd, forming one diocese from four monastic districts. In late 1858, Harutyun was back in Istanbul, again as the patriarchal vicar, a position he held until 24 April 1859, when he was appointed *aradjnord* of Erzurum. Two of the Patriarchs he served, Matteos and Gevorg, would later become Catholicos of all Armenians in Edjmiatzin—which was to prove very useful to Bishop Harutyun in the following years.

The Armenians of Erzurum had two images of Bishop Harutyun: first, he was a powerful figure working for the benefit of his community; and second, a selfish one, placing his personal interests above the interests of his people, maintaining close relations with certain notables at the expense of the unprivileged members of his community. Nevertheless, it is apparent that he had substantial spiritual and political authority over the Armenians of the region. For instance, in late 1863, when hundreds of Armenians from the Kharberd valley headed for Russia due to drought, he persuaded many of them to go back—by mentioning the advantages of staying under Ottoman rule, if the newspapers are to be believed. He was also well enough connected that he could obtain horses and carts from the governor to send them back.²⁸ The bishop’s influence over the

²⁸ *Masis*, no. 617 (7 December 1863), 2.

people of Kharberd was probably related to his previous work there as an *aradjnord*. As I will examine below, years later when his opponents accused him of disloyalty to the Ottoman state, the bishop's supporters would use this episode as a proof of his pro-Ottoman stance.

The bishop had also encouraged education, a very important element of Armenian reform. There were instances in which he delivered vehement speeches on its importance, which were publicized in Istanbul papers by Agheksandr Ter Nersisyan, son of Khachatur Khan.²⁹ Bishop Harutyun was also praised for his support for the Arsharunyats reading room.³⁰ Notwithstanding his support for educational institutions, some of his opponents also claimed that he was indifferent to the bad state of education in the city. For instance, the bishop was criticized sometime after his arrival in Erzurum because for several months since his arrival in town he had failed to visit the Artznayan School, the main Armenian school.³¹ Likewise, when Saffet Pasha, the inspector of the Fourth Army, paid a visit to the bishop on 6 November 1864, the bishop did not let his visitors go to the community school but rather called 100 students to his own office. A local witness, in a letter written to *Zhamanak* in Istanbul, claimed that “The *aradjnord* did not want to show the wretched state of the schools to such high-ranking officers.”³² A commentator in *Masis*, however, avoided making such an interpretation of the non-visit. In short, at different levels, there were two parties in Erzurum—those who supported the bishop and those not satisfied with him.

The first loud anti-Harutyun voice was heard publicly in the summer of 1863, a few months after the ratification of the Armenian Constitution in Istanbul and just before the

²⁹ *Masis*, no. 470 (8 February 1861), 2.

³⁰ *Masis*, no. 631 (14 March 1864), 2.

³¹ *Masis*, no. 418 (28 January 1864), 3.

³² *Zhamanak*, no. 51 (5 December 1864), 203; *Masis*, no. 668 (28 November 1864), 2. Both newspapers emphasized that the pashas were satisfied with Armenian students' strong command of Turkish and promised to send Turkish language textbooks from Istanbul.

establishment of the above-mentioned Local Council in Erzurum. A letter, which was sent from Erzurum to *Masis*, severely criticized the *aradjnord* for being anti-constitutional and an enemy of enlightenment, also claiming that some prominent personalities of the city had the desire to defrock him.³³ The letter went on to criticize the *aradjnord*'s lack of emphasis on education:

But how can Karin have progress as long as the *aradjnord* who has control over her is an enemy of progress? How can the poor people of Karin enter the road of enlightenment while not having the first and most important means, that is a school in good order, where her children are educated methodologically in line with the spirit of the age to be a true man and a true Armenian. But how can the people of Karin have a school without acknowledging its worth and value? Here again the duty and mission of an *aradjnord* comes forward.³⁴

There were other accusations in the letter. The most grave concerned the *aradjnord*'s misuse of charity money—about 80,000 gurush—to build an office (*aradjnordaran*) for himself. A group of Russian Armenians had donated the sum to the bishop after the earthquakes of 1859. Moreover, the anonymous writer of the letter narrated an anecdote about the anti-constitutionalism of the *aradjnord*. The anecdote was probably true, as others were still referring to the event years later:

People in Istanbul and in many provinces—for [celebrating] the ratification of the constitution—were toasting the longevity of his majesty the Sultan Abdülaziz and crying “long live the constitution.” Whereas our *aradjnord* at a feast table at one of the notables of our city, [while] drinking to the constitution, suddenly changed [his mood], got angry, could not stand [it anymore] and could not restrain his violence; poured down the wine that was poured in the name of the constitution, cried “my glass is contaminated”, wounded the hearts of patriotic people who were drinking.³⁵

The anonymous writer directs a last criticism to the bishop which connects the bishop's roots—namely his links with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem—with his current, anti-constitutional actions. He claims that the bishop is hoping to become the Patriarch of Jerusalem one day and

³³ *Masis*, no. 596 (13 July 1863), 2–3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

adds, “poor men hope that the constitution will not enter from the doors of St. Jacob’s monastery [in Jerusalem].”³⁶ Most probably the writer wanted to deliver an even stronger attack by emphasizing the bishop’s connection with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. This was the period in which the Patriarchate of Istanbul was trying to diminish the autonomy of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, to expand its power over the latter.³⁷

The second half of the letter was published in the following issue of *Masis*. It dealt again with the anti-constitutionalism of the bishop, but it is worth mentioning that Khrimyan Hayrik was also named in the letter. “We will finish our words by remembering another characteristic of the *aradjnord*, his hospitality” said the writer ironically and continued, “while he [Khrimyan Hayrik] was delivering a sermon in the church, the *aradjnord* disliked his [Hayrik’s] progressive words, went to the altar and preached the opposite. While Khrimyan invited people to question the clergy through new laws, the *aradjnord* despised them [by saying] ‘[t]he Bible is our constitution.’ It was so ridiculous that there was nothing to do but laugh. He [Bishop Harutyun] made it sound as if the constitution would replace the bible.”³⁸ The writer ended by claiming that the *aradjnord*’s acts were due to his support from Edjmiatzin and the money he had received; that was the reason why “he never fears the administration in Istanbul.”³⁹ Much like his reference to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the first part of his letter, in the second part the writer emphasized the bishop’s connections with Edjmiatzin, which was a precious but problematic connection for the bishop, as I will discuss later.

³⁶ *Masis*, no. 596 (13 July 1863), 2–3.

³⁷ Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State,” 38 ff.

³⁸ *Masis*, no. 597 (20 July 1863), 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

This letter was noteworthy for various reasons. First it was published in *Masis*, the semi-official organ of the Apostolic Patriarchate, which suggests that some spiritual authorities in Istanbul should—at least tacitly—have agreed to its publication. This shows the strength of the idea of constitutionalism in the era and the top-down pressure for reform, accompanied even by some anti-Edjmiatzin sentiments. Second, the letter was important as it not only openly challenged a very important member of the clergy, but also attributed an almost sacred value to the constitution. The reform-minded clergy like Khrimyan Hayrik had gained a strong hand for pursuing reforms, as the constitution provided these members of the clergy with both a secular framework to function within the broader Ottoman imperial reform projects and a moral advantage over their potential opponents. The reform-minded people pursued the “sacred” goal of bettering the community and the constitution was their secular tool.

Protests against Bishop Harutyun continued, not necessarily complaining about his anti-constitutionalism but rather emphasizing his maladministration of the community. Criticisms against him were made public for the second time in June 1864. News about the execution of a young Armenian man from the village of Keghakhos, Erzurum, who had killed a Muslim from the same village, reached the newspapers of Istanbul. The reason for the newspapers’ attention was not the execution itself but rather Bishop Harutyun’s indifference throughout the course of events. The governor of Erzurum intervened on behalf of the soon-to-be executed Armenian, convincing the family of the murdered Muslim to accept blood money and withdraw their lawsuit. However, the newspapers claimed, the *aradjnord* neither informed the Local Council about this deal nor did anything to stop the execution by arranging the blood money. The bishop was even accused of not sending a priest during the execution of the Armenian. The commentator in *Masis* lamented: “that time only the people of Karin understood what a merciless

heart their shepherd has.”⁴⁰ *Zhamanak* called the Spiritual Assembly of Istanbul to duty to discipline the *aradjnord*. Otherwise, the newspaper claimed, the *aradjnord* would take refuge at the Catholicate in Edjmiatzin, which was ready to accept him. The newspaper also claimed that the population of Erzurum already hated the bishop and that he had no supporters in the city except for few notables.⁴¹ Only *Kilikia* preferred a more reserved stance and asked the Apostolic Patriarchate to make a deeper investigation before giving a verdict on the issue.⁴² In August of 1864, *Zhamanak* highlighted strife between Apostolic Armenians and Catholics in the village of Artzati, where an Apostolic Armenian girl was converted to Catholicism and became a nun. The newspaper accused the bishop once again of being indifferent and acting sluggishly in community affairs.⁴³ Notwithstanding the fact that these local events began to find places in the newspapers of Istanbul, the bishop retained his post. As the complaints against the bishop grew and the Patriarchate of Istanbul did not move, the protests were transformed from complaints in newspapers to petitions against the bishop and eventually to violence. During this transformation the class aspect of the protests and divisions within the local society became more visible.

“We Don’t Want the *Aradjnord*!” Struggles to Limit the Power of the Bishop

People of Karin, particularly “the poor,” began to send petitions to the National Administration demanding removal of their bishop. In the 6 March 1865 issue of *Kilikia*, a telegraph from Erzurum dated the 23rd of February was published: “The local *aradjnord* went to Van on the 13th of the month under the order of the [national] administration. A part of the population of the place [Erzurum] does not want the *aradjnord*. It seems that they will prepare and send a petition to the administration.”⁴⁴ Almost a month later, another piece appeared in the

⁴⁰ *Masis*, no. 642 (2 June 1864), 2.

⁴¹ *Zhamanak*, no. 39 (20 June 1864), 103.

⁴² *Kilikia*, no. 25 (24 June 1864), 2.

⁴³ *Zhamanak*, no. 42 (1 August 1864), 127.

⁴⁴ *Kilikia*, no. 62 (6 March 1865), 3.

same paper saying that a letter of complaint carrying 60 seals had been prepared to be sent from Erzurum to the Administration of the Apostolic Community. It also stated that “prominent people” of the city had prevented the petition from being sent and “therefore this [the petition] is another one which was prepared secretly by part of the poor public.”⁴⁵ The timing of the petition was significant, as Bishop Harutyun had left the city on a mission to Van. The mission was to investigate and prepare a report about the struggles over the Catholicate of Aghtamar—examined in the previous chapter—including the murder of one of the parties involved.⁴⁶ The anti-Bishop Harutyun camp also criticized the report that the bishop had prepared on the Aghtamar Question, saying “[t]he people of Van in general say that the testimony of Bishop Harutyun is not a reliable testimony. If that is so, then it [the National Administration] is obliged to send another inspector to Van to examine that issue.”⁴⁷ Richard Antaramian argues that the Aghtamar Question—as it is known in Armenian history—was an important part of the centralization policy carried out by the Patriarchate of Istanbul as a part of the general reform.⁴⁸ The assignment of a highly questionable figure like Bishop Harutyun, whose anti-constitutional attitude was known publicly, makes it difficult to reach judgements about the reformist and anti-reformist camps as they were formed and reformed in that period. It also shows that it was not only the constitution that empowered bishops, but also the Administration of the Apostolic Community in Istanbul, which wanted to make use of the bishops’ local connections. And these were exactly what the people of Erzurum were protesting against, as they preferred an *aradjnord* whose power and authority was checked by the constitution.

⁴⁵ *Kilikia*, no. 67 (10 April 1865), 3.

⁴⁶ Ormanyan, *Azgapatum*, 3: column 4922.

⁴⁷ *Zhamanak*, no. 64 (5 June 1865), 95.

⁴⁸ Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State,” 15 and passim.

Not long after the bishop wrote his report on the Aghtamar Question and returned to Erzurum, “a part of the public” asked the notables and the Local Armenian Council to write a regulation which would diminish the power of the *aradjnord*.⁴⁹ The *aradjnord* and notables compiled a regulation and submitted it to the Local Council—which, as we have seen, was filled with members of notable families. The council made remarks on some points and then a general assembly was convened in the courtyard of the office of the *aradjnord* to ratify the regulation. It was a crowd of 200 people, presided over by the *aradjnord* and including notables, members of the Local Council and heads of artisans. Then, according to Agheksandr Ter Nersisyan, who sent a letter to *Kilikia* describing the events, “for an unknown reason” some people began to yell, “we don’t want the *aradjnord*” and demand his immediate resignation. As the uproar grew, some notables asked the governor to intervene. He dispatched a major with soldiers to quell the protestors. After the arrest of 17 of them, the protestors were dispersed. Two days later, the *aradjnord* went to the governor asking for the release of the arrested ones and his request was granted. A few days later, by the intermediacy of two notables from outside Erzurum, Harutyun Demirjibaşyan Agha of Istanbul and Felekyan Hovhannes Agha of Kayseri, the Armenian General Assembly of Erzurum met once again, and the people and the *aradjnord* reconciled. As a post-script, Ter Nersisyan added that the day after the general assembly, on 6 June, the *aradjnord* was called to Istanbul.⁵⁰

The bishop did not go to Istanbul immediately, and from one of his opponents we learn that he stayed in Trabzon to gain time while his supporters in Erzurum made a *mazbata* (petition) signed by many people asking for his return.⁵¹ What is important in that news is that the writer

⁴⁹ *Kilikia*, no. 81(17 June 1865), 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Zhamanak*, no. 69 (4 September 1865), 130.

did not blame the people who signed the petition in favor of the bishop because they were uneducated—and the notables kept them so “to keep their power indestructible.”⁵² This was another instance in which class struggle was translated into the publicly legible language of reform, and supporting or being against education of the masses was one aspect of it.

Both the opponents and supporters of the bishop adopted other strategies as well, particularly while the bishop was removed and in Istanbul. His opponents began to focus on the *aradjnord*'s lack of qualifications, rather than emphasizing his alleged crimes and excesses. They asked whether the bishop was worthy of ruling over the diocese of Erzurum, which after Istanbul and Jerusalem had become “the third Patriarchate.”⁵³ The supporters of the bishop had a completely different interpretation of events. In a letter sent by Hovhannes Ter Sargisyan of Taron to *Masis*, it was claimed that following the absence of the *aradjnord* the community once again could not reach “divine unity.”⁵⁴ Demirjibaşyan Harutyun Agha of Istanbul, who had quelled the first uproar against the bishop, organized another meeting of the general assembly on 29 July. During the assembly, the people first “forgave each other,” then ratified the regulation that had been the target of the protests a month before. Moreover, two petitions carrying 400 signatures were prepared and sent to Istanbul, asking for the return of the bishop.⁵⁵ These petitions were the ones on account of which the bishop's opponents blamed the notables for deceiving the populace.

The opponents of the bishop also claimed that the investigation carried out in Istanbul was unfair because the accusers were not present during the investigation at the Spiritual Assembly. “The accuser does not speak, because he does not have a tongue. He is a paper,” said

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *Masis*, no. 703 (21 August 1865), 2.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

an anonymous writer who commented on the futility of the investigation of the bishop.⁵⁶ The bishop's return was not granted easily, however, and the news about the Erzurum community's "forgiving each other" seems not to reflect reality. The Spiritual Assembly granted the bishop's return but then revoked it twice, recalling him each time. The first revocation resulted from a difference of opinion between the Spiritual and Civic Assemblies in Istanbul, as the latter did not permit him to leave. On the second occasion, the bishop left Istanbul after receiving a permit, but a petition was sent to Istanbul from Erzurum which included 181 signatures, mainly from *esnaf-başıs* (chiefs of artisans), asking that the bishop's return be prevented. Upon receiving the petition, the Spiritual Assembly revoked the order for his reinstatement in his former position. But when they investigated the petition closely they saw that four of the signatures in the artisans' petition did not match the seals. The council granted permission for Bishop Harutyun to leave Istanbul for his post in Erzurum, this time by ship to Trabzon.⁵⁷ Preference of the sea route over the land route probably aimed to prevent any possibility of calling the bishop back, should any petitions against him reach Istanbul in the meantime.

Bishop Harutyun returned to Erzurum on 21 November. The ceremony made for his return was splendid. Khachatur Khan's son Agheksandr sympathetically narrated the ceremony in the newspaper *Kilikia*: Notables and heads of artisans went a distance of one-and-a-half hours outside the city; the governor sent soldiers to escort him and the primary translators of the British, French, and Russian Consulates were present at the ceremony. Leaders of the Greek and Catholic communities met him at a distance of an hour from the city. When the bishop entered the city, a large crowd followed him, and when he entered the courtyard of the church school

⁵⁶ *Zhamanak*, no. 73 (9 October 1865), 167.

