

**AT ARM'S LENGTH:
HISTORICAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF PROXIMITY IN HARPUT**

by

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Dedication

to Sinemis

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Abstract

In recent years, the multifaceted nature of cultural otherization in trans-regional encounters has attracted renewed interest by anthropologists. Epistemological distance has ceased to be an object of unhesitant condemnation; instead, scholars have begun exploring the diverse forms of distancing the other. This dissertation expands the analytical framework for understanding otherization by focusing on spatial and social proximity in and of a provincial dual town, Harput-Mezre, in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It scrutinizes the reverberations of social distance in relatively close and intimate relations—‘short-distance relations’—between suburban and urban people, between missionaries and converts, and between Armenians and Kurds from the locals’ point of view. Moreover, it traces the history of spatial duality and proximity in Harput region by underlining the local origins of place-making strategies and spatial separation. The dissertation thus contributes to the literature on bringing back ‘the other’ into theory of anthropology, on the one hand, and on provincializing imperial and global centers, on the other.

The dissertation consists of five parts; the first and the last part unravel the rise and demise of Harput-Mezre as a dual town, while the other three deal each with a specific form of short-distance relations. Part I sets the socio-historical scene for the emergence of Mezre in the 1830s-50s. Part II addresses the socio-spatial relationship between Harput and Mezre and reveals the suburbanization process in the entire region in the nineteenth century. Part III reconstructs the emergence of a highly powerful group of American missionaries—the Harput clique—in the 1850s and 60s, and discusses their distancing relationship with Protestant Armenians in the city.

Part IV focuses on the 1895 Armenian Massacres by examining various local narratives of the event to reveal the perceptions of actors about the enemy others. Finally, Part V traces the process of nationalization of space in the early twentieth century whereby the dual town transformed into a new unified city called Elazığ. Hence, the dissertation analyzes the formation of spatial, ethnic and cultural distance in local, regional and trans-regional encounters.

Introduction: On Short-Distance Relations

This dissertation is a study of short-distance relations in and of a provincial dual town, Harput-Mezre, in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Harput was a classic fortress city on top of a hill with a history going back thousands of years, whereas Mezre emerged from scratch in the beginning of the nineteenth century on the plain, in Harput's piedmont, in proximity to it. Harput and Mezre lived together, side-by-side, in a certain social and spatial duality for a period of a hundred years. By the mid-twentieth century, however, the dual town had ceased to exist. Newborn Mezre had grown into a medium-sized city called Elazığ, while Harput had shrunk to a small district of the latter. Today, the downtown of Elazığ is occasionally referred to by its aged inhabitants as Mezre, and Harput is still the historic and recreational area of Elazığ. Nevertheless, the distinct dual formation of Harput-Mezre was replaced by the single, unified city of Elazığ. I will tell the story of this vanished duality.

The city of Elazığ in contemporary Turkey is an exceptionally uninteresting object of study. It is not a global capital (like Istanbul), nor an old cosmopolitan metropolis (like Smyrna or Salonika); it does not have significant historical heritage (like Bursa or Cappadocia), nor is it too new to frame as a Republican city (like Ankara); it is not a place to work on tribal economy (like the provinces to its east) nor a place to study the roots of capitalism (like the provinces around the Mediterranean and Aegean seas). The history of the Kurds is a rising field, but Elazığ is only close to Kurdistan, not in it. State-formation in the periphery is important, but one would choose the military centers of the east (like Erzurum or Erzincan) to work on it. It is not on any

borders, either, to be taken as a frontier town. Political historians would surely turn their face to the Middle East or Balkans instead of this unmarked city in southeastern Turkey. To top it all off, its modern built environment is as ugly as many other Anatolian towns, if not more so.

Perhaps the worst is, though, that Elazığ's old town of Harput *does* have quite interesting highlights. Harput was one of the cultural capitals of Ottoman Armenians; Euphrates College in Harput was arguably the most important Protestant institution of higher education in Ottoman Anatolia; the Harput region was the primary source of Armenian and Muslim emigration to America; Harput-Mezre served as one of the most violent concentration zones during the Armenian deportations; last but not least, perhaps the most tragic love affair between an American and an Armenian took place in Harput. Over the years, I have felt compelled to rely on these indisputably significant aspects to justify my project. In formal and informal talks and writings, I brought these highlights to the table in order to stave off the polite nods that greeted my first mention of 'Elazığ.' 'Harput' was different; with all its cosmopolitan characteristics, it used to bestow an unbearable lightness of being to my topic.

What made it unbearable over time was my gradual divergence from these highlights from which I actually started. This dissertation project began as a seminar paper on Ottoman emigration to the United States, particularly to Detroit. It was a fascinating journey among various exciting stories, like that of Ali Baba, the "Turkish wrestler" from Detroit, who took the title of heavyweight world champion on May 6, 1936, by "tossing Shikat in 57:34 with body slam before crowd of 4,000" at Madison Square Garden.¹ *Who* he was is a question with confusing answers: According to the *New York Times*, Ali Baba, "whose real name is Arteen Ekizian [an Armenian name]", "hates Turks. He comes from a country where they eat Turks for

¹ "Ali Baba Annexes World Mat Crown," *New York Times*, 6 May 1936, p. 29. For his earlier victory against Shikat in Detroit, see "Ali Baba Pins Shikat; Claims World Title," *New York Times*, 25 April 1936, p. 12.

breakfast... He's a blood-curdling Kurd from Kurdistan..."² The *Los Angeles Times* called him "the bone-crushing Kurd" and "an Armenian rug peddler" in the same article; he became an "Armenian Assassin" a few days later, and "the untamed Kurd" the next week. The *Reading Eagle* called him "the Detroit Kurd" and "Detroit's self-styled Turk." The *Pittsburg Press* was also confused but did not care: "the terrible Turk, crushing Kurd, artful Armenian, or whatever Ali Baba is."³

Ali Baba or Arteen Ekizian showed up as Harry Ekezian in four movies between 1932 and 1935, including *Alice in Wonderland* (1933), in uncredited roles.⁴ It is almost tragic that today we have his picture, even motion picture, but not a clear explanation of his ethnic identity. Conflicting information pointed to his being perhaps an Armenian, but Ali Baba talked to the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in 1950 and said that his father, Camal Baba, was the chief of a Kurdistan tribe. He also said: "Dad was a very kind fella. He don't believe in killing innocent people. So you know the massacre of Armenians in 1915? My dad saved a lot and the Turks didn't like the idea. So they killed my father."⁵ Was Ali Baba a saved and adopted Armenian child to a Kurdish chief? Or was he really a Kurdish child who assumed an Armenian name in the US, perhaps to be better treated by Americans? We do not know. *Where* he was from, on the other hand, was a question with only one answer: he "was born on April 22, 1906, in Karput in the Turkestan region of the then Turkish Empire."⁶ Eventually, my initial interest in transregional mobility, fluid identities and the surprising stories of Ottomans in America shifted to the source of Ali Baba's triple identity, to the place that should have conditioned his story, to a region

² "Shikat, Ali Baba Wrestle Tonight" and "Sports of the Times," *New York Times*, 5 May 1936, p. 28.

³ *Los Angeles Times*, 30 April 1936; *Reading Eagle*, 19 April 1938; *Pittsburg Press*, 6 May 1936.

⁴ *The Montreal Gazette*, 30 April 1936. For the other movies, see <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0252350/>.

⁵ Robert Cromie, "Wrestler Ali Claims People Are Funny, Too," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, p. B2.

⁶ "A Native of Turkestan," *New York Times*, 6 May 1936, p. 29.

where Turks, Kurds and Armenians, as the quotations above showed, must have been distant enough to be enemies but close enough to be mistaken for one another. In this place called Karput (Kharput, Kharpert, Harberut, Harpoot, Harput, Carput), they must have been living in short-distance relations.

Having pitched my tent in Harput, I was at first amazed by the highlights of Harput's history but they also led me to new perspectives as Ali Baba did. First, my initial interest in fabulous and cosmopolitan Harput faded away when I discovered Mezre standing right next to it, in proximity to it, inviting an analysis of spatial relationships rather than of bourgeois culture. It was the dual-town formation with its separate but complementary parts that attracted my interest. Second, I delved into hundreds of letters written by the missionaries in Harput, but I soon became aware that I had to get rid of the inevitable aura of the knowledge that Americans from Boston had lived in god-forsaken Elazığ. This aura resulted from a particularly modern overreaction conditioned by the age of nation-states. Instead, the letters invited me to think about the missionaries' relations to their closest associates—the native Protestants—and about the impassable distance in this relationship. Last, my curiosity about the 1895 Massacres, another significant event in Harput's history, made me go into archival details, but only to understand that there was no obvious reality to uncover in order to rescue the oppressed people from the hidden corners of the archive. Yet again, the narratives of the event led me to something else, to cross-dressing and deception stories that made me contemplate the behavior of someone in proximity, someone close enough to deceive but distant enough to be an Other.

Only later did I realize that all these re-directions had a common horizon, which I call 'short-distance relations.' The dissertation turned into a project on spatial, cultural and inter-ethnic distance in local, regional and transregional encounters in the Harput region. Hence,

Harput/Mezre has turned into an “arbitrary location” for me both because it gives me “a framework for a study of something else” and because the study of short-distance relations has “no *necessary* relation to the wider object of study.”⁷ The difference of an ‘arbitrary’ location from a traditional ‘case’ is that the latter is chosen to study something predetermined whereas the former *becomes* a case during the research as the questions are gradually shaped based on the specifics of the would-be-case. The focuses of initial interest are dropped along the way, and new interests are created. Arbitrary location is, then, a rabbit hole that turns into a wonderland when the right key is chosen.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind: On Short Distance

The words ‘distance’ and ‘distant’ come from Latin *distantia*, which means ‘standing apart.’ That immediate contact needs to be prevented is obvious enough in this definition, but it is also implied that objects shall share a physical space; things in different universes do not *stand* apart. Today, however, while *distance* still denotes a finite magnitude of space in between things, *distant* usually blurs the horizon and expresses an indefinite amount of breadth, like *far* or *remote*. Particularly in the field of social relations, *distance/distant* generally denotes something negative, something unwanted or deliberately imposed. Physical distance can be objectively comprehended as a tangible, analyzable feature of the order of things, but social distance mostly connotes *lack* of social relations. It seems that we have been gradually losing the sense of proximity or standing apart. ‘To keep at arm’s length’ is said to mean ‘to avoid intimacy and close contact with someone or something’ even though its etymology disagrees with such a

⁷ Matei Candea, “Arbitrary Locations: In Defence of the Bounded Field-Site,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 179–180.

negative definition:⁸ We need to *keep* someone at arm's length. And the truth is, our arms are not so long.

Social theory tells us a lot about intimacy or distinction, encounter or otherization, being in the field or sitting in an armchair, sympathy or estrangement, identification or difference, but rarely anything in the middle. The discipline of anthropology has always been subject to oscillations between the virtues of non-alignment and the virtues of cultural intimacy. During the self-reflexivity crisis of anthropology in the 1980s and 90s, the binary opposition between being distant and being close was strengthened more than ever. It was as if anything not nearby, not intimately close, automatically became a lost horizon. The moral and political implication was that the ethnographer's distance from the subject people was taken solely as an index of unequal power relations, if not of modernity's colonialism. Non-intimacy was easily identified with a less trustworthy knowledge-gathering process, which, in the end, allegedly invited the ethnographer's mindset to dominate the fruit of the research. Inventing, it is called. Scholars mistook any bit of distance from the subject matter for self-assertion, and sought ways to become closer and closer in order to avoid representational distortion. The epistemology of intimacy has been offered as a political alternative to the epistemology of isolation. Out of sight, out of mind, as people say; long-distance relations create problems (as most academics know by experience). But are there not short-distance relations?

Encounter literature best exemplifies the binary opposition between intimacy and distinction. Arguably one of the most exciting endeavors in the discipline of anthropology from

⁸ John Ayto, ed., *From the Horse's Mouth: Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms*, 3rd ed., Online Version (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

the 1970s on has been the study of contact between indigenous people and Western modernity.⁹ Asad (1973) and Said's (1978) pioneering works were followed in the 1980s and 1990s by a tremendous body of scholarship on colonial encounter. The exclusive emphasis on the west's epistemological and material power/violence gradually gave way to a more balanced understanding of cultural transformation as a process in which non-western people had an equal role- albeit unequal power and mostly unequal effect.¹⁰ Scholars thus have paid increasing attention to the moments of encounter (rather than the structures of domination) between the colonizer and the colonized in order to grasp the negotiations and uncertainties at the base of (colonial) modernity. Historians, too, have focused on intimate moments of encounter by using micro-historical techniques to illuminate the alternative potentials in the historical beginnings of the contact.¹¹ As a result, new concepts have joined our theoretical toolbox: contact zone, border-zone, hybrid spaces, in-between spaces, third space, and middle ground are the ones most widely used.¹²

⁹ For a recent review of this body of literature, see Lieba Faier and Lisa Rofel, "Ethnographies of Encounter," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43, no. 1 (2014): 363–77.

¹⁰ Especially see Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Michael T. Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (London: Routledge, 1993); Marshall Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, For Example* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002); Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011). In historical studies, Timothy Mitchell's earlier and later works exemplify both trends. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002).

¹¹ See, for instance, Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds* (Hill and Wang, 2006); Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2009).

¹² 'Contact zone' was famously coined by Mary Louise Pratt in 1991; hybrid spaces and third space were used by Homi Bhabha; 'middle ground' was theorized by Richard White. Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession*, January 1, 1991, 33–40; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994); Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Notwithstanding its virtues, the encounter literature tends to confine social relations among cultural others only to the relations of contact. Decades ago, in a critical review of the “culture contact” project of Robert Redfield and his colleagues, Gregory Bateson made a strong statement which needs to be taken as a great methodological lesson even today: “The laws of gravity cannot conveniently be studied by observation of houses collapsing in an earthquake.”¹³ For Bateson, it was a mistake to work on cultural contact by looking at the points of dense contact between supposedly separate and definable entities (like the village and the city). If I may be allowed to put it in my own words, the fact that nothing falls down in normal life does not mean that there is no gravity; in fact, there is a dynamic spatial equilibrium between hanging objects and the earth. The same gravitational relationship exists *at any moment* but it is only *visible* when something falls.

The dominant form of social relations for Bateson was relations at *some* distance, or in proximity, as opposed to intimate relations of contact that were only exceptional (like in an earthquake). Culture contact could end up in “complete fusion” or in “elimination of one or both groups,” but most likely in “the persistence of both groups in dynamic equilibrium.” Bateson used the term *schismogenesis* for the last condition and defined it as “a process of differentiation in the norms of individual behavior resulting from cumulative interaction between individuals.”¹⁴ The relationship between Harput and Mezre as well as between American missionaries and Armenian Protestants will be best examples of one form of it, of *complementary schismogenesis*, namely, in Marshall Sahlins’ words, of “a competition by contradiction, in which each side organizes itself as the inverse of the other... [Thus,] one cannot write the history of one without

¹³ Gregory Bateson, “Culture Contact and Schismogenesis,” *Man* 35 (December 1935): 180.

¹⁴ Gregory Bateson, *Naven: A Survey of the Problems Suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea Tribe Drawn from Three Points of View* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1936), 175, see also 184.

the other.”¹⁵ In this systemic relationship, social change does not come from outside influence but from inner dynamics.¹⁶

Following Bateson’s insight, I will call *short-distance relations* the relations between groups that share a common ground of interaction but perpetuate (and even reinforce) their relative distinction after the encounter. By using this term, I aim to put *schismogenesis* into conversation with Simmel’s sociology of social distance (see below). The paradox of the encounter literature is that it assumes an unbridgeable epistemological gap but also an unavoidable physical contact between the native and the stranger. In this uneasy combination of long-distance and intimate, the dynamic equilibrium in the network of short-distance relations tends to be lost. This middle ground is so unfamiliar to us that even the term ‘short-distance relationship’ is used as the binary opposite of long-distance relationship, namely a synonym of intimacy, in online sites on romantic relations. But that it is short does not mean that there is no distance.

Today, objectification is no longer the monopoly of the ethnographer only; it plays a crucial role in mutual interpretation in the everyday sociality of the entire world.¹⁷ It has been a while since the very idea that disconnection creates a vacuum of knowledge that can only be filled with self-assertive theses was questioned and challenged.¹⁸ Perhaps first-time flyers would still be surprised at the safety announcement in the airplane cabin that, in case of emergency, one needs to place the oxygen mask on oneself first, and only then help one’s child. Deliberately putting distance between you and your loved one always sounds tragic, as in many Hollywood

¹⁵ Marshall Sahlins, *Apologies to Thucydides: Understanding History as Culture and Vice Versa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 69.

¹⁶ Bateson, *Naven*, 176.

¹⁷ Webb Keane, “Self-Interpretation, Agency, and the Objects of Anthropology: Reflections on a Genealogy,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 02 (April 2003): 222–48.

¹⁸ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, no. 3 (September 1, 1998): 469–88.

movies in which one tries to protect the other from oneself by distancing them. Nevertheless, we are becoming more open to positive evaluations of limited distance in social relations. For instance, Richard Sennett can today publish an essay on Jewish agency in the creation of the sixteenth-century ghetto, which is normally assumed to be an imposition from outside. He can also discuss the positive contributions of this particular form of spatial separation, which would have been scandalous only two decades ago.¹⁹

Provincial Town: Tertium Quid

Harput-Mezre was and Elazığ is a provincial town. Even though it is difficult in practice to tell the difference between a provincial town and a central city, let alone the difference between town and city, I propose to use ‘provincial town’ as an *analytical* category to distinguish it from city, on the one hand, and from countryside, on the other. In the following paragraphs, I will lay out the characteristics of a provincial town. It is true that only some parts of this dissertation are strictly urban history (Part I-II, V); nevertheless, the theoretical insights behind my use of ‘town’ will be based on and will further develop the idea of short-distance relations that is crucial for the other parts, too. The town is conceptualized here as an idiosyncratic socio-spatial entity that has short-distance relations with both countryside and city. Scholarship on the town is surprisingly underdeveloped; even the quite established field on American small towns has remained a drop in the ocean of urban studies.²⁰ In general, towns are either subsumed under cities as a smaller sub-type or they are labeled as neither-city-nor-village. In keeping with the latter view, towns are identified with negative feelings and seen as outcasts; as an American proverb says, God made the country, man the city, but the devil the little town.

¹⁹ Richard Sennett, *Foreigner: Two Essays on Exile* (London: Notting Hill Editions, 2011).

²⁰ For a recent contribution and a review of the earlier body of work, see Robert Wuthnow, *Small-Town America: Finding Community, Shaping the Future* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013).

H. Paul Douglass was the first person who seriously studied the sociology of American small towns in order to reveal their distinctive features. He began his book, *The Little Town* (1919), with the following words:²¹ “Somewhere between the country and city lies that which is neither, but which partakes on a petty scale of the nature of both– the little town.” (3) Of importance for me, he refused to accept the neither-nor statement as a final word; he rather took it as a beginning for further research and advocated “the right of the little town to be viewed independently.” (9) With this idea of town as *tertium quid*, as he calls it, the domain of human residential units is understood as a tripartite constellation of ideal types of countryside, town and city. Even though American small cities are too peculiar to use as a model for analyzing other parts of the world, the tripartite system will serve as a correction of the city/village dichotomy in my work on a provincial town. This special binary opposition is only a chapter in the widespread conceptual inclination to analyze social relations in two extremes of intimate and distant.

The eradication of short-distance relations in the sociology of social relations can be best illustrated in the formation of the Chicago School of urban sociology. Robert E. Park, the founder of the school, was deeply influenced by Simmel’s ideas during his studies in Berlin (1899-1900). One of the key terms Park coined in urban sociology was ‘social distance’ inspired by Simmel’s famous essay “The Stranger,” the translation of which was included in Park & Burgess’ *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (1921). I would like to call this moment the invention of ‘the other’ in urban studies. It was a very fruitful endeavor, but it came at the expense of distorting Simmel’s philosophy. The essence of Simmel’s theory, namely that *all*

²¹ Harlan Paul Douglass, *The Little Town, Especially in Its Rural Relationships* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1919).

social relations are based on different degrees of *distance*, was turned in the Chicago School into a project of documenting *distant*, marginal characters of the urban space.²²

The result was impressive; Thrasher's study on gangs, Wirth's on the ghetto, Anderson's on homeless people, and Zorbaugh's on slums are pioneer works of urban marginality. But the emergence of this brand new and excellent research field was at the expense of theoretical weakening; urban relations were imagined as being composed of the normative, on the one hand, and the marginal, on the other. Most notably, Emory S. Bogardus, another graduate of Chicago, applied, following Park, the idea of social distance to race relations in the city.²³ He initiated a great survey project in order to measure the social distance among different ethnic groups in the United States, which also created a scale known as the Bogardus Social Distance Scale. In his work, the greater the distance, the more problematic the relations became.²⁴ And the city as a peculiar socio-spatial organization was the generator of the greatest social distance among people, whereas in the countryside spatial (not social) distance was dominant.²⁵

Simmel, however, saw social distance as a fundamental dimension of social relations rather than a limitation on it. Intimacy was not an alternative to social distance for him.²⁶ In an essay on knowledge in reciprocal relations, Simmel emphasized that no social relation is imaginable without "non-knowledge of one another" regardless of whether the experience is

²² See also Levine's article supporting this thesis, Donald N. Levine, "Simmel at a Distance: On the History and Systematics of the Sociology of the Stranger," *Sociological Focus* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 1977): 15–29. Allen's article is along the same lines but he eventually put proximity and distance in opposition. John Allen, "On George Simmel: Proximity, Distance and Movement," in *Thinking Space*, ed. Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (London: Routledge, 2002), 54–70.

²³ For Park's essay on the use of social distance concept in analyzing racial relations, see Robert Ezra Park, "The Concept of Social Distance As Applied to the Study of Racial Attitudes and Racial Relations," *Journal of Applied Sociology* 8 (1924): 339–44.

²⁴ Emory S. Bogardus, "Social Distance and Its Origins," *Journal of Applied Sociology* 9 (1925): 216–26; Emory S. Bogardus, "Social Distance in the City," *Proceedings and Publications of the American Sociological Society* 20 (1926): 40–46.

²⁵ Colin Wark and John F. Galliher, "Emory Bogardus and the Origins of the Social Distance Scale," *The American Sociologist* 38, no. 4 (2007): 383–95.

²⁶ Robert F. Murphy, "Social Distance and the Veil," *American Anthropologist* 66, no. 6 (1964): 1257–74.

framed as “sincere revelations” or “mendacious concealments.”²⁷ In fact, for a healthy relationship, for example in marriage, one should show discretion, which he defined as “staying away from the knowledge of all that the other does not expressly reveal to us.”²⁸ Similarly, in his essay on secrets, Simmel not only refused to attribute a negative social meaning to secrets, but he also posited that “the secret produces an immense enlargement of life.”²⁹

The ‘enlargement of life’ by the distinctive features of short-distanced relations was taken seriously by one of Park’s students at Chicago who but did not work on urban spaces. Robert Redfield finished his dissertation on a Mexican village a few years before sociology and anthropology were separated at Chicago. *Tepoztlan, a Mexican Village* (1930), I believe, should be recognized as the first anthropological study of ‘town’ as defined by Douglass above. Redfield’s better-known ideas on folk culture were widely criticized in later years by the other fathers of peasant studies (like Bateson, Foster, Wolf, etc.), but generally the critics reduced his tripartite constellation (primitive - peasant/folk - urban) to binaries (peasant/folk vs. urban *or* primitive vs. modern).³⁰ However, Redfield’s work’s real value lies in his idea of “the intermediate community” (which I will call *town* even though he did not use this term) that bears the characteristics of both “a primitive tribe” and “a modern city civilization.”³¹ Namely, these

²⁷ “Knowledge, Truth, and Falsehood in Human Relations” in Georg Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1950), 312.

²⁸ “Types of Social Relationships by Degrees of Reciprocal Knowledge of Their Participants” in *Ibid.*, 321, 329.

²⁹ “Secrecy” in *Ibid.*, 330.

³⁰ It is incredible to see, for example, how George M. Foster misrepresented Redfield’s work in his critical review. Foster dismissed the tripartite structure of Redfield’s argument and conflated ‘primitive’ and ‘folk’ societies in one group in opposition to ‘urban.’ This led him to criticize Redfield for taking folk society as an isolated unit, which was the opposite of Redfield’s decades-long project. In his response, Redfield pointed out the conceptual confusion and said that he called ‘peasant society’ what Foster called ‘folk society.’ Needless to say, his ‘peasant society’ was already theorized as a unit in constant contact with the city, as Foster suggested. George M. Foster, “What Is Folk Culture?,” *American Anthropologist* 55, no. 2 (1953): 159–73; Robert Redfield, “The Social Organization of Tradition,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 15, no. 01 (1955): 13–21.

³¹ See especially the last chapter of Robert Redfield, *Tepoztlan, a Mexican Village; a Study of Folk Life* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1930).

towns have a dual or double life (not an in-between life) created by their being in proximity vis-à-vis the big city and the traditional countryside at the same time.

Redfield was impressed by the “middle way” *Tepoztlan*’s people used to choose for living a “good life”: they were prudent (like a traditional peasant) but also open to novelty (like city people) without being too adventurous (like tribesmen).³² These people were in a cultural connection with both the traditional life and the city life, if cultural connection is defined as “enlargement of cultural horizons sufficient to become aware of other cultures and of the possibility that one’s own society may in some ways require their presence.”³³ I believe that his conceptualization of *tertium quid* as embodiment of two cultures in the same social space, as an intermediary carrying two lives at the same time, as a positively defined middle ground (not a neither-nor), needs to be revisited as a fertile point of departure for work on provincial towns.

In peasant studies, later works, especially by Eric Wolf and James Scott, have superseded (and from time to time falsified) Redfield’s work, but at the same time his special emphasis on dual life has been abandoned. In reality, Simmel’s concept of ‘stranger’ could not be better exemplified in any Chicago School work on the urban marginal. For Simmel, “to be a stranger is naturally a very positive relation; it is a specific form of interaction” (402). The stranger is not the ‘other’ in our contemporary usage; the other is “beyond far and near” because there is no short-distance relation between the self and the other. The stranger, on the other hand, is a “synthesis of nearness and distance” (404). He is not a mobile person, a wanderer or a flâneur; he is “an organic member of the group” (408) he lives in.³⁴ In both Simmel’s stranger and

³² Excess of anything, even “excess of denial,” was rejected by the townsmen. “The Peasant’s View of the Good Life,” in Robert Redfield, *Papers*, ed. Margaret Park Redfield, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 310–326. See also, “Tribe, Peasant, and City,” in *Ibid.*, 1:282–294.

³³ “The Cultural Role of Cities” in Redfield, *Papers*, 1:346.

³⁴ “The Stranger” in Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, 402–408.

Redfield's town, we can recognize the double embodiment of two relatively separated worlds by an intermediary (spatial or personal) character. The idea that the middle gains cultural richness thanks to its short-distance relations in proximity shall be used as a corrective of in-betweenness and binary oppositions.

More often than not, whenever one's experience does not fit into the too-well-defined binary categories, hyphenated concepts are put to use ('in-between'). However, they only make us defer creating a *positive* definition of the experience. The concept of 'ambiguous,' for instance, is widely used in academia to refer to 'neither-nor' situations even though the main referee, Sigmund Freud, drew upon this concept in order to point out 'both-and' situations that caused dual existence and thus a paradox.³⁵ To take another example, 'liminality' could actually give us a valid excuse to keep relying on hyphenations and negative definitions; after all, Victor Turner defined this concept of van Gennep's as a "betwixt-and-between" situation in which the "[liminaries] are neither-this-nor-that, here-nor-there, one-thing-not-the other." Nevertheless, it would be inconsiderate to dismiss what Turner added a few lines later: "But the most characteristic midliminal symbolism is that of paradox, or being *both* this *and* that" [emphasis in original]. Even though his interest is generally said to be in transitory phases, I would emphasize that Turner's entire work is an examination of liminal situations that "cease to be a mere transition and become a set of life."³⁶

³⁵ "I mean that the relation is really 'ambivalent,' that is, it is composed of conflicting feelings of tenderness and hostility." Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, trans. A. A. Brill (New York: Moffat, Yard and company, 1918), 24. Freud takes this concept from Eugen Bleuler, for whom, too, ambivalence is a "phenomenon whereby pleasant and unpleasant feelings simultaneously accompany the same experience." David N. Graubert and Joseph S. A. Miller, "On Ambivalence," *The Psychiatric Quarterly* 31, no. 1-4 (January 1, 1957): 458.