⁵⁷ *Zhamanak*, no. 75 (6 November 1865), 184.

boys began to sing for him.⁵⁸ Agheksandr Ter Nersisyan concluded his description with awe: “After seeing the effort and hurry of the populace to run and kiss the hand of his holiness, I could not hold my astonishment; such an admirable love for clergy. At that moment, I moved aside and the following words flooded in my mind: ‘Blessing to you, the Armenian community of Karin, that you have a patriotic, wise, intelligent shepherd like Vehapetyan [who] at the same time loves the people, and blessing to you your honorable holiness that you have a clergy-loving flock like the Armenians of Karin.’”⁵⁹ The emphasis on the presence of chief artisans alongside the notables who were there to meet the *aradjnord* was intended to give an image of unity to the Armenians of Erzurum. It was, however, well known even in Istanbul that problems would be stirred up by the bishop’s arrival in Erzurum. And there were not many ways to solve them.

Just after the bishop’s departure from Istanbul for Erzurum, a commentary was published in *Masis* on his return to his post. The anonymous writer, without supporting any of the sides in the conflict, advised those people who were dissatisfied with the bishop to force him to apply the constitution and to organize a Provincial Representative Assembly and well-functioning National Administration in the province. Just as only the General Assembly in Istanbul had the right to elect the Patriarch (art. 2 of the 1863 Constitution), so only did the Provincial [General] Assembly have the right to accept or reject the *aradjnord*. Also, organizing the Provincial Assembly would render obsolete all former methods of complaints, such as petitions, “which belong to the past.”⁶⁰ For the author, the problems of Erzurum Armenians were not serious because they could easily be solved by the application of the constitution; so the people of Erzurum who were dissatisfied with their bishop needed only to “demand the application of the

⁵⁸ *Kilikia*, no. 99 (11 December 1865), 3–4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Masis*, no. 715 (13 November 1865), 2.

constitution.”⁶¹ The author was right that the application of the constitution, in the form of convening a Provincial Representative Assembly, could be instrumental in solving many “personal” problems between the people and the bishop. Ideally the assembly would limit the bishop’s power. However, structural problems, such as the dominance of some notables over the society would remain unless reforms were applied in different aspects of communal life. But this was impossible as the artisans, the only group with the power to balance the notable’s position, were losing their social and economic power.

Bishop Harutyun’s attitude was reported to have changed after his return from Istanbul. The change was even noted by his critics, albeit skeptically. *Zhamanak*, the periodical which carried the most open anti-Harutyun campaign, confessed that the bishop had begun to carry out reforms which satisfied many in the city. “He [the bishop] used to consider the cup of constitution contaminated, whereas now he is taking care to establish constitutional organs” the writer said with clear reference to the incident during the celebration of the constitutions in 1863. However, he added, some people believed the bishop intended to confuse community leaders in Istanbul who were against him.⁶² The major problem was domination of the bishop by some town notables. Kürkçübaşı Makaryan Agop’s name is stated openly, as a major impediment to the application of reform in the community; the notable was even called the “first and main enemy of Khrimyan.”⁶³ I will return to this point in the last section, where I examine the final blow the artisans delivered to the bishop and the notables in the case of the wedding of Kürkçübaşı’s daughter. Before doing so, however, I will examine the removal of Bishop Harutyun from his office in 1868–1869. This was his second removal in less than five years. This

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² *Zhamanak*, no. 83 (26 February 1866), 33–34.

⁶³ Ibid., 35.

time, the allegations were not related to his anti-reformism or maladministration of the community; the bishop was accused of having pro-Russian sentiments.

Aradjnord Harutyun's Second Removal: Local Politics Merge with Imperial Interests

The reforms of Bishop Harutyun continued, and even sceptics began to thank him. For instance, the bishop compiled a report on the St. Karapet Monastery of Mush, and his demand for reform was favored by his opponents. The bishop had made an investigation in the monastery together with Hovhannes Agha of Karin. Hovhannes Agha was the representative of Khachatur Pastirmacıyan Efendi, who was appointed for the mission by the Administration of the Apostolic Community in Istanbul, but could not participate because of his heavy business schedule.⁶⁴ Upon the bishop's report, the Administration decided to exile six *vardapets* who had opposed Khrimyan Hayrik, and the latter had previously blamed them for causing problems in the monastery. The order was carried out by the bishop himself.⁶⁵ In this affair, the bishop had acted in line with Khrimyan Hayrik's policy, further contradicting the earlier accusations concerning his unfriendly and rude attitude towards Hayrik. Also, a few months before this investigation, Khachatur Pastirmacıyan Efendi had argued with the bishop over a case of the forced marriage of an Armenian girl to a man she did not want to marry. It was reported that Khachatur Efendi had left a meeting of the Armenian Provincial Assembly in protest against the *aradjnord*, who wanted to marry the girl. Only after the intervention of Harutyun Mutafyan Agha did Khachatur Pastirmacıyan reconcile with the bishop.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, these struggles within the privileged stratum of society did not solidify into factions; personal relations were open to change over time, and alliances were made and remade constantly in Erzurum.

⁶⁴ *Zhamanak*, no. 99 (8 October 1866), 166.

⁶⁵ Ormanyan, *Azgapatum*, 3: columns 4804–4805; Kostandyan, “Taroni Hogeavor Aradjnordı,” *Lraber Hasarkakan Gitutyunneri* 1 (1999): 70.

⁶⁶ *Zhamanak*, no. 83 (26 Feb. 1866), 37.

At the Christmas mass of 1866, the name of the newly elected Catholicos in Edjmiatzin was mentioned for the first time. The new Catholicos was Gevorg IV of Constantinople (1866–1880); it may be recalled that Bishop Harutyun had served him as vicar when the Catholicos was the Patriarch of Istanbul. Thus the bishop found himself with very strong backing, albeit from the other side of the border. The Russian Consul of Erzurum, Mr. Ivanoff, was present at the mass in his ceremonial uniform and he received gratitude from the populace for his presence. That night Khachatur Pastirmacıyan Efendi, a few months after his struggle with the *aradjnord*, organized a reception in celebration of the election of the Catholicos and the *aradjnord* at which the Russian Consul of Erzurum and the notables of the city were present. The same day, Khrimyan Hayrik's disciple Garegin Srvandztyants was ordained a bishop.⁶⁷ Close relations between the supporters of Khrimyan and Bishop Harutyun continued: on 23 February 1867, St. Vardanants' holiday was celebrated with a mass led by Srvandztyan that concluded with a sermon by the *aradjnord*, with the Russian consul also in attendance.⁶⁸ When the next crisis unfolded in March 1868, it was not related to the bishop's attitude towards reform, which had obviously become more positive over the years due in part to his close relations with Khrimyan Hayrik and his disciples. The bishop's opponents, backed by Khachatur Khan and Mr. Maghack, the dragoman of the British Consulate, took advantage of the bishop's cordial relations with the Russian Consul in Erzurum to remove him from his post.

A pro-Russian bishop in Erzurum, 1868

In the period between 1866 and 1868—that is, between the Bishop's reinstallment after his first removal from office and his second removal—the Russian consul began to appear as an important public figure in Erzurum. He participated in masses at the church and also in

⁶⁷ *Masis*, no. 780 (21 January 1867), 3.

⁶⁸ *Masis*, no. 789 (25 March 1867), 3.

receptions alongside the Armenian notables of the city. As an important note, in these activities he was not accompanied by his British and French counterparts. In a consular report to the British Embassy in Istanbul, Mr. Maghack, the dragoman of the British Consulate in Erzurum, claimed that the relations between Bishop Harutyun and the Russian authorities were more than cordial. According to the dragoman, the bishop had been a part of machinations which took place around 1856 to bring the Armenian Apostolic church under the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church. The initiator of the project had been Gevorg IV, the Patriarch of Istanbul at that time (and Catholicos of Edjmiatzin in 1866), along with Bishop Harutyun who, as already noted, was his secretary and patriarchal vicar.⁶⁹ Mr. Maghack claimed that the bishop delivered pro-Russian speeches, was ready to obtain Russian passports for many Armenian notables of Van, Bitlis, Mush, Erzurum, and Arapgir, and that the bishop had good relations with the Kurdish tribes in the province and with those on the Russian border.⁷⁰ The most interesting notice in this very intriguing dispatch concerned the upcoming elections of 13 March 1868 for the Armenian Local Council. For the dragoman, they would be a chance for the Porte to move away from Bishop Harutyun and to form a new council so that “the elected members of its community are no longer corrupt men and sold to Russia.”⁷¹ Mr. Maghack, as I will discuss in the next section, was not a disinterested party in local politics. Ideally he was a representative of British interests, but he had his own interests as well. He had had serious problems with local authorities in 1867 when he was accused of trying to murder his wife in order to marry Kürkçübaşı Agop’s daughter. The marriage was not permitted by Agop, so his report might be a result of growing animosity between him and Bishop Harutyun, who was publicly identified as an ally of Kürkçübaşı and notables. Nevertheless, the dragoman’s report further explains why

⁶⁹ *N.A.*, F.O., 195-889, no. 3, dispatch from Mr. Maghack to Sir Eliot, 26 January 1868.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

opponents of Harutyun made references to his connection with Edjmiatzin in their complaints about the bishop, and claimed that his allegiance was to Russia.

As these were grave accusations, the Porte undertook some action. Based on this report, the Porte decided to call the bishop to Istanbul with an official notice (*min gayr-i resmî patrikhâneye teblîgat-i hafiye*) to the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul. The reasons for his being called to Istanbul were to be kept secret “so as not to cause any rumors,” and in the meanwhile the governor of Erzurum was ordered to carry out an investigation of the issue.⁷²

A local observer, Mkrtich of the Ballaryan family, gave another account of the background of Bishop Harutyun’s removal in a letter to Garegin Srvandztyan.⁷³ According to Mkrtich Ballaryan, Bishop Harutyun was called to Istanbul after Panosyan, the superintendent of the St. Prkich (St. Savior) Hospital, had resigned. However, the bishop postponed his departure, and in that period—that is in the middle of March—he received a medal from the Russian Empire.⁷⁴ There was nothing unusual about the decoration. According to the Patriarchate of Istanbul, Bishop Harutyun, who had represented the Ottoman Empire and the Armenian community during the inauguration ceremony of the Catholicos in Edjmiatzin, was granted a

⁷² B.O.A., HR. SYS. 2819-6, 22 Zilka‘de 1284 (17 March 1868). The translation office of the Porte had written the date of Mr. Maghack’s report as 26 February instead of 26 January. The way the Porte used British diplomatic correspondence as an intelligence report is noteworthy.

⁷³ I could not find who Mkrtich Ballaryan was although he must have belonged to the Ballaryan families, as he carried honorary titles of both *Medzabadiv* and *Agha*. Only one of his letters was signed as M.[grdich] Kh[achatur?] Ballar. See Letter of M. Ballaryan to G. Srvandztyan, dated 12 September 1872, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 256. Hakob Poghosyan in his critical edition of Tevktants’ memoirs mistakenly attributes these letters to Hamazasp Ballaryan. Yeremia Tevktants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan 1872–1873 tt.*, ed. Hakob Poghosyan, (Yerevan: Hayastani GAH, 1991), 313, n. 71.

⁷⁴ Mkrtich Ballaryan’s letter to Garegin Srvandztyan, dated 15 March 1868, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 82. If the elections took place on 13 March, as Mr. Maghack had claimed in his dispatch, the event should have taken place just after the elections.

medal by the Czar alongside other representatives of the Ottoman Empire. The Apostolic Patriarchate had requested the permission of the Porte to accept the medal.⁷⁵

The medal was a prestigious St. Anna order of the first rank, adorned with a crown. The bishop was decorated with it in an exclusive ceremony open to the notables only; the consul in his uniform visited the bishop in his office and in the presence of Armenian notables, read the verdict of the Czar to the sound of cheers. The same day, at eleven o'clock, Armenian notables and the *aradjnord* went to the consulate to repay the consul's visit.⁷⁶

The event turned into a crisis when Khachatur Khan went to the office of the governor, Hacı Ahmed Pasha, and said that Armenians who participated in the ceremony "are Russophiles [and] did such and such things [i.e. the decoration ceremony] without notifying you."⁷⁷ The governor inquired why Khachatur Khan was also dressed in uniform. Upon hearing that Khachatur Khan defended himself by saying he "had no choice but to wear [his uniform]" the Pasha dismissed him, accusing him of being of ill character and possibly a talebearer.⁷⁸ When the Russian consul heard about the events he wrote a *takrir* (official note) to the governor, telling him that he carried out the orders of the Russian government, and asked the governor to talk to him if he wanted to inquire further. The consul also notified the Russian Embassy in Istanbul, asking them to inform the Porte about the incident.⁷⁹ The Porte, according to Mkrtych Ballaryan, sent a rebuking telegraph to the governor, ordering him not to intervene in the affairs of Armenians. The next day, the governor called Khachatur Khan to his office, scolded the notable with dishonorable words in the presence of the translator of the Russian Consulate in Erzurum

⁷⁵ The Patriarchate had requested permission in early April and had reinstated its request in June. *B.O.A.*, I.HR 232-13712, 11 Rebi'ü'l-evvel 1285 (2 July 1868).

⁷⁶ Mkrtych Ballaryan's letter to Garegin Srvandztyan, dated 15 March 1868, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 82.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

and some officials, and said that he would not be admitted to the pasha's office anymore. The Russian consul also gave notice to the Russian public of Erzurum that "whoever has commerce with Khan Efendi, cut it, and that he is not to sit in their *odas* (chambers) and shops, if [he] salutes do not accept it, spit in his face saying 'traitor', and don't salute."⁸⁰ The reaction of the notables of Erzurum was no less harsh than that of the governor and the consul. The Civic and Religious Councils of Erzurum informed Catholicos Gevorg IV of the events, accusing Khachatur Khan of "selling out" his co-nationals, and interestingly enough mentioning that he was a Catholic (though he was not).⁸¹

Khachatur Efendi's motivations for "selling out" his fellow notables are not clear. He might have aimed to win the trust of the governor. The fact that the removal of the bishop took place after the elections for the local council indicates that the timing of the affair might be also linked with local politics—but we do not have any information about that election. Khachatur Khan soon would disagree with the notables on other grounds, most notably on the issue of marriage between Maghack and Kürkçübaşı's daughter a few months later. However, it seems unlikely that Khachatur Khan, who had worked as a translator in the Russian Consulate at Erzurum for many years and was well versed in local politics, miscalculated either the power of notables or Russian influence. One plausible explanation is that he might have wanted to build a base for himself by distancing himself from the notables and allying with others who opposed the bishop and the notables. I will come back to this point later in the chapter.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Matenadaran: Mesrop Mashtotsi Anvan Hin Dzeragreri Institut, Yerevan, Divan of Edjmiatzin Catholicate, catalog no. 18, 207-2182 [1868]. Unfortunately I was not granted permission to see the actual document and here I refer to the summary of the documents as provided in the catalog entry. References in them to Khachatur Khan as a Catholic might have aimed to discredit him in the eyes of the Catholicate and/or to give an image of unity among Apostolic Armenians by labeling him as an "other."

The breakdown in relations between the governor and Khachatur Khan was not helpful for the goals of some reformers who needed such powerful notables for their projects. In an undated personal letter from Khrimyan Hayrik to Srvandztyan, most probably sent during this period, Khrimyan lamented on the affair:

I want you to confidentially learn if [Khachatur] Khan Efendi's relations with the governor are strong as they were in the past? Are his words and influence working? My heart got cold, when I learned that they are cold.⁸²

Khrimyan Hayrik's concerns should have faded away as soon as Governor Hacı Ahmed Pasha was replaced by the new governor, Ismail Pasha, who had carried out the investigation in Mush in 1869. The British and Russian consuls had written to their respective embassies in Istanbul to intervene on behalf of Hacı Ahmed Pasha, asking that he remain as governor of Erzurum.⁸³ Thus the affair revolving around the bishop's removal did not break down relations between the Russian consul and the governor.

Anti-bishop struggle in the context of local, communal, and imperial politics

The reason behind the bishop's second removal was his relations with the Russian consul, and this distinguishes it from his first removal in 1865. But the Russian connection does not explain why it took more than a year for the bishop to return to his post. There were several dimensions to it. The politics of the local Armenian community and the Administration of the Apostolic Community in Istanbul, and imperial rivalries all had their roles to play. The bishop's removal connected different spheres of power and geographies, giving local discontent a "national" and even inter-imperial prominence.

⁸² Khrimyan Hayrik's letter to Srvandztyan, [undated], *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 376.

⁸³ N.A., F.O., 195-889, no. 42, Dispatch from Consul Taylor to Sir Eliot, 8 December 1868. The consul stated that they sent telegraphs in mid-October and there was miscommunication due to problems in the telegraph office.

As with his first removal in 1865, the *aradjnord* did not leave Erzurum immediately and went to Istanbul almost two months after he was called there.⁸⁴ It was in April that the Patriarchate asked for permission from the Porte for accepting the decoration, and interestingly enough the Porte granted the permission in June—that is, months after the bishop’s removal from office.⁸⁵ Whether this indicates a lack of coordination between different departments of the state or it shows the complexity of politics in an empire where the central and local governments and the Patriarchate all had their own agendas is not known to us. By playing this game, the central government might also have tried to keep its involvement in the bishop’s removal secret and to avoid any criticism, since it was the Patriarchate that officially recalled the bishop.

Meanwhile, after the bishop’s removal in 1868, letters began to be published in newspapers in Istanbul in favor of the *aradjnord*. They emphasized one point: a vast diocese like Erzurum could not be left without an *aradjnord*. Protests against his removal began to pour in as early as May, a few weeks after the *aradjnord*’s arrival in Istanbul. A letter sent from Erzurum to *Pundj* mentioned local problems like the Apostolic-Catholic strife, which resulted in the murder of an Apostolic Armenian in the village of Hindzk, as proof of the need for the presence of an *aradjnord* in the city. It added, “the nationals of the locality and all diocese [of Erzurum] impatiently wait for their honorable *aradjnord*’s return.”⁸⁶ In August, a letter in *Masis* listed the removal of the bishop and leaving the diocese without an *aradjnord* as reasons for the insufficient development of the city.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, a positive image of the *aradjnord* was promoted in the Istanbul papers that were supporting him. *Pundj* published news about a mass in which Bishop Harutyun participated and a particular solemn service for those who were

⁸⁴ *Pundj*, no. 156 (20 May 1868), 4.

⁸⁵ The grant was issued by the Porte on 22 July 1868. *B.O.A.*, I.HR 232-13712

⁸⁶ *Pundj*, no. 160 (25 May 1868), 1.

⁸⁷ *Masis*, no. 864 (31 August 1868), 3–4.

persecuted in the Hindzk Affair by Catholics. The piece ended by stating: “We hear that his honor [the bishop] will go to Jerusalem soon and from there to Karin [Erzurum], his diocese where his beloved people are waiting impatiently for his return.”⁸⁸

While the news about the bishop found its place in Istanbul newspapers, it was also discussed in the private correspondence of people in Erzurum. Ter Grigor Artznayan, the director of the Artznayan reading room and the vicar of the removed bishop, claimed in a letter to Srvandztyan that the Sublime Porte, through some Armenian *efendis*, had cajoled the “decrepit” patriarch and called the *aradjnord* to Istanbul with blasphemies. The Patriarchate could say nothing but that the bishop came for a change of air. Artznayan also said that “the people of Istanbul are embittered against the patriarch... and we [from Karin] sent a petition with six hundred signatures” demanding the bishop’s return.⁸⁹

The people of Erzurum continued to send petitions in favor of the *aradjnord* during his absence. As late as June 1869, when some Kurdish bandits plundered the St. Astvatzatzin Monastery in the neighboring district of Hasankale, a petition again carrying more than 600 seals was sent to the Administration of the Apostolic Community in Istanbul and to the Grand Vizier, Ali Pasha. The petitioners claimed that their rights were not being defended in the absence of their *aradjnord* and they therefore requested his return to Erzurum.⁹⁰ The petitions and news in the Armenian newspapers of Istanbul show that the *aradjnord* had public support both in Erzurum and in Istanbul; the province was represented as an innocent victim in the power struggles.

⁸⁸ *Pundj*, no. 182 (11 July 1864), 1.

⁸⁹ Grigor Artznayan’s letter to G. Srvandztyan, dated 8 June 1868, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, columns 83–84.

⁹⁰ *Masis*, no. 905 (14 June 1869), 3; *Mamul*, no. 23 (14 June 1869), 181.

In the same period, anti-Harutyun groups formed alliances in Erzurum. The *Mamul* newspaper of Istanbul, which had a clear pro-Harutyun stance, provides details about these anti-Harutyun groups. News that contradicts attempts to secure the bishop's return, accompanied by negative commentary, appear in the paper. A note that the newspaper claims to have extracted from a longer letter, describes how a council (*khorhurd*) met in Erzurum and was presented by the populace with a petition asking the Administration of the Armenian Apostolic Community in Istanbul to appoint Bishop Khrimyan [Hayrik] Mkrtich as their *aradjnord*.⁹¹ The newspaper objected to such an appointment on four grounds: (a) The bishop had been called to Istanbul indirectly, *as if* in response to a national problem, (b) the Sublime Porte promised to send a *locum-tenens* in few days, (c) the people of Erzurum had not collectively declared any dissatisfaction with their *aradjnord*, and (d) the *aradjnord* did not—as written regulations required—submit his resignation to the [Armenian] Assembly in Istanbul. Therefore, concluded *Mamul*, “due to these legitimate reasons, the people of Karin can have Hayrik appointed only as a temporary deputy-*aradjnord* and not anything else.”⁹² As there was no reference to the legitimate or popular character of this council in the news, and it was the *zhoghovurd* (the people, the masses) who sent the petition, the council was probably an alternative to the notable-dominated Local Council.

Their request was not granted. Khrimyan Hayrik returned to St. Karapet Monastery in Mush by June 1869,⁹³ most likely because of the failure of the proposal to have him appointed as *aradjnord* of Erzurum. The notables' support for Bishop Harutyun did not necessarily mean that they did not support Khrimyan Hayrik's reform projects, including advancing education and

⁹¹ *Mamul*, no. 18 (17 May 1869), 138. It is interesting to note that the newspaper used Khrimyan Hayrik's official name, Bishop Mkrtich Khrimyan, which was contrary to the contemporary usage in the press.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Emma Kostandyan, “Taroni Hogeavor Aradjnordi,” *Lraber Hasarkakan Gitutyunneri* 1 (1999): 75.

finding solutions to the plight of Armenians in the provinces. If they had not, they would not have collaborated with him in the investigation in Mush, as detailed in the previous chapter. The support of notables for Bishop Harutyun, which willingly or unwillingly placed them in an anti-Khrimyan position, was a result of their reluctance to share their power with the non-privileged. Khrimyan Hayrik's name was more closely associated with the populace than the notables would have desired.

The postponement of the bishop's return was also linked with the rivalry between Russia and Britain on the borderlands of the Ottoman Empire. Maghack's report on the machinations of the *aradjnord* should be recalled here. The British Consul in Erzurum, Taylor, wired an extremely negative dispatch in December 1868 talking about the vices of the removed *aradjnord*. The consul claimed that the petitions which were sent to Istanbul in favor of the bishop had been organized by the Russian consul and signed by the notables, and they were submitted to the governor who "it is said—will back [them] by his influence."⁹⁴ The consul's accusations against the *aradjnord* Harutyun were many, most importantly that he was known for his "Russian proclivities" and possessed a wealth "of some fifteen thousand Turkish Liras...which he uses in usury and in loans to influential natives of his creed." The consul further claimed that "...the *esnaf* [artisans] —representing the masses—are to a man opposed to it as it is against them—owing to their corporative weakness—that his inordinate capacity is particularly directed."⁹⁵ Thus, at this juncture, the debate about Bishop Harutyun's removal and return turned into an area of struggle between different parties and interest groups in the city. This time, however, imperial actors (Britain and Russia) were also involved, as the consuls were linked with different interest groups and heavily invested in local politics. The claim of the consul that artisans represented the

⁹⁴ N.A., F.O., 195-889, no. 44. Dispatch from Consul Taylor to Sir Eliot, 24 December 1868.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

masses might be far-fetched, but there is no proof that they represented the masses any less than the notables or the bishop did. Indeed, the artisans had more representative capacity, not only due to their demographic superiority or proximity to the populace, but also because of their ability to build broader networks of alliances, which included Khrimyan Hayrik whom they proposed as *aradjnord*, and Khachatur Khan, who, as I will show shortly, supported the artisans' "excesses."

A fourth dimension is the role of the Administration of the Armenian Apostolic Community in this affair. On 4 September 1869, Khrimyan Hayrik was elected as the Patriarch of Istanbul. He was not the first but the third choice of the community leaders in Istanbul. In his election the support of Grigor Otiyan, the famous Tanzimat statesman and associate of Ali Pasha, was an important factor.⁹⁶ One of the first things Khrimyan Hayrik did in his new office was, ironically, to receive the order of Ali Pasha which permitted the return of Bishop Harutyun to Erzurum. He received that order on November 15; according to the newspapers the permission was granted "thanks to special efforts of Otiyan Efendi."⁹⁷ In other words, the great Tanzimat bureaucrat who supported Khrimyan Hayrik's candidacy to the post of Patriarch also supported Harutyun's return to Erzurum. After expressing his gratitude to the Grand Vizier, Bishop Harutyun left for Erzurum. *Mamul*, sympathetic to the bishop, wrote that "honor is the primary issue of life and death for people" and asked that those who had secretly and "indirectly" accused the *aradjnord* be found. The newspaper further claimed that "services which have been done by the *aradjnord* of Karin to the Ottoman government as a faithful subject are not unknown to Ali Pasha." The newspaper could only remind its readers how the bishop had stopped migrants who had left the Kharberd valley for Russia a decade ago.⁹⁸ The support that the bishop received

⁹⁶ Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 149–150.

⁹⁷ *Mamul*, no. 48 (26 November 1869), 383.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

from a first-class Tanzimat bureaucrat and reformist like Otiyan Efendi indicates the extent of Bishop Harutyun's power both in Erzurum and in government circles, and the intricacies of politics in Istanbul at that time. Having pro-Russian sentiments was only one of these dimensions and even its meaning was dependent on time and context.

Return of the bishop to Erzurum: the meaning of “pro-Russian” before 1878

The British Consul in Erzurum, upon receiving a telegraph that the Bishop was on his way to Erzurum, stated that the Russian Consul Ivanoff “is making most strenuous efforts to secure the return of this intriguing bishop” and added that the Russian consul had also claimed that the governor, Ismail Pasha, had promised to support the bishop's return, which the British consul did not believe.⁹⁹ After such upheavals, Bishop Harutyun Vehapetyan returned to Erzurum, where he stayed, notwithstanding some “changes of air” in the meantime,¹⁰⁰ until 1880. The support of the Russian consul behind the bishop and the potential pressure the consul could have exerted through his embassy became factors contributing to the bishop's power in the province.

The claims of Bishop Harutyun's alleged sympathies towards Russia were probably true. Besides the reports of Maghack and the British consul, there is other evidence to support this view. For instance, in the spring of 1872 the Russian consul began a tour in the area, and with a letter of introduction from the *aradjnord*, he visited St. Karapet monastery and then headed towards Van.¹⁰¹ This was the period when the *Mut yev Tes* (also known as *Miutyun i Prkutyun*: Unity for Salvation) organization was established in Van. It was an Armenian populist organization, which threatened the Apostolic Armenian clerics with conversion to Russian

⁹⁹ N.A., F.O., 195-939, no. 33, From Consul Taylor to Sir Eliot, 30 November 1869.

¹⁰⁰ For instance in 1874 the bishop had asked for permission to go to Istanbul for a change of air and was granted the permission, however, he changed his mind and went to St. Lusavorich Monastery in Erzurum province. *Pundj*, no. 900 (10 July 1874), 1.

¹⁰¹ Letter of Tadeos Khachaturyan to G. Srvandztyan, dated 9 April 1872, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 234.

Orthodoxy if the problems of Armenians in the province were not solved.¹⁰² Their members and some other people of Van met with the Russian consul during his visit. Srvandztyan was not very positive about the consul. In his letter to Khrimyan Hayrik he said, “he [the consul] is such a candid man that you would not think he is Russian, but after all he is Russian” and added that the consul had told Armenians who were disgruntled about their conditions “...you wait until the absolute Russian consul settles in Van to defend Christians from Kurds. Tell him your words, although I have a duty to investigate and record the conditions of Christians, in a few days I will return to Karin [Erzurum].”¹⁰³ Therefore in this period, it was not only the Ottoman imperial authorities—and probably British diplomats—in Istanbul who were concerned about Russian influence in the region, members of the Armenian Apostolic Church had their own reasons to be concerned, too.

However, there was another point, the importance of which should not be underestimated: the changing nature of relations between the Ottoman and Russian Empires and the difficulty of attributing a meaning to being “pro-Russian.” In the period between the defeat of the French at the hands of the Prussians in 1871 and the Ottoman state’s brutal suppression of the rebellions by local populations in the Balkans in 1875, a period known in history as the “Bulgarian Horrors,” the two empires enjoyed good relations.¹⁰⁴ Changes in inter-imperial politics had their repercussions in local society. A public manifestation of these relations took place in October 1871 when a committee led by the governor of Erzurum, including Muslim and

¹⁰² Gerard Jirair Libaridian, “The Ideology of Armenian Liberation: The Development of Armenian Political Thought before the Revolutionary Movement (1639–1885)” (PhD diss., UC Los Angeles, 1987), 206–209. This is a very interesting issue which deserves more attention, as the *Mut yev Tes* with its pro-Orthodoxy leanings might be related to the conspiracy to convert Armenian Apostolics to Russian Orthodoxy. As an additional fact to prove this, one of the clerics, Ignatios, who had been involved in the conspiracy in 1856, was the *aradjnord* of Van in the 1860s.

¹⁰³ G. Srvandztyan’s letter to Khrimyan Hayrik, dated 2 May 1872, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 235.

¹⁰⁴ M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton University Press, 2010), 84.

Armenian high-level bureaucrats, was assigned with the task of meeting Czar Alexander in Tbilisi, decorating Grand Duke Michael, and thus contributing to better relations between the two states.¹⁰⁵ Despite some scandals—such as disrespectful treatment shown to Armenian members of the committee by the Pasha and some members of the committee who visited “the public brothels and baths in their gold laced trousers”—the committee was successful in its mission. It returned to Erzurum after being accepted in Russia with “imperial hospitality [...] and the numerous decorations they received from the governor.”¹⁰⁶ However, even before that date there were also some good relations at the local level. One such occasion was the reception at the Russian Consulate in Erzurum that was organized in February of 1870 to celebrate the anniversary of the accession of Tsar Alexander to the throne. It was attended by prominent figures of the city, including the local Ottoman bureaucrats.¹⁰⁷ Having “Russian proclivities” had various meanings in the period and it did not necessarily mean promoting Russian interests at the expense of Ottomans, an accusation that was to be directed at Armenians after the 1877–1878 Russo-Ottoman War. Bishop Harutyun was never accused of following such a pro-Russian policy. Therefore attributing the bishop’s removal solely to the idea that the Porte sought to hinder the development of Russian influence in Erzurum is not a sufficient answer to all the questions related to his removal. These questions include why the bishop was reinstalled in 1869 by a pro-French statesman like Ali Pasha, and why Khachatur Khan, himself a former Russian subject, “sold out” his people to the governor.

¹⁰⁵ N.A., F.O., 195-939, no. 15, Consul Taylor to Sir Eliot, 16 October 1871.

¹⁰⁶ N.A., F.O., 195-939, no. 17, Consul Taylor to Sir Eliot, 21 October 1871.

¹⁰⁷ Enver Konukçu, *Selçuklulardan Cumhuriyete Erzurum*, (Erzurum Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası, Yardım, Araştırma ve Geliştirme Vakfı, 1992), 287.

Dynamics of local politics: Khachatur Khan vs. the bishop

Both Khachatur Khan and Bishop Harutyun were linked to the same political/religious clique within the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the early period of their lives. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, before leaving the clergyman's path, Khachatur Khan was raised by Hovhannes Movsesyan (later Patriarch of Jerusalem as Hovhannes of Smyrna), whom Vehapetyan briefly served.¹⁰⁸ It is not known whether Khachatur Khan's leaving Hovhannes Movsesyan's service had any impact on the relations between him and Bishop Harutyun. This does not appear to be the case. It may be recalled that in 1862, when Kürkcübaşı Makaryan Agop and Khachatur Khan made applications to become Ottoman subjects, their applications were supported by the bishop. How, then, should one interpret Khachatur Khan's move against the bishop in 1868? It might be the case that animosity had grown between Khachatur Khan and the bishop over the years for some reason. However, I claim that the reason for removal of the bishop was neither related to the reformist agenda of the notables or the clerics in its broader sense, nor to the bishop's Russian sympathies or even to personal animosity between the bishop and Khachatur Khan. It was, rather, related to the political economy of the city in the 1860s, and the artisans' reaction to the dominant role of the elites in economic and communal politics. The decoration of the bishop by the Russian consul gave them the pretext to carry on their anti-Harutyun agenda and Khachatur Khan was their "secret hands." This being the case, as immediately after the removal of Harutyun, the artisans attacked Kürkcübaşı Makaryan Agop

¹⁰⁸ Antaramian claims that Harutyun Vehapetyan was closely associated with Hovhannes of Smyrna. He states that "Hovsep [Vehapetyan] then traveled with the newly elected [P]atriarch [Hovhannes] to Jerusalem for Giragos' funeral. While Hovhannes was consolidating his position against Giragos' predecessor Zakaria and his supporters, he ordained Hovsep a *vardapet* (celibate priest)." Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 73. My reading of Antaramian's source, the *Azgapatum* of Ormanyan, does not imply such a close relation, on the contrary Hovhannes postponed Vehapetyan's ordination for some time and submitted it to the Patriarchate of Istanbul. Vehapetyan did not return to Jerusalem after his ordination as a *vardapet*. See the subsection "Disputes about the Bishop Harutyun Vehapetyan and his temporary removals" in this chapter.

Efendi, the most powerful notable of the region who reached the peak of his economic and symbolic power in the mid-1860s.