³⁶ Victor Turner, "Variations on a Theme of Liminality," in *Secular Ritual*, ed. Sally Falk Moore and Barbara G. Myerhoff (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Comp., 1977), 37.

Hence, following Douglas' 'little town,' Redfield's 'peasant,' Simmel's 'stranger,' and Turner's 'liminal phase,' I suggest that any object of study can be conceptualized as a *tertium quid* that is to be defined as the dual existence of two norms to which the object stays in proximity. This methodology was named "trichotomy" by C. S. Peirce, who conceptualized 'the third' category as a relational outcome or function of two parties.³⁷ In other words, *tertium quid*, as an ideal type, is not only an intermediary with short-distance relations to both ends, but also carries the characteristics of both ends. This dual existence was also observed in the social universe of intermediaries (between empire and local, between formal and informal, etc.).³⁸ But once a contact zone emerged, once the primitive met the modern, the local the cosmopolitan, would it not be a step backwards to focus only on the contact zone as a product of a *binary* relation, instead of investigating the relations between the zone and the still-surviving normative poles, namely the short-distance relations? If the contact does not efface the encountering systems, if everything is not yet hybrid, not only the results of contact but also the post-contact proximity needs to be analyzed.

The affective turn in social sciences recently made scholars pay more attention to proximity and mediation in order to emphasize the agency of collective emotions between close-by but still distanced social groups. As a reaction to the dominant intimacy paradigm, for example, Gaston revisited the eighteenth century philosophers of sympathy and pointed out that for Rousseau sympathy always needed a certain distance between subjects.³⁹ Similarly, Rutherford turned to Hume and reminded us that sympathy is "the embodied outcome of

³⁷ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 186.

³⁸ For a discussion on these "fixers," see Craig Jeffrey et al., "Fixers in Motion. A Conversation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, no. 03 (July 2011): 692–707.

³⁹ Sean Gaston, "The Impossibility of Sympathy," *The Eighteenth Century* 51, no. 1 (2010): 129–52.

proximity.”⁴⁰ Bubandt and Willerslev underscored the “dilemma of emphatic proximity combined with distance” in order to warn about the “dark side” of short-distance relations of empathy that can be mistaken as intimacy.⁴¹ In a similar vein, the peculiar characteristics of being side by side in inter-subjective knowledge production led Fontein to propose an agenda for an “anthropology of proximity” in which the stress the ontological turn placed on radical differences was replaced by a focus on what I would call short-distance relations in the instances of co-existence.⁴² In Ottoman studies, too, Makdisi proposed to differentiate “proximity and coexistence” from “tolerance” in order to dissociate coexistence from intimacy.⁴³

Setting the Scene

The life of Harput/Mezre is the story of a provincial town during rapid social, economic, legal and political transformations in the Age of Reforms (*Tanzimat*) in the empire. The formation of a modern centralized state apparatus, emergence of the concept of citizenship, establishment of local municipal governance, the founding of mass media, the rise of secular courts, the initiation of mass education, and many other institutional and social transformations generally represented by one single word—modernity—took place in this long century. *Tanzimat* is considered the childhood years of today’s world, the beginning of today’s modernity, and therefore it is perhaps the most studied period of Ottoman history. Nevertheless, until recently, this historiography remained confined to the center of the empire, on the one hand, and to the

⁴⁰ Danilyn Rutherford, “Kinky Empiricism,” *Cultural Anthropology* 27, no. 3 (August 1, 2012): 472.

⁴¹ Nils Bubandt and Rane Willerslev, “The Dark Side of Empathy: Mimesis, Deception, and the Magic of Alterity,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57, no. 1 (January 2015): 5–34.

⁴² Joost Fontein, “Graves, Ruins, and Belonging: Towards an Anthropology of Proximity,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17, no. 4 (December 1, 2011): 706–27.

⁴³ Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Marc Baer, Ussama Makdisi, and Andrew Shryock, “Tolerance and Conversion in the Ottoman Empire: A Conversation,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 04 (October 2009): 927–40.

distant frontiers that later became independent nation-states, like the Arab provinces, on the other. Eastern Anatolia, however, where Harput/Mezre is located, has been left as a “black hole” between western Anatolia and today’s Middle East. A region that is at the same time eastern Turkey, western Armenia and northern Kurdistan has escaped (of course with notable exceptions) the historian’s craft.⁴⁴ This study is about provincial town life during an age of transformations in a less-distant periphery of the empire. Harput/Mezre was in double proximity: as a town, it was an intermediary between the countryside and the imperial capital, and with its location in the Ottoman East, it was an intermediary between the imperial frontiers and the imperial center.

The dissertation consists of five parts ordered chronologically. Part I sets the socio-historical scene for the emergence of Mezre in the 1830s-50s. It starts with the rise and decline of Keban, Mezre’s predecessor, and continues with the onset of internal colonization in the Ottoman East. Mezre was founded as a garrison town during the military interventions in Kurdistan as part of the reform process and attendant centralization attempts. Being located at the invisible border of Central Anatolia and Ottoman Kurdistan, Mezre’s geographic positioning brought about yet another layer of proximity as it was an intermediary between the center and the Ottoman East, which is itself already an intermediary region. The aim of Part I, however, is to put emphasis not on the coming but rather on the departure of imperial power. I ask what happens after the historiographically amplified periods of war-making? How is a town made in eventless times? Thus, Chapter 2 focuses on the aftermath of the garrison phase, when local place-making activities took place in the face of the governmental indifference of the 1840s.

⁴⁴ 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, 2015).

Moreover, Mezre's social meaning for the locality is explained by connecting this period of ruination to the pre-1930s period, and it is argued that Mezre's dual spatial-social characteristic is one of suburb rather than one of colonial town. As a result, the always-overemphasized internal colonization is provincialized in the history of the town.

The last chapter of Part I tells the story of the most notable local family of Mezre, the *Çötelizades*. The existence of four *pashas* (the highest bureaucratic rank, the rank of provincial Governors) in the family generally hides the rural roots of this landed aristocracy, which, in origin, was an *agha* (landlord) family expelled from Harput to Mezre. Mezre as a segregated space of landed notables (as opposed to Harput's urban families) was to transform into a separated space for the new trade bourgeoisie (as opposed to Harput's dynastic families) who struggled to limit the family's authority. The *Çötelizades* were both the leaders and also the outcasts of the new society in Mezre; they were sued most, criticized most, but always given the key positions in the local administration, too. Their persistence was due to their mediating role in the urban-rural continuum; they were the key personnel of the town.

Part II undertakes an analysis of the dual town form in the Harput region. The under-researched phenomenon of cities moving from one location to another nearby will be examined in this part. The progressive accounts of moving cities are deconstructed here by focusing on the middle phase, marked by the simultaneous existence of town life in both the new and old locations. Inspired by Turner and Bateson, this seemingly transitory period is treated as a set of dual urban life in dynamic equilibrium. First, two dual towns other than Harput/Mezre are examined both for comparative purposes and to demonstrate the prevalence of the phenomenon. These cases of Arapgir and Malatya support the historiographical thesis that the phase of spatial

duality in the course of the city-move is not a temporary in-between phase but an outcome of the historically specific movement of suburbanization.

The second chapter of Part II deals exclusively with the case of Harput/Mezre and their relationship between the 1860s and 1890s. Against the widespread view that dual towns are generally products of outside intervention, I will elucidate the suburbanization movements in the region. In accordance with the negative connotations of distance and separation mentioned above, Mezre's functioning as an imperial garrison in the 1830s for a brief period tends to dominate the critical scholars' historiographic imagination of Harput/Mezre duality. As a result, the local dynamics of spatial separation based on new class positions have been completely dismissed. In this chapter, I show that Mezre was made into a proper town thanks to a symbiosis between the (mostly Muslim) new bureaucratic class and the (mostly Armenian) new trade bourgeoisie. As counterintuitive as it is, Mezre's sociological composition in the nineteenth century refutes the theories that Mezre the government town effaced Harput the cosmopolitan city. Mezre was a peculiar combination of a bourgeois suburb and a local government center.

Part III opens a window on the missionary encounter in Harput in the same period (1850s-90s). American missionaries set out for the Ottoman Empire in the 1820s and expanded their reach into the eastern provinces in the 1850s. Their target was the 'corrupt' old churches, namely the Orthodox (Greeks in the west, Armenians in the east) and Catholics (Maronites in the south). Like all cities of the Ottoman East, in the city of Harput one in three or four people was Armenian, and there were hundreds of Armenian villages on the plain; thus, it was fertile ground for missionary work. Nevertheless Harput was no more than an ordinary mission station until the work of a small but extraordinarily studious group of missionaries turned the station into one of the most important in the entire empire. First, I will give an account of the making of the

renowned Harput station in the 1850s and 60s. It will be emphasized and demonstrated here that, in this period, the harshest social conflict occurred between neither Muslims and native Christians, nor missionaries and Muslims, but missionaries and native Christians. Although it sounds like the most plausible option anyway, retrospective looks mediated by contemporary nationalist and/or sectarian views frequently dismiss this fact.

Accordingly, throughout Part III, I will be interested in the relatively short-distance relations within the Christian community rather than the encounters between complete ‘others.’ So little common ground existed between Americans and Turks that simple hospitality worked pretty well as a social medium. Even after fifty years of work, no missionary could properly speak Turkish except Mr. Barnum, whereas all, without exception, learned at least some Armenian. Nevertheless, the antagonism between the Armenian Church and the missionaries hindered too much intimacy between the two communities. Thus, to examine the shorter-distance relations, the main chapters will focus on the most ambiguous—and analytically the most exciting—aspect of the missionary encounter: the relationship between missionaries and Armenian Protestants (converts). The existing literature tends to take the missionaries and the natives as two sides of an encounter the outcome of which is the converts; the encounter is presupposed and the convert character is celebrated as an icon of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. With Bateson’s warning in mind, I will rather concentrate on the persistence of distance even in the closest relationship—the relationship between localized Americans and Americanized Armenians. In the last chapter of this Part, I turn to the Gregorian Armenian intellectuals and their critique of the converts. Of interest is the fact that the opposing sides of the encounter were actually formed gradually after the encounter, and paradoxically converged in their hostile attitude towards the Armenian Protestants.

Part IV has a different nature compared to the previous parts because it is a microhistorical study of one single, exceptional event rather than an analysis of long-term social and spatial norms. The event is the invasion of Harput/Mezre by thousands of Kurds from northern mountainous regions on November 11, 1895, and their plundering of the Armenian neighborhoods and, on occasion, killing them. This particular assault in Harput was part of a series of attacks in all cities of the eastern provinces known as the ‘1895-96 Armenian Massacres.’ On these events, there is less than a handful of serious studies based on archival research; in proportion to the frequency with which these events are referred to in academic and popular literatures, we in fact know very little about what really happened on the ground. Most of the circulating educated guesses are projections based on what is known about the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Thus, one of the primary aims of Part IV is to illuminate the event in Harput in minute detail using various kinds of archival sources. In my analysis, I will assume an uncomfortable role and propose to see the events first and foremost as a Kurdish rebellion. I will also show how Kurds disappeared from the narratives of massacres right after the event.

The second half of Part IV tackles the same event from a different angle by following a common thread in all the narratives: cross-dressing and deception. Massacres are studied by scholars quite frequently both because they are overplayed in the official archives and because they indicate an encounter between at least two social groups. Recalling again Bateson’s earthquake metaphor, however, massacres are too-exceptional instances in the long-term relations between clashing communities and thus reduce the social distance into moments of violent intimacy. It is presupposed that the long-distance relations between social ‘others’ turn into non-distance during these exceptional moments. Yet again, I prefer to frame the social structure as composed of short-distance relations among those who were distant enough to be

opposite parties of collective violence but close enough to be able to deceive each other by donning the guise of the other through cross-dressing. Accordingly, I propose a distinction between provocation and deception as two different forms of governing the behavior of the other. Contrary to popular provocation theses, the deception thesis gives agency and responsibility to the actor (not only to the instigator).

Part V tells the last phase of Harput/Mezre's story in the early twentieth century. After a short introduction about Muslim-Christian relations in the early decades of the new century, I concentrate on the 1930s when Harput/Mezre duality ended and Elazığ was born as a modern city of the new nation. Much as it had a hundred years earlier, Elazığ was turned into a military headquarters of the central state during Operation Dersim (1938-39) against Kurdish people in the north. Thanks to government initiatives, Elazığ developed to the extent that some thought it was poised to become the Paris of the eastern provinces; at the same time, Harput was ruined. In the 1940s and 1950s, however, still in parallel with the 1840s of Part I, government support withdrew when war-making was over in the region. Elazığ never achieved its ideals. In the last section of Part V, I examine the nostalgia towards Harput and Mezre that suddenly emerged in the 1950s. I conclude with the developmentalism of the 1960s that gave Elazığ its contemporary shape.

A Note on Sources

The present study is based on detailed research in two main archives: the Ottoman Archives (PMOA) and the Missionary Archives (ABCFM). Like every archive, they mostly frustrated me until I obediently complied with their rules and nature. I looked for plans and maps, or at least for descriptions of the built environment of Mezre in the Ottoman archives, but in vain. Harput-Mezre needed to be a Beirut or a Salonika, namely a global city of that age, to be

privileged enough to have such precious plans; a provincial town always had unfulfilled projects, on the one hand, and local development without any projects, on the other. Neither did the same archive sit and explain to me the causes of the 1895 events even though I believe I did a comprehensive research on this small topic. It rather provided me with multiple narratives on the event and left the rest to me. Regarding the missionary archive, given that the missionaries were real people and some of them lived in the same house for more than four decades, I expected their hundreds of letters to give me a vast store of details about daily life which could not be reached in the government documents. But no assumption could be further from reality; I could not find more than a few paragraphs in thousands of pages. What they mostly do is gossip about other Americans and, of course, about Americanized natives, who became the subject of Part III.

Travelogues found frequent use in this study, especially in Part II. European and American visitors to Anatolia, to the Bible lands, or to India sometimes passed through Harput/Mezre and— if we are lucky- they wrote down their impressions. When they did, the narrative based on tightlipped archival documents suddenly gets colored with living details. Even though I find this tonal discrepancy appealing, I tried to encode it by putting together different kinds of sources about the same thing/event. For example, the physical features of the governor's house in the archive add to the social meaning of its interior design in the travelogue, and are supported by a drawing of the house by another traveler. The reader will recognize a similar tonal discrepancy between archival material and missionary letters. Part II and Part III, for instance, do not speak much to each other although they partially cover the same decades—a perfect indicator of the social distance between the worlds of the missionaries and of the government officials.

I made extensive use of periodicals in the chapters about the later decades. For the early nineteenth century, the only available periodical is the official imperial gazette, to which the reader will find references in Part I. After the 1850s and 60s, non-official printed press developed in Istanbul and in cities with high cultural capital (like Van in the east), but many provincial towns had as their first local paper the official gazette of the local government in the 1870s-80s. Mezre's gazette *Mamuretülaziz* appeared in October 1883, and I use it at the end of Part II. *Yeprad*, an Armenian bi-weekly published in Harput between 1909 and 1914, finds limited use in certain sections. Periodicals are used comprehensively in Part V on the Republican period. Here, five local newspapers published in Elaziğ in the 1930s-60s will be the main primary source.

Part I: The Making of Mezre

Part I gives an account of the early phase of Mezre's hundred-year-long story. It opens with a scene from the late eighteenth century when Mezre did not exist yet, and it ends right before it became a proper town in the 1860s. The first chapter delineates the story of Mezre's predecessor, Keban, and its losing the status of provincial capital to Mezre in the 1820s-30s. The rise of Mezre is associated here with Ottoman centralization and internal colonization in the eastern provinces. The next chapter, however, begins with the cessation of these external interventions and instead emphasizes the local initiative in turning Mezre from a hamlet into a town from the 1840s into the 1860s. It focuses on the struggle of the local groups over the built environment in the town. The last chapter revisits the same two decades from the perspective of the most powerful local family of Mezre, the Çötelizades, who were gradually excluded from certain credit networks by the newly rising trade bourgeoisie. The family turned into a mediator between the town and the rural hinterland. In its entirety, Part I describes the formation of a provincial town possessed of relative autonomy thanks to its mediating power between the imperial center and the distant periphery.

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Chapter 1: Place-making in the Harput Area

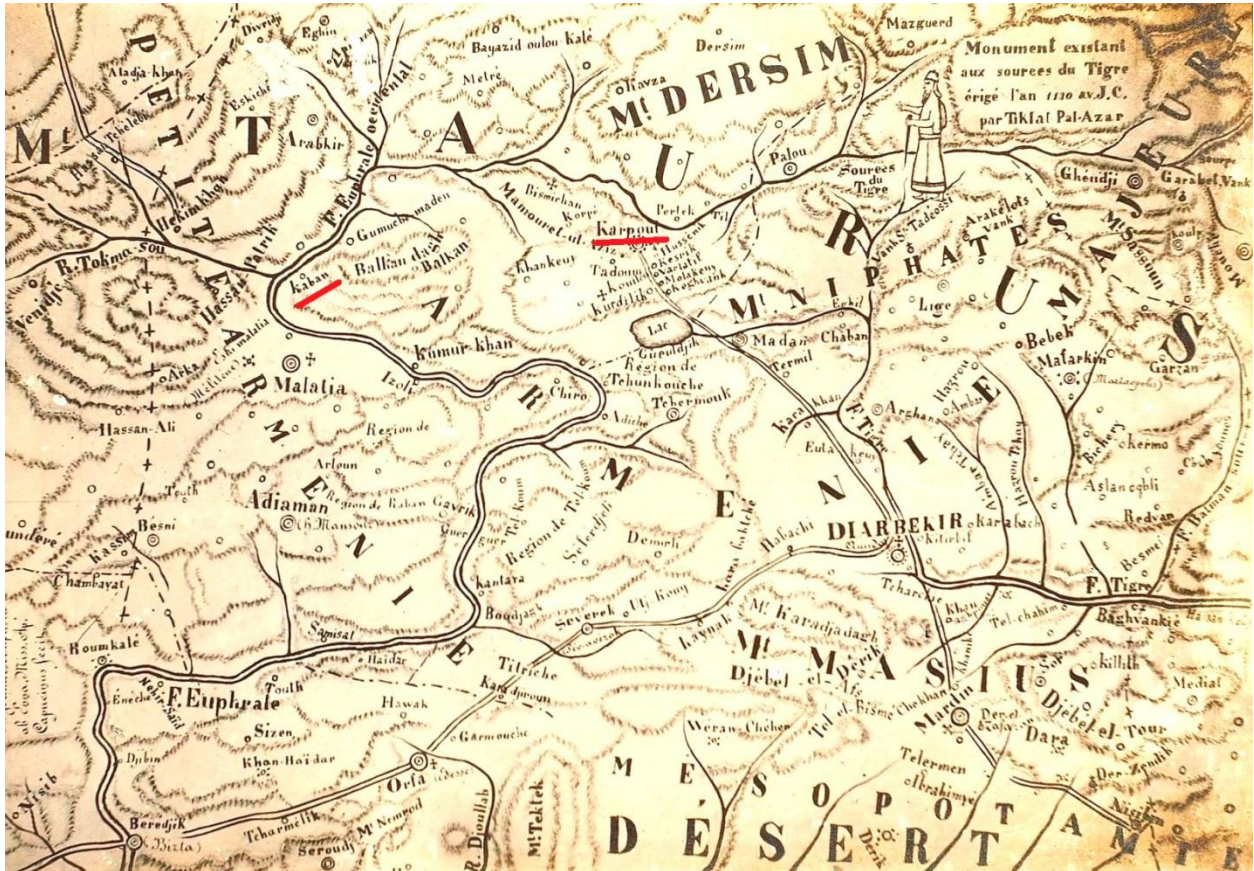


Figure 1-1: Karpout [Harput] and Kaban [Keban] in the Map of Catholic Mission in Mesopotamia and Armenia.⁴⁵

The Making of Keban

At the end of the eighteenth century, the ancient city of Harput was no more than a district center (*kaza merkezi*) administratively attached to Diyarbekir Province (*Eyalet*). And even the city of Diyarbekir, regardless of its own ancient history, was not the economic capital of the region. Instead a rather small place, with no historic credentials, had attracted cultural

⁴⁵ Pierre de Gigord, *Album de La Mission de Mésopotamie et d'Arménie, Confiée Aux Frères-Mineurs Capucins de La Province de Lyon*, ed. Frère Raphaël, Pierre de Gigord Collection of Photographs of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, Getty Research Institute, 1904, Box 39. Karpout [Harput] and Kaban [Keban] are underscored by me.

investment by the provincial elite thanks to its vast underground resources: its name was Keban. But the mining history of Keban did not have a long genealogy, either; the mines there were opened perhaps only in the first decade of the 1700s, even though the Ottoman state had centuries of experience mining in other places, for example in the neighboring town of Ergani.⁴⁶ By the end of the eighteenth century, however, Keban had become the unofficial capital of the region—which is usually called the Harput region—and hosted the rulers who not only governed the mines (including those in Ergani) but also had exceptional privileges that put them in a more powerful position even than the nominal Governors (*Vali*) of the Provinces of Sivas and Diyarbekir.

The lives of cities in the provinces were transient. The persistence of ancient names and of official titles, like that of Diyarbekir Province or the City of Harput, conceals the recurring processes of place-making and creates an illusion of continuity. The truth is, the notion of Harput's having a centuries-long history is as untenable as the idea that today's Athens can be explained by the war with Sparta. Harput of the nineteenth century had (almost) nothing in common with Harput of the eighteenth century. As Saussure asserted about both chess and human language, "any particular position has the unique characteristic of being freed from all antecedent positions; the route used in arriving there makes absolutely no difference."⁴⁷ In this unusual thesis on history, change comes from contingent human behavior with unlimited potential, but the resulting system is still a consistent whole of (social) relations that cannot be explained by referring to the earlier system. Along the same lines, the old cities need to be dissociated from the genealogical burden of their names. Therefore, this chapter starts with the

⁴⁶ Fahrettin Tızlak, *Osmanlı Döneminde Keban-Ergani Yöresinde Madencilik (1775-1850)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997), xxix–xxx.

⁴⁷ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), 89.

story of Keban at a time when Harput had taken a backseat and Mezre did not even exist. In the nineteenth century, Harput and Mezre would be made in the exact same way Keban had been, namely by the local elites and by financial capital, not by history.

Across the empire, the mining towns had always been places of exception. The pre-modern states did not have a central treasury to collect and distribute the aggregate revenue of the state; most of the wealth was collected and distributed locally. Tax was not something that used to be transferred through the entire country all the way to Constantinople. But precious metals were. Gold, silver and the other underground resources composed a substantial portion of the imperial treasury; they used to be channeled to the capital city unless a mint had already been established at the mine for coin production—as had been the case in Keban for a while. The mining towns had autonomy. The director’s office was one of the rare cases where tax-farming was not implemented. The mines were run by appointed director, not by the winners of auctions. Not only these rulers but also the entire mining community in the town had special privileges. They were exempt from (almost) all taxes and military obligations. Even the legal conflicts in these mining towns were to be resolved locally by the mining authorities; the Provincial Governor or the Judge had no say in these special towns.⁴⁸

Keban’s rise was neither unilinear nor uncontested. Not long after the inception of its mining life, the earthquake of 1730 killed many workers underground. As a result of the death of their fellow workers, Kurds attacked the mines, killed the director, Bedir Ağa, and destroyed all seventy furnaces. The event left the mines inactive for two decades until Ispanakçı Mustafa

⁴⁸ Tızlak, *Osmanlı Döneminde Keban-Ergani Yöresinde Madencilik (1775-1850)*. Zeynep Türkyılmaz’s most recent research traces the relation between the exclusive autonomy of the mining sector and the special cases of dual religious practices (Christian and Islamic) among some (mostly Greek descendant) communities in the mining towns. Zeynep Türkyılmaz, “Zahirde İslam, Batında Hıristiyan” (Thursday Talks of Tarih Vakfı, Istanbul, March 28, 2013).

Pasha repaired the equipment and restarted production after seven years of struggle against Kurdish resistance (1751-58). Production continued without cessation through the 1760s, and in 1775 the Ottoman government formed a special unit, the Directorate of Imperial Mines (*Maden-i Hümayûn Emaneti*; ‘the Mines’ from here on), devoted to the administration of the Keban and Ergani mines, among which Keban served as the primary residence of the director (*emin*). From then on, Keban developed from a mere village into a proper town and became the informal capital of the region.⁴⁹

Place-making was the unintended consequence of the concentration of wealth and power. Keban went through its heyday during Yusuf Ziyaeddin Pasha’s intermittent but long-lasting reign in the region (~1785-1799 & ~1809-1811). Today, the oldest building in the city is the endowment complex (*küllîye*) he built around 1810-11.⁵⁰ In fact, it was a mutual process of place-making and career-making. Yusuf Ziyaeddin Efendi (not yet a Pasha) was the *enderûn ağası* of the above-mentioned Ispanakçı Mustafa Pasha. In the mid-1780s he was appointed as the director of the Mines, and upon his successful rule he was made a vizier (with the title of Pasha) and also, in 1792, the Governor of Diyarbakir. He later served at the highest echelons of the imperial bureaucracy, including serving twice as Grand Vizier (the highest non-hereditary position). His career includes governorships of almost all provinces in the Ottoman East, some at the same time, as well as the chief-commandership of the Eastern imperial army. During Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt, he went there, too. However, he always came back to Keban up

⁴⁹ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, vol. 1 (Mamuretülaziz: Mamuretülaziz Matbaası, 1884), 106–110; Ali Yiğit, “Keban Kasabası’nın Kuruluş ve Gelişmesine Etki Eden Coğrafi Faktörler,” *A.Ü. Türkiye Coğrafyası Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, no. 6 (1997): 411–23.

⁵⁰ Yiğit, “Keban Kasabası’nın Kuruluş ve Gelişmesine Etki Eden Coğrafi Faktörler,” 417.

until his final retirement to Istanbul in 1811.⁵¹ As the Yearbooks later recorded, he “preferred to reside” (“*tercih-i ikamet eyledi*”) in Keban.⁵²

When the Pasha held multiple posts, he ruled the other places, like Diyarbekir and Harput, by proxy. This non-presence of the administrator was not the exception but the rule in the imperial system; in fact, the entire bureaucracy can be described as an endless chain of farming-out of the duties, or as a hierarchy of absentee lordship. It was the Pasha’s brother-in-law Abdi Pasha, for example, who took over the mining business in Keban as a proxy when the Pasha had to go to Erzurum as its governor (~1794).⁵³ And this post was in addition (*ilâveten*) to his governorship of Diyarbekir, where another proxy was in charge. Abdi Pasha, on the other hand, was officially appointed as the director of the Mines only in 1798; and, when he was assigned as the governor of Diyarbekir in 1806, he in fact governed the province by proxy from his residence in Keban. Keban was important for the central state, too; its production could not be allowed to drop for any reason. When it declined in 1804/05—reportedly because of banditry—an imperial edict ordered the governors not to leave Keban: if they had additional posts, they needed to govern them by proxies.⁵⁴ At least from the 1780s to the Age of Reform (*Tanzimat*, 1839-76) governing by proxy (*mütesellim*) was the dominant practice in the region.⁵⁵

This proxy-governance was once taken as a sign of decline in the traditional historiography. The lack of state control and the rise of provincial notables were repeatedly identified as the main characteristics of pre-Tanzimat Ottoman rule. However, the proxy system was no more degenerative than any hierarchical division of labor that entailed relative autonomy

⁵¹ Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 1701–2.

⁵² *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, 1884, 1:107.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1:106–110.

⁵⁴ Tızlak, *Osmanlı Döneminde Keban-Ergani Yöresinde Madencilik (1775-1850)*, 36.

⁵⁵ İbrahim Yılmazçelik, “Osmanlı Hakimiyeti Süresince Diyarbakır Eyaleti Valileri (1516-1838),” *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 10, no. 1 (2000): 233–87.

at each level of bureaucracy. In fact, today we call it modern or rational when a capitalist corporation decentralizes the decision-making process (rather than centralizing it in one person or in one family). The relative autonomy of a locale seems to open the door to a loss of control, but this idea (which involves trust issues) is only a result of mistaking an extractive empire for a modern governmental state. The Ottoman Empire at this stage was not even trying to give welfare or discipline to the provinces; its sole aim was to extract money and men. Similarly, trans-national corporations do not monitor the local processes centrally; instead, each supervisor controls the managers one level below and responds to those one level above at the end of each month/year. Or, to take another example, proxy-governance was similar to the real estate business today: people buy properties and rent them out to other people, who sublease them to yet other people. There is no risk in this business as long as the aim is to extract the monthly rent from the next person (rather than controlling how the people in the house live their lives). Imperial governance, in this sense, did not necessitate any intimate relationship with the local. The system of proxies meant that every place was kept at arm's length from other places. State-making in the provinces consisted of war-making and money-making only, not city-making or legitimacy-building.

The cities were made through the residency of power-holders. To continue with the metaphor of the real estate sector, at the end of the day the landlord lives in another apartment. Maybe in a house in the suburbs, maybe upstairs. Maybe in a rented house, and then his landlord must be living somewhere else, too. The transfer of duties in the hierarchical division of labor also caused constant shifts in the location of power, both in terms of persons and places. If Saussure's concept of arbitrariness of sign corresponds to Weber's state theory of positions independent of persons, the Ottoman state was an illustration of Derrida's model of deferring:

Whenever one tries to reach a meaning (position/title/power), s/he cannot rely on one carrying signifier (person) but is constantly sent to another one. Are you looking for the *real* ruler of Diyarbekir? God help you. On the other hand, the indexical signification of these ruler-persons brings us to the actual places they used to live. As Saskia Sassen long ago showed, the extreme mobility of the trans-national managerial class does not prevent them from creating well-settled nodes (global cities) as consumption and culture centers.⁵⁶ The fact that they *live* somewhere created special places. So also did the Ottoman governors/proxies live, and so did they make places.

Keban was such a place. During the heyday of the Directorate of Imperial Mines, Keban was made as a regional capital town (1770s-1830s). Although many towns and villages in the vicinity, including Harput, were administratively attached to Diyarbekir Province, they were financially connected to the Mines, namely to Keban.⁵⁷ The unique amalgam between a newly emerging economic power in the mines and the new cultural capital of governors sent from the center (at the expense of local power-holders) created urban development in this unexpected place. As late as the 1880s, Yusuf Ziyaeddin Pasha's imprint was recognized through the mosque, the library, and the clock, among other material remains from a half-century before. At that time, though, Keban was no longer a regional capital. It had lost its credentials to a neighboring place, another newly rising town, to Mezre (a suburb of Harput). But Keban and Mezre shared a very crucial structural element: They rose not thanks to any official titles or to any historic significance (unlike Harput or Diyarbekir, they had neither) but thanks to the trans-imperial managerial group (the governors and directors) and local people who chose to *live* there.

⁵⁶ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁵⁷ İbrahim Yılmazçelik, "XVIII. yüzyıl ile XIX. yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Diyarbakır Eyaletinin İdari Yapısı ve İdari Teşkilatlanması," *DTCF Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 29 (1997): 224.

Even though until a much later period the area in question was called Harput Province, with the city of Harput as its capital, the governors of the region resided in Keban and then in Mezre. No matter who was entitled to govern which region, no matter what kind of administrative divisions created which provinces under which name, the trans-regional class of title-holders built residential governing places that concentrated power and money. Neither Harput nor Diyarbakir, but Keban and Mezre were the global cities of the nineteenth-century Ottoman East.

It begs primary research (which is outside the scope of the present study) to explain the intricacies of the decline of Keban and of the power shift to Mezre. But it is certain that the Çötelizade family played the leading role in this drama. The role of this Harput dynasty in the creation of Mezre is obvious and will be explained in the next section and in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, a few details from the Keban period may give some hints about the place-shift. When Yusuf Ziyaeddin Pasha departed from Keban to Istanbul for good, he assigned the job, the position, and the city to his assistant (*kethüda*) İzmirli Ahmed Pasha (~1810). He, too, directed the mines very successfully and was promoted to director of the Trabzon and Gümüşhane mines (~1814). But an incident prevented his leaving Keban peacefully: instead, his property was confiscated and he was expelled to Amasya because during a conflict (*münazaa*) he killed Çötelizade Hacı Mehmed Ağa from Harput dynasties, who was a member of the property-owning class (*erbâb-ı servet*).⁵⁸ Who Çötelizade Mehmed Ağa was, and in what context the central state favored the local dynasty over the governor, is not clear. The only clue comes from a few decades before.

⁵⁸ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, 1884, 1:106–110. PMOA, HAT 278/16381, 23 December 1813; C.ML. 379/15585, 12 March 1814; C.DRB. 3/101, 12 March 1814.

In 1781, the director of the Mines in Keban sent an order to the notables of Harput reminding them to pay their usual yearly share of the “coal fee” on time.⁵⁹ The Ottoman mining system necessitated the contribution of all surrounding villages and towns to the mining business in cash or in kind (coal and/or logs). In the Harput region, too, the entire area was continuously mobilized to feed the furnaces in Keban and Ergani. For example, Eğin had to provide 10,000 pine tree logs and 1,000 *kuruş* cash, whereas the city of Harput was responsible for cash payment only (13,500 *kuruş*).⁶⁰ The above-mentioned order to “pay attention” to the timely collection of this contribution was addressed to ten specific names, all with the title of agha (*ağa*: landlord), el-Hac Osman Ağa being the leader of the notables (*reis-i ayân*). Among these notables, there were two Çötelizades, Mehmed Ağa and İbrahim Ağa. On a later occasion, the director of the mines warned the same *ağas* of Harput again, this time about a Kurdish tribe who resisted transferring the coal to Keban.⁶¹ Last, as a result of some conflicts in Harput and the killing of an eleven-year-old, strict orders came from Keban: the landlords (*ağavât*) in the city of Harput, especially İmamzade Hacı Mehmed Ağa, Mahmud Ağazade Mustafa Ağa, Çötelizade Mehmed Ağa and Çötelizade Osman Ağa, were to be “deported from the inner city and settled in the villages of the province like the other children of similar families.” No one from the class of landlords was to be admitted into the city without the express permission of the Keban Directorate. No excuse or apologies were to be accepted about this issue. This stiff order was addressed, of course, not to the aghas this time, but to the *efendis* (the bureaucrat class) of Harput.⁶²

⁵⁹ Hasan Yüksel, ed., *1776-1794 Tarihli Maden Emni Defteri Osmanlı Döneminde Keban-Ergani Madenleri* (Sivas: Dilek Matbaası, 1997), 17, 79.

⁶⁰ Tızlak, *Osmanlı Döneminde Keban-Ergani Yöresinde Madencilik (1775-1850)*, 27, 181.

⁶¹ Yüksel, *1776-1794 Tarihli Maden Emni Defteri Osmanlı Döneminde Keban-Ergani Madenleri*, 44.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 46.

It would be speculation—albeit a very plausible one—to state that the place called *Ağavat Mezrası* (hamlet of landlords) right on the plain below the hill city of Harput was created during this exile of landlords from the city proper. Since the alternative name of the hamlet was ‘the hamlet of Çötelizades,’ the connection to the exile seems even more reasonable. If it is true, we can trace the emergence of Mezre to this conflict because, as will be shown in the next section, Mezre was simply a shortened toponym for *Ağavat Mezrası* or *Mezra-ı Çötelizade*. In any case, it seems certain that during the heyday of Keban the biggest landlords of the Harput region were taxed more aggressively and punished when they resisted; they were sharply reminded of their non-urban background, as well. And it goes without saying that the residents of the ‘hamlet of landlords’—Mezre—which would later become the capital city of the entire province, were fated to be the protagonists of the place-shift from Keban to Mezre in the 1830s. In sum, place-making in Keban seems to have created its opposite image in Mezre: while Keban bore the imprint of a strong Pasha’s will and power, as a site of endowed buildings and mosques, a prototype of a space of state bureaucracy, Mezre was a non-place, a farm for exiled landlords, a representative of the feudal nobility. This was going to change in the next half century.

The Decline of Keban and the Emergence of Mezre

The golden age of the Mines seems to have ended by the decade of the 1820s, when problems rather than successes were recorded in the registers. Then-director Salih Pasha complained about the banditry in the region and its grave consequences for the mining business: the bandits had gotten hold of all the coal-provider positions.⁶³ These intermediaries were key figures in connecting the official world of demand in Keban to the everyday world of supply in the towns and villages of the Harput region. As seen above, the aghas of Harput occupied the

⁶³ Tızlak, *Osmanlı Döneminde Keban-Ergani Yöresinde Madencilik (1775-1850)*, 144–145.

same intermediary position, and enjoyed the same bargaining power. In 1829, the imperial center tried to overcome some of the problems by refraining from appointing pashas to the Directorate on the grounds that these high-ranking officials did not pay enough attention to the mines. But it did not work as wished, because low-ranking titles also meant a lower degree of authority.⁶⁴ Finally, in 1832, the turbulence in the region reached its peak when Egypt's rebellious governor declared war against the Ottoman sultan. The south-eastern corner of Anatolia, where the Harput region lay, was to be the area of encounter between Egyptian forces coming from the south and Ottoman forces marching from the north-west. The director of the Mines, Osman Pasha, was also going to take part in the war mobilization, like all bureaucrats in the eastern provinces. So, the Mines needed to be taken care of locally until this crisis was overcome. But by whom? The decision seems to have contributed to the creation of a brand new city.

In August 1832,⁶⁵ the government of the Mines and of Diyarbekir Province (which then included the Harput district) was entrusted not to a bureaucrat pasha but to Çötelizade İbrahim Ağa of Harput, who, as revealed in the official order, had already been the proxy-governor (*mütesellim*) of Diyarbekir.⁶⁶ In other words, one of the agha families of Harput—seemingly the most powerful one—who had been (at least in theory) exiled from the city of Harput a few decades ago, was given the governorship of the entire region, including Keban, Diyarbekir and Harput. Of course he also became a vizier; he was no longer an agha, but Çötelizade İbrahim Pasha. The new Pasha set out for Keban at once from Diyarbekir, but when he reached his home

⁶⁴ Ibid., 61.

⁶⁵ The date is given wrong (1831/1247 instead of 1832/1248) in the article on Çötelizade İbrahim Pasha in *Sicill-i Osmani*; Yılmazçelik copied this mistake, too. Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, 1996, 3:777; Yılmazçelik, "Osmanlı Hakimiyeti Süresince Diyarbakır Eyaleti Valileri (1516-1838)," 265.

⁶⁶ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 36, 18 August 1832. Further evidence to the prevasiveness of the proxy system comes from the history section of the first Mamuretülaziz Yearbook (*Salname*, 1883) that represented İbrahim Pasha already as the governor (*vali*) of Diyarbekir before he was appointed to the Mines. *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, 1884, 1:106–110.

(*vatanı*) of Harput along the way, he fell sick and died. This was reported to Istanbul by his son-in-law and nephew (his brother's son) Çötelizade İshak Ağa, who perhaps requested to inherit the position. According to the official imperial gazette, this closest descendant of the Pasha was fit for the duty, since İshak Ağa was both son-in-law and nephew to İbrahim Pasha and thus educated by him (*kendisinin terbiyegerdesi olarak*). Moreover, he had not allowed the soldiers recruited by his uncle to disperse, and there was a petition from the locals supporting his claim. As a result, in October 1832, Çötelizade İshak Ağa became a Pasha and was appointed as the governor of Diyarbakir and the director of the Mines.⁶⁷ Less than a year later, his area of power was extended through the Rakka (al-Raqqah) Province, too.⁶⁸

Çötelizade İshak Pasha governed the region for only one and a half years. In March 1834, all these posts were taken away from him and he was ordered to his house to live in retirement (*mütekaiden vilayetinde evinde ikamet eylemesi*).⁶⁹ This short period of time witnessed the scandalous defeat of the Ottoman forces by the Egyptian army (December 1832) and a demeaning armistice treaty (April 1833) upon the intervention of European powers. Basically, in 1832, Çötelizades—a local family with feudalistic credentials and power—was in the right place at the right time. As everybody else was dealing with the Egyptian army, they were elevated from an agha family to a pasha family, and no member of the family would ever be called agha again—they would be called *Bey* (Mr.), instead, which was a civic honorific. Their feudal genealogy was buried in the soil for good. But even more importantly, the small hamlet of lords right outside of Harput suddenly and unexpectedly entered the universe of significant places, just

⁶⁷ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 41, 4 October 1832. Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvîs Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, vol. 4–5 (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı - Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 754.

⁶⁸ Yılmazçelik, “Osmanlı Hakimiyeti Süresince Diyarbakır Eyaleti Valileri (1516-1838),” 270.

⁶⁹ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 80, 26 March 1834. In a few months, his vizierate was also withdrawn; instead, he was bestowed *kapıcıbaşılık* as an imperial gift. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 85, 3 July 1834.

because Çötelizade İshak Pasha was living in a mansion there. The simple *mezra* (hamlet) would come in later decades to be known as Mezre, the provincial capital. The short stint of official governance by Çötelizade İbrahim and İshak Pashas changed the entire social space of the greater Keban-Harput-Diyarbakir region irreversibly.

Keban gradually ceased to be the primary residence of the regional rulers. In 1833, Malatya became the residence (*arâmgah*) for the directors of the mine, and in 1835, Mezre took over the role. In addition, Keban's decline was accelerated by the well-known centralization attempts of the Ottoman state from the 1830s on. The special autonomy of the mining towns and the mining business was impaired when the Mines were taken under bureaucratic governance in 1836 and under the rule of the new Reform Age (*Tanzimat*) in 1845.⁷⁰ The Mines ceased to be a semi-autonomous directorate; instead, it became an official District (*sancak*) under Diyarbakir Province and began to be governed by the district governors (*kaymakam*). As a result, a local director was to be appointed to the Mines, rather than a bureaucrat pasha, and once again a member of the Çötelizade family was preferred: The first district governor of the new administrative structure in the Mines was Çötelizade Süleyman Bey. In 1844, Süleyman Bey had already been bestowed the military title of brigadier (*mirliva*). In June-July of 1845, he was promoted to the District Governor of the Mines and became a *mirülümera* (a bureaucratic title); of course, now he was also a Pasha.⁷¹ And the next year, he was promoted and became a *mirmiran*.⁷² He governed the Mines for around three years until he died in the beginning of 1848.

The period right before Süleyman Pasha's directorship was stamped with attempts to modernize the mines according to European methods. From 1836 on, the central state had been

⁷⁰ Tızlak, *Osmanlı Döneminde Keban-Ergani Yöresinde Madencilik (1775-1850)*, 36–51.

⁷¹ PMOA, C.DH. 344/17171, 5 July 1845; A.MKT. 27/15, 17 August 1845.

⁷² PMOA, A.DVN. 21/85, 20 December 1846.

seeking ways to increase production. Austrian Gustave de Pauliny was employed as the chief engineer of the mining department; supervisors and skilled workers were brought from Europe. De Pauliny personally visited the empire's mining towns, including Keban and Ergani. For example, in 1841, he placed Hungarian engineers in the Ergani mine and criticized the system in the region for relying on forced labor (as an inefficient technique) and for causing deforestation that would impede the mining work in the near future: "unless some means are devised, the mines, he [de Pauliny] says, will be lost to the country."⁷³ In 1843, European equipment was to be installed in Keban.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the productivity of the Keban-Ergani mines continued to decline. In 1846, Süleyman Pasha submitted a detailed report to Istanbul in which he complained about not having the necessary financial means to run the mines as before: *Tanzimat* (the Reform Edict of 1839) had particularly increased the costs of the job (perhaps because it abolished forced labor and extraordinary taxes) and the allocations could not meet the demands of the system anymore in this new age. He requested the doubling of the advance payment to him so that he could arrange all the workers and other business relations on time.⁷⁵ At the same time, the governor of Harput Province charged Süleyman Pasha for withdrawing too much money from the province's account, which the Pasha had to explain later.⁷⁶

In other words, thanks either to *Tanzimat* or the villagers' resistance (which is generally reflected in the documents as Kurdish banditry), or both, the peculiar system of financing and feeding the mines gradually ceased to work. Süleyman Pasha died with substantial debts to the

⁷³ John Macgregor, *Commercial Statistics. A Digest of the Productive Resources, Commercial Legislation, Customs Tariffs*, vol. 2 (London: Whittaker and Co., 1850), 119.

⁷⁴ Tızlak, *Osmanlı Döneminde Keban-Ergani Yöresinde Madencilik (1775-1850)*, 154.

⁷⁵ PMOA, C.DRB. 54/2684, 12 December 1846.

⁷⁶ PMOA, A.MKT. 56/99, 14 December 1846; C.ML. 323/13332, 16 April 1847.

official treasury, for which his brother Çötelizade Ömer Bey was held responsible.⁷⁷ No other pasha was appointed to the vacant position. The ex-treasurer of the army of the Arabian Peninsula, Şakir Efendi, was going to take over the job, and until his arrival Çötelizade Hüsnü Bey, the son of the ex-governor Çötelizade İshak Pasha, was to supervise the mines.⁷⁸ In the following decades, the administrative center of the Mines moved to the mining city of Ergani, which developed in the second half of the nineteenth century,⁷⁹ and Keban continued to lose population. By the 1880s, this once-capital of 3,000 households was abandoned by its inhabitants and turned into a small 400-household village.⁸⁰ In sum, in the 1830s, the hitherto residence of the regional governors turned into another place of proxies. The new bosom of provincial power was to be the small hamlet of landlords right below the hill city of Harput.

The Rise of Mezre

The practice of place-making in the Ottoman political world was different than the structure of fixed places in the nation-states. In the latter, as Weber theorized, the state is composed of a stable hierarchy of impersonal positions that are recurrently filled by different individuals, and these positions most likely are attached to real places, too. The modern state, thus, is a garb of abstract positions and their effectiveness depends on who does the steering in that position. This Kafkaesque state is like a gorgeous building with thousands of rooms, and thousands of people constantly enter and leave these rooms, but the building stays *there* no matter what. The positions are abstract and impersonal, but at the same time they are generally place-based; people move to fill the positions, not the other way around. Thus, in nation-states,

⁷⁷ PMOA, A.MKT. 126/5, 16 April 1848.

⁷⁸ PMOA, A.MKT.MVL. 8/67, 9 April 1848; C.DRB. 55/2737, 3 May 1848.

⁷⁹ Ali Yiğit, "Maden (Ergani Madeni) Kasabası'nın Kuruluş, Gelişme ve Fonksiyonları," *F.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 7, no. 1–2 (1995): 319–43.

⁸⁰ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, 1884, 1:110.

official places do not rise and fall, only the people do. However, in the Ottoman political world, the official positions were neither impersonal nor place-based. In fact, generally the positions traveled to where the people resided. Similar to place-making practices in the non-state domain today, places used to rise and fall in the Ottoman world depending on who took over the position. The country was like a giant city in which every few decades different neighborhoods acquired the fanciest credentials. Ottoman official place-making was a constant gentrification process in which places were transformed by people in power.

The first official history of Mezre, written in 1883, reminded the readers of the peculiarity of this official system: Wherever the appointed lords (*bey*) resided, that place was considered the center of the district. Its equivalent today would be moving the capital city of a state to whatever town the new governor happened to be from. If things in the Ottoman system had been as they are today, then perhaps Mezre would never have emerged, and we would not be talking about the rise and fall of places like Keban and Mezre, but only of pashas, as we do today. However, Mezre did emerge. The same official history tells us that like many other villages that had served as the center before, Mezre became the governing center of Harput district when the Çötelizade family acquired distinction and prominence (*kesb-i imtiyaz ve iştihâr*) among the notables. The administration of the district was bestowed to several generations of the dynasty in succession (*müstemirren*), making Mezre the center for a long time (*müddet-i medîde*).⁸¹ In other words, towns were endowed with life thanks to the concentration of local and trans-regional power in the same place. Keban was revived when Yusuf Ziyaeddin Pasha governed the whole region from there; Mezre was made literally from scratch when the Çötelizades took over the government and a simple hamlet turned into a city.

⁸¹ Ibid., 1:101–105.

Mezre is not a proper place name. *Mezra* (ar. *mazra'a*) simply means arable land or hamlet. From the administrative point of view, *mezra* is the smallest unit of human settlement; unlike villages, *mezras* do not have any social structure. The official account of 1883 stated that this place (Mezre) used to be the Çötelizades' private residence (*kendilerine mahsus olarak ikâmetgahları*) and was called “*mezra of lords*” (*ağavat mezrası*).⁸² The allusion to deep history in this statement can be seen as an example of the invention of tradition, since this hamlet was perhaps created, as seen above, by the *aghas* exiled in the 1770s-90s and arguably only later did one of the families (the Çötelizades) gain the upper hand. Mezre's unconventional toponymy (a place name made out of a geographical term) suggests the novelty of the place as a reference in the everyday conversations of Harput people. In other words, not only was Mezre new, but it was also a place of strangers from the very beginning; it was the last place to pride itself on local roots or a place-based genealogy.

The population registers from the early 1830s list the towns first, then the villages and at last the *mezras*. In the registers of the central district of Harput, one can find “*mezra-ı Çötelizade*” among many other *mezras*. It looked like a rich hamlet, yet there was no indication of its future as a provincial capital city. In the registers of Muslims, 86 male adults and children in 26 households were recorded, and the first entry was dedicated to el-Hac İshak Bey Çötelizade and his family. He was followed by some other landlords (mostly *aghas*, only one *bey*), but more than half of the families were tenants (*müstecir*) of the landlords—either jointly (*ağaların müstereken*) or of one individual landlord.⁸³ In the registers of non-Muslims, 63 men and boys in 10 Armenian households were recorded, with Minas oğlu Krikor Keşiş and his family being the

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ PMOA, NFS.d. 2675, p. 58-9.

first entry.⁸⁴ In other words, this hamlet did not differ much from the other registered hamlets. Çötelizade İshak was still a *bey*, not a pasha (it was noted that he was in Istanbul at that time). Namely, it was just moments before this ordinary hamlet's fate changed. The exceptional story of this particular *mezra* will turn it to a place name (like 'Farmville') as this place became the regional capital and, later, a big city. Still, some people of Elazığ (Mezre's current name) occasionally use 'Mezre' to refer to the city center.

As mentioned before, Çötelizade İbrahim and İshak Pashas served as the governors of the Keban-Harput-Diyarbakir region between 1832 and 1834 when the Ottoman state was fighting against the Egyptian army. The fact that they were living as the leading family of a small hamlet next to Harput was an entirely contingent factor in the political history of the period. In fact, the place they lived was, at the end of the day, within the limits of Harput, a long-time provincial capital anyway. For the registration official who came around in these years, too, this *mezra* was perhaps a fancy one named after a notable family, but it was still a *mezra* of Harput. Two years of rule by the family did not in itself change the entire political geography of the region, but it was so effective that even the newly-appointed pasha eventually chose to live in this hamlet instead of Harput. This symbiosis between the displaced locals and the incoming outsiders was going to create a special town of strangers that would always keep the surrounding native places in a distance. Mezre was going to be an urban unit even before it turned into a city; it was a place where having come from somewhere else was the norm.

The successor of Çötelizade İshak Pasha was not an ordinary pasha; on the contrary, he was a former Grand Vizier and the recently defeated commander of the Ottoman army before the Egyptian forces: Reşid Mehmed Pasha (*Çerkes*, Circassian). Reşid Pasha worked as a governor

⁸⁴ PMOA, NFS.d. 2676, p. 123.

in important provinces of Thrace in the 1820s and served as Grand Vizier between 1829 and 1833. These years witnessed the unexpectedly enormous challenge of a provincial governor, Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt, rising against the imperial center. When his daring demands were not met by the Sultan, his son İbrahim Pasha invaded Syria and started out marching into Anatolia, quite easily.⁸⁵ Reşid Pasha, who was dealing with Albania at the time, was chosen as commander-general of the imperial army and nominally given Egypt's governorship. Thus, he at once set out with preparations for war. The fact that the Grand Vizier himself took on the issue was said to have relieved the streets of Istanbul,⁸⁶ but on the other hand İbrahim Pasha had already passed the Taurus Mountains and entered the Konya plain.

Egypt's defiance was insolent and arrogant. How dare a provincial governor threaten the sultanate? The war inevitably turned into a battle of legitimacy. It was said that Reşid Pasha sent a threat to the people of Konya that if even one person joined the Egyptian forces, all those under the age of six would be summarily executed. On the other hand, it was also rumored that İbrahim Pasha built good relations with the inhabitants of Konya and removed his soldiers outside of the city in memory of Mawlana Jalal ad-Din Rumi.⁸⁷ On December 21, 1832, the Ottoman army under the command of Reşid Pasha encountered the Egyptian army on the Konya plain in the middle of Anatolia, and was heavily defeated. Reşid Pasha was taken captive. And for İbrahim Pasha, the road to Istanbul was now shorter and unobstructed. Perhaps for the first time in centuries, inner Anatolia was invaded by an enemy army and became the stage for an imperial war. The defeat was so scandalous and shocking that some local bureaucrats were reported to

⁸⁵ In many of the places he passed through in Anatolia, he was accepted as a savior, rather than an enemy. People were not content with Sultan Mahmud II's reforms and did not resist İbrahim Pasha's army at all. Şinasi Altundağ, *Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Paşa İsyanı - Mısır Meselesi, 1831-1841*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 63.

⁸⁶ Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvîs Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, 4-5:718.

⁸⁷ Serdar Ösen, "İbrahim Paşa'nın Konya'yı İşgali Esnasında Mehmet Said Hemdem Çelebi'nin Tutumu," *Turkish Studies* 8, no. 11 (2013): 225.

have contemplated changing loyalty in favor of this new dynasty.⁸⁸ The inhabitants of the towns on İbrahim Pasha's way openly declared that they would not resist him. Many other people in Anatolia ceased to care about their local Ottoman officials, waiting instead for their new rulers.⁸⁹ And the remaining soldiers began digging trenches on the Anatolian side of the Bosphorus; Constantinople's invasion was just a matter of time.

İbrahim Pasha did not capture the imperial capital. International realpolitik made the great powers check and limit the aspirations of his father, Mehmed Ali Pasha, who reluctantly complied with the peace agreement signed in Kütahya by his son. The captive Grand Vizier and Commander Reşid Pasha was well treated by İbrahim Pasha and eventually set free.⁹⁰ He retreated to his Bosphorus mansion on the suburban coastline of Istanbul as an ex-Grand Vizier.⁹¹ But his rest did not last long. Later in the same year (1833) he was called for a new duty: governing the eastern provinces. He was appointed as the governor of Sivas Province, to which in short time the Mines and in March 1834 Diyarbakir (including Harput) would be added.⁹² The demeaning defeat had clearly shown how weak the Ottoman state infrastructure was in comparison to the modern army and tax system of Mehmed Ali Pasha. The highly centralized and authoritarian rule in post-Napoleon Egypt was lacking on the main lands, especially in the black hole of the eastern provinces, located between Syria, Russia and Anatolia. This area was the vast semi-autonomous Kurdistan which had hitherto been made up of self-governing emirates. Neither proper taxation nor recruitment for the army could be undertaken here;

⁸⁸ Ibid., 224; Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvîs Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, 4–5:747.

⁸⁹ Efkân Uzun, "Mehmed Ali Paşa'nın Anadolu'ya Saldırısının Niğde ve Nevşehir Yöresindeki Tesirleri," *Zeitschrift Für Die Welt Der Türken* 4, no. 2 (2012): 160; Altundağ, *Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Paşa İsyanı - Mısır Meselesi, 1831-1841*, 1:65.