Kürkçübaşı Agop Revisited: Between “Worthy of Immortality” and “Anti-Reform”

As may be recalled from the previous chapter, the governor of Erzurum, Hayreddin Mehmed Pasha, requested the Porte to grant Kürkçübaşı Makaryan Agop an honorary second rank upon the notable’s acceptance into Ottoman subjecthood in 1862. The Pasha had underlined Agop Efendi’s “manifest power, influence, standing and personal dignity” as the reason for the request for decoration of the notable.¹⁰⁹ The pasha, in a later dispatch, insisted on his earlier request by claiming that their acceptance of Ottoman subjecthood would motivate Armenians who had accepted formal Russian protection to re-accept Ottoman subjecthood.¹¹⁰ Although at first this sounds like exaggerated praise of the notable by the Pasha in order to receive approval for his request, Agop Efendi did indeed possess immense social and economic capital. This capital could also easily be turned into political power for his personal benefit at the expense of many members of the local community during the period of Armenian Constitution. In the current section I focus on this aspect of the notable’s power.

The first great manifestation of the notable’s economic and social power came during the drought of 1863 when, as has already been noted, hundreds in the Kharberd valley left their lands with the intention of migrating to Russia. Due to the crop failure in the districts of Kharberd, Palu and Mush, those districts began to import wheat from Erzurum, which had resulted in an increase of prices in the city from 3.5 guruh for a *lidre* of wheat before the drought to 8 guruh afterward.¹¹¹ Agop Efendi, known for his connections and for supplying wheat to the army

¹⁰⁹ “Hoca Agop’un derkâr olan kadir ve î’tibâr ve vak’ ve haysiyyeti cihetle mûmâileyhin rütbe-i sâniye...,” B.O.A., MVL., 635-28, 12 Muharrem 1279 (10 July 1862).

¹¹⁰ B.O.A., MVL., 641-1, 3 Rebi’ü'l-evvel 1279 (28 August 1862).

¹¹¹ *Masis*, no. 617 (7 December 1863), 2.

during the Crimean War, proposed to the governor that he could solve the crisis if given a monopoly on the wheat market. The conditions were as follows: the notable would supply bakeries wheat at 7 guruh 30 para for a year, the bakers would not buy wheat at the market, and they would sell bread at the price of 48 para per *okka* (approximately 1.2 kilograms). According to one commentator, Agop Efendi's proposal "touched those many [who have] love for profit, particularly the bakers, because an *okka* of bread is being sold at 100 paras." The opposition to the notable's proposal did not gain traction, and in time a *lidre* of wheat flour fell as low as 5 guruh and "the populace [was] grateful to the notable."¹¹² How the bakers were affected by the prices set by the notable was not mentioned in the news.

The proposal of Agop Efendi to monopolize the wheat market was regarded as a humane (*mardasirabar*) act by the writer of a letter to the newspaper. In this period, the notable's "humane" and "dedicated to the community" (*azgaser*) deeds continued. He constructed a new building attached to the existing Artznayan National School of Erzurum in 1864–1865 as the most important manifestation of such deeds.¹¹³ Priest Hovhannes Ter Sargisyan of Bitlis praised Kürkçübaşı Agop Efendi for undertaking the construction of the school in a sermon he gave on the benefits of the constitution. For the priest, the school was important proof of the progress of the local Armenian community during the new constitutional era.¹¹⁴ The school was also considered a source of pride for the whole community. For instance, when Musa Saffet Pasha and Ferik Azmi Pasha examined Armenian school children in late 1864, as it might be recalled, they were not taken to the existing national school due to its bad condition. Instead, they were taken to the school under construction. The Pashas reportedly said, "such men [implying Agop

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ghazar Charig, *Hushamatyan Bardzr Hayqi Karinapatum* (Beyrut, Mshak Tparan, 1957), 163–164.

¹¹⁴ *Masis*, no. 653 (15 August 1864), 3.

Efendi] are worthy of immortality with the indelible memories [they leave] for the ages.”¹¹⁵ It should be noted that Priest Ter Sargisyan, who praised Agop Efendi, was from Taron (Mush-Bitlis region) and there was no chance that he was not aware of how the people of the region were embittered against Kürkçübaşı for his exploitation of the region (a subject I examined in detail in chapter two). The correspondent’s proud recount of the Pashas’ praises of the notable and his school might be related to the Ottomanist atmosphere of the era in general, and to the fact that he was director of a reading hall in the town in particular.¹¹⁶ These news pieces and the priest’s sermon indicate the prominent position that was attributed to education as an element of reform during the era of the Armenian Constitution. They also highlight the gray zone within which notable moved, between devotion to his community and oppression of his own people. However, there were some in Erzurum who did not accept the image of Kürkçübaşı Agop as an exemplary notable.

Kürkçübaşı Makaryan Agop: “First and Main Enemy of Khrimyan”

Zhamanak, a newspaper that had maintained a clear anti-Harutyun stance during the bishop’s absence in 1865, had later admitted that the bishop showed some signs of reformist activity after his return from his first removal. It published a long letter which, while mentioning certain developments in the city, directed open criticism towards Agop Efendi. For the newspaper, Makaryan Agop Efendi was a symbol of the failures of reform, as the people had still not been saved from notables like him.¹¹⁷ The writer of the letter further claimed that the communal assemblies were tools in the hands of the notables, who ran them as if they were assemblies in the pre-constitution era, and it further added: “If Makaryan sits [as the] head of the

¹¹⁵ *Zhamanak*, no. 51 (5 December 1864), 204.

¹¹⁶ The correspondent was Petros M. Odznetsi, director of the Arsharunyan Reading Hall. For reading halls in Erzurum, see chapter 4 footnote 80 above.

¹¹⁷ *Zhamanak*, no. 83 (26 February 1866), 33–37.

assembly, everyone else will remain silent, no one will have the power to make any observations. Consequently, Makaryan's goal [is] to confine the constitutionally established assembly through a channel, [so that] he will have the same power [as before] and that everything will come out from his mouth."¹¹⁸ The writer also questioned why only 250 people out of 3,000 households in Erzurum voted in the elections, which points to the limited nature of the pool of voters—a matter also decided by the notables. Yet the writer was not completely hopeless; he wrote, “if there would be a Makaryan there [in the assembly] then there will be also a [Khachatur] Pastirmacıyan Efendi who will be the fearless preacher of truth and justice and will break into pieces secret and weak ideas.”¹¹⁹

The main concern of the writer was obviously the power Makaryan Agop held over the local communal assemblies. According to the writer, the economic activities that formed the basis of Agop's political power were hindered by people like Khrimyan Hayrik. Therefore Makaryan's men in the Communal Representative Assembly (*Yerespokhanakan Zhoghov*) of the province wanted Khrimyan to resign. “Makaryan is first and main enemy of Khrimyan,” said the writer, because Khrimyan Hayrik enlightened people to stand against Makaryan, who farms out tithes and gets 1% for himself. Moreover, Makaryan Agop Efendi had Vardapet Mkhitar imprisoned because the *vardapet* was trying to organize people and demanded money—4,000 liras—that the notable owed to the people.¹²⁰ This debt, as I examined in the second chapter, was from the period of the Crimean War and it still had not been paid even in 1870. Interestingly enough, this was a visible statement about the polarization of the local community, placing Kürkçübaşı and Bishop Harutyun on one side, and Khrimyan Hayrik and Pastrımacıyan on the

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

other. However, sides in this narrative would change in the following years, as Khrimyan Hayrik would regain his position in Mush, as might be recalled, due to Bishop Harutyun's report. Soon the Pastırmacıyans would side with Makaryan Kürkçübaşı Agop when the latter had to face the artisans' challenge. Before examining the consolidation of alliances among rival socio-economic groups and alliances within the notables of Erzurum, I will examine the activities of Mr. Maghack, the dragoman of the British Consul in Erzurum. This case, too, shows the ways in which imperial politics merged with the local social order and interests.

Plot Within a Plot: Mr. Maghack, Notables, and Imperial Powers in Local Politics

A major figure in the local society of Erzurum in the 1850s and 1860s was Antoine Selman Maghack, the dragoman of the British Consulate. In the eyes of British Consul Taylor, Mr. Maghack was not an ordinary dragoman. The consul knew him from his youth due to Mr. Maghack's relatives' work in the British consular service. For the consul, the dragoman was far superior to his counterparts in his skills and capacity, which caused some envy in Erzurum. Mr. Maghack was from a Christian notable family of Baghdad and had served in the consulate of Erzurum as dragoman since 1854. He was probably ethnically Armenian, as his full surname, which he did not use, was Magha[c]kyan. On occasion, however, he was referred to as an Arab.¹²¹ He came from a family that had served under consuls in Baghdad, and the dragoman himself had served General Williams in Kars during the Crimean War before assuming his position in the consulate in Erzurum. Mr. Maghack had engaged in various activities in Erzurum, from tax farming to membership in the municipal board, and from membership in a committee selecting native items for the Paris exhibition to leading agricultural modernization in the countryside of Erzurum. Mr. Maghack decided to leave his position as a dragoman in 1871 because he was "obliged in consequence of his numerous engagements with the local

¹²¹ N.A., F.O., 195-889, no. 8, From Taylor to Sir Eliot, 8 April 1867.

government as a part [?] farmer of the revenues.”¹²² Consul Taylor, who talked about Mr. Maghack’s services in very positive terms, asked the embassy to intervene on behalf of Mr. Maghack to receive an honorary second rank. In his report, however, the consul did not remind his superiors in Istanbul and in London of the crises his dragoman had caused in the previous years. The crises not only were closely related to problems around his marriage with Kürkçübaşı’s daughter, but also show how the social lives of these power holders were intricately linked to local and imperial politics.

A British dragoman, a murder plot and the French, Russian, and Persian consuls
In April 1867, private correspondence took place between Monsieur Courtois, the French Vice-Consul in Erzurum, Mr. Maghack, and Mr. Taylor, the British consul. They were about the local crisis that had evolved around the family of Mr. Maghack—more precisely Mr. Maghack’s alleged plot to murder his wife in order to marry Kürkçübaşı’s daughter. Upon reading the very grave accusations against his employee, the British consul felt the need to inform his superiors in Istanbul. Mr. Maghack had been separated from his wife because she, who was never referred to by her name in any of the correspondence and reports, was accused of being a well-known prostitute in Erzurum. The accusation against Mr. Maghack was about his alleged involvement in successive attempts to murder his wife in 1866. Mrs. Maghack, who claimed French subjecthood—for the reason that Mr. Maghack had held it for a limited time in the years when they got married—had made French authorities in Erzurum intervene on her behalf. Her case also received some support from the Russian Consul, Ivanoff. According to the plaintiffs, Mr. Maghack had proposed to one of his neighbors, through the intermediacy of a household maid, to help him get rid of his wife: either the man would marry her in return for 90 liras, or murder her for 500 liras. According to the Persian Consul of Erzurum, who later became involved in the

¹²² N.A., F.O., 195-939, no. 20, From Taylor to Sir Eliot, 30 October 1871. It might be “...part-time tax farmer” but the word “time” is missing in the original text.

affair, Mr. Maghack also approached a Persian subject in the same period with a similar proposal to assist him “in one way or another to rid him of his wife.”¹²³ The Ottoman authorities carried out the investigations, since Mr. Maghack was an Ottoman subject, and he was acquitted. According to the British consul, the governor told Mr. Maghack that the French vice-consul and the Russian consul had slandered the dragoman. In the meanwhile, Mr. Maghack had allegedly invited the French consul to a duel to clear his honor and had also shown disrespect to the Catholic bishop who tried to solve the problems, further complicating the situation.¹²⁴ The French vice-consul desisted from his accusations a few months after the authorities were informed about the episode,¹²⁵ and within two weeks after his withdrawal of the accusations, the French vice-consul left the city.¹²⁶ The main reason behind Mr. Maghack’s alleged determination in this criminal course of action was that he aimed to marry S[1]rma, Kürkçübaşı’s widowed daughter.

According to the new French vice-consul in the city, Mr. Maghack had removed S[1]rma Kürkçübaşı from her parents’ house and placed her in his house by September 1867, notwithstanding the criticism of the Catholic religious authorities of the town, who were preparing to send a letter of protest to the French vice-consulate about the affair.¹²⁷ Those protests bear no real importance, as in less than six months the dragoman married S[1]rma Kürkçübaşı in late May 1868. The marriage caused more turmoil than ever before. The period up to the marriage had witnessed a power struggle between various local actors, particularly consuls, whereas the marriage itself revealed other aspects of local politics. It was the last field

¹²³ N.A., F.O., 195-889, no. 8, From Taylor to Sir Eliot, 8 April 1867.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ N.A., F.O., 195-889, no. 16, From Taylor to Sir Eliot, 4 July 1867.

¹²⁶ N.A., F.O., 195-889, no. 20, From Taylor to Sir Eliot, 26 July 1867.

¹²⁷ C.A.D.N., 166-PO-D27, Ambassade, Constantinople, Série D-2, Erzeroum, no.6, addressed to Outrey, *charge d’affaires* of France in Constantinople, 1 September 1867.

of struggle between the artisans and elite, the former allying with Mr. Maghack whereas the latter, unanimously with the exception of Khachatur Khan, stood on Kürkçübaşı's side.

More than a Wedding: The Marriage of Mr. Maghack and S[ı]rma Kürkçübaşı

On 24 May 1868 Mr. Maghack married S[ı]rma Kürkçübaşı in the Armenian Apostolic rite. The priests who conducted the ceremony were Father Hovhannes and Father Melkiset. The two priests and another four priests who were also present sanctioned the marriage of Mr. Maghack, "who in a petition states he is an Armenian by father and mother and that he obeys all Armenian rites and ceremonies in conformity with which he wishes to be married."¹²⁸ At this point a telegraph reached the room where the ceremony was taking place and the ceremony stopped. Later the two priests who conducted the service were exiled, their functions as priest abrogated.¹²⁹ Interestingly enough, among the guests were *takhan*[?] and *bismekci*[?] artisans, not notables. Mr. Maghack's acceptance of the Apostolic Rite might have been an attempt to solve any further complications, given the impermissibility of marriages between Apostolic [S[ı]rma] and Catholic [Maghack] Armenians. If this was the case, however, it did not help.

Grigor Artznayan, the vicar of Bishop Harutyun in his absence, described the events as "troublesome." He admitted that the city was divided into camps, saying: "The city was divided into two, Antuan and Makaryan, for the *bedelet*, the majority of the artisans were embittered against the major notable [Kürkçübaşı Makaryan], Antuan's side grew day by day, a petition was also sent to the Apostolic Patriarchate, asking forgiveness from the priests and recognition of Antuan's marriage [as] lawful. If the contrary happens there will be great noise and troubles and many conversions [to Catholicism]. *Efendis* except the Khan, found fault with what the *esnaf*

¹²⁸ N.A., F.O., 195-889, no. 30, From Taylor to Eliot, 19 July 1868, enclosed document 1.

¹²⁹ Grigor Artznayan's letter to G. Srvandztyan, dated 8 June 1868, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column. 84.

did...”¹³⁰ This exactly confirmed what Consul Taylor stated in his report: “the Armenian *esnaf* and notables in Erzurum form two parties hostile to each other as the latter take advantage of their influence and position to impose an undue share of the annual taxes upon the former.”¹³¹

The notables sent a petition to the Patriarchate on May 28, and on May 31 the artisans responded with their above-mentioned petition in favor of the marriage, a petition sealed by 376 people.¹³²

That was the last and most significant struggle between the two groups in the local Armenian community.

Before preparing his report to the British embassy, Consul Taylor claimed to have made inquiries with the artisans, notables, and clerics about the issue. He mentioned two petitions, one signed by all of the notables of the town and another one by the *esnaf* and local populace. The consul, sympathetic to his employee from the very beginning of the affair, summarized the petition of the notables and answered their claims in his own report to his superiors. For the consul all charges against Mr. Maghack except the one about the invalidity of the marriage were unsupported. He accepted that a second marriage in the absence of divorce was an act of bigamy according to the Armenian Apostolic rite, but it should be kept in mind, he noted, that Mr. Maghack’s ex-wife, who was known for her prostitution, had begun to live with another man in Ahiska, Russia. The petition of the notables also accused Mr. Maghack of being indebted to Kürkçübaşı. However, the consul claimed the opposite was the case: the notable was indebted to Maghack for the services of the dragoman, particularly in the notable’s intricate money affairs including those with the government over the last two years. Mr. Maghack was also owed money by Kürçübaşı’s wife and son, who also had not paid back their debts. The petition of the notables

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ N.A., F.O., 195-889, no. 30, From Taylor to Sir Eliot, 19 July 1868.

¹³² Ibid.

further accused Mr. Maghack of taking a “young woman” by force, referring to S[1]rma’s move to the dragoman’s house. According to the consul, the bride was 34 years old (a claim that conflicts with the dates on her tombstone), a widow, and had gone of her own will.¹³³ For Consul Taylor, the reasons behind the turmoil in the city were twofold. The first one was related to money and the Kürkçübaşı family; the sons-in-law of Kürkçübaşı—and particularly Manas, who was in debt to his father-in-law—did not want a powerful figure like Mr. Maghack to marry into the family. Second, it was another arena of struggle between the artisans and the notables.