⁹⁰ Uzun, "Mehmed Ali Paşa'nın Anadolu'ya Saldırısının Niğde ve Nevşehir Yöresindeki Tesirleri," 154.

⁹¹ Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvîs Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, 4–5:722.

⁹² *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 80, 26 March 1834. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, vol. 5 (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 1381.

moreover, during the war with Russia (1828-29) Kurds even took the enemy's side, it is said.⁹³

Hence in 1833, right after the scandalous defeat, the Ottoman state commenced the main pillar of the Reform movement, namely the military colonization of Kurdistan, which was to last for at least a century. Reşid Mehmed Pasha was its first commander, and Mezre was going to be its first outpost.

In 1834-36, Reşid Pasha kept hold of the provinces and regions of Sivas, Diyarbekir, Harput, the Mines, Muş⁹⁴ and Rakka (Ar-Raqqah in Iraq), which is to say he was not a regular provincial governor but the Governor-General of the entire south-east Anatolia, with extraordinary authority. His mission was not simply taking the Kurdish emirs under yoke; it was part of a larger project to create a modern state. The same year, a new recruitment system, called *redif*, was announced: every able male between 23 and 32 was to be conscripted by lots for the sake of regional defense.⁹⁵ The *redif* was basically the precursor of the modern army based on universal conscription, and Reşid Pasha was to be the implementer of this daring work in the Ottoman East. Not surprisingly, the new practice of forced recruitment appalled the inhabitants of the region.⁹⁶ The state now wanted to draft soldiers from the people of the region to fight against the people of the same region. At first, Reşid Pasha brought his traditional imperial army to the region to accomplish this difficult task. He attacked and ousted powerful Kurdish dynasties, with the compliance and help of some other Kurdish tribes. Especially the campaign against the chief (*mir*) of Soran, Mir Muhammed Pasha of Rowanduz, was a substantial military

⁹³ Suavi Aydın and Jelle Verheij, "Confusion in the Cauldron: Some Notes on Ethno-Religious Groups, Local Powers and the Ottoman State in Diyarbekir Province, 1800–1870," in *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870-1915*, ed. Jelle Verheij and Joost Jongerden (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 31.

⁹⁴ Apparently, he himself demanded the addition of Muş into his jurisdiction in order to have unlimited access to material resources during military expeditions in the region. Right after Mir Muhammed of Rowanduz was defeated and captured, Muş was transferred to Erzurum Province's suzerainty. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 139, 1 October 1836.

⁹⁵ Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Süresince Türkiye'de Askerlik* (Ankara: İmge Kitapevi, 2008), 27–39.

⁹⁶ Aydın and Verheij, "Confusion in the Cauldron: Some Notes on Ethno-Religious Groups, Local Powers and the Ottoman State in Diyarbekir Province, 1800–1870," 33.

expedition in collaboration with the governors of Mosul and Baghdad. In the fall of 1836, Mir Muhammed eventually surrendered to Reşid Pasha and was sent to Istanbul.⁹⁷ In October 1836, all three governors were officially awarded for capturing Rowanduz's chief.⁹⁸

Reşid Pasha's rule in Ottoman Kurdistan can be considered the beginning of the war between the Turkish army and the Kurdish guerillas that has lasted until today. It was certainly the inception of Ottoman internal colonization and of the formation of the modern state. War-making and state-making, as Tilly suggested long ago, were intertwined in the eastern provinces from the 1830s on.⁹⁹ And the first attempt was successful from the perspective of the central state; Reşid Pasha's short rule was remembered even half a century later by the inhabitants as a reign of terror.¹⁰⁰ His rule did not last long because he caught malaria on his way back from the front and died in Diyarbekir without reaching his home. But where was his home? Where would the ruler of Sivas and Diyarbekir Provinces live if not in Sivas or in Diyarbekir? Did he pay homage to Keban's recent history? Or did he live in Harput, a central location among all these provinces?

The commander-general came to Harput and stayed there a few months when he first arrived in the region. Perhaps it was commonplace for the new ruler to come to his predecessor's town, i.e. to the *de facto* capital of the region, namely to the Harput of the Çötelizades (remember that what I call Mezre was not a marked place yet, it was just a farm right outside the city). But shortly later, he moved to the mansion of Çötelizade İshak Pasha down in *mezra*, as a guest. In his short but effective rule, the ex-Grand Vizier treated this hamlet and the vacant space

⁹⁷ Sinan Hakan, *Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerinde Kürtler ve Kürt Direnişleri (1817-1867)* (İstanbul: Doz Yayıncılık, 2007), 68–86.

⁹⁸ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 137, 14 October 1836.

⁹⁹ Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 169–91.

¹⁰⁰ Antranik, *Dersim: Seyahatname*, trans. Payline Tomasyan (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2012).

around it as his brand new military outpost. The imperial army of course was deployed there on the plain instead of the city of Harput since this hill city was a classic old town with narrow streets and extremely dense neighborhoods. The Pasha built a hospital, an arsenal and barracks for the soldiers down in *mezra*.¹⁰¹ As a result, between 1834 and 1836, the only local pasha of the region ever—İshak Pasha—hosted arguably one of the most outsider pashas ever (this was Reşid Pasha’s first post in the eastern provinces). İshak Pasha also died around the same time as Reşid Pasha.¹⁰² We do not know if their relationship was really an example of friendly hospitality (as claimed in some internet forums today), but given the fact that the successor pasha bought (or confiscated) the mansion from İshak Pasha’s heirs, the outsiders were “bad guests.”¹⁰³

The hamlet of landlords, then, turned into a garrison, a military outpost of the imperial army right at the invisible border of Kurdistan. Between 1834 and 1838, the Kurdistan wars were commanded from this outpost by two competent commanders. In the same years, the foundations of military governance were laid, too, first with the proto-conscription system (*redif*, 1834) and then with the unification of military and civil powers in the new post of Governor-General or Marshal (*müşirlik*, 1836). In 1836, the *redif* law was amended to the effect that the recruited soldiers were to stay alternately in the provincial centers, thus constituting a standing provincial army; and these provincial armies were to be commanded by six supra-provincial commanding units in the empire called *müşirlik* (commanding area of a marshal). Sivas *Müşirliği* was one of the six and encompassed Diyarbakır and Harput provinces.¹⁰⁴ Accordingly, upon the death of

¹⁰¹ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, 1884, 1:101–6.

¹⁰² Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, 1996, 3:807.

¹⁰³ Bad guests challenge the generally unquestioned claim of the hosts to exclusive sovereignty over a space. Andrew Shryock, “Breaking Hospitality Apart: Bad Hosts, Bad Guests, and the Problem of Sovereignty,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18 (2012): 20–33.

¹⁰⁴ Yılmazçelik, “XVIII. yüzyıl ile XIX. yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Diyarbakır Eyaletinin İdari Yapısı ve İdari Teşkilatlanması,” 229; Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Süresince Türkiye’de Askerlik*, 34–39.

Reşid Pasha, Mehmed Hafız Pasha was appointed as the first Marshal (*müşir*) of the Sivas-Harput-Diyarbakir region (November 1836).¹⁰⁵

In 1836-38, Hafız Pasha governed Kurdistan by means of both armed battles and gift-giving. On the one hand, the imperial army colonized hitherto autonomous regions by force, massacred the inhabitants on a massive scale (especially Zoroastrians), recruited men for the new army, and taxed the so far untaxable societies. On the other hand, he built strategic allegiances with some of the chiefs against the persistently rebellious ones. As a result, some local tribes and leaders were empowered, provided with official ranks and imperial gifts. In this process, Hafız Pasha reinforced his own authority, too, by claiming the position of the sole intermediary between the Kurdish tribes and the central state (some of his independent moves were to offend the neighboring governors).¹⁰⁶ When in April 1838 Prussian officers Traugott Wilhelm Heinrich von Mühlbach and Helmuth Karl Bernard von Moltke arrived in Mezre as military advisors, the Marshal left them with a good impression of his strong posture and commanding manners, and also of the garrison town of Mezre, from where he ruled the region.¹⁰⁷

Hafız Pasha did not stay as a guest in the Çötelizade mansion; he rather bought it from Çötelizade İbrahim Pasha's daughter (and perhaps Çötelizade İshak Pasha's wife and cousin) Emine in the name of the state and officially made it the Governor's House (*saray*).¹⁰⁸ Apparently, Emine inherited a substantial debt from her father to a moneylender (*sarraf*) living in Istanbul. In the Ottoman Empire, the governors had to pay substantial amounts to the central treasury in advance before starting off for their terms. This money was generally borrowed from

¹⁰⁵ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 137, 14 October 1836.

¹⁰⁶ For the details of these two years, see Hakan, *Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerinde Kürtler ve Kürt Direnişleri (1817-1867)*, 81–115.

¹⁰⁷ Reinhold Wagner, *Moltke und Mühlbach zusammen unter dem Halbmonde, 1837-1839* (Berlin: Verlag von Hermann Walther, 1893), 69–70.

¹⁰⁸ PMOA, İ.MVL. 56/1081, 30 June 1844.

the (almost exclusively Christian) money-lenders in Istanbul, who worked as credit banks. The officials expected high turnover from the local taxes to pay off their debts and make some profit. Generally the debts were rolled over, whereby long-term financial relations were built. In Emine's case, it seems, the pasha members of the family could never pay off the debts to Aznavuroğlu Ohannes (an Armenian moneylender) in Istanbul. Somehow, she sold the mansion to Hafız Pasha, who bought it in the name of the Ottoman state for 100,000 *kuruş*. He did not pay the amount in cash; the cost was apportioned (*tevzi*) to the districts of the Mines Directorate, and was to be collected as tax in the following years and submitted directly to Aznavuroğlu Ohannes. However, the apportioning system was not without a hitch. More than twenty years later Ohannes was still petitioning, not for the first time, to get the remainder of his money (24,200 *kuruş*), which apparently was never collected or never transferred to him.¹⁰⁹

Hafız Pasha improved this hamlet-turned-garrison called *mezra* more than his predecessor Reşid Pasha. In April 1838, the Hafız Pasha personally gave Moltke and Mühlbach a tour of the garrison with barracks for 6,000 soldiers and additional military camps in different corners. In Mezre as well as in Harput and its villages, up to 18,000 soldiers ready to fight against the internal enemy (either Kurds or the Egyptian army) were to be seen doing military exercises (on the flat roofs, for example).¹¹⁰ Moreover, the Pasha was not a guest in a local notable's house anymore; perhaps the best mansion of the hamlet was now the Governor-General's residence where he both lived and steered the politics. Thus, when on March 24, 1838, he left Mezre for Diyarbekir for three months to command the new expeditions against the

¹⁰⁹ PMOA, A.MKT.UM. 221/8, 1 December 1859; A.MKT.DV. 172/68, 15 October 1860. What happened in practice seems to have been that the local government took over the debts of a prestigious local family in exchange for their mansion and defrayed the costs of the moneylender in exchange for the unpaid quarter of the amount. As a result, the extremities of the unlimited financial capitalism were tamed by the state, who arbitrated the debt crises by *de facto* asking for sacrifices from both sides.

¹¹⁰ Wagner, *Moltke und Mühlbach zusammen unter dem Halbmonde, 1837-1839*, 70–71.

Kurdish societies, he was sent off in the manner befitting a local sultan who was leaving for war. Five other pashas, many mullahs, officers and cavasses, a total of around 200 people, accompanied Hafız Pasha to Diyarbekir. All were on horseback except the Pasha, who was riding a mule. The scene of the departing caravan, as described by the German officers, was a mix of the most gaudy and colorful dress with arms, bridles and saddles. The notables of the region also gave escort for an hour's journey, and upon their return they organized a prayer meeting to wish a good journey for the Pasha.¹¹¹

Hafız Pasha's return in July was also ceremonial: The commanding pasha in Mezre with his retinue, as well as the notables of the district, welcomed the Pasha in the village of Kesrik (half a mile away from Mezre). They were lining up on both sides of the village's main road. They intended to kiss his stirrups (*Steigbügel*) but he put forth the palm of his hand. The Pasha then entered Mezre and his mansion (*konak*) in a festive procession; his bodyguards marched in close lines to his sides and the officers followed on their horses. In the reception room, the floors of which were covered with green fabric, he positioned himself [standing] on a lower pillow covered with tiger skin, and all the officials passed by, one by one, in order to kiss his foot (*Fusskuss zu machen*). Then coffee was served.¹¹²

What is striking in this scene is the unfolding of the most significant aspect of the new provincial life emerging in the beginning of the nineteenth century in the Ottoman East: the intertwining of courtly rituals of the imperial palace with local feudal rituals. No longer was the question whether periphery or center had more power in a given locality. As Dina Rizk Khoury has described, what was happening since the eighteenth century was the 'Ottomanization' of the local: "[the] power base of [the local elites] was predicated on reproducing on a much smaller

¹¹¹ Ibid., 75.

¹¹² Ibid., 163. I am grateful to Denise Klein for editing and correcting my translation in this passage.

scale the political organisation of the imperial and provincial governor's households."¹¹³

Moreover, this process of mimicking the sultanic official world in turn made possible the 'localization' of the Ottoman state.¹¹⁴ Thus, the Reform Age (*Tanzimat*) was less a reclaiming of the periphery by the center, less a process of centralization of power, than a statization of the local. There was no ready State to diffuse into the periphery (as the 'modern state formation' paradigm generally implies); in fact, the distribution of intangible titles to locals (like Çötelizade İbrahim Pasha) created the modern state from the bottom up within the locality.

Nevertheless, there was more than mimicking going on, if the form of exchange in mimicry is ultimately defined as the process of voluntary adoption of the powerful other's attitudes. The idea of mimicking may well give agency to the locals (in comparison to the idea of intrusion by the state) but at the end of the day, the influence comes from somewhere outside and the binary opposition of "here" and "there" remains untouched. However, it seems to me that the new provincial life was based on a tripartite positioning or opposition. The above-described mansion in Mezre brought under the same roof an ex-*agha* and an ex-Grand Vizier. Not only was there no pre-structured state, but also there was no pre-structured local. If Mezre was 'here,' there were two 'there's, not one: the local traditional society and the imperial official world. Mezre was an intermediary between them, a fixer who connected two worlds and who carried both worlds' characteristics. It was a remote area not only for the central state but also for the inhabitants of the old towns in the region; it was distant in both directions. Thus, Mezre is not an ordinary case to study. It is the crystallized form of a provincial urban society which is still to

¹¹³ Dina Rizk Khoury, "The Ottoman Centre versus Provincial Power-Holders: An Analysis of the Historiography," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi, vol. 3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 144.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

this day the dominant life form in the periphery of Turkey. This urban form deserves to be defined in positive terms (rather than such negative ones as “in-between” or “liminal”).

Ardener’s concept of “remote areas” is very helpful despite its name’s misleading connotations. The recent re-discovery of this concept treated it as a yet another label for marginal, for the object of otherization.¹¹⁵ However, Ardener’s phenomenology tells us much more than what epistemological critiques have been repeating since the 1980s and 90s. I suggest that his “remote area” is less an other of “here” than a double incarnation of “here” and “there” as a third form. Let me call it, simply, ‘provincial town,’ and apply his ideas to the present work: The provincial towns have a positively definable, peculiar habitus thanks to their carrying the characteristics of both the countryside and the center. They are “event rich” as opposed to the monotonousness of the villages and automatism of the center, because they are always “in constant contact with the world” —I add—in both directions. They are the contact zone, by definition; they connect worlds. Provincial towns are “full of strangers” as opposed to either the dominance of anonymity in the city or the intimacy of the village. It is true that Simmel saw the stranger as a key character of the metropolis but, as Ardener pointed out, a stranger is perceived and treated as a stranger only in remote areas. And, the provincial towns are “full of innovators,” they make recurrent attempts to change something, “yet the innovations seem to have short life.” There is more planning than doing, or than fully doing. Finally, this condition of never-ending changes and failures makes the provincial towns “full of ruins.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Erik Harms et al., “Remote and Edgy: New Takes on Old Anthropological Themes,” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4, no. 1 (2014): 361–81. This roundtable almost exclusively focused on the relationality of remoteness and on its always-ambiguous, in-the-making character. This is of course true, but the originality of Ardener’s ideas does not lie, to my mind, in pointing out the slipperiness of being remote, but rather in attempting to reach a positive definition of a certain lifeworld.

¹¹⁶ Edwin Ardener, “‘Remote Areas’: Some Theoretical Considerations,” in *The Voice of Prophecy and Other Essays* (London: Blackwells, 1989), 211–23.

Mezre was a provincial town in embryonic form. Its double-remoteness from both Harput and the outside world, its embodiment of official and local elite rituals and life-styles (Ch. 5), its administrative function of mediation, its event-rich life that began in the 1830s, and, as we shall see in the following chapter, its trial with its own ruination were Mezre's peculiar characteristics.¹¹⁷ This gives the historian a theoretical leverage, too, which allows her to escape progressivist narratives when writing urban histories. During my research, I have been told many times by colleagues or amateur historians linear stories of the making of Mezre or Harput. Ideological differences mattered only in the value judgment given to the progression: Mezre was either a modern city that developed uninterruptedly from 1830s to today, or it was a colonial imposition that gradually destroyed (the Armenian) Harput. Unfortunately, there was nothing gradual in this provincial town's history, nothing teleological either. There has been constant innovation, constant ruination, and constant contemplation over the outside world and over the traditional/local world. Baudelaire saw the kernel of modern metropolitan life in the affect of constant change and time flying around a standing individual. In provincial towns, the contrary is true: individuals are always doing something, yet there is a never-ending feeling that 'nothing changes.'

¹¹⁷ For the original use of the term "double-remoteness," see Andrew Shryock, "In the Double Remoteness of Arab Detroit: Reflections on Ethnography, Culture Work, and the Intimate Disciplines of Americanization," in *Off Stage/On Display: Intimacy and Ethnography in the Age of Public Culture*, ed. Andrew Shryock (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004), 279-314.

Chapter 2: Ruination and Home-making

The story of Mezre's transformation into a garrison town by the central state in the 1830s perfectly fits its future trajectory in the twentieth century. Over the last two centuries, Mezre/Elazığ has functioned, in certain critical periods, as a military outpost for the central state at the invisible border of Kurdistan. Most outstandingly, in 1938-39, the city of Elazığ (Mezre's current name) served as military headquarters during the operations in the Kurdish area of Dersim (see Ch. 12). Similar to the marshal system of the 1830s, a supra-province was created in the Elazığ-Dersim region to be governed by a governor-general with extraordinary authority (the supra-provinces were named General Inspectorates). As had been the case a hundred years before, Elazığ was the commanding height that hosted the rulers who were responsible for massacres and displacements across the entire Kurdish region. In the second half of the twentieth century, Turkish Elazığ has been known as the inverted mirror image of its Kurdish neighbor, Diyarbakır. Arguably the only publicly recognized feature of Elazığ today is its particular success in breeding Turkish nationalist Mafiosi. In 1987, the south-eastern provinces in Turkey, namely the Kurdistan region, were taken under a state of emergency due to the armed conflict between the Turkish army and the Kurdish guerillas. Again, a new 'super-province' was created under the rule of a 'super-governor,' who had almost unlimited power. This apartheid-like system was extended recurrently until 2002; the state of exception truly became the rule for the inhabitants of this region. Yet again Elazığ had a special position; even though it was not the official center of the super-province, the rumor goes that the super-governors used to spend time in Elazığ.

As Charles Tilly taught us long ago, war-making and state-making implicate and reinforce each other in the process of modern state formation. The last two centuries of Turkey's history perfectly confirm Tilly's contention. War-making and state-making simultaneously began in the 1830s in the eastern provinces, and this dual process was spatially mediated by a hamlet called Mezre. The resistance was strong enough that the process never ended, and the intermediary role of Mezre/Elazığ continues until today. Nevertheless, archival research unsettles this neat and linear story of Elazığ as a product of state-making in the periphery. It is true that the town was used for military purposes during the periods of war-making, but it is not equally true that in other times (namely, for most of the period between the 1830s and 1930s) the same place stayed inactive and just waited for another war, as real military outposts do. In fact, contrary to the governmental logic of today's nation-states, the Ottoman Empire never cared about what happened in the locality after war-making was over. And, to be fair, Tilly never claimed that city-making was part of the process, either. A closer look into the decades following the 1830s shows the inadequacy of the (internal-)colonialism literature in explaining life in the periphery. In the 1840s and later, the state did not lift a finger for Mezre, let alone turn it into an artificial-colonial town. The truth is that Mezre never had as much state power as it did between 1834 and 1839, but its growth into a city started only later.

The End of War-Making in Mezre

The narrative of Mezre as a colonial town shows its weakness as we look at the years as early as 1838. When Hafız Pasha returned from Diyarbekir to Mezre in the end of the summer, the condition of the barracks in Mezre was miserable. Contagious diseases had killed thirty percent of the soldiers. The so-called military hospital was a one-storey, mud-brick building with glassless windows that exposed the patients to sun during the day and to wind during the night.

Out of this perfect generator of illness, not surprisingly, 5-10 dead bodies were carried every day and were only perfunctorily buried. In August, plague hit Mezre, too, and the Pasha finally declared quarantine.¹¹⁸

In the meantime, the Egyptian threat revived when Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt once again embarked on an expedition against the Ottoman forces. Similar to his predecessor Reşid Pasha, this time Hafiz Pasha was meant to stop his progress towards Anatolia. Military priority was shifted accordingly from the eastern front (the fight against the Kurdish emirates) to the south. At the end of August, the entire army was moved from Mezre to the Malatia plain to prepare for war and for the encounter with the Egyptian army. The army settled in camps on the plain just outside the city of Malatia, while Hafiz Pasha took up his residence in the summer place called Aspuzu. At that time of the year almost all residents of Malatia were staying in their summer homes in Aspuzu. In the end of October, when winter was about to come, the Pasha moved his headquarters to the real city; however, he ordered the residents to stay in Aspuzu for a while. And on November 11, in the face of harsh winter conditions, the soldiers were eventually permitted to move into the houses in the city (from their camps). As a result, 12,000-15,000 residents of Malatia were forced to stay in their summer homes for the entire winter.¹¹⁹ This event literally changed the place of Malatia for good. The place called Malatia today is the Aspuzu of those days, and then-Malatia is now known either as Old Malatia or by its new official name, Battalgazi (see Ch. 4).

In spring of 1839, preparations for the actual war began, and in June Hafiz Pasha's army encountered İbrahim Pasha's soldiers in Nisib (between Malatia and Aleppo). The Egyptian forces once again heavily defeated the Ottoman army. Most soldiers who remained alive

¹¹⁸ Wagner, *Moltke und Mühlbach zusammen unter dem Halbmonde, 1837-1839*, 169–186.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

scattered, only a few thousand of them could be re-gathered back in Malatia. Hafız Pasha received there the news that Sultan Mahmud II had died and his son Abdülmeçid, 16 years old, had ascended the throne. On July 22, when he was still in Aspuzu, he received further instructions from the new sultan that he was discharged from supreme-commandership but was allowed to stay on temporarily as the governor of Sivas—without commanding the troops.¹²⁰ All officers, including Hafız Pasha and the Prussian officers, left Malatia and the greater Harput region at once. They left ruins behind. The residues of war-making were abandoned buildings, an exploited environment (even in January there were no sheep left to slaughter),¹²¹ and displaced people. Malatia was turned into old Malatia for good; the ruination of the town was so thorough that this old city could never be revived again. Mezre survived the Ottoman army's temporary invasion, but it was left as a ruin with useless barracks and deadly diseases. War-making passed through the Harput region without making much state there. At the end of the day, who was to care about a hamlet in the middle of a remote area, anyway? Except, of course, the people who *lived* there.

Mezre in Solitude

The suzerainty of the defeated Hafız Pasha was limited to the political governance of Sivas Province, and the Diyarbekir Province, which was separated from Urfa and from the Directorate of Mines, was assigned to a new governor, Marshal Sadullah Pasha.¹²² In other words, the supra-provincial structure was unofficially abandoned when war-making was over. Like Reşid Mehmed Pasha, the first stranger guest of the Çötelizade mansion, Sadullah Pasha

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 287.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹²² *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 182, 28 July 1839.

was also a Circassian slave of *Koca Hüseyin Pasha*,¹²³ namely an elite-educated soldier. More importantly, he also chose to live in Mezre, not in Diyarbakır.¹²⁴ He arrived in Mezre roughly a year after Hafız Pasha and his army gave the garrison town back to its residents (to remind: a handful of landlord/notable families). Five years of war-making using Mezre as the primary garrison suddenly turned into a past in 1839, a past to refer to in talking about the future.

The first thing Sadullah Pasha did was to write a report on the unpromising state of things he came to find in Harput Province. Unlike the correspondences from the previous years, the narrative form of his report was not progressivist. It was obvious that the present was not better than the past, and the future did not seem to be guaranteed. First, he complained about the problem of missing troops in the army. Many soldiers did not return to the garrison after their defeat by the Egyptian forces. (It was quite a comedown to have an incomplete army in a place that had been the most important command post in the Ottoman East until just a year ago.) The pasha suggested that either a new battalion should be sent to Harput or the vacancy had to be filled by locally recruited soldiers (*redif*). Neither of his demands was approved by Istanbul, however. Especially the latter was found dangerous since “*redif* privates have not warmed up yet to military service, and *redif* of that region is primarily recruited from Kurds and tribes, [so] if they were sent to the regiments now, they would constantly have an eye to deserting and also stir up the regular soldiers (*asakir-i muvazzafa*).”¹²⁵ In short, the idea of creating a steady security force based on conscription from the locality was simply dismissed once the war was over. The center seemed to be interested not in governing the region, but just in ruling it.

¹²³ Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, 1996, 5:1429.

¹²⁴ Yılmazçelik, “Osmanlı Hakimiyeti Süresince Diyarbakır Eyaleti Valileri (1516-1838),” 285.

¹²⁵ PMOA, İ.DH. 2/87, 22 September 1839.

Second, in his report, Sadullah Pasha talked about the unpleasant conditions in the garrison: the barracks there had been occupied for a certain time by an excessive number of soldiers and then they were left completely unattended during the Ottoman-Egyptian war in Nisib. As a result, he stated, the buildings had fallen into “ruin” (*harab*). Naturally his request for money for repair purposes followed.¹²⁶ The response of Istanbul was positive, but as we will see shortly, in practice the center generally hampered the local development projects simply to avoid wasting money in the periphery.¹²⁷ These barracks and other military buildings had been added to the built environment of the *mezra-ı Çötelizade* only five years previous—quite a short time. But they were not the initial steps of a continuous developmental project, but rather a burst of excessive waste for one-time war-making. The Ottoman Empire did not care about colonizing the provinces. Mezre was made not thanks to the central state, but despite its indifference.

Sadullah Pasha’s residence in Mezre lasted one full year. In July 1840, he was sent to Ankara, and to replace him, the *ferik* (lieutenant-general) of Maraş, Süleyman Pasha, was appointed as the new Marshal of Diyarbekir.¹²⁸ As the new Marshal died before he took on the new position, however, Ahmed Zekeriya Pasha (of Kocaeli) filled in the vacant position in August 1840.¹²⁹ Zekeriya Pasha stayed one and a half years as the Marshal of Diyarbekir, and he also chose to reside in Mezre.¹³⁰ During these years, the military concentration in the region

¹²⁶ PMOA, İ.DH. 2/87, 22 September 1839.

¹²⁷ The most common response of the imperial center to the financial requests from the provinces was to the effect that the costs were to be apportioned to the village and town people in the province. In other words, the costs were funded by the local population instead of the central treasury; the governors themselves too could be responsible for covering certain costs. For example, during Sadullah Pasha’s term, a member of the imperial military council was sent to the Harput region for recruitment purposes. During his trip, he apparently spent 168 thousand *kuruş* to the Kurdish lords, to owners of the places he stayed and to the recruited soldiers. When he demanded this money, the state accepted to pay 68 thousand from the treasury and apportioned the remaining burden equally to Hafız and Sadullah Pashas. PMOA, İ.DH. 5/211, 2 December 1839.

¹²⁸ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 201, 12 July 1840.

¹²⁹ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 203, 12 August 1840. In the same order, Maraş was given to the son of the deceased Süleyman Pasha as *mirliva* (major general).

¹³⁰ Yılmazçelik, “Osmanlı Hakimiyeti Süresince Diyarbakır Eyaleti Valileri (1516-1838),” 285.

continued to decline. On the one hand, half of the long-serving soldiers were called back to Istanbul on the grounds that their military service had lasted “too long” (*hayli uzamış*).¹³¹ On the other hand, the subjugation of southeastern Kurdish Anatolia continued more with tactical alliances than through (hardly successful) military expeditions. The most hardened enemies of the central state in 1834-39, both Mir Muhammed and later Han Mahmud, were not only pardoned in Istanbul by the sultan, but were even allowed to return to Kurdistan (although Mir Muhammed’s return was prevented by local governors) and honored with higher titles.

Simultaneously, some newer Kurdish lords rose to local power thanks to their allegiance with and compliance to the Ottoman state in opposition to other established powerful leaders in the region. The most notable debut was that of Bedirhan Bey, who was officially given Cizre and Bohtan region and promoted to brigadier (*miralay*) during Hafız Pasha’s time. His principality was made official as a safe outpost of Diyarbekir Province in the middle of the rebellious Kurdish federations. In 1839-42, the local governors around Bedirhan Bey’s region seem to have struggled to be the suzerain of this presently docile access to Kurdistan. For example, the governor of Mosul tried to oust Bedirhan Bey, but the latter established good relations with the new governor of Diyarbekir and stood up to the former’s accusations.¹³² It was a time of negotiations and alliances (accompanied, of course, by physical violence).

This new governor of Diyarbekir (which included Harput) was Mehmed Vecihi Pasha, who replaced Zekeriya Pasha in November 1841. Vecihi Pasha came to a province which was gradually being stripped of its army and its notable districts. At the time of his appointment, for example, Urfa was taken from Diyarbekir and given to Aleppo due to its physical closeness to

¹³¹ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 201, 12 July 1840.

¹³² Hakan, *Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerinde Kürtler ve Kürt Direnişleri (1817-1867)*, 117–155.

the latter.¹³³ In comparison to the previous years, when the entire southeastern Anatolia was governed from Mezre, the present Diyarbekir Province had lost its exceptional sovereignty. Nevertheless, Mezre maintained its privileged position—so much so that Vecihi Pasha, too, avoided going to Diyarbekir and stayed in Mezre.

Vecihi Pasha departed from Konya (his previous post) on November 28 and arrived in Harput on December 22, a Wednesday, where he was welcomed by military commanders, the judge of Harput, the mufti, the *ulema* (religious scholars) and the local notables. He met with Faik Efendi as well, who was the highest representative of the state bureaucracy there; he had been appointed more than a year before as the chief financier.¹³⁴ Accordingly, this entire group of notables and leaders set up a meeting (*divan*) where the imperial order of the new pasha's appointment was read aloud. Greetings followed. This ceremony of bureaucracy—quite different from Hafiz Pasha's entrance to the town—was then put on paper and signed by the headmen (*muhtar*) and some *imam* of every Muslim neighborhood in Harput, with a total of 49 seals. This letter of celebration was attached to the first report of Vecihi Pasha, written on the very next Monday. It seems that the bureaucratic procedures sanctioned by the new Reform Edict (1839) were really minded, and the locals wanted to show that they were minded. The primary ritual of the official world was now the paperwork that indexed the existence of the state apparatus. The bodily rituals of earlier generations (remember the reception at Hafiz Pasha's mansion) were now intertwined with abstract bureaucratic rituals based on writing and signing.

Nevertheless, this imagined community we call the state was mediated and embodied by the real life of the rulers and the staff. The fact that they actually lived and occupied space in the

¹³³ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 235, 25 November 1841. Here it was reported that Vecihi Pasha had deeper acquaintance with the region compared to his predecessor Zekeriya Pasha.

¹³⁴ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 201, 12 July 1840. He was appointed for the exact same reason as Vecihi Pasha's appointment: acquaintance with the locality through previous experiences in the region.

actual world created a difference from the non-material hegemony they owned and imposed. The excess created by this indispensable materiality, I believe, made Mezre a residential unit. On the same day as the mentioned letter, Vecihi Pasha wrote another letter, this time in a colloquial and unadorned language. Two letters signed by the same person on the same day to the same addressee could not be more different in style. In the latter, the Pasha said that, although moving to Diyarbekir seemed to be more convenient given its closeness to every part of the province, since Faik Bey lived here and was working now on financial issues, and since some other issues had to be addressed here, too, he had settled for now in Harput Province.¹³⁵ These two letters of the pasha represent two facets of state formation in the periphery: On the one hand, the state was created as an ideological entity through rituals like bureaucratic ceremonies, domination of the written word, circulation of the idea of *Tanzimat* reforms, and the creation of a public sphere. This aspect of state formation can be called spatial in the sense that it works through diffusion of representations and public images into daily life conversations and imaginations.¹³⁶ On the other hand, the state was created as an embodied entity simply through the existence of the staff of the state (including the governors).¹³⁷ This is very much a place-based aspect of state formation. The former (spatial, abstract) aspect is more dominant in the Ottoman historiography; I will rather be focusing in this work on the place-based aspect and on the role of the residents in creating Mezre.

Vecihi Pasha actively played his role as a mediator between the imperial center and the eastern periphery. As mentioned, he had good relations with Bedirhan Bey of Cizre. They

¹³⁵ PMOA, İ.DH. 50/2485, 19 January 1842.

¹³⁶ A classic work on the power of symbols in creating hegemony is Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

¹³⁷ Here I am inspired by Weber's analysis of law. In his unusual definition of law, he put key emphasis on the *staff* of people rather than on rules or institutions.

exchanged letters and collaborated in taking Cizre from Mosul Province back to Vecihi Pasha's Diyarbekir Province. At one point, Bedirhan Bey reacted and said that he would leave his post and move to Diyarbekir with his family if Cizre remained under Mosul. Vecihi Pasha appeased this Kurdish lord, who was now loyal to the state but had enough power to change sides. The pasha wrote to the center in favor of Bedirhan Bey and against the governor of Mosul; even Faik Bey (the treasurer) gave testimony confirming Vecihi Pasha's opinions. Although the Sublime Porte was convinced to take Cizre back under Diyarbekir and dismiss the governor of Mosul, the governor of Baghdad's new reports in October made those in Istanbul believe in the opposite scenario, which cast Vecihi Pasha in a bad light as someone who was bribed by the Kurdish lords. As a result, Vecihi Pasha was dismissed (and appointed to Aleppo as its governor) and Cizre remained in Mosul Province.¹³⁸

In October 1842, Palaslı İsmail Pasha¹³⁹ of Ankara was appointed to Diyarbekir.¹⁴⁰ Like his predecessors, he came to Mezre instead of going to the city of Diyarbekir. Fortuitously enough, the Rev. George Percy Badger and his lay assistant J. P. Fletcher passed through Mezre on the very same day as İsmail Pasha's arrival. During the Euphrates Expedition of the British Government in 1835, the existence of the Christian or proto-Christian tribes in Kurdistan had made a sensation. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge made an inquiry about these people (1838-40), which revealed that especially the Nestorian society was subject to oppression and massacres by both Kurdish lords and the Ottoman governors. Accordingly, Rev. Badger was assigned to a special mission among Chaldean Christians in Kurdistan in 1842.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Hakan, *Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerinde Kürtler ve Kürt Direnişleri (1817-1867)*, 134–155.

¹³⁹ Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, 1996, 3:830.

¹⁴⁰ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 245, 5 November 1842.

¹⁴¹ George Percy Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals - with the Narrative of a Mission of Mesopotamia and Coordistan in 1842-1844, and of a Late Visit to Those Countries in 1850* (London: Joseph Masters and Co., 1852),

Oct. 20th. [1842] – Three hours after leaving Pelté we reached Mezraa, where we were obliged to halt in order to change horses. ... The pretty plain in which Mezraa is situated reminded us of some country places in our native land; but how different is the condition of the villagers who inhabit those little dwellings, from which the curling smoke is ascending towards an azure sky, and whose labour it is that renders the scene around so gay and beautiful, from the husbandmen of happy England!¹⁴²

Badger did not write more about Mezre itself apart from saying that “Mezraa is situated on the plain immediately below the large town of Kharpoot,” and that “Whilst resting at the post-house, we witnessed the entry of a new Pasha into Kharpoot.” His assistant Fletcher, on the other hand, described the scene and the moment in a more animated way, which is worth quoting at length:

... [we] reached Mezraa, a town of some size, where we put up at the post house, a commodious and comfortable building, commanding a good view of the road and of the town. Seated on our carpets, we enjoyed the luxury of a bowl of Leben (sour milk), and procured, for a trifle, some delicious grapes, as they are produced in great abundance by the vines surrounding the town. The heavy clusters which loaded our leaden tray recalled to mind the grapes of Eshcol, which the spies brought to the children of Israel as the first fruits of the Promised Land.

As I was quietly inhaling my chibouque [tobacco pipe] in the wooden balcony outside the chief apartment, the sound of drums and trumpets disturbed my half-sleepy reverie; and the Tatar came to announce that the Pasha of Kharpoot, who had been newly appointed, and whose usual official residence was at Mezraa, was now entering the town. I hurried to the window commanding the best view of the cavalcade, which was as striking and as gay as eastern pomp could make it. Horse-tail standards were mingled with banners of green silk, inscribed with sentences from the Koran; Kurdish chiefs distinguished by their gaudy turbans and wide pantaloons, decorated with gold or silver embroidery, mingled with the troops of mounted officials, clad in the ungraceful uniform of Europe. Spears glittered, spurs jingled, and the band of the pasha performed military music with some correctness and skill.

The *cadi* and *mufti* were there to offer the homage and recognition of law and religion to the representative of the sovereign; and those who did not know the truth might imagine that there was some sincerity in the acclamations with which

xi–xiv; J. P. Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh - and Travels in Mesopotamia, Assyria and Syria* (Philadelphia: T. K. and P. G. Collins, 1850), 13.

¹⁴² Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals*, 33.

the new governor was welcomed. And yet oppression had been at work to furnish all this splendor. Every town or village through which the procession passed had been compelled to supply provisions and forage gratis for the pasha and his hungry followers, who doubtless exacted fourfold more than their instructions bade them, and insulted and perhaps injured severely the poor peasants whom they stripped of their all.¹⁴³

Badger shared the same deconstructive realist look. It was the third new pasha in a year, he said (I found no evidence of it), and with his 300 followers each coming of a pasha was a new burden to the inhabitants. Regarding the ceremony, his description adds a few details onto Fletcher's:

The number of officials of all ranks from the towns and villages, the large assembly of Coordish chiefs, Moollahs, and Oolema; as well as the immense crowd of merchants and tradesmen who had met together, clad in their gaudy oriental apparel, to greet the new comer, made the spectacle at once gay and attractive. A troop of Albanians in their rich dresses, and a company of Turkish infantry were drawn up to salute his Excellency as he passed, whilst two cannon kept up constant fire in honour of the event.¹⁴⁴

The pashas and the other representatives of the state in the periphery were highly respected not because they were too powerful. It was the opposite; the governors were to rely on local support to earn legitimacy (except the extraordinary passages of war-making). The pompous welcoming ceremony was less an index of absolute obedience than an invitation to play the game of local politics together. The local government was an intermediary, namely its power came from its flexibility resulting from having access to two worlds (the center and the periphery) at the same time. In that sense, Badger and Fletcher were right in pointing out the mismatch between the exaggerated scene and the backstage intentions. But the rituals they witnessed were not simple pretensions; they constituted a gift to the newcomer, which was meant to be returned in some other forms (official titles, title deeds, or tax-farms).

¹⁴³ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 68–69.

¹⁴⁴ Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals*, 33–34.

The gaudy ceremony also masked something about the governor's life. The sultanic procession suggests that the local governors were living like local sultans—in their mansions, without interacting with the social and material environment around. This was not true in the periphery, where the governors were integrated into an urban elite life shared with the other elites of the city. In the end, Mezre was a small suburb; a handful of land-owner families were living there, and perhaps the traditional elite of Harput also used to come down to Mezre to talk about important topics with the official elite. In other words, Mezre was almost like a large estate with manors of the aristocracy. It was already separated from the real city (Harput)—so much so that the governor did not need to create a symbolic aura to manage social distance. Everybody in Mezre was from the same elite world, anyway; there was no 'people' there. A result of this social intimacy and the lack of a need for the creation of invisible boundaries was the organic relation of the governor to the life in Mezre. The governors cared about the built environment of this small place even though the imperial center took no interest in it and even though the governors generally served one to two years only. As shown in Sadullah Pasha's report above, the ruination and abandonment meant something to them. They were here not only to make as much profit as possible in one year; the materiality of the place mattered, too, for them.

Battles over the Built Environment in Mezre

Palaslı İsmail Pasha had an exceptionally long, three-year rule in Mezre (1842-45), and one of his most significant correspondences with the imperial capital was about his home, namely about the famous mansion which had been bought by Hafız Pasha from the Çötelizade family. On August 9, 1844, İsmail Pasha signed his report on the inadequacy of the present mansion and the need for a new one; a supporting court decree and the plotted plans of the new government house were attached, too. According to both reports, the underlying cause of the

demand was the ruination in the built environment. This high-class petition was framed in the language of a modernist who was almost surprised and disillusioned at having found such a big gap between the pitiable life conditions in the periphery and the seemingly increasing hegemony of the Ottoman imperialism. After all, the 1840s was the opening decade of the new life of the reformed Ottoman state (remember *Tanzimat* - 1839), but Mezre was far from meeting the expectations of a provincial capital.

This “village called mezrea,” the pasha began in his report, was composed of only 20-30 houses. The government house, namely the mansion, did not have enough rooms to accommodate all of the office households (*daire halkı*); for this reason, in his predecessors’ times, many officials’ families were hosted, by necessity, in the houses of the villagers here (in Mezre) and in other close-by villages. And, currently, the situation was the same. However, this state of things had put the village’s inhabitants in misery, especially because their houses tended to be ruined (*müşrif-i harab*) every year and the repair work amounted to considerable costs. As a result, families were separated when some had to move out to different places, and they became miserable. And it was evident that the remaining ones would also be separated, and become miserable, in the near future. Hence, the proposal was to build a new, big, two-storey building with rooms and stables that would accommodate the entire governmental household and its animals, save them from being dispersed around (*müteşettit*) and save the village inhabitants from agony.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ PMOA, İ.MVL. 56/1081, 30 June 1844.

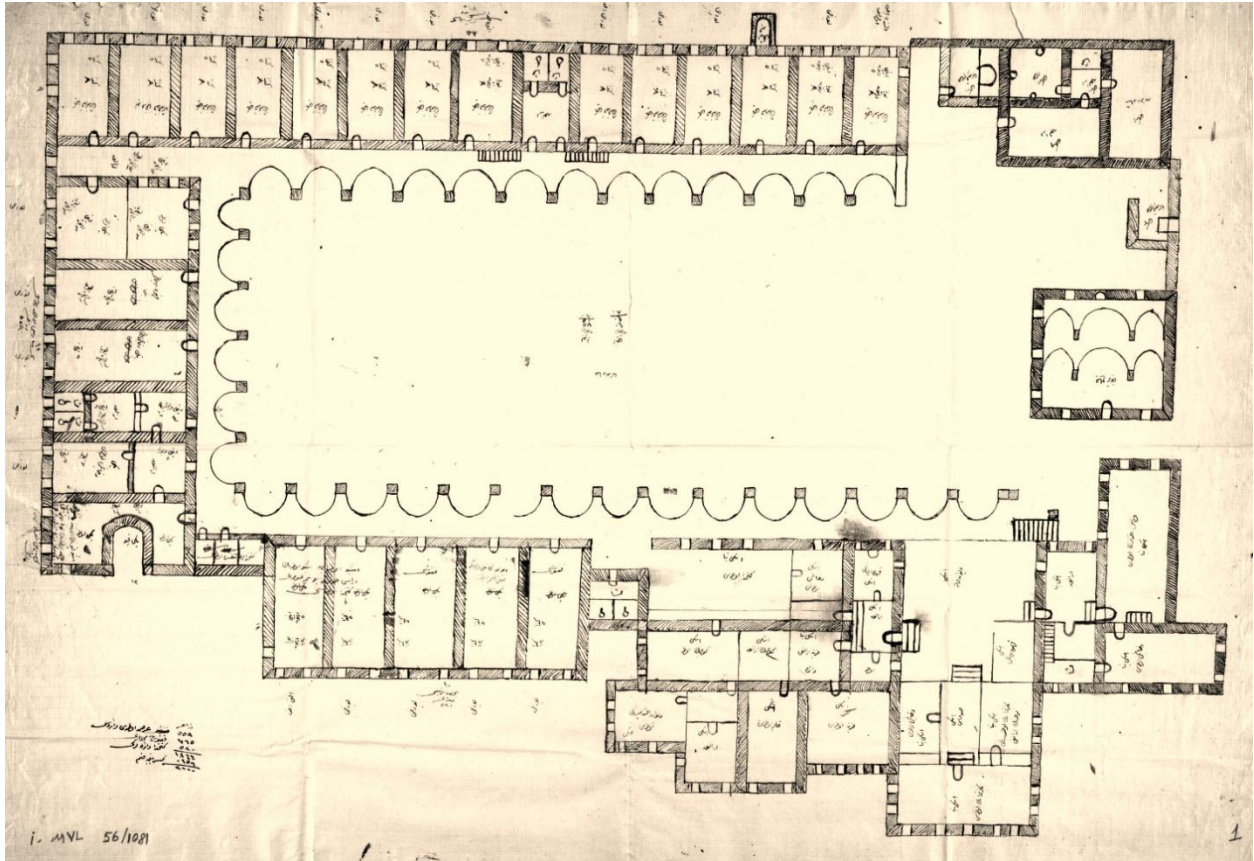


Figure 2-1: The plan of the new government complex, Meze, 1844.¹⁴⁶

The archival file includes the building plan (Figure 2-1)—an extremely rare occasion for places in the Ottoman East. The uniform, rectangular apartments in the left half of the plan composed the proposed annex to the old mansion, whereas the original mansion can be discerned on the lower right side of the image. The single square in the right-center is the mosque, and the small complex above the mosque is the public bath; both had already existed. The old Çötelizade mansion had two large rooms and one meeting hall (*divanhane*) apart from many small apertures/rooms (*aralık*). The proposal basically was to connect the mansion with the mosque and the bath to create the front façade of a completely new, rectangular building complex. The

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

new U-shape part of the rectangular (the left half) would be built from scratch as row apartments and annexed to the façade, which would create a courtyard in the middle of the complex.

If we remember that “this village” was a privileged hamlet of landlords and notables, the alleged ruination of the houses might be taken as an index of discomfort of the resident hosts about the extra burden of uninvited guests. Alternatively, the report might be a collaborative effort of the residents and the officials to increase everybody’s welfare and to develop Mezre. In any case, similar to Sadullah Pasha’s previous report, the needs of the province were framed as a need for urgent intervention in a process of material decay. I conjecture that the people of the provinces (as opposed to today’s historians) were perfectly aware of the reluctance of the imperial center in colonizing the periphery and they framed their demands as restoration of the original state of things or as prevention of further decay, rather than as development. For this reason, the new building complex was proposed as a precaution to avoid even more financial cost in the future.

However, development projects in the peripheries most of the time were doomed to remain unaccomplished. Such visual representations found in the archives can easily be taken as evidence of interventionist logic, but Mezre was not Beirut or Salonika, it was not a womb of transregional capitalism. In reality, the Supreme Council (*Meclis-i Vala*) in Istanbul found the estimated cost of 50-60 thousand *kuruş* too much and gave authorization only if 50 thousand of it was apportioned to the entire district as tax (as happened during the purchase of the mansion from Çötelizade Emine) and if the rest was left to Mezre’s inhabitants. It is not clear whether or not the huge building complex was ever constructed in its projected shape, but we know that a

new structure was built for the administrative staff and its cost was met by Rüstem Ebûbekir Pasha,¹⁴⁷ the Marshal of the Anatolian Army, who also was a resident of Mezre.

This military general was in Mezre because of recent changes in the imperial army structure. In 1843, the Ottoman state promulgated substantial reforms in the military system. The significance of these regulations was evident in their splendid announcement ceremonies in Istanbul. The highest echelons of the state and military bureaucracy participated in ceremonies held on both sides of the Bosphorus (and one of the places was a military post, the Davutpaşa Barracks). With the 1843 decree, the newly created conscription system was professionalized. The *redif* army (explained before) was turned into a reserve army, while in the face of local security issues the new institution of gendarmerie was to be founded in 1844. Military service ceased to be life-long and was limited to five years, after which soldiers were to go home and stay in the local *redif* army for another seven years. Moreover, the empire was partitioned into six army districts, among which ‘the Anatolian Army’ basically encompassed eastern Anatolia. The headquarters of the Anatolian Army was to be in Sivas; however, during the implementation of the reforms, in August 1844, it was changed to Harput.¹⁴⁸ Hence, Rüstem Ebûbekir Pasha was the commander of this newly created Anatolian Army centered in Mezre.

The reason for the last-minute change of place of the headquarters is not clear, but a report written by British Consul G. Taylor a few years later (in 1850) might shed light on the issue. The following testimony is a perfect illustration of how Mezre was created by the provincial elites rather than by centralized efforts. Taylor wrote:

It has been definitely announced that the head-quarters of the Army are, in the Spring, to be transferred from hence [Erzurum] to Harpoot. This has been decided

¹⁴⁷ Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, 1996, 5:1401–2.

¹⁴⁸ Ayten Can Tunalı, “Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Kara Ordusunda Yapılanma (1839-1876)” (PhD Dissertation, Ankara University, 2003), 28–39; Çadircı, *Tanzimat Süresince Türkiye’de Askerlik*, 41–63.

in opposition to the opinion of the Mooshir [Marshal] himself, and is understood to have been brought about by officers of this division of the Army, who own houses and property at Harpoot, and therefore find that residence more suited to their individual convenience. I think the change is much to be regretted on many accounts. The climate is not healthy; the accommodations for the troops are far more limited than here; the provisioning the Army will be more expensive; the communication with Constantinople more difficult; the position is not so convenient with respect to Koordistan, and the Persian and Georgian frontiers, which are the points requiring at present a strict supervision; and, on the whole, the expenses of the division of the Army will be much larger that they would have been here. But what in my mind is more important than all these considerations together is, that so many Pashas, distant from the seat of Government, will be freed from the control which the presence of the Mooshir imposed on them, and which was the means of checking many abuses and maintaining in vigour many salutary orders and regulations of the Porte. (...) ¹⁴⁹

The reaction of Taylor was understandable since Harput, as pointed out before, had been losing its significance from the point of view of war-making since the defeat of 1838. The jurisdictional territory of the province had shrunken, too. Moreover, in 1845, when İsmail Pasha and Faik Bey were dismissed due to their inappropriate behavior incompatible with imperial justice (the official decree lacks any further details), Harput and the Mines were even separated from Diyarbekir Province to form an independent sub-province. İzzet Pasha was appointed as the new governor of Diyarbekir, and Harput was assigned to Ömer Fâiz Pasha with the rank of *mirmiran* (he did not stay long, though). ¹⁵⁰ Harput's demeaning status as a sub-province lasted only a few months and then it became an independent province itself: Harput Province. ¹⁵¹ Of

¹⁴⁹ The National Archives (TNA), United Kingdom: FO 78-835, Consular no: 6, Erzeroom, 2 March 1850, "Report on Erzeroom for 1849" from Consul Taylor to Viscount Palmerston. I am indebted to Yaşar Tolga Cora for sharing this valuable document with me.

¹⁵⁰ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 293, 8 November 1845. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, vol. 4 (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 1320.

¹⁵¹ Harput stayed as a *mutasarrıflık* only a few months. Following Ömer Fâiz Pasha, Ali Pasha was also appointed as *mutasarrıf* in March 1846. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 299, 19 March 1846. However, in May, Harput was re-named as a province (*eyalet*) and, at first, vizier Yakub Pasha, but when he had to be sent to Salonika, Hüsrev Pasha was appointed as Governor (*vali*). *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 301, 4 May 1846; no. 303, 21 July 1846. Hüsrev Pasha died when he reached Harput and the same Ali Pasha was re-appointed, but with the rank of vizierate this time. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 305, 23 October 1846. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 286–7.

course, the new administrative restructuring changed the status of Mezre for good. Never again would Mezre claim to be governing the entire eastern provinces. Diyarbekir in the east and Erzurum in the north were to function as the military-imperial outposts in Kurdistan.

Perhaps for the same reason, when the military governor Rüstem Ebûbekir Pasha donated the above-mentioned building complex to the state treasury as a personal gift as he left his post (1846),¹⁵² the Supreme Council in Istanbul responded somewhat hesitantly. It was stated that the buildings would be useful for the governors for sure even if the army center was transferred to somewhere else in the future.¹⁵³ It was apparent that the central government was also determined to strip Harput of its militarily privileged position, which conforms to the reaction of Taylor a few years later when Harput was chosen unexpectedly as the military headquarters. In fact, Harput's being the center of the Anatolian Army was not to last long, and Erzurum was to become its center, anyway. In other words, as in Thomas Mann's story *Buddenbrooks*, Mezre managed to get its best-furnished administrative building complex just as it actually lost the corresponding status of a regional capital. In this age of rapid change in the identity of places and people, not unlike the affect of flying time in contemporary German cities like Mann's Lübeck, the built environment tended to be a late-comer.

The historiography of the *Tanzimat* Era (1839-1876) is grounded on the idea of progress. This is not only true for the classic works that praised the modernization attempt of the era as the origin of new Turkey (positive progressivism). It is also true for the critical scholarship of the last two decades, which has deconstructed the modernization paradigm and questioned the naïvely positive value judgment attached to the reforms. Instead, scholars have emphasized, to mention but a few points, the increasing intervention of the state apparatus in daily life, the

¹⁵² Aleppo's Governor Osman Pasha replaced him. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 304, 18 October 1846.

¹⁵³ PMOA, İ.MVL. 81/1607, 5 September 1846.

emergence of the police and gendarmerie, the colonization of the periphery by the center at the expense of semi-autonomous local governments, the otherization of communities other than Sunni Muslims, and state-organized atrocities. However, in the latter trend, too, the basic idea of progress, namely of the continuous development of the dark side of modernity, has stayed unquestioned (a negative progressivism). In reality, in the provinces, especially in those that were not the nodes of world capitalism, no developmentalist logic was imposed from the imperial center. And it is not that the projects failed or were undermined by local resistance; they simply did not exist.