The petition of the notables was signed unanimously by all notables of Erzurum. One of their claims, indeed the one that was true, was that the marriage could not be ratified because Mr. Maghack was already married to someone else. However, Consul Taylor claimed that this was just a pretext, since even apart from the highly questionable nature of Mr. Maghack’s previous marriage, the rule was applied with great flexibility when it came to notables. The Consul argued, “even one of the most influential sealers of the petition [of the notables] to the Patriarchate—a certain Bastoormajee [Pastırmacı]—was married a second time to a young virgin, his first wife being still alive.”¹³⁴ Arbitrary application of rules by notables was not only the consul’s criticism. The artisans directed it towards the notables in their petition to the Patriarch and threatened the Patriarch, who was “accustomed to hearing their [notables] own words, and executing according to their orders.” They asked for protection from the arbitrary rule of the notables so that they “will not be forced to undertake means that would damage our community.” In short they wanted “justice.”¹³⁵

¹³³ N.A., F.O., 195-889, no. 30, From Taylor to Eliot, 19 July 1868. According to her tombstone she was born in 1840, so she was less than 30 years old when she got married. See footnote 138 below.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ N.A., F.O., 195-889, no. 30, From Taylor to Eliot, 19 July 1868, attachment 2, translation of the petition of the *esnaf* to the Patriarchate.

According to Church Law, a marriage was invalid as long as there was no written consent of the bishop, or of his vicar, in this case Ter Grigor Artznayan. It was claimed that Priest Artznayan had given verbal consent to the marriage but had later denied it, whereas Bishop Harutyun, who was in Istanbul at the time, claimed that he had no idea who the sealers of the artisans' petition were, a move to discredit them in the eyes of the Apostolic Patriarchate.¹³⁶ The clerics of the town were also divided into two, as six of the thirteen priests of the city had supported the marriage; after a month, the two exiled priests were still in Karmir Vanq and the other four who ratified the marriage were waiting their turn to be severely punished.¹³⁷

Alliances and consolidation of the notables as a group

The marriage of Mr. Maghack and S[1]rma Kürkçübaşı had turned into a stage on which the decade-long tensions between the *esnaf* and the notables were displayed. Economic struggle between the two groups due to unfair distribution of taxes, the tax farming of *bedelat* on the one hand, and political problems based on the dominance of the notables, on the other, were the main reasons for the conflict. When the challenge came from the *esnaf*, the notables sided with Kürkçübaşı in an attempt to consolidate their power over the rest of the society. The fact that Pastırmacıyan was considered a balancing power against Kürkçübaşı a few years ago and turned into a leading name in the pro-Kürkçübaşı petition, shows that the challenge from the *esnaf* against the political and economic dominance of the notables unified the latter group, regardless of their stance on reform or the bishop. Facing an attack from the non-privileged who were not allowed to participate in the new imperial order, solidarity among the notables was consolidated.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Grigor Artznayan's letter to G. Srvandztyan, dated 1 July 1868, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 85.

Khachatur Khan's position as the only notable who did not criticize the *esnaf*, which took place only a couple of months after "delivering up his nationals" in the Bishop Harutyun affair, is quite a noteworthy move. This was the last in a series of moves against other notables to affirm his power in the society. As I showed in a sketch of his biography in the previous chapter, from 1869 onwards he was an elected member of the Provincial Administrative Assembly of Erzurum, as the representative of the Apostolic Armenians. Khachatur Khan was not from Erzurum, but established himself there due to his business. He had taken over the massive wheat export trade by 1874, the former business of Kürkçübaşı Agop Efendi. However Khachatur Khan was not a landowner, unlike the other notables—Kürkçübaşı Agop, the Pastırmacıyans, the Ballaryan and the Kharajyans. And interestingly enough, when Hamazasp Ballaryan and Daniel Kharajyan returned to Erzurum after the dismissal of the Ottoman Parliament in 1877, Khachatur Khan did not return. He remained in Istanbul where he would die some fifteen years later. Khachatur Khan had built a power base in Erzurum in alliance with the artisans. The fact that he was a self-made notable, whose power base was urban and who did not invest in the land-ownership, but had risen through the administrative structures of the new order, did not permit him to build an independent power base, unlike other notables. These circumstances led him to base his power in the Armenian community through close relations with the urban population. As I touch upon in the epilogue, his intricate positions in the Ottoman administration in Erzurum allowed him to move on with his career in Istanbul as a public and community administrator.

As for S[1]rma Kürkçübaşı, not much is known about her agency in this male-narrated/dominated story, except that she was bold enough to move into Mr. Maghack's house before marriage. We also know that her marriage was eventually ratified. According to her

tombstone, when she died in 1881 at the age of 41, she was “S[ı]rma daughter of Mahtesi Agop Makaryan and wife of Antuan Magha[c]kyan.”¹³⁸

Conclusion

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, the Armenian community of Erzurum was divided along class lines—*esnaf* vs. notables—in the 1860s and 1870s, the period of reform and the Armenian Constitution. The constitution, by virtue not only of its organs and committees, but also through the hopes and expectations it engendered, provided new fields of struggle between these groups. The main struggle was over leadership of the community. This period is marked by the economic decline of the artisans due to increasing taxes and the ever-growing wealth of the notables who controlled tax revenues and the market. This tension reveals itself in the problems that artisans had with some notables who were not only powerful in the local economy, but also farmed out taxes that the artisans paid and enjoyed close relations with local authorities. Thus the dominance of notables in the new assemblies failed to fulfill any potential expectations of the non-privileged for stronger participation in community affairs. The classes were not monolithic entities, but rather camps forming alliances in the face of fierce problems. The struggle between the *esnaf* and the notables is revealed in detail in a few instances: first in the cases of the temporary removal of Bishop Harutyun in 1865 and in 1868–1869, and then in the strife surrounding the marriage of Mr. Maghack, the dragoman of the British Consulate in Erzurum, and S[ı]rma, daughter of Kürkçübaşı Agop Efendi. The artisans protested the bishop in all of these cases and also stood against the notable who refused to permit the marriage of his daughter. The advice of the National Administration in Istanbul to the protestors was to force the bishop to

¹³⁸ Qosyan, *Bardır Hayq* 1: 291. Qosyan copied the inscriptions on the tombstones in the Armenian Apostolic Cemetery of Erzurum. The cemetery was destroyed after the Genocide.

apply the constitution fully and establish a General Assembly where they could voice their discontent. However, as I have shown, elections were organized by the notables, who thanks to their social and symbolic power in the community before the application of the Armenian Constitution in Erzurum—were designated to choose both the voters and the candidates in the elections for the post-constitution elections. The *esnaf* could do nothing but protest about their lack of participation in the process. In other words, there was “reform”—but its interpretation by different parties varied according to their position in the society and their participation in its administration.

The chapter has also demonstrated how these very local and sometimes personal issues not only held the attention of consuls in the city but also easily integrated into their imperial rivalries. Mr. Maghack’s alleged plot to murder his wife and marry Kürkçübaşı’s daughter was turned into a struggle between the Russian, French, and Persian consuls on the one side and the British consul on the other. The British consul defended the dragoman in return for his faithful service, while the other consuls and vice-consuls used the complex love-affair as a pretext to wage war on the British consul on a local level. The timing of the consuls’ intervention in the affair coincided with Mr. Maghack’s report on the bishop, in which he accused the bishop of supporting the Russians. The case thus exemplifies the ways in which personal and local rivalries merged with imperial ones on the borderlands of the empire. The struggle between British, French and Russian consuls to exert more influence in the local society of Erzurum in the late 1860s and early 1870s, a period when the Ottoman Empire was making and re-making alliances between the Great Powers, had led them to invest deeply in local politics as a continuation of their imperial policies. The British consul’s intervention in the affairs on the side of the

dragoman—thus, by extension, supporting the artisans against the notables and the bishop—was another vivid example of how imperial and local politics were mostly interdependent.

Going back to the issue of reform, these developments did not mean that “reformist” ideology was weak at the time. On the contrary, it permeated the political atmosphere. The artisans, the notables and the bishop moved within the field of reform and there was no visible anti-reform party. The intra-communal struggle did not result in reformist and anti-reformist parties, crystallized in *esnaf* and notables, but resulted instead in different meanings being attributed to reform in a variety of sub-fields, ranging from popular participation in governance by artisans to the construction (and later administration of) community schools by notables.

Therein, however, lay a dilemma: the struggle between the wealthy and the artisans in Erzurum in 1860s resembled the struggle between *amiras* and *esnaf* in Istanbul in the late 1840s. The latter conflict was considered a milestone on the path leading to the Armenian Constitution. In both cases, in Istanbul and in Erzurum, the *esnaf* lacked material means to support the community institutions. In Erzurum of the 1860s and 1870s the majority of the *esnaf*, who could not make it into the ranks of notables, economically diminished in the face of the latter group. Seen from the perspective of the notables, reform provided the notables what they deserved, namely a prominent position in the governance of the community, simply because they, not the *esnaf*, were the ones who had sufficient economic power and political networks to carry out such a role. The notables’ relations with the imperial administration, which I examined in the last chapter, were the most important component of these networks. Likewise we witness the transformation of “traditional” charity, exemplified in the works of Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi, which targeted different segments of the population but were mainly limited to activities like providing free food and building religious institutions. Charity now began more and more to

resemble modern acts of philanthropy, which not only legitimized the notable's position in the eyes of the masses but also were visibly enmeshed with specific ideas of community-building and reform. In the light of these developments, I suggest a revision to the scholarship on the Armenian Constitution, suggesting that in Erzurum in the 1860s and 1870s—and probably in Istanbul of the 1840s—the *esnaf* challenged the elite not because they had the power to do so but, very much to the contrary, because they were losing economic and thus political power and sought to compensate for the loss by jumping on the constitutionalist bandwagon.

Bringing intra-communal struggle into the history of Ottoman Armenians leads us to question the validity of the claim that Bishop Harutyun and Khrimyan Hayrik formed opposing parties due to their stance towards reform; that they were anti-reformist and reformist, respectively. Although it is true that Khrimyan Hayrik was nominated as a bishop by the *esnaf*, albeit unsuccessfully, in 1869, soon after which he left the Erzurum, the cleric was simultaneously in close relations with notables such as Daniel Kharajyan. To complicate matters further, I have shown that the Kharajyans, including Daniel Kharajyan, sided with Bishop Harutyun and Kürkçübaşı Agop. This supports my claim that it is almost impossible to discern alliances in local politics, as they were constantly made and remade. Also it is not easy to talk about exclusive and unchanging groups of reformists and anti-reformists, as the actions of these groups were dependent on how they interpreted and perceived reform. That is why we have ended up with caricatured images of the bishop, who was either a good bishop who fulfilled an important duty in the vast Bishopric of Erzurum or a reactionary and an anti-constitutionalist opponent of reform.

Within this complex net of relations which linked local, imperial and inter-imperial politics, there is one issue about which we can be fully certain. Through all the political

stratification and consolidation of social groups among the Armenian community in Erzurum, the masses were only indirectly represented in narratives about the political life of the city. Yet all three of the actors examined in this chapter, the *esnaf*, the notables and the bishop, employed the discourse of acting in the name of the masses and representing them. That discourse would change only when new groups were able to rise to prominent positions in the society and begin to negotiate power with non-privileged groups by incorporating them into local politics. This was the transformation of the elite-dominated society into a broader network of coalitions between different groups—the transformation of local struggles into “national” politics. And that is what I examine in the conclusion.

**Chapter 6 and Conclusion:
Twilight of the Age of Armenian Notables, and
Modernization and Nationalization of Armenian Politics**

Captain Clayton, who was commissioned to the district of Van as a military-consul, wrote to his superiors about the future of region, the mood of its peoples, and the imperial rivalry between Russia and England in the aftermath of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1878–1879.¹ He claimed that there were three groups among the Armenians, each with different future prospects: “The most sensible and enlightened who recognize that they do not fit for autonomy, the younger and more hotheaded who dream of independence and the peasantry who want nothing but security and protection from wrong and robbery.” The soldier-diplomat added:

...[T]he first class would be willing to see the present government to remain if adequate reforms were brought about and would like to see this done by England’s influence, but even they do not believe that the Turks will ever reform by their own action but hold that it must be done by an International Commission as in Eastern Roumelia or by some other external force; the second class of Armenians are inclined to look to Russia rather than England because they think that what has been done in Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia is due to Russia and they have ties with her in Loris Melikoff and other Armenians who have distinguished themselves in her service, and the third class the peasantry, would welcome a Russian advance with enthusiasm, caring nothing for political power and knowing Russia only as a near and tangible power who could give them the protection they want while England is distant and her desire or ability to assist them vague and uncertain. But all I believe to be diverted in the end to whatever power gives them their long desired safety and prosperity...²

The soldier-diplomat’s statements were a snapshot of the political divisions among the Armenians and their attitudes towards the great powers and reforms after the war. The war,

¹ Captain Emilius Clayton, who had no diplomatic experience either in the Ottoman Empire or elsewhere, was appointed to the region of Van as a military-consul after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878. British Military-consuls were appointed to the Eastern provinces following the Cyprus Convention in 1878, which bound Britain to act on the side of the Ottoman Empire against Russian aggression and to oversee the application of reforms as noted during the Congress of Berlin. The establishment of the military consuls also had to do with British domestic politics, particularly with Lord Salisbury’s efforts to create an alternative diplomatic corps within the traditional diplomatic system at the Foreign Office. For an analysis of the military-consul system, see Ronald Marvin DeVore, “British Military Consuls in Asia Minor, 1878–1882” (PhD Diss., Indiana University, 1973).

² The British Library, Western Manuscripts Add MS 39032, Layard Papers, Vol. 102, Letter from Captain Emilius Clayton, Vice-Consul at Van: Correspondence with Sir A. H. Layard, 11 April 1880, fol. 273.

which had begun as war between the Ottoman Empire and the principalities of Montenegro and Serbia, had turned into a major confrontation between the Ottomans and the Russian Empire. Erzurum had just fallen when the imperial Russian Armies approached Istanbul in March 1878. The war had major impacts on the Ottoman state and society. The principalities of Serbia, Montenegro, and the Twin Principalities (of Romania) became independent, one-third of Bulgaria became autonomous, and another third semi-autonomous. Millions of inhabitants of the ex-Ottoman territories in the Balkans, mostly Muslims and some Jews, migrated to the Ottoman territories.

The war also internationalized the “Armenian Question,” as explicit articles were added to the texts of both the St. Stephanos Treaty and the Congress of Berlin about the deterioration of the Armenians’ condition, especially in the countryside in the eastern provinces.³ However, this did not mean that the Great Powers of the time agreed on a single policy of reform to be applied in the provinces.⁴ Nor did it mean that the period before the Russo-Ottoman War was peaceful in the provinces. On the contrary, it was the period of Provincial Oppressions (*Gavarakan Harstaharutyunner*), as it was called at the time. Increasing oppression by Kurdish tribes and abuses by tax collectors, tax farmers and state authorities were the main problems of the period.⁵ As discussed in the introduction to the dissertation, various historians have argued that the

³ Richard Hovannisian, “The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire,” in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 2:206–212.

⁴ Hrant Pasdermadjian, *Historie de l'Arménie: Depuis les Origines jusqu'au Traité de Lausanne*, 2nd édition (Paris, Librairie Oriental H. Samuëlian, 1964), 326ff. Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923: A Study in International Relations* (London, New York: St. Martin's P., 1966), 253–255; for the “official” narrative of the period see *Hayots Patmutyun, hator: 3: Nor Zhamanakashrdjan* (Yerevan: GAA Patmuyun Institut, 2010), 429–447.

⁵ The Patriarchate of Istanbul had prepared two reports in the first half of the 1870s. A summary of the first report was submitted to the government in 1872 whereas the second report (1876) was not submitted due to debates in the Armenian National Assembly. Lillian Etmekjian, “The Armenian National Assembly of Turkey and Reform,” *The Armenian Review* 29 (1976): 38–52. For the importance of these reports for the understanding of the chronology of the “Armenian Question” see Yaşar Tolga Cora, “Osmanlı Taşrasındaki Ermeniler Üzerine Olan Tarihyazımında Sınıf Analizinin Eksikliği,” *Praxis*, 39 (2015): 26–28.

rapidly changing Ottoman state apparatus, centralization attempts by the central government and the filling of the power vacuum by non-state agents such as Kurdish tribes, and problems over the settlement of Caucasian immigrants all led to a decline in security in the region and growing oppression of the settled population.

However, after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878 these issues and “reform” in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire took on a different meaning than the one examined throughout this dissertation. It was no more a matter of changing imperial and communal institutions to resolve the existing and “local” problems. Reform turned, instead, into a diplomatic tool in the negotiations between the European Powers, Russia and the Ottoman state and specifically targeted Armenian populations in those regions. Some local Armenians in Erzurum captured this moment and actively participated in the shaping of the reform project by making their own reform proposals.⁶ This moment marked not only the internationalization of the Armenian Question, but also the nationalization of Armenian politics.