On the contrary, the locals were progressivist, and the center kept dragging its feet. In 1847, the Marshal of the Anatolian Army submitted a proposal for another building, for constructing new military barracks in Mezre. He suggested that the place called *çatal mezra* was suitable for building new casernes with a public bath and a school. In fact, the old barracks (built at the time of Reşid Pasha) in Hüseyinik (the next-door village of Mezre) could be re-built from their debris (*enkaz*)—yet another reference to ruination. The detailed response of the Supreme Council in Istanbul was not simply dismissive. It raised concerns about whether this chosen place’s water and air was clear and healthy. Moreover, close attention should be paid to the fortitude and robustness of the new buildings, the report said, “since those areas are not in sight and could not be permanently maintained and repaired carefully.” Regarding the provision of lumber, the Harput area had only poplar and willow trees, and a structure built out of them would “turn into ruin in a short time.” To bring lumber from Kemah and Keranis by river transportation (on the Euphrates) had been proposed, but the Council inquired whether the transportation cost would not be equal to the cost of using stone, which would make the building

even stronger and save it from repair costs in the future.¹⁵⁴ This over-care or bureaucratic idealism ended up in five years of continuous postponing of building the barracks. Finally, in August 1852, Galip Efendi, who had been sent to Harput as a building inspector for the construction, was accused of corruption. He had spent more than 1000 *kese* “without having done anything.”¹⁵⁵ The new barracks were never built. Instead, the old military garrison in Hüseynik was repaired by the Marshal, who tried to get the costs reimbursed by apportioning them to the local people. However, the Supreme Council turned down the proposal because Harput Province was already under *Tanzimat* rule since 1845, namely the citizens could not be held responsible any more for government expenditures. The costs had to be offset by the local treasury.¹⁵⁶

In the issues that were not related to military concerns, the imperial center was even more dismissive. For example, in the same year of 1847, the complete renewal of the government house (the original Çötelizade mansion) was proposed from the locality because it was in a “highly ruinous” condition. The repair bill was a little less than 200 thousand *kuruş*. Nonetheless, the government did not hesitate in kindly refusing the proposal and gave permission for the reparation of only the most crucial parts with 9 thousand *kuruş* (September 16).¹⁵⁷ As an incredibly rare incident, we have a visual representation of the governor’s house drawn just a few weeks after these correspondences. French geographer Xavier Hommaire de Hell and his companion, the painter Jules Laurens, luckily stopped by Harput on their way to Tehran, Persia, in October 1847. Laurens made three drawings there: one of “old Harput” (“le vieux Karpouth”),

¹⁵⁴ PMOA, İ.MVL. 98/2090, 16 June 1847. The quoted texts read in original: “oraları göz önü mahal olmadığından daima nezaret olunup dikkatle tamiratına layığıyla bakılamayacağından” and “az vakitte harab olacağı.”

¹⁵⁵ PMOA, İ.DH. 253/15813, 19 August 1852.

¹⁵⁶ PMOA, İ.MVL. 255/9500, 13 December 1852.

¹⁵⁷ PMOA, İ.DH. 153/7940, 16 September 1847.

one of “Harput” (perhaps Mezre), and one of “the house of Pasha in Harput” (definitely, in Mezre). The last painting, dated October 2, 1847, is a proof of the “highly ruinous” condition of the mansion, especially when it is compared to other elite houses Laurens depicted on his way (Figure 2-2; cf. to the plan in Figure 2-1, esp. the mosque). Apart from being the tallest structure in Mezre, the governor’s house did not have any material credentials to deserve representing the governor of a huge region in the Ottoman East. Moreover, in the other two drawings, the residences in Harput look generally in better shape than the houses of Mezre. In other words, the built environment of Mezre in 1847 was still in its hamlet form, whereas Harput’s buildings reflected its deep genealogy in history.



Figure 2-2: The house of the Pasha in Harput, 1847.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Jules-Joseph-Augustin Laurens, *Jules Laurens'in Türkiye Yolculuğu = Le Voyage de Jules Laurens En Turquie*. (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 1998), 195.

As seen in the Council's comments about the barracks' longevity above, the imperial center's only concern was to keep the province as an unchanging background for government business. The buildings should not decay, and if they did, they should be repaired just enough to restore them to their original position. The material world of the provinces had to be always ready for the use of the center for war-making; the provincial places had to stay as empty slots to be filled by the army-state temporarily whenever needed. The deterioration of the built environment was irritating for the state; people (governors) were expected to be circulating, but the places had to remain the same.

The same was not true for the locals. They wanted to change their built environment, wanted to develop it. The following case is illustrative of the local wars over the material changes and the center's quite irrelevant concerns. In spring of 1850, the Muslim notables of Harput petitioned against the unlawful enlargement of some church buildings in the Harput region. It was noted that the changes were allowed in the first place due to the permissiveness of Sabrî Mustafa Pasha¹⁵⁹ and Yusuf Pasha (Gürcü),¹⁶⁰ who governed Harput between 1846 and 1849. The issue was un-localized when Hacı Ali Efendi, from the *ulema* (religious scholar class) of Harput, wrote from Istanbul to his son Veli Efendi and to Beyzade Ali Efendi in Harput to get copies of the petition. In these letters, he roughly dictated the petitions that were to address the highest offices like Sheikhl-ul-Islam and the Supreme Council. He specifically asked them not to use his and his addressees' names in the text (26 March 1851). The outcome was one of the most participated collective petitions of Harput's history, with almost 400 seals on it –all from Muslim scholars, imams, and headmen (*muhtar*) (Figure 2-3). Three original copies reached the capital

¹⁵⁹ The Governor of Harput between November/December 1846 and May-June 1849. Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, 1996, 5:1412.

¹⁶⁰ The Governor of Harput between May-June 1849 and August 1850. *Ibid.*, 5:1696.

and there commenced an interesting official correspondence between the center and the province.

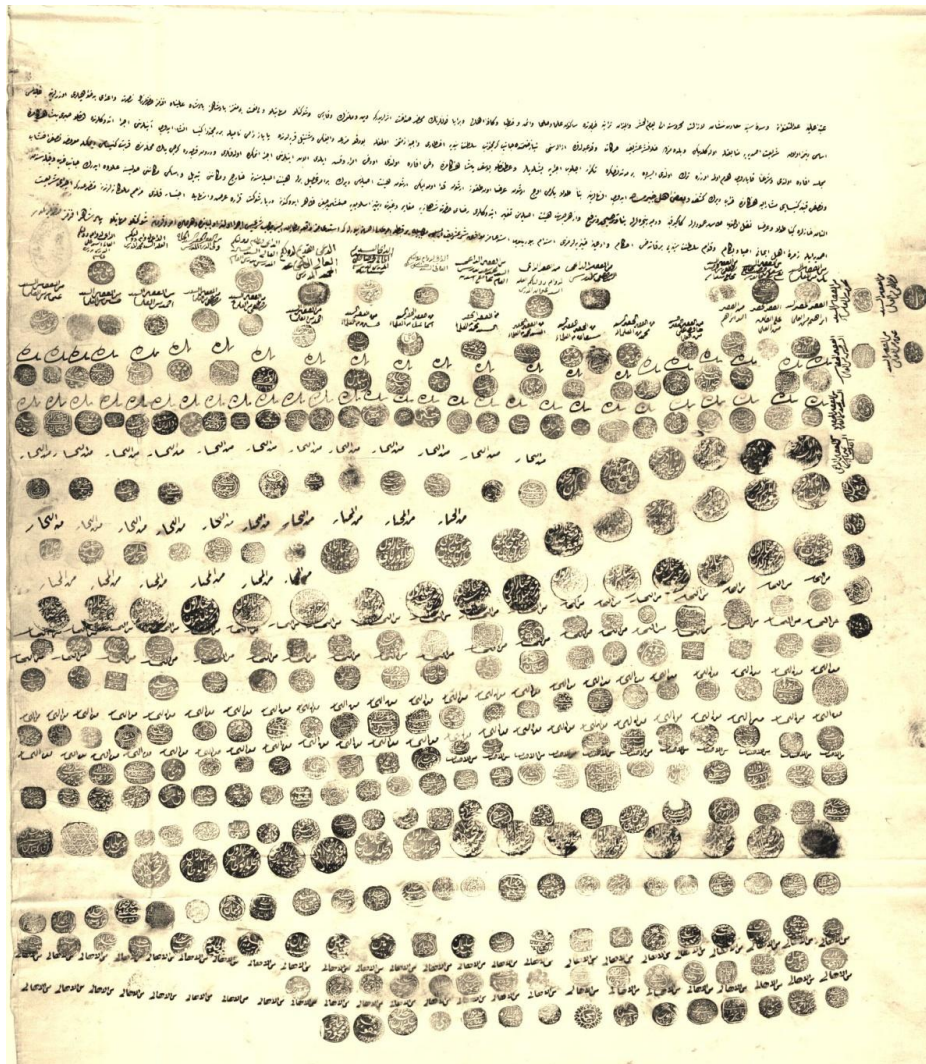


Figure 2-3: The collective petition about the unlawful enlargement of church buildings in Harput, 1851.¹⁶¹

The local government had already been dealing with the issue before the petitions were sneaked to Istanbul. The provincial council created an investigation committee composed of the deputy judge (*naib*), the inspector (*müfettiş*), Hacı Mehmed Efendi from the council and from the *ulema*, Çötelizade Ömer Bey from the council, engineer Salih Efendi and *kethüda* Şerif Efendi.

The committee visited four places: Surp Karabet Church in the Gürcübey neighborhood of

¹⁶¹ PMOA, İ.MVL. 225/7653, 29 November 1851.

Harput, and three priest's houses in the villages of Mezre, İğıkı and Şentil. The former was accused of having been unlawfully enlarged and built of stone, whereas the latter three were implicated for being used as churches without having the necessary entitlements. The plans of all four buildings were drawn and sent to Istanbul attached to the provincial council's and the deputy judge's reports (Figure 2-4).

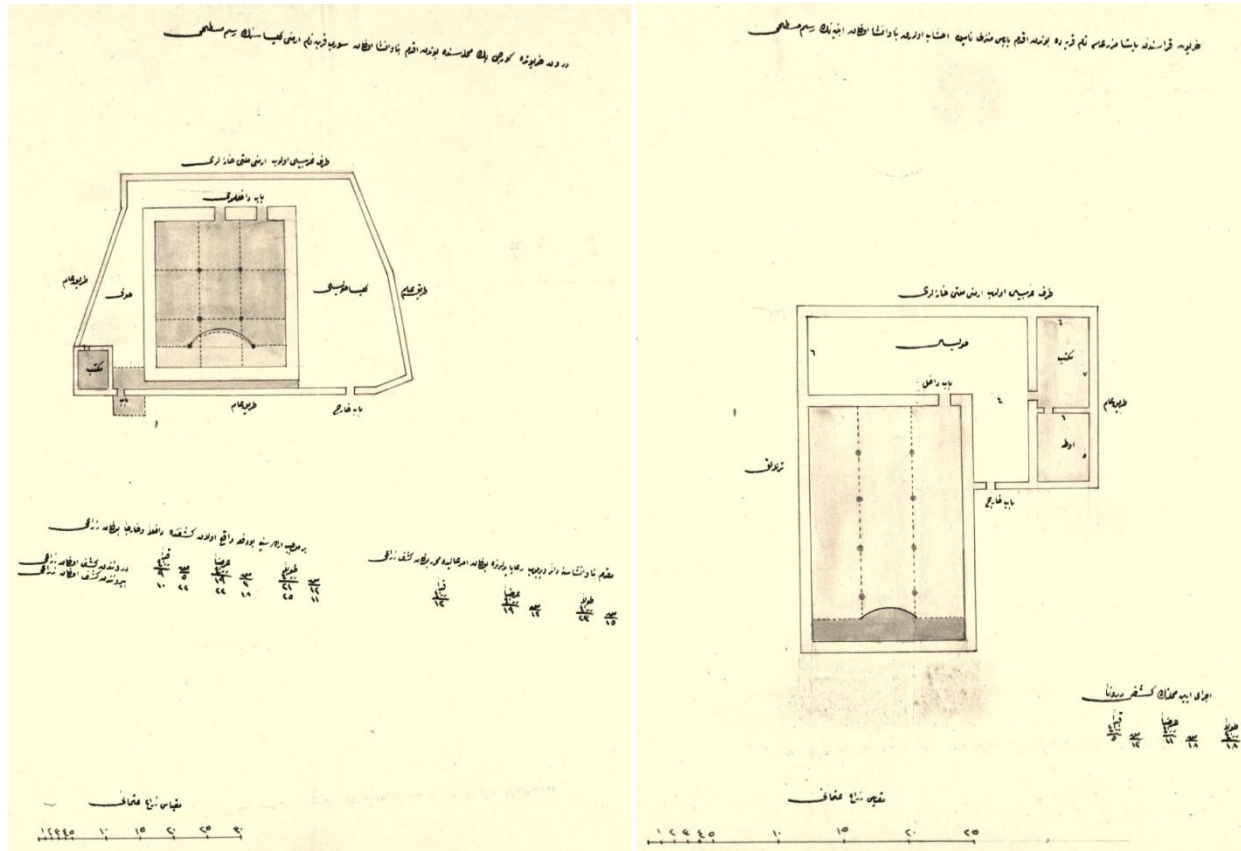


Figure 2-4: Surp Karabet Church in Harput and the priest's house in Mezre.¹⁶²

The report of the provincial council headed by the Governor Osman Nuri Pasha was quite objective; it provided all the measurements prepared upon the building inspections and it also included the responses of the representatives of the Armenian community (25 April). However, Osman Nuri Pasha and the Marshal of the Anatolian Army, Mehmed Reşid Pasha—basically two stranger governors of the region, both of whom lived in Mezre—sent a separate cover letter (27

¹⁶² PMOA, İ.MVL. 225/7653, 29 November 1851

April), too. In this private letter, the governors were very unsympathetic towards the recent fuss created by Harput's traditional elite. The measurements of the inner space of the buildings were already within the limits of original plans, and bringing this issue to court would cause tribulation (*suda*) because of anticipated "long talks" (*uzun uzadıya lakırdı*) among Muslims and Christians. Three weeks later, the two governors sent another private report to Istanbul (18 May), a rather indignant one. They were irritated by "the men of this region" who "could not wait patiently" for the decisions (*sabr eder adamlar olmadıklarından*) and "could not help talking here and there" (*şurda burda bir diyeceği olmamak lazımdan iken*). It was known that the attitude and nature (*etvar ve mizac*) of the people in the provinces and especially in this region were prone to disorderly behavior (*işte taşra ve bahusus bu havali ahalisinin ekseri halleri böyle uygunsuzluk vukuuna badi olmakda*). The decision of the center about the case was basically arbitration. The Supreme Council's report referred to probable negative repercussions among Armenians and in Europe if the churches were to be torn down (as this was the decision expected by the petitioners), and it stated that in these times the state had to make sacrifices (from building regulations). Thus, the church buildings had to be turned back to their original form by the hand of the Armenian community itself. Moreover, future similar incidents had to be prevented by the governors. From a last private letter by the governor Osman Pasha (12 October), we learn that Veli Efendi was banished in May to Malatya for this collective disturbance he had instigated. Two months later, in July, he was pardoned thanks to appeals by the notables in Harput and he was allowed back. In this letter, the Pasha continued to complain about the local people, who were, he wrote, mostly Kurds or tribesmen.

This local battle over buildings confirms the pragmatic approach of the imperial center towards locally significant problems. The only concern of Istanbul was preserving the status quo

in the provinces and preventing any possible disorder, especially a disorder that would attract international attention. Additionally, the church case uncovers the tensions between the traditional Muslim elites in Harput, on the one side, and the Armenian notables and the local government, on the other. As will be shown in detail in Part II, this tension was also a spatial one, between Harput and Mezre. Last but not least, the buildings in question were not arbitrary signs of otherwise social conflicts. In the petition of the Muslim notables, the previous governors (of the late 1840s) were specifically implicated for being permissive about the recent unlawful changes in the built environment. Taken together with the other examples given in this chapter, the local bureaucratic classes seem to have intervened in the material world they lived in, mostly in Mezre, to the displeasure of the traditional elite of Harput. They tried to reverse the process of ruination in this short-lived imperial outpost and to make a place to live in accordance with their high military and bureaucratic titles. None of the developmentalist attempts were supported by the imperial center but, nonetheless, the local government (which was composed of the local bourgeoisie and the bureaucrats) took care of themselves.

The findings of this chapter run counter to the dominant understanding of the material world in the provinces as an index of the central state's increasing control. The studies on the *Tanzimat* and post-*Tanzimat* period, including the early decades of the Turkish Republic (1930s-40s), have treated local material developments under the rubric of symbolic aspects of state centralization.¹⁶³ In a recent work on provincial reform in Iraq, for example, it was reiterated that “[i]n accordance with its top-down character and its direction from center to periphery, it is

¹⁶³ The classic work on the material colonization of the provinces by the modern state in the Republican period is Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001). For the symbolic aspect of imperial power in the provinces, see Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*.

possible to trace the reflections of Ottoman modernization at provincial level.” The author continues,

Ottoman modernization was not only visible in the provincial administration; its reflection in public works was also very significant. (...) Improvement in public works was significant for three major reasons: firstly, it was through the construction and/or repair of public works that an increasing state control was experienced among the local people. Secondly, public buildings displayed ‘the presence of the state at the local level’; the government house (*hükümet konağı*), clock tower, modern schools and hospitals being among the more visible signs of the state in the local landscape.¹⁶⁴

On the contrary, this chapter has emphasized the dismissiveness of the central state in the development of provincial spaces. The governor and the bureaucratic elite were of course a part of the state apparatus, but they certainly did not act as an extension of the central state, nor did the latter care about its visibility in the provincial towns until later. In fact, between the end of war-making (1838) and Mezre’s becoming a real town (1860s), this hamlet of strangers, exiled landlords and appointed governors made itself into a residential unit. It acquired an intermediary role between the old town and the imperial center. It became a home for the new elite as opposed to the old one in the upper town. In all the development projects unsupported by Istanbul, the bureaucrat class seems to have collaborated with the newly rising local trade bourgeoisie. In harmony with the context of the integration of the Ottoman economy to the world economy in the nineteenth century, the landed gentry of Harput was losing ground to the trade bourgeoisie. In the following chapter, thus, I will look at the legal cases of the Çötelizade family and tell the story of their changing relationship with local governance. The new actors of the age, namely the

¹⁶⁴ Ebubekir Ceylan, *Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq: Political Reform, Modernization and Development in the Nineteenth Century Middle East* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 18. The author refers for the quoted phrase to Yonca Köksal, “Imperial Center and Local Groups: Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Edirne and Ankara,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 27 (2002): 116.

Armenian businessmen, will appear in these cases as the new companions of the bureaucratic classes. Mezre of the 1850s will be a stage for this socio-economic transformation.

Chapter 3: Money, Family and Politics

Local Politics

What happened to the Çötelizade family after their quite short governorship in 1831-33? Did they lose power and slowly disappear after İshak Pasha died and Hafız Pasha bought their mansion from his wife Emine? Or, did they cooperate with the winners of the new *Tanzimat* system and thrive? In this chapter, I will follow the traces of the family members of the next generation, namely of the children of the pashas. In this way, I aim to mimic the conceptual structure of the previous chapter, which looked at the state of affairs in a place (instead of a family) in the aftermath of its period of effulgence. The scene again consists of dual presence, of passing and emerging. Çötelizades would never become regional governors again, but they would never step down from the political and public sphere, either. In fact, during the constitutional revolution of 1908, Harput (Mamuretülaziz) was going to send Çötelizade Asım Bey to the newly created parliament in Istanbul; in 1920 and 1923-31, Çötelizade Muhiddin Bey was going to represent his province in Ankara—the capital of the new republic. What really happened to the family in the 1850s was a shift in the basis of their social status from the economic to the political realm. This shift was in accordance with the peculiarities of the 1845-65 period, when the political, economic and legal realms were intertwined.

The Age of Reform (*Tanzimat*) is conventionally dated between the Reform Edict (1839) and the ascendance of Abdülhamid II to the throne (1876). The former announced the administrative and legal reforms that were to pave the way for the creation of the modern bureaucratic state, whereas the latter symbolizes the retreat from reformation and

democratization and the restitution of monarchy. Historians have challenged this periodization by documenting the pre-1839 military reforms, on the one hand, and by emphasizing the continuation of modern state formation during Abdülhamid II's reign, on the other.¹⁶⁵ New periodizations place less emphasis on the political milestones than on the administrative and economic restructuring, among which the Criminal Code (1840, 1858), the Land Code (1858), the Provincial Law (1864/67) and the creation of *Nizamiye* Courts (1864) stand out. Most importantly, a new administrative body created by the Reform Age was going to be responsible for the enforcement of all these laws, especially in the provinces: the local councils. In this chapter, I will focus on a special period with regard to the local councils, namely the period between the coming of *Tanzimat* to the eastern provinces in the mid-1840s and the re-institutionalization of separation of judicial and administrative power in the mid-1860s. In this exceptional in-between period, the local councils had not only political but also extraordinary economic and legal power.

The creation of powerful local councils composed of appointed bureaucrats and elected local notables has been of interest to historians. On the one hand, these councils were seen as the embryo of modern representative democracy; on the other, they were taken as extensions of the central state in the provinces. A more nuanced approach, known as the 'urban notables paradigm' (coined by Hourani in 1968), emphasized the mediating role of the urban notables between the local population and the government thanks to new administrative mechanisms like the local councils. Nonetheless, the critics of this 'paradigm' rightfully pointed out the "illicit

¹⁶⁵ Virginia H. Aksan, "The Ottoman Military and State Transformation in a Globalizing World," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 2 (2007): 259–72; Avigdor Levy, "Military Reform and the Problem of Centralization in the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18, no. 3 (July 1, 1982): 227–49; Nadir Özbek, "Philanthropic Activity, Ottoman Patriotism, and the Hamidian Regime, 1876–1909," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37, no. 01 (February 2005): 59–81; Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

cooperation” between the local notables and the local bureaucracy; thus, they challenged the idea of mediation and called for more bottom-up approaches.¹⁶⁶ Accordingly, micro-historical studies have shown the dynamic process of negotiations between various actors in a locality, whereby the actual function and fate of the local councils was determined.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, taking the period of the 1840s-60s as dynamic (or, ‘event-rich’ in Ardener’s terms) rather than as a failure has deconstructed the teleological approaches that saw these decades as transitory to and preparatory for the “mature” system of the later periods.¹⁶⁸

The peculiar feature of the period of 1845-65 was the extraordinary power of the local councils; it was unprecedented (in pre-*Tanzimat* councils) and would not last after the new laws of the 1860s (especially when the monopoly of juridical power was given back to the courts in 1864). During this period, the council of a province had exclusive authority (at the expense of the governor’s personal authority) to decide on everything from taxation to land transactions, from public works to recruitment, from settling legal disputes (along with the sharia court) to supervising the market prices.¹⁶⁹ Even though the level of authority of the governor was changed multiples times (in 1846, 1849, and in 1852) in contrary directions,¹⁷⁰ there is no doubt that a segment of the local notables was elevated with official council membership at the expense of the governor’s authority.

¹⁶⁶ The phrase “illicit cooperation” was used by Ma’oz in his seminal article published before Hourani’s work. Moshe Maoz, “Syrian Urban Politics in the Tanzimat Period between 1840 and 1861,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 29, no. 2 (January 1, 1966): 277–301. For the impact and critiques of the urban notables paradigm, see Philip S. Khoury, “The Urban Notables Paradigm Revisited,” *Revue Du Monde Musulman et de La Méditerranée* 55, no. 1 (1990): 215–30; Khoury, “The Ottoman Centre versus Provincial Power-Holders: An Analysis of the Historiography.”

¹⁶⁷ Elizabeth Thompson, “Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844–45,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 3 (August 1993): 457–75; Köksal, “Imperial Center and Local Groups: Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Edirne and Ankara.”

¹⁶⁸ For the criticism, see Thompson, “Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces.” For the use of “maturity” and “transition” in the analysis, see the following recent work, which reiterates the teleological approach towards the period of 1840s-60s: Ceylan, *Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 101–131, 221.

¹⁶⁹ Maoz, “Syrian Urban Politics in the Tanzimat Period between 1840 and 1861.”

¹⁷⁰ Musa Çadırcı, “Osmanlı Döneminde Yerel Meclisler,” *Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler* 2, no. 5 (1993): 3–12.

The councils also reinforced a more subtle transformation in wider society, namely the domination of the urban over the rural. Escalating demand for agricultural products in the globalizing world economy led the states and the merchants to increase their control in the countryside, mostly by force. As a result, in the nineteenth century, cities gradually came to dominate the rural life and economy.¹⁷¹ As Abu Mannuh's meticulous study on Jerusalem suggests, a direct result of the increasing authority of the local councils over the taxation of the countryside was that "the traditional and 'natural' leaders of the peasantry were destroyed or lost their military and political power, and the countryside, leaderless, was laid open to the influence and domination of the city."¹⁷² Even though the process in the countryside of Harput province was not as clear-cut as suggested, it is certain that military interventions from the 1830s onwards unsettled the political structure of the countryside. In Part IV, we will see the violent invasion of the city of Harput by people from the countryside and the plunder of urban wealth as a consequence of the long-term subjugation of country to city.

A Local Family: The Çötelizades

The Çötelizade family was in the center of these social, economic and urban transformations. Before İbrahim Pasha was appointed as the governor of the region in 1831, the honorific title of the family members was *agha*, not *bey* or *effendi*. The Çötelizades were a landlord family whose primary power base was rural. This was confirmed when they were exiled from Harput to live in the countryside "like the other children of similar families," as the governor in Keban had condescendingly stated (Ch. 1). After the intermittent period of İbrahim

¹⁷¹ 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, 2014), 43–66.

¹⁷² B. Abu-Manneh, "Jerusalem in the Tanzimat Period: The New Ottoman Administration and the Notables," *Die Welt Des Islams*, New Series, 30, no. 1/4 (January 1, 1990): 37.

and İshak Pashas, however, the family title was immediately upgraded to *bey*. From then on, the family members were candidates to become *urban* notables and high-standing officials of the state to such an extent that not a single reference exists in any post-1831 source to their *agha* past. Instead, they were commonly called a “dynasty.” For example, in 1855, the governor Palaslı İsmail Pasha received orders to show respect and assistance to Çötelizade [Hasan]¹⁷³ Hüsnü Bey of Harput and Sağırzâde İbrahim Besim Bey of Kemah since both belonged to dynasties (*hanedandan*).¹⁷⁴ The order was sent in response to petitions from the locality complaining about ill conduct towards these two men. It seems that the younger generation of the family had to claim back their authority, which was perhaps jeopardized when the pasha generation passed away.

Çötelizade İshak Pasha, the last local governor of Harput, had three sons. When the family was registered in *mezra-ı Çötelizade* in the first population census in the early 1830s, İshak Bey was 46 years old and his sons were named Hüseyin Bey (16), Osman Bey (8) and Cemal Bey (5).¹⁷⁵ The oldest son, Hüseyin Hüsnü Bey, came to be seen in local political circles quite frequently in the 1840s. He was appointed as the governor (*kaymakam*) of Behisni sub-province (*sancak*) in January 1848. He was dismissed in March 1849 but re-appointed in May 1850 upon recommendations from Harput Province.¹⁷⁶ A year later, he was subject to investigation for having taxed peasants excessively when he had been in office, but this did not

¹⁷³ There is a strong possibility that a typographical error misrepresented Çötelizade Hüseyin Hüsnü Bey as Hasan Hüsnü here.

¹⁷⁴ PMOA, A.MKT.UM. 197/80, 7 June 1855. Palaslı İsmail Pasha lived in Mezre in 1842 as the governor of Diyarbekir; his welcoming ceremony was quoted at length from Badger and Fletcher’s accounts in Chapter 2. Now, he was re-appointed to Mezre as the governor of Harput Province. He ruled from April to October, 1855. Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, 1996, 3:830. The *Sicil*, however, does not give the date of his dismissal correct, see İ.MMS. 6/202, 6 October 1855. He was dismissed on good terms due to his old age; and, his successor was Arif Pasha who had served as the governor of Şam-ı Şerif (Damascus) and as the marshal of the Arabian Army.

¹⁷⁵ PMOA, NFS.d. 2675, p. 58-9.

¹⁷⁶ PMOA, A.TŞF. 15/54, 16 January 1848; A.TŞF. 6/51, 31 March 1849; A.MKT.NZD. 2/80, 17 May 1850.

prevent him from appearing as the director (*müdür*) of Siverek district (in Behisni). Yet again, in the end of 1851, he was taken under official investigation due to the complaints of the local notables of Siverek about his oppressive rule; nevertheless, the governor İsmail Pasha cleared his name by claiming that Hüsnü Bey simply fell victim to slander.¹⁷⁷ Most importantly, in September 1853, the right to collect the tithe (*aşar*) of the Harput central district was assigned to Hüsnü Bey at the suggestion of the Marshal of the Anatolian Army. In the end, Hüsnü Bey was also to appear as a member of the Harput Council in 1855.¹⁷⁸

Siverek district in Behisni sub-province was a particularly problematic place for the Ottoman government because of the unending raids of Arab tribes from the south, especially by ‘Anayza and Shammar tribes, who often moved to north to seize the agricultural harvest. Çötelizade Hüsnü Bey’s re-appointment in 1850, for example, was occasioned by the “misery” caused there by the Shammars’ raids; in other words, the harvest was taken by the tribes and the tax could not be collected properly. As a result, the district governor’s “ignorance about the region” was brought forward and he was replaced by Hüsnü Bey, who “has good command of the character and attitudes of the people” there.¹⁷⁹ Throughout the entire century, the struggle over the extraction of the agricultural surplus between the Ottoman state and the (semi)nomadic tribes was to continue. This challenge of city-people against the rural power-holders seems to have been mediated in the Harput Province by ex-landlords like the Çötelizade family. As may be inferred from the complaints about them, the family members were truly familiar with the rules of taxation outside the city, including using force. And, as we have seen, both civil and military governors supported and constantly favored them as tax-farmers and district governors.

¹⁷⁷ PMOA, A.MKT.UM. 35/49, 25 October 1850; MVL. 245/20, 14 December 1851.

¹⁷⁸ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 57/61, 3 September 1853; İ.MVL. 344/14892, 27 November 1855.

¹⁷⁹ PMOA, A.MKT.NZD. 2/80, 17 May 1850.

The inner-city politics, however, was more complicated and not always in the family's favor. Hüsni Bey could hold the right to collect central Harput's tithe only for six months (February-June 1853), since a certain Mehmed Agha raised the bid and acquired the job in the middle of the financial year. Hüsni Bey responded by asking for compensation of his expenses during his six-month service, but it seems that he could not reach an agreement with Mehmed Agha. Accordingly, four years later, Hüsni Bey's guarantor (and/or representative) Abdullah Bey petitioned the government in Istanbul to settle the issue. The central government asked from the local government whether or not Hüsni Bey had really hired collectors and whether the amount he asked (50 thousand *kuruş*) was reasonable; the local council replied with full confirmation. At this point, however, Mehmed Agha's guarantors, *sarrafa* (moneylender) Mısırlıoğlu Bedros and Boyacıoğlu Garabet began objecting to Hüsni Bey's claims. They seem to have convinced the authorities that the council's confirmation was based only on verbally asking Hüsni Bey, rather than a real investigation. As a result, the government requested an investigation report.

The local council in turn sent its report: out of 183 villages in the central Harput district, 63 were to be taxed by salaried officers and the rest were auctioned to local applicants; thus, Hüsni Bey had spent the amount he requested for the arrangements in the latter 120 villages. Nevertheless, Bedros and Garabet intervened again and said that his term of service had ended before the harvest began (in June) and he could not have collected tax and hired people for this purpose yet. They also added that the local council's report must have been written "as a favor" (*riayet-i hatıra*). The central government was convinced; it was determined that before the harvest time one would not hire so many people and spend so much money. The bureaucrats in Istanbul also added that Çötelizade Hüsni Bey was a member of the local council and from a

respected dynasty, and thus his word had influence (*nafiz-el-kelem*). In consequence, the payment of the requested amount was declined.¹⁸⁰

Can we interpret this single case as an index of the rise of the Armenian merchant and moneylender bourgeoisie? Taking into account the well-established literature on the transformation of the Ottoman bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century, this would not be a far-fetched statement and more examples below (and in Part II) will support it. The moneylender class in general was crucial in the tax-farming system because the tax-farmers were dependent on borrowing for the advance payments. Therefore, in some of the documents relating to Hüsnü Bey's case, Mehmed Agha's name did not even appear; Mısırlıoğlu Bedros and Boyacıoğlu Garabet stood out as the other party of the dispute. In the end, the guarantors of both parties had immediate interest in the cash transfers in the locality; the tax-farmers were also affected, if indirectly, since their liability for future borrowings was at stake if they could not pay back their debts to the moneylenders. As a result, having extra-economic influence in the process, like Hüsnü Bey's membership in the council, was to become a problem for the financial bourgeoisie. Thus, as we will see shortly, the Çötelizades were forced to separate their economic and political activity in the following years.

The political power of the family complicated its relationship with the new, non-dynastic notables in Harput. The fact that the local councils also held legal power in this special period of 1845-65 reinforced the authority of the dynastic notable members of the council, especially because the imperial center usually passed the petitioned disputes to the hands of these same

¹⁸⁰ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 125/1, 24 January 1858; A.MKT.MHM. 128/84, 22 March 1858; İ.MVL. 569/120, 30 March 1858; A.MKT.MHM. 130/55, 2 May 1858.

councils.¹⁸¹ Thus, it would be a very serious asset for the family that, in 1859, not only Hüsnü Bey but also his brothers Osman and Cemal Beys were members of the local council. Even more so if we remember that the local councils had only four members from the local notables.¹⁸² Their political power, however, was in tension with their financial dependency, and the power-holders of the financial sector kept challenging the family's dynastic privileges.

In 1861, for instance, the moneylenders Beşiroğlu Mikail and Melkon in Istanbul complained in their petition that, even though they had requested it many times, Hüsnü Bey procrastinated in paying his debt and its interest based on two bonds. He even denied his debt just to gain time, the petitioners said, and it was rumored that his mental capacity was impaired (*şuverine halel vakı olmuş*).¹⁸³ In light of the events in the countryside, it is a real possibility that Hüsnü Bey was unable to pay off his debts because of his incapacity to collect all the taxes. In 1859-60, for example, a local of Karacadağ area in Siverek district (mentioned above) sent a petition to be exempted from tax simply because the Arab tribes had already taxed the area and he was not able to pay the same tax twice. The taxation of Karacadağ area was in the hands of Hüsnü Bey, and the petitioner requested to be allowed to pay him this year's tax in installments in the following years.¹⁸⁴ The local dynastic family, whose power was based on its ability to extract surplus from the countryside, was thus faced with two interconnected challenges: tribal resistance and the financial sector. Available information suggests that Çötelizades collaborated

¹⁸¹ See, for example, the petition of another Christian moneylender, who demanded his 52,340 *kuruş* from Çötelizade Hüsnü Bey, and the official order to the governor (*vali*) to acquire the owed money by using the authority of the local council: PMOA, A.MKT.DV. 111/15, 11 July 1857.

¹⁸² The council was to be composed of the governor, the treasurer (*defterdar*), a scholar (from *ulema*), the judge, the mufti, four elected members from the local notables, and the representatives of non-Muslim communities. Sedat Bingöl, *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı'da Yargı Reformu (Nizâmiyye Mahkemelerinin Kuruluşu ve İşleyişi, 1840-1876)* (Eskişehir: T.C. Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2004), 69–72.

¹⁸³ PMOA, A.MKT.DV. 181/61, 31 January 1861; A.MKT.UM. 526/40, 22 December 1861; BEO.VGG.d. 170, entry no. 222, 24 December 1861.

¹⁸⁴ PMOA, A.MKT.UM. 436/97, 2 November 1860.

with the state to face the former challenge and they exercised a more limited power in urban politics in a response to the latter challenge.

Hüsnü Bey's younger brother Osman Bey was the only member of the family who was decorated with military titles. In 1855-56, he became a brigadier (*asakir-i mansure miralayı*). And he was İshak Paşa's only son who lived to see the end of the century. Before he died in the last year of the nineteenth century, at around the age of eighty, Osman Bey was honored by the Sultan with imperial gift (*atiyye-i seniye*) in 1891.¹⁸⁵ In 1859-60, he was an absentee member of the Harput council. He was in Istanbul, perhaps working as a proxy in the capital city, where personal presence should have made things work faster. For instance, a few years after his brother Hüsnü Bey's claim from Mısırlıoğlu Bedros, this time Osman Bey petitioned to claim his money from Bedros regarding the Harput tithe, and he managed to get an official confirmation from the Chamber of Accounts (*meclis-i muhasebe*), which was established with *Tanzimat* specifically to hear cases between moneylenders, tax-farmers and the state.¹⁸⁶ The Çötelizade family had, then, not only dominated the local council but also kept hold of its connections with the imperial capital. As a matter of fact, the youngest brother Cemal Bey was also in Istanbul at that time.

In the first months of 1860, however, apparently serious complaints were filed from some people of Harput to Istanbul, especially implicating Cemal Bey. As a result, in May, the local governor received imperial orders to dismiss the Çötelizade brothers from the local council. Accordingly, Cemal Bey and Osman Bey resigned, and Hüsnü Bey's duty was suspended.

¹⁸⁵ For Osman Bey's appointment to posts as a brigadier, see PMOA, A.MKT.NZD. 307/79, 7 March 1860. For the documents about the imperial gift, see İ.MMS. 125/5374, 15 October 1891; A.MKT.MHM. 502/44, 20 October 1891; DH.MKT. 1884/106, 2 November 1891; DH.MKT. 1894/101, 29 November 1891; DH.MKT. 1919/27, 4 February 1892; DH.MKT. 1922/13, 13 February 1892.

¹⁸⁶ PMOA, A.MKT.NZD. 312/52, 19 January 1860. For the history of the Chamber of Accounts, see H. Hüseyin Gürhan, "Sayıştay'ın Tarihsel Gelişimi," *Sayıştay Dergisi*, no. 25 (1997): 37-42.

Governor (*mutasarrıf*) Yusuf Pasha sent a report a few months later and clearly backed Cemal Bey, who had returned to Mezre: He was stripped of his official post, and public announcements were made inviting the complaining parties to the local government in order to open a legal case against Cemal Bey. However, the governor continued, two months had passed and no one had made an official application, which made him conclude that the groundless complaints were perhaps due to some people's personal hostility against Cemal Bey.¹⁸⁷ At the same time, Osman Bey was also back in Harput, and he petitioned Istanbul about the unjust dismissal of his family from the council. He also complained about being left without an official post, even though he had increased Harput's tax revenue during his tenure. He asked that the Mines, or at least the taxation of Siverek, be given under his authority.¹⁸⁸

In September, the governor Veysî Pasha¹⁸⁹ submitted a more detailed report about the case to the Supreme Council in Istanbul. He also confirmed that the local council (*şura*) had not reached any decision against Cemal Bey. He interpreted the situation as a fuss created by quarrels among relatives of the extended family. When these quarrels were appeased, rumors would disappear and the local politics would be freed from disturbance. The Pasha suggested that, in order to solve the issue, those in Istanbul should be brought here (to Mezre) and prevented from staying away for long periods because otherwise they sent orders to their relatives here against the interest of the others and provoked them to create trouble. In sum, he proposed that Çötelizade Osman Bey (he was back in Istanbul) and his fellow Ali Efendi, and from the other side Hacı İshak Ağa and his fellow Mehmed Efendi (from the ulema) should be sent to Mezre from Istanbul. On the other hand, the Pasha was hesitant to work for a complete

¹⁸⁷ PMOA, MVL. 601/73, 10 July 1860.

¹⁸⁸ PMOA, MVL. 363/11, 29 August 1860.

¹⁸⁹ According to the *Sicil*, he was the governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Harput from October 1859 to September 1862. Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, 1996, 5:1664.

exclusion of the family from local politics. He recalled that the Çötelizade dynasty had been around for a few hundred years and had been the most prominent (*fâik-iil akrân*) family in Harput. Even though their simultaneous presence in the council should not be allowed again, to make them retreat to their mansions would also be disadvantageous, considering their long experience in local business.¹⁹⁰

Consequently, Osman Bey really moved back home. The imperial capital seems to have approved Veysî Pasha's suggestions, since Osman Bey was sent to Harput but at the same time the Pasha was ordered to lend assistance to this respected brigadier whenever he needed.¹⁹¹ However, exactly one year later, upon further petitions signed by some people of Harput, the central government harshly reprimanded the local government for allowing Çötelizades into government business. Apparently Osman Bey was appointed again as a council member after he returned to Harput despite orders to the contrary. Moreover, it was reported that he had accompanied the governor during his visits to the districts, and provisions for the army were forcibly taken from the inhabitants of the villages. Military expeditions and governors' visits to districts were, of course, crucial to subjugate bandits and tribes, but it was said that the villagers were being exploited without any success against the bandits. Additionally, many district governors were heard to be from the relatives or acquaintances of either the governor or the Çötelizades. In sum, one more time it was ordered that the family be kept outside of all state business and the previously-mentioned district governors be dismissed.¹⁹² Similar orders were sent again in April 1862; this time, the governor was implicated more heavily, with personal

¹⁹⁰ PMOA, MVL. 603/75, 18 October 1860.

¹⁹¹ PMOA, A.MKT.UM. 443/46, 19 December 1860.

¹⁹² PMOA, A.MKT.UM. 523/21, 8 December 1861; BEO.VGG.d. 170, entry no. 203, 9 December 1861.

corruption being charged, too. For example, a person indebted to the state had been appointed as a district governor, and the governor had received gifts from tribes.¹⁹³

In his defense against the accusations, the governor admitted that Osman Bey had been made a council member, but only temporarily. The visits to the districts were made to collect the leftover taxes (*bakaya*), and Osman Bey had been sent with 15 cavalymen and secured more than 100 thousand *kuruş* of tax (*bir yük kuruşdan ziyade bakaya*). On the other hand, he denied the allegation about the district governors' being his or the Çötelizades' relatives. Regarding the other issues, he admitted that he had received a mare (*kısrak*) from Sheikh Abdülkerim, which he reciprocated with things like watch and sword. He sold the mare on behalf of the local treasury. The center's follow-up response was moderate. Even though the procedure he followed in selling the mare was not in accordance with the rules, in general the center approved that rejecting the sheikh's gift would have been inappropriate.¹⁹⁴

To conclude, in the 1850s, the authority of the Çötelizades was challenged by other urban notables in the capital city of Harput Province. The members of the family were dismissed from the local council, and even though they kept on holding important offices outside the city, their access to the provincial leadership boards was questioned and gradually limited. On the other hand, the local governors always backed the family members because, it seems, Çötelizades were important assets in mediating between the hinterlands and the city. As the last example showed, the taxation business in the countryside had its own rules that combined military intervention and gift-exchange. The Çötelizades had been in key tax-farmer positions for decades and could not simply be eliminated for the sake of other urban notables, who, I surmise, came mostly from the merchant classes.

¹⁹³ PMOA, A.MKT.UM. 555/58, 17 April, 1862; BEO.VGG.d. 170, entry no. 332, 18 April 1862.

¹⁹⁴ PMOA, A.MKT.UM. 571/8, 4 June 1862.

The historiographical question about this early *Tanzimat* era has been whether the administrative system completely changed or whether the reforms were only ostensibly implemented. As we have seen, governmental practice in the countryside—most notably, the taxation procedures—did not fundamentally change. It is also true that, in city politics, generally the same people simply acquired new titles. As late as 1860, almost all elected members of the local council were members of the same Çötelizade family. However, the cases in this section point out another, new power focus, as well: the financial and trade bourgeoisie. Rather than being eliminated, the family seems to have assumed a particular role in the new division of labor: like aghas of the old days, they were to use their know-how in non-urban politics, especially in agricultural taxation and its side tasks (like soldier recruitment or communication with the tribal leaders). The rising merchant and manufacturing bourgeoisie, on the other hand, would come to dominate—albeit only gradually—city politics. As an indication of this transformation, when the Chamber of Commerce was established in 1884, there was no Çötelizade among the twelve founding members (it was chaired by a manufacturer, see Ch. 5), whereas at least one family member had a leading position in the new Chamber of Agriculture.¹⁹⁵

Money: The Politics of Debt

The Çötelizades' appearance in the archival documents almost always involved a debt case. No doubt this shows the limits of the state archives: we can hear the voices of the locals only when an unresolved case reached Istanbul. Nevertheless, it is worth thinking about the prevalence of debt cases since they also tell us about social relations among different economic actors. A debt case was not an arbitrary instance of power relations; it was rather the main form of relationship among tax-farmers, government officials, merchants and peasants. As a financial

¹⁹⁵ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 56, 10 [9] November 1884; no. 22, 11 March 1884.

institution, tax-farming was a form of domestic borrowing for the central government. The right to collect taxes from a state-owned asset was auctioned to the highest bidder, and the winner, namely the tax-farmer, was to transfer a certain amount of money to the state treasury in advance. The tax he was to collect during his tenure would ideally compensate this advance payment and leave him some profit. The key gear in this mechanism was the role of the private bankers (*sarrafs*, also: moneylender) who used to lend to the tax-farmers the large amounts of cash needed for the advance payments. Either an agent of the banker accompanied the tax-farmer to the province and worked as his financier (to assess the tax revenue of the debtor), or the banker could himself win the auction (as an absentee tax-farmer) and sub-contract the tax-farm to someone in the province. In both cases, the practicing tax-collectors in the field were always indebted to the bankers, who resided (mostly) in Istanbul.¹⁹⁶

This domestic borrowing system was also in effect in the classic age of the empire. Ottoman economic historians have already debunked the myth of a traditional, non-monetized economy in which exchange of things would dominate monetary exchange. Instead, even at the end of the fifteenth century, a money economy prevailed, especially—but not exclusively—in urban contexts. And in the sixteenth century, use of money increased significantly. In addition, neither Islam nor the lack of banks prevented the development of complex credit mechanisms recognized by both the ordinary people and the imperial courts. However, starting in the late eighteenth century, military defeats and the subsequent reform attempts left the government in desperate need for ready cash. New taxes in cash increased the circulation of money, and

¹⁹⁶ Murat Çizakça, “Evolution of Domestic Borrowing in the Ottoman Empire,” in *East Meets West: Banking, Commerce and Investment in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. P. L. Cottrell, Monika Pohle Fraser, and Iain L. Fraser (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 1–10; Yavuz Cezar, “Economy and Taxation: The Role of *Sarrafs* in Ottoman Finance and Economy in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies*, ed. Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki (London: I.B.Tauris, 2005), 61–76; Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: The Nineteenth Century* (SUNY Press, 1988), 76–80.

between the 1830s and 1850s a series of paper money forms were issued (notes of indebtedness, interest bearing paper money, and paper money).¹⁹⁷

During the increasing monetization of imperial economy, the private bankers gained an unprecedented upper hand in government politics since they began financing all state business, as well. In other words, not only the tax-collectors but also the governors were in constant debt to the bankers simply because the latter were financial guarantors of the former; governors' payments to the central treasury were made by the bankers. Cezar's study on the bankers' records demonstrated that incredible amounts were owed by many pasha governors to the bankers in Istanbul; these amounts basically were the budgets of the provinces.¹⁹⁸ Kabadayı's study on the financial inventories of the richest banker of the time, Mkrdich Cezayirliyan, showed that his biggest debtor was the Grand Vizier. At the same time, Cezayirliyan was heavily indebted to the state treasury simply because he had taken on many state projects (like the construction of a bridge over the Golden Horn). Cezayirliyan's economic activities covered all areas of a large corporation today: the construction business, banking, tax-farming, industry, and commerce.¹⁹⁹ In sum, the entire Ottoman economy worked as a credit economy in which everybody was indebted to another agent. The debts were open-ended social relations but they became a problem when extra-economic factors stepped in, i.e. the intervention of the government in imprisoning Cezayirliyan, or the death of a banker or of a tax-farmer. So, when Çötelizade Süleyman Pasha died in 1848 (Ch. 1), his future-oriented financial relations were cut, and they turned into unpaid debts.

¹⁹⁷ Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁹⁸ Cezar, "Economy and Taxation: The Role of *Sarrafs* in Ottoman Finance and Economy in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries."

¹⁹⁹ Mustafa Erdem Kabadayı, "Mkrdich Cezayirliyan or the Sharp Rise and Sudden Fall of an Ottoman Entrepreneur," in *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi and Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Peeters Publishers, 2008), 281–99.

Right after Süleyman Pasha died, the government set about the official procedures to clear his account. He had a significant amount of debt and his son Çötelizade Tahir Bey appeared in the archival documents as the heir responsible for his debts. But it looks like things did not go smoothly. Towards the end of 1850, Tahir Bey finally applied to the government to pay the debts inherited from his father in installments.²⁰⁰ Like Hüsnü Bey, Tahir Bey was carrying the title of *ıstabl-ı âmire müdürlüğü*, a new official honorary title created with *Tanzimat*.²⁰¹ And, again like Hüsnü Bey, he was mentioned in the documents mainly regarding his debts. In the course of the 1850s, two bankers did not stop hounding Tahir Bey until they got him to pay off his father's debts. One was *sarraf* Muradoğlu Garabet or Garabet Muradov, a citizen of the Russian empire; the other was *sarraf* Goncagüloğlu Sarkiz in Istanbul. Both were Armenian bankers.

Muradoğlu Garabet's case first appeared in 1855. He petitioned to the government that Tahir Bey and another person owed him 25,000 *kuruş* but had been resisting payment despite his recurrent requests. He asked that they be brought to Istanbul for trial if they did not pay his money. Upon this petition, the government ordered the governor of Harput to deal with the case. Interestingly, the draft of the order in the archive shows that the clause about his being sent to Istanbul was struck through and replaced with a milder order that said, in effect, 'let us know' if Tahir Bey does not pay the amount.²⁰² However, Garabet could not get his money, neither at that time nor at least in the next six years, during which period he applied many times to the government agencies. We understand from the correspondence that at some point Tahir Bey paid

²⁰⁰ PMOA, C.ADL. 41/2507, 8 January 1851. He owed 150,000 *kuruş* to Misakoğlu [Misakyan] Artin, 110,000 *kuruş* to Goncagüloğlu Nişan, and 100,000 *kuruş* to Yenikomşu[?] oğlu Kevork.

²⁰¹ *Istabl-ı Âmire* was in fact the imperial palace's stable, the duty of which was to provide horses to the central state from all over the empire. In 1837, *Istabl-ı Âmire Müdürlüğü* was founded as a new office and its title was also distributed as a high rank title. Abdülkadir Özcan, "Istabl," in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 19 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999), 203–6; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, vol. 6 (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 1738.

²⁰² PMOA, A.MKT.DV. 80/80, 8 June 1855.

a portion of the debt and signed bills for the rest. However, it turned out at the Istanbul courts that the bills were counterfeit and that Tahir Bey had left the capital without making any further payments. In 1859-61, the center recurrently sent orders to the province that he should be made either to pay his debt or come to Istanbul for trial. Apparently, no action was taken at the local level. Eventually, in a decision of the local council on January 25, 1861, Tahir Bey was clearly protected. The local court has decided here, the council wrote, that Tahir Bey has no more debts owed to Garabet. Moreover, he had tax-farms of considerable value (3000 *kese*) under his control and, therefore, his leaving Mezre might harm tax revenues. The central government basically bought this argument and wrote that anything that could possibly reduce the tax revenues was not favorable; so, Tahir Bey should send his officially recognized agent to act on his behalf in the capital.²⁰³ We do not know whether or not Tahir Bey ever paid off his debts.

The bulk of Tahir Bey's debt, on the other hand, was owed to another banker in Istanbul, *sarraf* Goncagüloğlu Sarkis.²⁰⁴ Süleyman Pasha had owed him a total of 155,000 *kuruş*—a debt now inherited by Tahir Bey. Tahir Bey had paid 110,000 *kuruş*, so a remaining 45,000 *kuruş* was the subject of official correspondence in 1854-56. The case started with Sarkis' petition to the government requesting his money from Tahir Bey. The Council of Commerce in Istanbul decided in favor of Sarkis and sent an order to the province that the amount be secured from Tahir Bey. If money could not be collected from him, his property should be sold through the local council. And if that did not work, either, Tahir Bey should be sent to Istanbul for trial. Sarkis had accomplished all the paper work; he registered Boyacıoğlu Bağdasar, a tradesman

²⁰³ PMOA, HR.MKT. 287/74, 15 May 1859; HR.MKT. 290/56, 1 June 1859; A.MKT.UM. 372/81, 18 October 1859; HR.MKT. 327/85, 1 March 1860; HR.MKT. 361/7, 26 December 1860; HR.MKT. 361/87, 2 January 1861; HR.MKT. 382/2, 24 June 1861.

²⁰⁴ Goncagüloğlu Sarkis was in the list of the debtors to above-mentioned Mkrdich Cezayirliyan. After the confiscation of the latter's assets, the government managed to secure Sarkis' debt, 16,777 *kuruş*. Kabadayı, "Mkrdich Cezayirliyan or the Sharp Rise and Sudden Fall of an Ottoman Entrepreneur," 298.

living in Istanbul, as his guarantor since he legally promised to pay all the expenses of Tahir Bey's coming to Istanbul in case he lost the case in the commercial court.

The local council in Harput, however, protected the notable debtor once again. In its report on February 25, 1856, the council reiterated Tahir Bey's claims that the remaining 45,000 *kuruş* was only the interest on the real amount (110,000 *kuruş*), which had already been paid. Supposedly Sarkis had promised before not to claim the interest. Moreover, the report continued, Tahir Bey had taken over his father's debts even though the inherited property was not enough to pay them off; he just wished to protect his father's honor. Since then, he had been trying to pay off all the debts, but currently only a house and some land remained, the further selling of which would cause "the light of the dynasty" (*şem'-i hanedan*) to fade away, and the household to perish. If this measure were taken, none of the other debts could be paid either. Even though interest was a legitimate component of business transactions with the bankers, in such cases of victimhood it was common to forgive it. Thus, the local council transmitted Tahir Bey's proposal to pay 10,000 *kuruş* and to close the case. Sarkis insisted, though; he did not accept the proposal and stated that Tahir Bey actually owned vast properties. The Council of Commerce backed Sarkis and ordered the province accordingly. In November 1856, the last dispatch from the center to the governor of Harput questioned why no action had been taken yet.²⁰⁵ Again, we do not know what happened next.

We know, though, that Tahir Bey's sister, Ayşe, sent a petition to Istanbul in 1858 about her brother's having concealed some of the inherited land and deceived his sisters. Ayşe explained that a total of 2,706 plots of land with 4,271 *kile* seed capacity (a unit of measurement)

²⁰⁵ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 59/11, 18 September 1854; A.MKT.UM. 216/10, 18 November 1855; A.MKT.DV. 86/53, 18 November 1855; A.MKT.UM. 243/94, April-July 1856; A.MKT.UM. 247/48, 7 August 1856; A.MKT.DV. 101/9, 2 November 1856.

passed to herself, her two sisters and one brother. Tahir Bey had already cheated her somehow and taken her share in the house. But now, as if that were not enough, it turned out that he had concealed (*ketm ve ihfa*) another 1,200 plots of land with 800 *kile* seed capacity. Since this was perfidiousness, she claimed her share directly from him, but he avoided her and abstained from sharing the inheritance. Thus, Ayse applied to the government. The center's dispatch to the local governor contained only a short order that the case be handled with justice.²⁰⁶

Zouhair Ghazzal warns us about the meaning of these kinds of cases: they could be real conflicts, but they could also be “constructed (friendly) litigation,” in which the parties play a legal game, known to everyone including the judge, to register hitherto unclaimed land as private property without dealing with transaction fees and paperwork.²⁰⁷ Ayşe's case could be both. If this was a fictitious case, for example, Ayşe might lose the case, deliberately, to register the land under the name of Tahir, or conversely, Ayşe might win the case just to pass Tahir Bey's lands silently to her in order to represent Tahir to the banker as lacking property and to protect the land against confiscation. Be that as it may, the case proves that Goncagüloğlu Sarkis' claim that these Çötelizades owned vast amounts of property was indeed correct. For comparison, a look at the confiscation news in the provincial gazette of Harput in 1881-83 will give an idea: The most comprehensive public property auction due to unpaid debt befell Misakyan Kevork Ağa, whose 65 plots of land with 83 *kile* seed capacity were auctioned to compensate his debt of 270,000

²⁰⁶ PMOA, A.MKT.UM. 338/25, 19 December 1858.

²⁰⁷ Zouhair Ghazzal, *The Grammars of Adjudication: The Economics of Judicial Decision Making in Fin-de-Siecle Ottoman Beirut and Damascus* (Beirut: IFPO-Orient, 2007), 356–360.

kuruş.²⁰⁸ 1,200 plots of land with 800 *kile* seed capacity would have been an enormous amount of property.