Almost every scholar who has examined “the Armenian Question” has pointed out the relation between failures of reform and the rise of the Armenian Revolutionary Parties—Armenakan, Dashnaksutyun, and Hnchakyan—in the region in the late 1880s and particularly in the 1890s.⁷ However, before the rise of these parties outside the Ottoman Empire and their move

⁶ Some Armenians of Erzurum submitted to the government a “reform program” in 27 June 1879. The “program” had 46 articles and touched upon the region’s problems. Bargaining was very visible in the program. In the conclusion of the program it states “... this nation [Armenians] full heartedly beseeches the Ottoman state to remain under its calm and safe shadow. Around it, the nations which progress with stride in the infinite race of civilization, surround.” Leo, *Hayots Hartsı Vaveragreri*, (Tiflis [Tibilisi]: G. Aghanyani, 1915), 163. For the entire document see *Ibid.*, 135–164, and for its summary see Hovhannes Zatikyan, *Karin*, (Erevan: Hayastan, 1992), 166–172.

⁷ Louise Nalbandian’s *Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, although outdated, is still the standard account of the Armenian revolutionary parties. See Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties Through the Nineteenth Century* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963). For a recent reassessment of the issue, see Gerard Jirair Libaridian, “What Was Revolutionary about the Armenian Revolutionary Parties?” in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman*

into it, some discontented Armenians within the empire organized clandestine movements. The government discovered the activities of one such movement, “the Defenders of the Fatherland,” soon after the movement’s emergence in 1883.⁸ Its members were imprisoned but rapidly released. Of the 76 who were taken to court, 18 were villagers or engaged in another type of agricultural work, 13 were shoemakers, 6 were tailors, and the rest belonged to other trades. There were only 3 merchants, 2 teachers, one director of a reading room and one painter.⁹ Not surprisingly, none of the notables or their family members was among them. The social and economic divisions within the city (examined in chapter five) had made themselves felt in the period following the war. What was essentially a “class” problem was being transformed into a “national” and anti-state struggle, but the local notables were not present when this change was taking place. Despite its geographical limits, this dissertation provides important clues concerning this transformation. Erzurum, due to the province’s prominent position on the borderlands of the empire, its strong urban economy, tight control over the agricultural production in its hinterland, and its Armenian notables who not only benefited from the new imperial order of the Tanzimat but also contributed to the making of that order, provides us a framework to examine the transformation in different provinces of the empire. Comparison with other—not necessarily Armenian—regions of the empire will broaden our understanding of the empire in that crucial era. This will also place the eastern, i.e. predominantly Armenian and Kurdish, regions of the empire into the broader scholarship on the empire. More frequent use of Russian consular reports and other Russian-language sources, which in this dissertation have

Empire, eds. Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek and Norman M. Naimark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 82–112.

⁸ [Arakel] Saroukhan, “The Agricultural Society: The First Popular Movement in Western Armenia,” *Armenian Review* 25 (1982):152–164; for an assessment of the movement within the larger framework of the “Armenian revolutionary awakening” in the 1870s and particularly after the war, see Rafik Parnaki Hovhannisyan, *Arevmtahay Azgayin-Azatagrakan Sharzhumneri yev Karini “Pashtpan Hayrenyats” (XIX d. 70–80 akan tt.)*, (Yerevan: GAH, 1965), particularly chapter 5, f. 282.

⁹ Saroukhan, “The Agricultural Society,” 159.

been used indirectly through Armenian translations where possible and necessary, as well as a more thorough use of archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, now partially located in Nubar Library, Paris, will contribute to the effort of reconstructing the history of Armenian communities in the eastern provinces of the empire.

Going back to the Armenian notables of Erzurum, we are left with the questions related to them in the 1870s and 1880s. What happened to the local Armenian notables in the period following their emergence during the imperial reforms and their domination of local society in every aspect in the 1850s and 1860s? In other words, why did the radicals and radicalized peasants and artisans, but not the local notables, win the day, i.e. succeed in asserting the claim of representing the Armenian “community”? In this section, I will answer this question on the basis of the trajectories of the notables that have been examined in the dissertation and the local politics of the 1870s and 1880s.

I claim that the societal change in the transition of political power from notables to other elements of the community in the 1880s and afterwards took place not because the Armenian notables were outside of the Ottoman new imperial order during the Tanzimat, but because they were too entangled with that order.

The age of reforms was marked by a redistribution of the powers of the great *ayans* among different sections of the society in the power vacuum created after their demise. The new imperial order was cooperation between the Armenian notables, the imperial ruling elite, and the newly established modern bureaucracy in the provinces. After the demise of the grand *ayans* and the beginning of the age of reforms, political power was still shared between conflicting cliques in the government and the palace in Istanbul and lesser notables in the provinces. The

administrative apparatus was still being developed and lacked sufficient manpower. The modern and “centralized” state was actively created by the descendants of the great *ayans* and lesser notables who became even more important in the new order.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I showed that the Armenian moneylender families of the ancien régime, such as the Allahverdiyans who had (or claimed to have had) ancient roots in the region, moved to Istanbul when they reached financial maturity in the eighteenth century. By that move, they cut their relations with local Erzurum society and left only a symbolic presence in the city—the church they built. Most interestingly for our purposes, they lost their connections in Erzurum, despite their enormous economic power and prestige in Istanbul. In the provinces their power was challenged by the consolidation of the lesser Armenian notables in the 1850s and 1860s.

The Armenian notable who dominated Erzurum society in the 1850s and to some degree in the 1860s was Kürkçübaşı Agop Efendi. He held numerous tax farms in different fields of the economy and had extensive social networks that connected heads of small villages to the great pashas of the army. However, his most profitable investment was provisioning the imperial Army on the Caucasian front during the Crimean War. This was an extremely lucrative business, which brought the contractor further recognition and money as well as trouble, as he was exiled on allegations of spying for the Russians and later for corruption. He was acquitted of both charges and negotiated his loyalty with the state by underlining his services as the leader of Erzurum Armenians during the war. His biography, outlined in chapter 2, not only exemplified the financial opportunities that were open to an aspiring Armenian notable in the 1850s but also the ways in which a notable might make use of the change in the imperial rule, namely cooperation between different constituents of the society.

In the third chapter I focused on the livestock trade in Erzurum through the biography of Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi, one of the Armenian *eşraf* who emerged in that period. Like Kürkçübaşı Agop, he was also much invested in social relations with the local authorities, worked in construction, and possessed lands in the countryside. However, unlike Kürkçübaşı Agop, his main source of income was not tax farming but domestic trade in livestock and the manufacturing of dried meat, *pastırma*. These commodities grew more important in that period due to changes in the Ottoman domestic market and its consumption by the army. His murder in 1872 as a consequence of a plot by religious dignitaries of the town also showed the limitations of Armenians' integration into the broader Ottoman society in the provinces and reactions to the rise of Armenian notables in the new order. Khachatur Efendi's increasing visibility in the form of an accumulation of urban real estate, which he began to "transfer" from Islamic endowed properties, was the visible pretext for the murder. His identification with the broader changes of the empire was the main reason behind it.

While Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi's wealth and the discontentment directed against him grew in the 1860s, a new type of notable emerged in the context of "reform," as exemplified by three notables discussed in the fourth chapter. These notables, Khachatur Khan, Hamazasp Ballaryan and Daniel Kharajyan Efendis, all worked in different aspects of "reform," ranging from suppression of some Kurdish tribes in Mush to expansion of the institutional power of the Patriarchate in the provinces and the education of the Armenian community in the city. Khachatur Khan was a self-made man, served in the provincial administrative assemblies with the goal of solving the problems of his community- while not failing to use his position to make some money for himself—and negotiated with the Apostolic Patriarchate as it tried to expand its authority in the provinces through him. Daniel Kharajyan was of notable origin, worked as a

judge in the newly established *Nizamiye* courts, and most importantly, served as the chief investigator for a mission to suppress some Kurdish bands in Mush in 1869, an attempt among others which I refer to as “Ottomanism in Practice.” Hamazasp Ballaryan was also of notable origin, coming from one of the richest merchant families of Erzurum. His relation with “reform” was, however, different than the other two notables’. He pursued the most important element of Armenian reform rhetoric, education of the masses, through establishing a reading-hall in Erzurum. His more than close relations with state authorities show how reform in the Armenian community was well integrated with the goals of the state, or at least did not conflict with them.

The power of the notables, however, was not uncontested. As elaborated in the fifth chapter, in the context of the Armenian Constitution of 1863, a major struggle between the artisans and the notables broke out over the issues of control of communal assemblies, the much-contested rule of Bishop Harutyun Vehapetyan and, most importantly, the economic power of the notables over the artisans. Throughout the 1860s the two groups—artisans and notables—turned every small contestation into a fight. With the exception of Khachatur Khan, the notables, despite differences among themselves, had already closed ranks when they faced the challenge coming from the unprivileged. By the end of the 1860s, divisions along social and economic lines in the Armenian community of Erzurum were more visible than ever. The Armenian notables’ dominant position in Erzurum was a result of their participation in the Age of Reform. Discontent with the reform meant a challenge to their power, and vice versa. The chapter also showed the ways in which imperial rivalries took over local politics and great powers became part of personal and local power struggles. Mr. Maghack, who was the dragoman of the British Consul in Erzurum, entered a struggle first with the bishop and then with Kürkçübaşı Agop,

whose daughter he wanted to marry. Personal affairs soon intermingled with imperial politics, making it difficult to distinguish local struggles from greater political rivalries.

Throughout the 1860s, the socially and economically unprivileged who were left out of the communal institutions began to raise their voices against the notables. But this was not the only reason for such challenges. There was another development throughout the 1870s: the change in the dominant forms of nationalism within Armenian politics. Liberal cultural nationalism, mostly pursued by notables like Hamazasp Efendi, defined the “community” as an abstract entity in history and glorified its cultural achievements. However, cultural nationalism was far from offering new forms of interpretations and providing solutions to the problems of the day. In that period, there was an increase both in the number of land-grabs, fires at market places including that of Van in 1876 (a topic to be discussed below), and devastation of the villages and towns during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1878, which made the conditions of Armenians in the provinces worse and increased cosmopolitan Armenians’ awareness of these issues. With these developments a politicized culture, which was based on provincial Armenians’ relation to the land and paid close attention to their needs, replaced liberal nationalism.¹⁰ Much as the power of the Allahverdiyans in Erzurum had faded when they could not accommodate themselves to the changes brought by the reforms of the 1850s, the power of lesser notables declined in the face of these social and intellectual developments. Their Ottomanism, which was based on their social and economic ties with state authorities, failed to offer something to solve non-privileged Armenians’ problems and challenged their position as leaders. The notables had to encounter confrontations coming from separate fronts: the rise in the number of merchants with the expansion of the Ottoman economy in the period was one of the challenges they confronted as a

¹⁰ Gerard Jirair Libaridian, “Nation and Fatherland in Nineteenth-Century Armenian Political Thought,” *Armenian Review*, 36 (1983): 86–87.

time when they sought to claim their share in community politics. The local notables were also contested by political dissidents in the 1870s and by radicals and revolutionaries after the 1880s.

The local notables continued to control the institutional power either in imperial or communal offices due to their age-long relations with the Ottoman establishment, and this concealed the fact that their real political power had been waning. The notables maintained their community leadership—they acted as power-brokers between the community and the government, enjoyed good relations with clergy, engaged in charity, and supported education. However, none of these could offer solutions to the more pressing needs of the Armenian community. The solutions required (a) criticism of the imperial state to push it towards a firmer application of reforms, (b) sharing their power with non-privileged members of society as a part of democratization of the communal institutions in the age of the Armenian Constitution, (c) expansion of their local and regional political visions to an inclusive national one, as local problems of the “community” (millet) of Armenians began to be interpreted as “national” in the secular definition of the term. The notables did none of these things, as each would have undermined their power. A notable like Kürkçübaşı claimed to be the leader of Erzurum Armenians in the 1850s—with no reference to Armenians of other regions. A local notable like him, who also had such a bad reputation as an oppressor of Armenian peasants, could not claim to represent a “nation” in the new era. The decline of notable families was not, however, inevitable. Those who could transform themselves and assume new political roles continued their work as community leaders until the Genocide. For instance, the sons of Khachatur Pastırmacıyan Efendi also failed to fulfill that claim, although they continued to conduct business with the army in the 1880s. It

required another generation for the family to raise a revolutionary, Garegin Pastırmacıyan (Armen Garo), who would put forward a claim to represent something bigger than the Armenians of Erzurum— as a revolutionary and then as a deputy of Erzurum after the Revolution of 1908. The age of Armenian *eşraf* in the provinces was coming to an end after two decades of power in the age of nationalization, democratization, and radicalization of Armenian politics in the 1870s and right after the Russo-Ottoman War. The provincial notables, as men of the Tanzimat, lacked the organizational skills, means of communication, and intellectual vigor of their opponents in the 1870s and the 1880s. With the development of modern politics, their power declined—and this was not an Ottoman or Armenian phenomenon.¹¹

As the notables failed to protect provincial Armenians' rights and pursue reform agendas, the expanding middle classes, intellectuals, radicals, reformist clergy, and political dissidents from the lower classes began to challenge the power of the notables from different angles from the 1870s onwards. The more the notables were challenged by the non-notables in the provinces, the more they grew attached to the state and its institutions which provided the basis of their economic and social capital. And the more they grew attached to them, the more they lost their ties with local communities and their problems. The phenomenon of the dual existence of so-called “successful” examples of

¹¹ Despite various structural differences between them, similar developments took place among the Jewry of Eastern Europe and Russia exactly in the same period. With the rise of socialist, nationalist or liberal autonomist movements in the 1880s, Jewish politics was completely altered, with their “traditional” leaders losing power. Eli Lederhendler concludes her examination of *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics*, with the following observation: “The hallmark of Jewish politics—its dependence on the state and its consequent articulation through intermediaries possessing access to state officials—was now absolutely rejected. Now Jewish politics were meant to take place at the national level, subject to public discussion, and led by representatives of the people. Yet abiding lack of permanent political institutions embracing the people as a whole meant that political leadership remain fragmented, divided by ideology as well as geography” Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics: Political Tradition and Political Reconstruction in the Jewish Community of Tsarist Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 156–157.

integration—the participation of certain Armenians in the imperial order—in the midst of the revolutionary movements and anti-Armenian violence of the mid-1890s came into being at this historical juncture. It was neither due to the “benevolence” of the Ottoman state nor the “loyalty” of Ottoman Armenians. It was based on the interdependence between those members of the elite and the state authorities.

The Notables of Erzurum and Their Careers in the 1870s and Afterwards

All of the notables examined in chapter 4 participated in reform in the 1860s in one way or another and had political journeys that culminated in their election to the Ottoman Parliament in 1876. When the elections for the Ottoman parliament were conducted in the province of Erzurum, Hamazasp Ballaryan and Daniel Kharajyan Efendis were elected to represent the Christians of Erzurum Province. As the members of the Provincial Assemblies and other representative organs participated in the elections, it was only natural to see as deputies Armenians who were related to government circles and well known to their communities.¹² And they did, indeed, work to improve the material conditions of their communities with the ideological tools of the imperial order of the Tanzimat, particularly Ottomanism.

¹² Elke Hartmann, “The ‘Loyal Nation’ and Its Deputies: The Armenians in the First Ottoman Parliament,” in *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy*, eds. Christoph Herzog and Malek Sharif (Würzburg: Ergon, 2010), 201. Hartmann argues that “many of the Armenian deputies started their public service careers with posts in the Armenian millet-administration, moving up to Ottoman state service. Some of the Armenian deputies from the provinces were at the same time agents of the Istanbul Patriarchate. But they were not necessarily the leading figures of the Armenian community in their provinces as well. Many of those Armenian personalities who played a significant role for their millet, be it as important donors, founders of schools or charitable institutions such as orphanages, hospitals, etc., or be it as leading intellectuals, writers or teachers—in short, many of those who were later remembered as leaders of their community in whatever function—had nothing whatsoever to do with the Ottoman administration. The Armenian Ottoman deputies were, without doubt, among the wealthiest members of their community; most of them were engaged in businesses that required close ties to the Ottoman authorities. As such, they were part of the economic elite of their millets. But not all members of this economic elite dedicated their wealth—or at least a part of it—to the development of their community.” I disagree with the first part of this argument based on my analysis in the fourth chapter, as the deputies fulfilled both administrative and communal positions officially. The issue of *not remembering* these figures might be due to our sources (such as *houshamadyans*, see introduction for further information) which are mainly a post-Genocide production or, as I claim here, the fact that the notables during the Tanzimat era were challenged and eventually replaced by different social groups in the provinces.

Hamazasp Balaryan Efendi

Armenian historiography highlights only some aspects of his speeches in the Ottoman Parliament of 1876, and praises Hamazasp Efendi for his criticisms of government policy, which he ironically called “the wisdom of the government” (*hikmet-i hükümet*). This was based on a famous parliamentary speech in which the notable criticized what he called the process of well-treatment of Kurdish tribal leaders and their acquittal after paying bribes. He claimed that Kurdish tribal leaders were accorded such privileges on the expectation that they would suppress Armenians when they revolted and assist the regular army in wars against the Russians.¹³ Here, Hamazasp Efendi was referring to events of the 1860s and 1870s. This is important since, from a provincial Armenian notable’s perspective, the central state had made a choice (or was in the process of making a choice) about whom it should form alliances with in the eastern provinces of the empire: before the 1890s it was already in negotiations with the local Kurdish power holders.

Yet, based on this speech it is not so easy to conclude—as many scholars do—that Hamazasp Efendi was an early Armenian nationalist. I argue, instead, that he should be seen as an Ottoman-Armenian who believed in “Ottomanism.” As Elke Hartmann in her study of Armenian deputies in the Ottoman parliament reminds us, there were anti-Russian sentiments prevalent among the Armenian deputies in the Parliament. Hamazasp Efendi was no exception to this and he also delivered an anti-Russian speech in the Ottoman parliament. He claimed that his family had briefly accepted Russian rule after the 1828-1829 Russo-Ottoman War but, soon regretting their decision, had preferred Ottoman rule and were loyal and trustworthy subjects of the Sultan.¹⁴ This reminder of his loyalty resembles his uncle’s decoration by the imperial

¹³ Levon Chormisyan, *Hamapatker Arevmtahayots Mek Daru Patmutyan, Hator A: 1850–1878*, (Beyrut, n.p., 1972), 1:296; Ghazar Charig, Hushamatyan Bardzr Hayqi Karinapatum, 394–395; Hovhannes Zatikyan, *Karini Nahangi XIX Dari Yerkrord Kesin*, (Yerevan: Noravank, 2013), 36. Chormisyan translates the term *hikmet-i hükümet* as “mystery/secretcy of state” (*petakan gaghtniq*) based on the secondary definition of *hikmet*.

¹⁴ *Masis*, 29 April 1877 quoted in Hartmann, “The ‘Loyal Nation’ and Its Deputies,” 219.

authorities two decades earlier as an acknowledgment of his loyalty to the Sultan. Hamazasp Efendi was also cautious about Russian rule even when Erzurum was under Russian occupation after the 1877–1878 Russo-Ottoman War. According to the memoirs of Barbara Doukhovsky, who was the wife of the Russian governor-general of Erzurum after the war, the Ballaryans were not very happy about the close relations between some Armenians and Russians in Erzurum. For instance, the notable was fiercely opposed to participating in a ball organized by the Russians, believing that the Armenians would pay for it later when the city was returned to Ottoman rule. According to Doukhovsky, after having been reprimanded by the governor-general, the notable was given “the most infamous Asiatic punishment,” which was “being forbidden to mount his horse for a whole month.”¹⁵ It should also be stated here that, like Khachatur Khan who used his post in the Provincial Assembly for financial gain, the Ballaryans also had financial interests in the state and the Ottoman army. Besides coming from a family of privileged merchants (*beratlu Avrupa tüccarı*) sponsored by the Ottoman state in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Ballaryans provided provisions to the army in the second half of the century, even as they were giving impassioned anti-Russian speeches in parliament.¹⁶

After the war, Hamazasp Efendi was counted by a reformist clergyman among the most important Armenians of the city, and one of the most educated.¹⁷ The Ballaryans kept their prominent position within the city, with Hamazasp Ballaryan and his nephew Karapet occupying important positions both in the government and community institutions. Hamazasp was elected

¹⁵*The Diary of a Russian Lady: Reminiscences of Barbara Doukhovsky* (London: John Long, 1917), 116.

¹⁶In a lawsuit in 1894, Karapet Ballaryan had requested the government to pay its debt of 22,500 gurush to him from the 1877–1878 Ottoman Russian war. This was a quarter of the entire amount that the government had initially owed and had paid over time, showing the considerable size of the initial amount. *B.O.A.*, BEO., 893-66946, 22 Mayıs 1312 (3 June 1896) and MV., 91-69, 9 Zilka ‘de 1314 (12 April 1897).

¹⁷ Emma Kostandyan, “Arevmtyan Hayastani Hayabnak Vayrerı Veraberyal G. Srvandztyantsi Kazmatz Vijakagrutyunnerits,” *Banber Hayastani Arkhivneri* 17 (1976): 90.

as a member of the Provincial Administrative Council in 1880/1881;¹⁸ Karapet Efendi held the same post in 1894/95.¹⁹ As in the pre-war period, Hamazasp Efendi combined his position on the administrative councils with his service to the Armenian Apostolic community and continued to control community institutions. He acted as the secretary of the [Armenian] Central Committee for Famine Relief, which was established to help those severely hit by the famine in the region and managed by Khrimyan Hayrik.²⁰ In 1882, Hamazasp Efendi was the president of the Armenian Provincial Assembly and Karapet Ballaryan was the president of the Armenian Civil Council. Hamazasp Efendi also occupied the post of president of the Armenian Provincial Assembly in 1890 and 1891.²¹

Daniel Kharajyan

Daniel Kharajyan was the chief investigator in Mush in 1869, and in the 1870s he continued to be active in community affairs, closely collaborating with the contested *aradjnord*, Harutyun Vehapetyan. He was one of the members of a committee that the bishop had set up to run a charity for education in 1875.²² He was elected to the first session of the Ottoman Parliament in 1877. There, as an Ottomanist Armenian notable, Daniel Kharajyan also gave anti-Russian speeches and boasted about how Armenians had taken up arms and organized “local militia units” in their home province against them.²³ Kharajyan delivered another speech in the

¹⁸ S.V.E., 9 (1299 [1881–82]): 74.

¹⁹ S.V.E., 12 (1312 [1894–95]): 154.

²⁰ *Masis*, no. 2576 (30 March 1880), 2; no. 2591 (17 April 1880), 3.

²¹ *Indicateur Ottoman Illustre* 4 (1883), 611 ; *Annuaire Oriental* 10 (1891), 1892.

²² *Masis*, no. 1686 (27 May 1875), 2.

²³ A part of the speech he delivered is the following: “...As our friends [deputies in the Parliament] have stated, we Christians never want protection from such a state [Russia]. I am a deputy of Erzurum. I know very well what Russian protection means. People of other places don’t know it as much as we do. We do not need such protection. We have organized *asâkir-i milliyye* [local militia units]. Young and elder, arms in our hands, we prepared. I, [while] holding such [a high] rank in the [service of his] imperial highness, began this service with pride. The [military] companies we organized grew into battalions. Against the protection that it [Russia] presents to us, we will retaliate with bayonets.” *Meclis-i Mebusan 1293/1877; Zabıt Ceridesi*, ed. Hakkı Tarık Us (Istanbul, Vakıf Matbaası, 1939), 178. Hartmann translates the term *asakir-i milliye* as “national units,” national here meant from/belonging to the Armenian community. Hartmann, “The ‘Loyal Nation’ and Its Deputies,” 220. *Asakir-i milliyye* were local militias organized particularly in the Balkan provinces of the empire during the 1877–78 Russo-

parliament in a debate on levying more demands on the population for the war effort; he opposed such proposals and emphasized the heavy material burden of the war upon the people of the province of Erzurum.²⁴

After his return to Erzurum from Istanbul,²⁵ Daniel Efendi continued to work as an appointed member of the court of appeal (*İstîna'f Mahkemesi*), which examined applications from the top-tier tribunals (*Bidâyet Mahkemesi*), and remained in that position at least until the turn of the century.²⁶ Daniel Efendi's son, Margar Efendi, who was born in 1860 in Erzurum, took up a career in the bureaucracy and began to work in the Customs of Erzurum in 1897.²⁷ His other son, Tigran Efendi, had some serious health problems.²⁸ It is interesting to note that the Kharajyan family, or at least this branch of the family, turned into full-fledged bureaucrats with little or no role in community institutions. This was in contrast to the Ballaryans, who worked as merchants and moneylenders while continuing to take temporary positions in both government institutions and communal ones in the same period. The Kharajyans' loss of economic power in the 1860s and their association primarily with the state rather than the community might explain the decline in later generations' prestige and social capital.

Ottoman War and could never be standardized throughout the empire. Therefore, as an alternative translation of *milliye*, I suggest "local militia units" as what is emphasized in this context was their voluntary and local aspects (*milli*), as opposed to the standing Ottoman army. Also it is not clear whether they were exclusively formed by Apostolic Armenians or not; this requires more research. Whichever is the correct translation, Daniel Efendi's anti-Russian and pro-Ottoman message is clear and if my translation is correct his emphasis on participation in local voluntary units is noteworthy. Similar discourses on military service by Armenians would resurface after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908.

²⁴ *Masis*, no. 1986 (21 June 1877), 3.

²⁵ Hamazasp and Daniel Efendis left Istanbul to return to Erzurum a month after the first session of parliament was dissolved in late June 1877. See *Masis*, no. 1877 (24 July 1877), 2.

²⁶ *S.V.E.*, 13 (1313 [1897]): 121 names Daniel Efendi as a member of the Judicial Section of the Court of Appeal.

²⁷ *B.O.A.*, Dh. Said., 139-215.

²⁸ In 1899, he requested permission to leave Erzurum and take treatments from a specialist in Istanbul. *B.O.A.*, DH. TMIK.M., 74-22, 6 Rebi'ül-âhir 1317 (12 October 1899).

Khachatur Khan Ter Nersisyan Efendi

As noted, Khachatur Khan was assigned to important missions by the Apostolic Patriarchate and the government. One of them was to Van, in late 1876. He was sent by the state to investigate one of the darkest events in the region—the fire at the Armenian section of the Van bazaar allegedly started by soldiers of the army. On the 1st of December 1876, a fire broke out in the market of the town, destroying mostly the Armenian part of the market. Many sources state that Ottoman soldiers purposefully set the fire, and later a mob plundered the market.²⁹

Khachatur Khan was sent to investigate the conflagration and the people's losses during the fire, accompanying Nazım Bey, who was sent from Istanbul.³⁰ Khachatur rendered another important service to the government, however vaguely defined in a document that requested his promotion for his services during “[investigation of] the great conflagration which took place accidentally in Van and... withdrawal of the Imperial Army to Erzurum” in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–

²⁹ Richard Edward Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State: Armenians and Ottoman State Power, 1844–1896” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2014), 182–183; Haykaz Poghosyan, *Vaspurakani Patmutyunits (1850–1900)*, (Yerevan: GAH, 1988), 188. Both works use Jankülyan's (Cangulyan) memoirs as the main source on the issue. Harutyun Jankülyan, *Hishatakner Haykakan Jgnazhamen*, masn A-B, (K.Polis: Kohak, 1913), 13–22. It is also claimed that the fire was specifically aimed at the properties of Sharan Bey and Galcıyan Georg Bey.

According to Jankülyan, the commander of troops, Mehmed Bey, specifically requested the burning down of properties belonging to Galcıyan Georg Bey and Sharan Bey. Jankülyan, *Hishatakner*, 16. Based on Jankülyan's memoirs subsequent studies readily accept the fact that the fire was an excess of soldiers and anticipated the ethnic violence of the coming years. I claim, however, that the fire might have had something to do with local politics within the community. Without falling into the trap of denialism, one should discern different parties' involvement in the event. For instance, although Sharan Bey's commercial inn of 100 shops was not burnt down initially, soldiers were moved to break down the doors of the shops in the inn and pillage it afterwards. Poghosyan, *Vaspurakani Patmutyunits*, 189. Such acts and Mehmed Bey's inquiry about burning down of specific inns raise the question of whether the perpetrators had specific targets in mind. It should be kept in mind that all of the actors in this event belong to different parties in local politics. According to Jankülyan, Mehmed Bey acted under the orders of the Timurzades, a powerful local clan. The clan had in the past supported Vardapet Poghos and they were financially supported by Banirian, Isajanyan and Marutian. Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State,” 173. Sharan Bey was one of the two notables who were accused of taking bribes from Vardapet Khachatur of Aghtamar. Local political disputes might have been settled within a larger context of anti-Armenian violence.

³⁰ “Namak Turkiyais,” *Mshak*, no. 23 (19 April 1877), quoted in Samvel Karapetian, “The ‘Accidental’ Fires of the Ottoman Empire,” *Vardzk-Duty of Soul* 5 (2012), 12. For the order for payment of Khachatur Khan's expenses which were about 7,200 gurush, see *B.O.A., I.DH.*, 15 Şevval 1294 (23 October 1877). The document gives the name of the inspector as Nazım as opposed to Nazif which was written in *Mshak*. There were other Armenian officials on the investigation committee. Karapetian “The ‘Accidental’ Fires of the Ottoman Empire,” 12.

1878.³¹ The request was made by İsmail Hakkı Pasha who was the governor of Erzurum during the war and was promoted to top positions in the central bureaucracy after the war.³² The Pasha's request was granted and Khachatur Khan was promoted to the first class of the second rank (*rütbe-i sâniye sınıf-ı mütemâyiz*).³³

Although details of what kind of services Khachatur Khan delivered to the army are not stated, it is logical to think that he, as a local notable, might have facilitated the logistics of the army when fighting began to take place in the fortifications around the city in the last months of 1877.³⁴ This was also the period in which elections for the second session of the Ottoman Parliament were held and Khachatur Khan was elected as a deputy from the province of Erzurum, accompanied by Kirakos Ghazancıyan of Erzincan. Khachatur Khan left Erzurum probably in November 1877 in the midst of the fighting, as the parliament met in Istanbul on 13 December 1877.³⁵ Khachatur Khan never returned to Erzurum after the Ottoman Parliament was dissolved by Sultan Abdülhamid II in February 1878. He stayed in Istanbul until his death in 1895, where he worked in the Armenian Apostolic Administration as a member of the Civic Assembly.³⁶

Bureaucrat sons of an Armenian notable

Khachatur Khan Efendi's high social and political position was passed down to his sons, who pursued bureaucratic careers to reach the top levels of the Armenian Apostolic community and the Ottoman social hierarchy. Agheksandr and Tigran, like their father, served both the

³¹ B.O.A., IDH 808-65332, 18 Receb 1297 (26 June 1880).

³² "İsmail Hakkı Paşa," Mehmet Süreyya Bey, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, Seyit Ali Kahraman, and Mehmet Süreyya Bey (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996), 3: 826,

³³ B.O.A., I.DH 808-65332, #3, 26 Receb 1297 (4 July 1880).

³⁴ W. E. D Allen and Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border, 1828–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 189–200.

³⁵ Originally the session was decided to be met in mid-November however it was postponed due to many deputies' failure to arrive Istanbul on time. Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: A Study of the Midhat Constitution and Parliament*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), 115.

³⁶ Teodik, *Amenun Taretsuytsı*, v.6 (K.Polis: V yev H. Ter Nersisyan, 1912), 405.

community and the state. Bishop Tevkants described them as educated and pious young people working in community affairs.³⁷ As noted, Agheksandr was a contributor to Armenian periodicals in Istanbul in the 1860s. Not less importantly, he occupied many posts in the provincial bureaucracy of Erzurum, Trabzon and Sivas, particularly in the fields of finance and the judiciary.³⁸ These included the post of assistant prosecutor of the third-tier tribunal (*Bidâyet Mahkemesi*) of the province of Erzurum (August 1879), chairman of the Commercial Tribune of the province of Sivas (May 1882), assistant prosecutor of the third-tier tribunal (*Bidâyet Mahkemesi*) of the province of Erzurum (his second term; December 1882), and chairman of the council of the penal section of the third-tier tribunal of Trabzon in January 1883. When he died in the summer of 1890 he was, like his father, the holder of the honorary rank of *sâniye*.³⁹

His younger brother Tigran also worked for the government. Between 1869 and 1871 he worked as the treasurer of the Erzurum customs. A considerable portion of his career is unknown. In 1903 he was appointed as a member of the Municipal Council of Istanbul. After the annulment of that council following the Constitutional Revolution in 1908, he was appointed to the very prestigious position of representative (*kapı kethudası*) of the Armenian Patriarchate to the Porte.⁴⁰ Due to his proximity to the Porte, he was, again like his father, granted very

³⁷ Yeremia Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan 1872–1873 tt.*, ed. Hakob Poghosyan, (Yerevan: Hayastani GAH, 1991), 41.

³⁸ B.O.A., Dh.Said., 2-459.

³⁹ Ibid. Antaramian claims, based on a British consular report, that Agheksandr Efendi was an assistant governor (*muavin*) and that he, “along with a number of other provincial Armenian officials, was discharged by order of the Sultan in 1881”. Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State,” 29, n. 42. The difference probably stems from a misreading of *procureur général* (attorney general) and confusion with governor general. Interestingly enough, according to the British Consul Agheksandr Efendi was dismissed alongside another Armenian official with the name Asnavur, in a conspiracy involving the Russian consul, whom the Armenian official criticized in press. The Russian consul had accused them of being “revolutionaries” and their presence at a political meeting was used as a good excuse. N.A., F.O., 195-1376, No 22, 11 November 1881. Agheksandr Efendi’s promotion in the ranks of bureaucracy and even appointment to the same position within a year after his dismissal (December 1882) shows that the accusations were not that grave.

⁴⁰ B.O.A., Dh.Said., 157-39.

prestigious honorary titles.⁴¹ Khachatur Khan Efendi's another son, Mihran, reached the top echelons of the Armenian community by marrying Agapi Ormanyan, the sister of the Armenian Apostolic Patriarch of Constantinople.⁴²

This brief account of the Armenian notables of Erzurum in the 1860s shows that in the period in question—that is, roughly between the 1860s and the 1880s—the notables of the city maneuvered in a space which was defined by Ottoman reform and the politics of Armenian communal life in the provinces. Hamazasp Efendi was a representative figure for this period in which Ottomanism was not just an option, but was seen as the only way to solve problems. Daniel Kharajyan Efendi followed a similar path to that of Hamazasp Efendi and put the idea of Ottomanism “into practice” in the most concrete way, acting as a government inspector to stop oppression by certain Kurdish tribes and alleviate the conditions of Armenians. His criticisms towards the government about Kurdish depredations, his loyalty to the Ottoman state, and his anti-Russian attitudes were not contradictory attitudes in that period. His high level of education, praised by his contemporaries, did not cement the Armenian nationalism one would have predicted. “Cultural nationalism” among the liberal-minded Armenian middle classes engendered such a space and allowed the notables to move within it. He mobilized his economic and social power to find solutions to the difficulties of Armenians through the existing framework—occupying posts in the government and communal institutions. The solutions

⁴¹He received first rank second class (1900) and was later decorated with *mecidiye* of first rank first class (1902) and *Osmânî* of second class (1303). *B.O.A*, Dh.Said., 157-39.

⁴² For the marriage and the untimely death of Agapi, see *Agapi, Ormanyan Intaniqen Mihran Ef. Ter-Nersesyani Amusin Tikin Agapii Anmorats Hishatakin Hushardzan* (K. Polis: V yev H. Ter Nersisyan, 1906). The fact that Patriarch Ormanyan was removed from his post after the Revolution of 1908 while the brother of his brother-in-law was appointed as new representative of the Patriarchate of Istanbul to the Porte after the revolution shows continuities between historic periods and the power of family-based social networks at the top of the Armenian Apostolic community.

offered by these institutions were limited by the shortcomings of the liberal-nationalist ideology of the 1870s.

Changes in Local Politics:
“National” Criticism towards the Notables and the State

Criticism of the notables was already observed in the struggle between the artisans and the state throughout the 1860s. Their criticism, however, had never turned into a critique of the imperial establishment and its lack of capacity or will to find solutions to the ills of the Armenian community. Instead, it was directed against the notables, the leaders of the community and the main beneficiaries of the new imperial order. In the 1870s, the young intelligentsia and a new generation of reformist clergy began to voice their criticisms of the notables more loudly.

Bishop Tevkants’s criticisms of Kürkçübaşı Agop as an oppressor of the peasantry and as a person lacking literacy and honor [*parkeshtutyun*; *namus*] was one example, but not the most significant one. Criticism about the failure of the reforms began to be heard alongside criticism of the notables. The issue arose at the General Provincial Assembly of Erzurum, which was made up of two representatives, one Muslim and one non-Muslim, from each sub-district, and which met in late May in Erzurum. In this meeting, as one may recall, the *aradjnord* of Mush, Kirakos, who had been elected as the representative of that district, was said to have handed a note to the governor. The note included two points. One of points has already been discussed in the second chapter: Kürkçübaşı Agop’s oppression of the people of Mush. The second point, however, was about the failure of the reforms that had been applied in Mush by the previous governor and Daniel Kharajyan Efendi a year before.⁴³ During the reform in Mush there were sceptics even among the initiators of the reform. Khrimyan Hayrik, in a letter to Garegin

⁴³ “Letter from Garin” by “Sur”, *Masis*, no. 977 (30 May 1870), 3.

Srvandztyan, wrote about his observation that the government might have a policy of showing Europeans Kurds as the real problem of the Mush region. This policy had the goal of rendering Turkish notables free of any responsibility in the affairs, and he added “that is the *müfti* of Mush is as righteous as Mkhitar Vardapet”.⁴⁴ After the failure of the reforms, such secret criticisms which were directed towards the state were turned instead on the notable who had played the most visible role in the investigation.

It was by early 1871 that Mghdich Khachikyan, a member of the young intelligentsia from Erzurum, published a response to a letter written against Daniel Efendi in the daily *Hayrenik*. The criticisms were about Daniel Efendi’s having received the honorary rank of *sâlise* (third rank) due to his successful work with İsmail Pasha in Mush in the previous year.⁴⁵ Indeed the criticism was about “works” and whether Daniel Efendi could be called a *gortzogh* (an agent; performer; *fâil*) during the Pasha’s reform in the district. Khachikyan, in response, asked the “jealous” author of the news in *Hayrenik*, whether Daniel Efendi should have been called a *gortzogh* only if “he had gone there [Mush] on his own as if he were a *vâli* (governor) to inspect?” Then he lists the past deeds of Daniel Efendi: he aided in the reform of community schools, and before his mission as an inspector for which “he had spent 10,000–15,000 gurush out of his own pocket,” he played important roles in the cemetery issue against the Catholics, and the Hindzk village affair in which the Apostolic-Catholic struggle ended violently.⁴⁶ The interesting point here is that the author, in order to show Daniel Efendi’s deeds for the Armenian community (*millet*), highlighted cases of reform in the community and instances of Apostolic-

⁴⁴ Khrimyan Hayrik’s letter to Srvandztyan, [undated], *Divan Hayots Patmutyan*, column 376; Emma Kostandyan, *Mkrtich Khrimyan: Hasarakakan-Qaghaqakan Gortzuneutyuni* (Yerevan: Zangak-97, 2000), 140.

⁴⁵ *Masis*, no. 1053 (18 February 1871), 3. Unfortunately I could not access the related issue of *Hayrenik*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* The murder of two lovers, a Catholic Armenian young woman and an Apostolic Armenian young man, by Catholic Armenians in the village of Hindzk in 1866 occupied both the local public and the press in Istanbul for a long time. The event also hardened communal lines. See *Masis*, no. 797 (20 May 1867), 3; no. 804 (8 July 1867), 3; *Pundj*, no. 160 (25 May 1868), 1.

Catholic struggle, but not the success (or failure) of reform in the provinces, although this affected the lives of many Armenians. The criticism and the line of defense might be taken as a struggle between different definitions of the nation, namely the liberal definition of the nation based on an ethno-cultural group and its rights and a definition based on the plight of the people. The debate also reflected the changing qualifications of a notable. It was no more the age of Khachatur Pastirmacıyan's or Khachatur Khan's charity for the poor. The definition of a notable in this period began to carry a notion of someone who *actively worked* to alleviate the plight of provincial Armenians. In other words, the notables expected to be engaged in "national" politics and in a period in which politics are defined as rights of the *nation*. This shift was a direct outcome of the reform in the provinces in the late 1860s and the active assertion by Armenian notables of political power. The more they were associated with state-sponsored reform (and its failure), the more their legitimacy became vulnerable to challenges, and the challenge grew as time went on and new political leaders with new definitions of leadership and politics emerged.

Criticisms to the Dominance of Armenian Notables in Erzurum before the 1877–1878 Russian-Ottoman War

When Bishop Harutyun returned to Erzurum in late 1869 after his second removal due to his alleged Russian sympathies, the old social and political order was reestablished after overcoming the crisis. As I have shown, support of notables for the bishop was a major reason for this. Bishop Tevkants, while in Erzurum in 1872, had defined two of the most important notables of the town: Aghadjan Ballaryan he described as "respecting clerics," and Poghos Kharajyan, he said, "shows respect to clergy, particularly to the Bishop Harutyun."⁴⁷ While he was trying to organize communal councils in Erzurum in line with the promises of the constitution, Bishop Tevkants criticized the notables in following terms:

⁴⁷ Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*, 40–41.

Already, a great part of our people are not at all ignorant about general and important affairs of our community, and a smaller part, [who] is more or less versed in [them], don't have eagerness to intervene [in affairs of the community] and these particular men, who have official and commercial business with the governor and others, think about their personal profit, remain indifferent in regards to the rights of the provincials, and by which rights destitute nationals remain crushed.⁴⁸

While he was trying to organize the assemblies demanded by the Armenian Constitution, Tevkants first organized the General Assembly from which the Civic and Spiritual assemblies would be elected. However, the election process was still dominated by various problems, one of which was the dominance of the notables during the elections. The bishop had noted this openly in his travelogue: “so far everyone would like to speak without order and law, and without being given the right to speak, especially influential men did not permit ordinary men to speak.”⁴⁹ In the elections, Khachatur Khan was elected as the chairman of the General Assembly, which had the most representative power—being based on a larger pool of voters and members—but possessed less real political power than the civic council. Likewise, none of the six priests who were involved in the marriage case of Mr. Maghack and Kürkçübaşı's daughter a few years earlier, were among the four members of the six-membered Spiritual Council.⁵⁰

By September 1872, Bishop Yeremia Tevkants left Erzurum for Van, where he would work to solve the problems connected with the Catholicate of Aghtamar. A local observer, M. Ballaryan, who had been away from Erzurum for some time and had recently returned, was pessimistic about the future of the assemblies organized by Bishop Tevkants. In his letter to G. Srvandztyan, Ballaryan said: “About my homeland. The scene is sad and the description is

⁴⁸ Ibid., 93–94.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁰ Priests Ter Grigor, Ter Hamazasp, Ter Mesrop and Ter Mkirdich were elected as members of the Spiritual Council by an absolute majority, whereas the same could not be reached for the remaining two members and their elections were postponed. Ibid., 100.

miserable, Reverend Father Yeremia [Tevkants] formed representative, civic, religious councils and almost an educational [council] and left. Bishop Harutyun had rejoiced the beard of many Yeremians, combed it and put them on the road. Yeremia's works were such that an old *kontra* [shoe, (*kundura* in Turkish)] is painted," as Yeremia could not have achieved anything real and usual business in new disguise, and Ballaryan continued:

The proverb says 'a fish rots from the head down'. I may say, as long as Bishop Harutyun is in Karin, nothing is possible in education and in advancement and it is not possible to make anything dynamic. Everything is superficial and organized only in appearance.⁵¹

The debates over how to rule the community continued in this period and the newly established councils and committees, products of the reform and the constitution, provided new areas for struggle. The parties were vague in this period, and it would be simplistic to define political struggles as only between the notables and their growing number of critics. The office of superintendents (*mütevelli*) who controlled and ran the community schools had turned into one of the major issues in the minds of the reform-minded members of the national administration and the clerics who wanted to challenge them.⁵² Those offices provided the notables certain economic and symbolic power, and therefore they came under open fire. The Committee on Education was the most important area of debate as it was responsible for the community schools and their funding. The Committee on Education directed all of its energy in the second half of 1873 to challenging the office of superintendents of community schools, who were notable members of society and responsible for the administration of schools. The committee's demands

⁵¹ "M. Ballaryan to K. Srvandztyan, dated 12 September 1872," in Gyut Aghanyants, *Divan Hayots Patmutyan, girq 13: Harstaharutyunner Tajkahayastanum*, (Tiflis[Tbilisi]: N. Aghanyantsi Tparan, 1915), column 257.

⁵² Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 124–125. Likewise, a reformist priest, Natanyan, who visited the region of Palu in the summer of 1878, complains about the superintendents and fraud in their work. See Arsen Yarman, ed., *Palu–Harput 1878: Çarsancak, Çemişgezek, Çapakçur, Erzincan, Hizan ve Civar Bölgeler* (İstanbul: Derlem Yayınları, 2010), 2:101–106.

for reform were rejected by the Civic and Economic Councils for “absurd reasons,” as the supporters of the Committee on Education claimed, and they asked for an investigation.⁵³

However, the Committee on Education did not have a purely populist program and did not offer a purely reform-minded solution, depending on how one defines reform. The committee tried to levy a new tax for the schools’ expenses, which was opposed by the populace. More controversially, it proposed opening a school for the children of the rich and the nobility (*aznuvakanats mankunq*).⁵⁴ In this period, in order to impose his patronage over the population, Bishop Harutyun opened a charity to build another school. The charity was run by notables including Daniel Kharajyan Efendi, the notable who was the chief investigator in Mush in 1869.⁵⁵ Ghukas Ter Azaryan, who had already built a school upon the will of his father, Soghomon Agha, in 1871, was another member of the board.⁵⁶ In this period the monasteries were still administered by a superintendence system. For instance, Hamazasp Ballaryan Efendi was the superintendent of Karmir Vank and was praised for providing education for the children of that district.⁵⁷

The problems about who would control community institutions in the city continued, but the competing groups’ strategies changed. In a petition submitted to the bishop on Christmas of 1874 demanding the full application of the constitution, members of local and financial councils and fifteen national representatives of Erzurum summarized the developments in the constitutional era in Erzurum. Note that these councils were reformed by Bishop Tevkants’ mission in 1872. From their perspective the constitutional era was the rule of only “those who

⁵³ *Masis*, no. 1475 (15 December 1873), 3.

⁵⁴ *Masis*, no. 1470 (4 December 1873), 2.

⁵⁵ *Masis*, no. 1686 (27 May 1875), 2.

⁵⁶ Tevkants, *Janaparhordutyun Bardzr Hayq yev Vaspurakan*, 41–42.

⁵⁷ *Loys Handes Kisamsyay*, no. 22, (15 April 1875), 347.

are called prominent ones (*yereveli gochvatzneri*)” —not those who deserved positions in the communal assemblies. The letter is worth quoting at length:

We request from you to take out the application of constitution from current form of theory and put it into practice. As it is known to your holiness that in our city since 1865 we have formed according to the constitution, general, spiritual and civic assemblies, local [administrative] and economic councils; their establishment is according to law but we cannot say that their function is so. It has been 11 years since the General Assembly was formed [but] it has hardly had 11 sessions in 11 years... It [the General Assembly] should have opened a Public Assembly to solve important issues discussing them publicly... the people do not have a voice. By not doing so, it surrendered to the fact that, on all issues, the populace must submit to the authority of other assemblies and councils,, and this is so painful that many times it dishonors the Assemblies of the National Constitution. From the establishment of the General Assembly until today Spiritual and Civic Assemblies were formed twice but both times the members who were taken out were re-elected, against the constitution... The constitution until today has called to the national service only those who are called prominent ones, while many valuable persons in the populace have been left standing at the corners; thus instead of loving the constitution, many have begun to hate it. It would not be bad to allow the intelligent part of the populace to participate in the constitution. The Civic Assembly is obliged to give a member to the Administrative Council [of the government] by election, once in every two years. But it is sad to say that the Civic Council never paid attention to that duty, one or two persons have turned membership in the Administrative Council into private property [though] that is against the law of the state, which orders constant change of members... starting from the General Assembly, all national assemblies should be renewed, and be adapted to the constitution, which will lead to the revival and unity of the community.⁵⁸

In the meanwhile, struggle over how to rule the community institutions continued in Erzurum. The National Administration in Istanbul had sent Bartogh Sur (Tataryan) as an inspector to Erzurum to inspect schools, and he had allegedly intervened in other aspects of community administration. Bartogh Sur was first considered an ally of the bishop but then turned against him, allegedly saying in a meeting that the “[p]eople of Erzurum are donkeys because

⁵⁸ *Loy's Handes Kisamsyay*, no. 17, (1 February 1875), 269–270.

they could not overthrow such an *aradjnord*.”⁵⁹ The Civic Assembly pressured the Local Council to dismiss Bartogh Sur, which it did unwillingly, but also requested the Civic Council to prove their accusations against the inspector. The response of Civic Council was unforgiving: it removed all members of the Local Council—signatories of the above-mentioned petitions— and appointed a temporary council in their place. The rising power of the middle classes and intellectuals began to be felt, but was still far from powerful enough to surpass the local notables. A commentator on the events summarized the situation in the town in the following terms: “It is said that Erzurum is made up of three classes, one is the workmen, who consider the *aradjnord* a second St. [Grigor] Lusavorich [the Patron Saint of the Armenian Apostolic Church]; a middling group, who were the first to overthrow Bishop Harutyun; a rich group who defend his holiness [the bishop] and cannot find a more worthy cleric in the community to replace Bishop Harutyun.”⁶⁰

Local and communal struggles—mainly dissatisfaction with the rule of notables who were economically and socially entangled with the imperial order, on the one hand, and increasing disappointment with the imperial state, which failed to fulfill popular expectations for reform, on the other—necessitated an ideological change in Armenian politics. By war’s end, the divisions in society put forward by Bartogh Sur before the war were transformed and translated into the divisions Captain Clayton mentioned in the introduction to this section. Before being translated into national politics, however, this ideological change was based on struggles within local communities and on growing dissatisfaction with Ottoman rule.

⁵⁹ *Masis*, no. 1788 (10 February 1876), 2–3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

The demands of local populations were presented through frameworks provided by the “reform” of the Ottoman state, and the “constitution” of the Apostolic Armenian Community, as they constituted the political language of the Tanzimat era. However, by the end of the war—and increasingly so afterwards—the problems and divisions in the Armenian community became “national” problems. These problems were expressed through a language more legible to all, namely that of “the Armenian Question.” The reasons for the imperial bureaucracy’s inability and unwillingness to understand and react properly to these societal changes in the eastern provinces, i.e. to the declining power of its partners in the Armenian community, are as crucial to understand as is the fact of that bureaucracy’s complicity in the deterioration of material conditions for Armenians there. Approaching the history of the empire from this perspective will be the next step in understanding the history of the Ottoman Armenians in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

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A.MKT.NZD.	Sadâret Nezaret ve Devair Evrakı
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