Çötelizade Tahir Bey's case is a good example of what Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., a fierce opponent of the 'natural law' movement and a proponent of legal positivism, said in 1901: "What gives the debt validity? Nothing but the fact that the law of the place where the debtor is will make him pay. Power over the person of the debtor confers jurisdiction."²⁰⁹ Tahir Bey was living in Mezre, and the place he lived did not make him pay his debt. This should have severed the family's relations with moneylenders in general. Using hereditary privileges or extra-economic authority to circumvent business commitments was perhaps not popular among the new merchant bourgeoisie in Harput/Mezre, either. In the same five years (1855-60), Tahir Bey was also prosecuted like Hüsnü, Cemal and Osman Beys. And with the dismissal of the latter group from the local council in 1860, the traces of the Çötelizade family in the archives waned almost completely. As has already been mentioned, they were not going to disappear from town politics, but it was certain that Mezre was going to host a new bourgeoisie in the 1860s (Ch. 5). The family's ordinary practices would be labeled as corruption—a new crime of the *Tanzimat* era. No longer was using administrative power in the economic domain seen in a positive light.²¹⁰

The last Çötelizade figures who also appeared in the documents of the same years were Çötelizade Mustafa Bey and his father Çötelizade Ömer Bey (possibly, the brother of Süleyman Pasha). In 1859, Hacı İshak Agha, a notable with the same honorary title of *ıstabl-ı âmir* *müdürlüğü* as Tahir Bey, petitioned about the late Ömer Bey's corruption and asked to be

²⁰⁸ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 25, 2 April 1884. There was no considerably high inflation in this period: Şevket Pamuk, "Prices in the Ottoman Empire, 1469-1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36, no. 3 (August 1, 2004): 451–68.

²⁰⁹ Quoted from a 1901 decision of Justice Holmes in John Rogers Commons, *Legal Foundations of Capitalism* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 248.

²¹⁰ Cengiz Kırılı, "Yolsuzluğun İcadı: 1840 Ceza Kanunu, İktidar ve Bürokrasi," *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, no. 4 (2006): 45–119.

compensated for his monetary losses. His story was as follows: Ömer Bey acquired the tax-farm of Harput's tithe for the year of 1854-55. However, he was a member of the governing council at the same time and it was forbidden for him to undertake tax-farming. Therefore, he registered the contract under his four-year-old son Mehmed Bey's name and as his guarantor he put the name of his other son, Mustafa Bey. According to the contract, the tithe was to be divided among four people: two Çötelizades, the tax-farmer Asım Ağa, and Hacı İshak Ağa (the current petitioner). In practice, though, the business was taken care of by the latter two and Ömer Bey. However, the unexpected happened and Ömer Bey died. Moreover, four-year-old Mehmed Bey also died soon after. The real problem arose, though, when Mustafa Bey (the guarantor) apparently decided to take advantage of the real contract, which had not been intended to reflect the realities from the perspective of the businessmen. He claimed that Mehmed Bey did not own any property, and Ömer Bey's property was irrelevant to the case (since he was not on the contract, anyway). Although it is not clear what he did exactly, it seems like he benefitted from the fraud face-value of the contract or from kinship relations for his own advantages. Hacı İshak Ağa was incensed. In his petition, he did nothing to conceal the real nature of the contract; on the contrary, as if Ömer Bey's inability to sign himself was due to a natural disability, he said that the sons' involvement was allowed just to make things easier for Ömer Bey. But now, Mustafa Bey's behavior was nothing but stabbing him in the back.²¹¹

More than two years later, on 3 November 1861, the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*) in Istanbul evaluated the case. Now it was clearer that Mustafa Bey wanted to get the share of the deceased party (his brother) from Hacı İshak Ağa by launching an inheritance trial. That was the moment when the latter decided to expose the

²¹¹ PMOA, A.MKT.DV. 143/62, 27 September 1859.

original fraud in the contract and demanded even that Mustafa Bey's share in goods be transferred to the state treasury. The Supreme Council refused the last demand on the ground that the treasury was not able to sell goods. As to the main problem, the Council only ordered the local governor Veysî Pasha that each share should be restored to its owner and the strife among the partners should be ended.²¹² The Council was conspicuously silent about the fraudulent contract.

As in the previous cases, the death of business partners always frustrated relations based on long-term personal experience and trust. It is obvious that Hacı İshak Ağa trusted Çötelizade Ömer Bey when the latter put his children's names in the contract. But with his death, the normally insignificant paper made a new subject emerge: Mustafa Bey. He ruined the business relation based on trust and tried to take advantage of the contract. This was not the only case of Mustafa Bey doing that. The tax-farm of Malatya's tithe for the year of 1855-56 was assigned to Arslanoğlu Krikor. He administered the job for four months, but then Çötelizade Mustafa Bey raised the price and acquired the tax-farm under the name of his servant Memo. Apparently, Mustafa Bey never paid Krikor's share for the first four months, and Krikor applied to the government. In his later petition, he said that Mustafa Bey had in fact been brought to trial at the Council of Financial Accounting (*Meclis-i Muhasebe-i Maliye*) in Istanbul, but he avoided all accusations by saying that the tithe was on Memo not on him, and freely returned to the province. Krikor's last request in May 1860 was that Memo be brought to Istanbul, to the court.²¹³

²¹² PMOA, A.MKT.MVL. 134/96, 5 November 1861; BEO.VGG.d. 170, entry #178, 18 November 1861.

²¹³ PMOA, A.MKT.DV. 159/92, 31 May 1860.

Conclusion

Edmund Leach was perhaps the first anthropologist who pointed out that “the feeling of indebtedness” makes a relationship “persisting.” While elaborating on Marcel Mauss’ examination of gift exchange, Leach concluded: “From the actor’s point of view, the great majority of gift-giving transactions are partial repayments of debt. I would emphasize the word partial. In any context, if a debt is ever fully paid off then the relationship between debtor and creditor ceases to exist.”²¹⁴ The idea that debt is the persisting medium of social relations and that paying off the debt means ending the relationship (not creating it) has been further dwelled on by other scholars, too.²¹⁵ In this chapter, the Çötelizades’ debt cases are interpreted as attempts to end the relationship between a local dynastic family and the bankers of the imperial center. The decease of the Pasha generation in the family reduced its political power, through which outstanding credits had been secured. The next generation was never expected to rise to the highest ranks again because the Reform Age was promoting centralized bureaucracy (not decentralization through distributing titles). The sons inherited a network of relations they could not perpetuate. The new bourgeoisie (bankers and tradesmen) thus expelled them from these networks via debt cases.

The Çötelizades’ attempts to make their subservient agents sign the contracts was a way of sneaking into the realm they were recently excluded from. No longer could they be a council member and a tax-farmer at the same time. The bourgeoisie basically wanted the landed gentry to limit its activity to land issues and be deprived of political privileges based on dynastic claims.

²¹⁴ Quoted in Stanley J. Tambiah, *Edmund Leach: An Anthropological Life* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 358.

²¹⁵ Most notably by Bourdieu. Graeber’s recent work on debt is a stimulating attempt to generalize the same idea of debt as the core of social relations to the history of the last five millennia. David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (New York: Melville House, 2011).

The family's role of mediation between the locality and the imperial center was also taken over by the bankers and tradesmen. Instead, the Çötelizades turned into the primary mediator between the town and its provincial hinterland (the local side of the tripartite structure). The more they became a *regional* mediator, the less they appeared in the central state archives, where almost no reference to the family exists between the 1860s and the end of the century.

In the 1890s, the above-mentioned brigadier Çötelizade Osman Bey, then in his eighties, filed three petitions about the withdrawal of the guardianship of Deveboynu Pass from his tutelage.²¹⁶ The rhetoric of his 1896 petition is significant because Osman Bey framed it as a testimony of the glorified genealogy and history of his family. This first self-promoting text was an index of two phenomena: First, until this petition, the Çötelizade family's power in the province had not been seriously challenged in the nineteenth century. According to Osman Bey, Deveboynu Pass had been under the family's authority without interruption since 1831 when it was first assigned to Çötelizade İbrahim Pasha (the first Pasha of the family). Apparently, no need for petitions or protests about the family's holdings had emerged during the previous decades.²¹⁷ Second, the *town* of Harput/Mezre matured as a middle node between rural society and the imperial center. The town had short-distance relations to both ends via different groups of people who lived together in the same town. The Çötelizades were the connector between the town and the hinterland; therefore, they were invisible from the central state's point of view (the archives). However, whenever a problem occurred, as in the case of Deveboynu Pass, or

²¹⁶ For Osman Bey's three petitions and other correspondences about the Deveboynu pass between 1892 and 1897, see PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 722/6, 17 September 1896. About his death, see BEO. 1310/98178, 16 May 1899.

²¹⁷ In 1891, Osman Bey wrote another interesting petition which was in effect a conveyance for the Çötelizade mansion that was still in use by the government; he and his sister Habibe donated the mansion to the state. In his cover letter, the Governor invited the central bureaucracy in Istanbul to appreciate this goodwill gesture of Osman Bey and to grant him with imperial gift. The Governor added that the family now did not have its once-proud wealth and power. As a result, Osman Bey was granted 250 *lira* as an imperial gift of the sultan. PMOA, İ.MMS. 125/5374, 15 October 1891.

whenever we have direct access to town life (see Ch. 5), the Çötelizades appeared as if (more correctly, because) they were never marginalized. After all, from the 1870s to 1930s, a Çötelizade was always sent to the imperial/national parliament as the representative of the province.

In the beginning of this chapter I asked whether the Çötelizades declined or rose as a family after the 1830s. The question is misleading not because it was too simple (which is always helpful) but because binary opposition does not fit into the tripartite perspective adopted in this dissertation. The Çötelizades declined as fixers of town-center relations but preserved their primary role (maybe even raised their influence) in hinterland-town relations. What initially looks like rises and falls to the historian's eye is actually an illusion due to the nature of the state archives. The real transformation behind the new division of labor between the Çötelizades and the bourgeoisie was the rise of the provincial town that disrupted the hitherto continuous connection from the hinterland to the center. In the old times, dynastic families (*ayan*) were empire-wide mediators: their one arm reached the hinterland and the other arm was stretched to the imperial capital. Now, there are two distinct mediator groups, both living in the town. The town is not a mediator in-between anymore, but it brings two poles together in one place. The town is not half-society/half-culture, as Redfield once hypothesized; it is both society and culture (both rural and urban). The town is not a site of curtailment; it is a site of amplification.

Part II: Duality in the City

Part II investigates the short-distance relations between towns in close proximity. Its unit of analysis is towns that have moved to a nearby place in recent history. During the decades-long process of transition from the old location to the new one, the town lives in both locations simultaneously. This dual-city phase provides the opportunity for a historical ethnography of proximity and duality. Chapter 1 gives an overview of moving towns and examines two cases from the Harput region: the moves of Malatya and of Arapgir. Chapter 2 is a detailed analysis of Harput-Mezre duality. It tells the story of Mezre's becoming a proper town between the 1860s and 1890s. Its suburban characteristics, the function of the new municipality, and the officialization of Mezre as the provincial capital town are explained. Both chapters challenge the idea that duality is a negative attribute imposed from outside and analyze instead the local sources of duality in social space.

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Chapter 4: Relocation of Towns

The previous chapters on the emergence of Mezre deliberately obfuscated the fact that Mezre has never been considered a legitimate unit of analysis for academic study. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the ancient city of Harput, the official capital of Harput Province, lay at the summit of a hill, commanding from above a vast plain of villages and small towns. Harput remained one of the larger and more important cities of the Ottoman East until the early twentieth century when the city's population moved down to the plains and fed today's Elazığ City a few miles away from the old town. As will be explained in the last chapter (Ch. 12), Harput was abandoned in the 1930s-40s and turned into a small district of Elazığ. In the nineteenth century, on the other hand, the place where Elazığ was to be built—namely, Mezre—was a small district of Harput. In sum, what happened was the shift of the city center and the simultaneous renaming of the city. Harput became Elazığ, and the city moved from the hill to the plains.

Why would one focus on Mezre, then? The shifting of a city-center is not a rare phenomenon in world history. In Istanbul, for example, the area called Pera was, until the end of the nineteenth century, a marginal elite suburb of the city proper, whereas today the Pera area is the center of the city and the old city proper is generally called the 'old' or 'historic' part of the city. But we never treat Constantinople, Pera and Istanbul as different entities. After all, there is only one city, whatever it was named in different periods, and it is understandable that its center shifted over time from one part to another. For the same reason, the existing accounts of the history of Harput and Elazığ differentiate these place-names only according to time period: the city is officially named Harput in the past and Elazığ in the future, but, at the end of the day,

there is only one city. Relations between Manhattan and Brooklyn might be a legitimate subject, but would it not sound weird if one claimed to study the relations between New York and Brooklyn (unless he is speaking metonymically)?

In this Part, I will analyze the hidden aspect of the place-shifts: the *process* of the shift. The idea of ‘shift’ generally imposes temporal irreversibility (progress) onto the analysis and conceals the synchronic spatial relations at any given moment. The shift from Harput to Elazığ narrated as a diachronic and irreversible event tends to dismiss the crucial question of any diachronic event: what would we see if we could take a picture of the area in the middle of the not-yet-completed process? If people were not teleported in a second, there needs to be a transitory period when neither Harput nor Elazığ were coherent units. And if this period lasted for a century, as I will show in the next chapter, then it needs a deeper analysis than being labeled simply as transitory. Following Saussure and Turner (see the Introduction), I will treat the so-called transitory moments as sites coherent enough to allow synchronic analysis. Accordingly, Chapter 5 will be devoted to the analysis of Harput-Mezre relations between the 1860s and 1890s—a period well after Mezre was established as a hamlet but well before Elazığ was made a city. In the present short chapter, on the other hand, I will explain two other exemplary cases from the Harput region, namely Arapgir and Malatya, in order to introduce my overall argument that the hidden process behind the shifting towns was that of suburbanization, namely the spatial expression of the cultural differentiation of a newly rising bourgeois middle-classes.

Towns on the Move

It is quite surprising to see that many Anatolian towns have their ‘old town’ not inside the borders of the current city proper but a few miles outside of the city. This means that these towns

moved at some point in history from one location to another close-by one. Ottoman and Turkish historiographies have never paid attention to these dis- and re-locations of towns, seemingly because the shifts have been seen as *natural* in both senses of the term: First, it is historically inevitable that medieval upper-towns moved down to the plains as the need for security from unruly attacks vanished with the emergence of territorial modern states. When freed from oppression, it was natural for the townsmen to move to new places easier to reach and more suitable for urban growth. Second, towns moved to other locations due to natural events. An earthquake or a great fire might demolish the town, or trade routes might change and abandon the town's location. Since all these happen *somehow*, since the movement of towns is a natural (instead of a social) event, they have been taken as independent variables in the real world of social relations.

The truth is that moving a city is never experienced by its inhabitants as a natural event. Never do the people move together, at the same time, without changing anything in the spatio-social structure of the city. Opening a new space for habitation is always steered by the social-cultural relations dominant at that time in that place. Moreover, the shift of a town from one place to another never happens overnight; it always involves long periods of duality. The Malatya example (below) will prove that even the seemingly fastest transition actually took decades, and for the people experiencing the process, it was not necessarily a transition to anything pre-determined. Thus, in my analysis of Anatolian towns on the move in the Harput region, I will de-naturalize the shifts by focusing on the periods of dual existence of the old and new towns.

The movement of towns in Anatolia as a general topic has been the subject of only one classificatory article, which was published in 1977. In this work, Tuncel confined himself to

classifying these towns according to the causes of the move: earthquake, military needs, fire, economic causes, etc.²¹⁸ A few more recent works followed the same classification and focused on an example of one type of moving.²¹⁹ From the 1980s on, the Turkish government undertook an unprecedented spatial intervention in south-eastern Anatolia by constructing massive dams in the Euphrates basin (the Southeastern Anatolia Project - GAP). And a new type of moving city emerged: those moved to escape the rising waters. As a result, the drowned towns made some scholars pay attention to the movement of cities.²²⁰ Nevertheless, the works on twentieth-century movement of cities in Anatolia remained very limited overall. Moreover, they only focused on the topographical choices and the planning features of the new town. The moving process, the temporary period of duality, and the experience of the move from the locals' point of view are generally missing in these works of traditional geography. The works on the recent moves of the last decades have an important advantage over the historical studies since they have access to the details of the process and to the inhabitants' first-hand experience. Nevertheless, they also tend to treat the moving process itself as an externality which goes to the 'encountered problems' section of the reports.

A good example is Halfeti—a town that was left under the water of Birecik Dam, built on the Euphrates around the year 2000. It was not the first town that had to move because of GAP dams, so the inhabitants were aware of their fate. They publicly discussed what they could do in order to avoid the problems faced by other towns that were unprepared when they had to escape the dam water in the early 1990s. As a result, it was officially determined to move the town to

²¹⁸ Metin Tuncel, "Türkiye'de Yer Değiştiren Şehirler Hakkında Bir İlk Not," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Coğrafya Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no. 20–21 (1977): 119–28.

²¹⁹ As an example, see Ali Yılmaz, Kemalettin Şahin, and M. Hazım Şahin, "Depreme Bağlı Yeri Değiştirilen Bir Şehir: Erbaa, Tokat," *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 6, no. 24 (2013): 414–25.

²²⁰ As an example, see Muzaffer Bakırcı, "Türkiye'de Baraj Yapımı Nedeniyle Yer Değiştiren Bir Şehir 'Halfeti,'" *Coğrafya Dergisi*, no. 10 (2002): 55–78.

Karaotlak village 8 km to the east. In contrast to old Halfeti, which was naturally bounded by the river below and mountains above, the New Halfeti was on a plateau with vast land. With government initiative, 220 single-storey houses with gardens were built for half of Halfeti's population—the half whose houses were affected by the dam water. Hence everything looked good from bird's-eye view. Future generations will perhaps know the new place as Halfeti and today's Halfeti as Old Halfeti.

In reality, the process had some intricacies. The upper part of the old hillside city was not directly affected by the water; thus, half of the city residents were not eligible for the compensation money given by the government. Neither were they provided with new houses in the new city. So they stayed in the old city. Frustrated with the process, these residents of the upper town demanded that at least the government offices stay in the old city so that life would continue here. The new towns' residents, on the other hand, wanted to host the local government in order to solve the administrative problems of the new town and to receive municipal services. Moreover, they complained about the lack of new economic opportunities for many of those who had to leave their agricultural lands under water. As a result, people of both places now express anxiety due to the incalculability of their future. It is not a surprise that many moved out to other cities in the 1990s when they first heard about the dam project.²²¹

The study on Halfeti does not go into the details of the social structure of the town, of the socio-economic characteristics of the people who stayed and the people who moved out, of the difference between living in the old town's dense neighborhoods and living in the new town's suburban-style housing pattern, etc. Moreover, the author believes that eventually the new town's location is advantageous thanks to its unbounded space and its easier access to

²²¹ Ibid.

transportation networks. He implies that the old town's development was *already* limited and it had to move *anyway* for the sake of modern life styles. I believe that this teleological view is dominant in works about moving cities. Even the contrary ethnographic details do not shake the common view; they approach the 'problems' section as things to be solved on the one-way street to the new city.

The moving towns and the progressivist and teleological narratives about them are not peculiar to a particular area or period. In fact, the most recent example is the case of Kiruna in Sweden. This small mining town in the northern (arctic) part of the country is today threatened by the mining business itself: if the extraction continues deeper under the town, the town will collapse. Therefore, the municipality and the mining company proposed to move the town to a site a few miles away, bringing about a radical plan to construct a living space from scratch for twenty thousand people. Beautiful graphic images of the future town on the internet make the project even more exciting and heroic (as in video games) for general public.²²² Nilsson's ethnographic study, however, has called attention to the narrative strategies in the media coverage that represented the relocation of Kiruna as "irreversible," with "no alternatives," and "unavoidable." Moreover, this was an opportunity because "an ideal and utopian society" was promised by the planners of the new town.²²³ In reality, the inhabitants have many concerns: who is going to pay for the new houses? Will they receive due compensation money/share according to their properties' value in the current town? How is such a long process going to be managed?

Kiruna's move will occur, according to the official plans, over fifty to one hundred years. My question in this chapter is: how is the spatio-cultural experience affected during these so-

²²² <http://nextcity.org/features/view/the-city-that-is-moving-9-kilometers-down-the-road>.

²²³ Bo Nilsson, "Ideology, Environment and Forced Relocation: Kiruna - a Town on the Move," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 17, no. 4 (October 1, 2010): 433-42.

called transitory periods that are too long to be really transitory? What does it mean to have some people gone to the new place, but some left in the old one? In what ways does this dual life in proximity work for the inhabitants? The towns on the move beg special analysis because the move is always partial, always incomplete; it always involves exceptional spaces of ruins; it always creates a duality of space and lives; it always produces temporariness as the structure of public feelings, but without being temporary in the life span of many human beings. The recent examples of Halfeti and Kiruna show that even when we have better access to human experience, the *process* of the move tends to be excluded from public discussion. In the examples from the nineteenth century we have only some minute data to reconstruct the processes but still, I argue, significant evidence exists to demonstrate the duality that reigned in the long transitory periods.

The Idea of Duality in the Town

The nineteenth century witnessed the blossoming of a trade bourgeoisie all over the empire including the hinterland. But in some exceptional cases— most notably in the port cities— the rising bourgeoisie transformed the city space strikingly. In eighteenth-century Istanbul, the suburban kiosks and the royal gardens on both sides of the Bosphorus lost their sixteenth-century elite character and turned into public places for the new metropolitan middle classes.²²⁴ In the second half of the nineteenth century, the collaboration of the bourgeoisie with the state— aided by the great fires— initiated extensive urban transformation in the center of the capital.²²⁵ In the same decades, all port cities of the empire lived through similar processes of building boom,

²²⁴ Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Suburban Landscape of Sixteenth-Century Istanbul as a Mirror of Classical Ottoman Garden Culture,” in *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires: Theory and Design*, ed. Attilio Petruccioli (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 32–71; Shirine Hamadeh, “Public Spaces and the Garden Culture of Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century,” in *The Early Modern Ottomans - Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 277–312.

²²⁵ Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 49–81.

urban regeneration and gentrification in their urban cores.²²⁶ The inner cities, however, as less fortunate subjects of urban history, did not possess the coercive power of state institutions to back up bourgeois desires. Arguably the most interesting aspect of provincial life has been the pairing of relatively easy and fast circulation of cultural ideas with the lack of infrastructural capacity to realize them in the same way as in the nodal cities of the trade networks. The result, I propose, is that these cities go through a typical suburbanization process, as opposed to the process of urban regeneration seen in the capital-intensive cities.²²⁷ Moreover, I will argue that suburbanization in the small towns in the Harput area created dual towns rather than the conventional center-suburb constellation. I will call this phenomenon urban duality and use the concept to analyze the mutuality between two separate but related entities.²²⁸

A counter example will best illustrate the peculiarity of urban duality: the “Gardens” district of the city of Van. The extraordinary beauty of the Gardens district, as described by its nineteenth-century visitors, had exactly the same features as the garden-towns in the Harput area.²²⁹ Nevertheless, the *relationship* between the two parts of Van was one of dense interaction

²²⁶ For Salonica, Izmir and Beirut, see respectively Sotirios Dimitriadis, “Transforming a Late-Ottoman Port-City: Salonica, 1876-1912,” in *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History*, ed. Pascal W. Firges et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 207–21; Sibel Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840-1880* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

²²⁷ Robert Fishman’s classic work on the history of suburbanization shows that the bourgeoisie’s spatial choices are dependent on the degree of the state’s involvement in realizing the desired way of life. In Paris, as in Istanbul, the center of the capital was rebuilt thanks to great coercive implementations by the government; however, in London, the new middle classes resorted to places outside of the city center and set about suburbanization. Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

²²⁸ In the academic works on urban transformation, concepts like duality and separation are mainly used as signifiers of negative judgments on what was going on in the urban space. For a recent example, see Tolga Ünlü, “Transformation of a Mediterranean Port City into a ‘City of Clutter’: Dualities in the Urban Landscape – The Case of Mersin,” *Cities* 30 (2013): 175–85. I prefer to use the concept of duality as an analytical tool.

²²⁹ For contemporary descriptions, see H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia, Travels and Studies*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901), 80–83; Armand Schweiger-Lerchenfeld, *Armenien: Ein Bild Seiner Natur Und Seiner Bewohner* (Jena: Hermann Costenoble, 1878), 100. For a scholarly article, see Anahide Ter Minassian, “The City of Van at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” in *Armenian Van/Vasporakan*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2000), 171–94. See also Yektan Türkyılmaz, “Rethinking Genocide: Violence and Victimhood in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1915” (PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 2011), 222.

rather than one of duality in proximity. Lynch observed that Gardens' relation to the city of Van was reminiscent of the West End's to London's center, rather than that of a real suburb (perhaps like Clapham), because the former had a dense daily interaction, as a gentrified highbrow shopping neighborhood, whereas the latter was a spatially separate entity.²³⁰ Missionary Raynolds confirmed this when he wrote in 1871 that "it is here [in Gardens] that much of the people reside, the men going to the city for their business."²³¹ Two decades later, in 1890, another missionary, O. P. Allen, wrote of the Gardens: "Most of the business is now done in the city the people going in the morning & returning at evening."²³² In the examples below, however, spatial separation will not comprise a dense, daily come-and-go between two parts, nor will any part be the "center" vis-à-vis the other. Thus, this study is also a call for new research on the different *types* of spatial distinction based on suburbanization, of which one type, I will suggest, is urban duality.

Arapgir: Bourgeois Suburbanization

Arapgir is an old town, perhaps around three millennia old. In the late nineteenth century, it was one of the wealthiest towns in the vicinity of Harput; its empire-wide renowned textile industry, on the one hand, and its remittance economy based on its high number of labor migrants, on the other, had turned the city into a local center of financial capital.²³³ However, this economic development which seems to belong to one single place conceals the fact that this wealthy Arapgir was a completely new town that only emerged towards the end of the eighteenth

²³⁰ For suburbanization in London, see Chapters 1 and 2 in Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, 18–72.

²³¹ Mr. Raynolds' letter to Rev. Clark, Harpoot, 5 October 1871, the archives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM), Reel 678.

²³² Rev. O. P. Allen's letter to Mr. Smith, Van, 20 October 1890, ABCFM, Reel 695.

²³³ Vural Genç, "Mamasoğulları: An Armenian Family of Investors in the 19th Century in Arapgir" (Paper, 47th Annual Meeting of the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA), New Orleans, LA, October 10, 2013); Arsen Yarman, ed., *Palu - Harput 1878: Çarsancak, Çemişgezek, Çapakçur, Erzincan, Hizan ve Civar Bölgeler*, vol. 2 (İstanbul: Derlem Yayınları, 2010), 315.

century as New Arapgir. Its old town was a fortress city in a valley, whereas the new location was on the plains 5-6 kilometers east of the valley. The Provincial Yearbooks (*Salname*) tell us that the move from the old to the new town happened around 1765 and from then on the old city was abandoned to ruin. Nevertheless, the move did not occur overnight, nor was it completed in a few decades. In the 1830s—sixty years after the alleged move, that is—half of its population was still living in the old town. Even in 1892, the Yearbooks were still talking about the decreasing population in the old place. In other words, the information which is normally interpreted as showing the decline of the old town is, in fact, conspicuously telling us that in 127 years no complete move was accomplished. Even today, the most populous three neighborhoods of the old town contain 9% of the entire population.²³⁴ If the shift was inevitable, why did it work so sporadically?

The available data can be interpreted as showing a gradual progress only if three dots in the graphic of the last 250 years are connected with one diagonal line. I rather contend that the mass movement to the new town occurred only in exceptional periods, whereas for decades the two places lived side-by-side as dual towns. And we have no evidence to suppose that the duality was experienced by townsmen as a temporary step to final moving. Karakaş's work on aggregate census records of Arapgir in the 1830s argued that the proportion of people who were "away" (*mahall-i aher*) was higher in the old town compared to the new town. As a conclusion, he surmised that people were trying to leave the limited life of the old town. This is an excellent example of the blinding power of teleological explanations because his own data in fact shows that the people "away" were *equally* distributed to the old and new towns. The argument in favor

²³⁴ The information is compiled from the following two articles: Erdal Karakaş, "Arapkir'in Kuruluşu ve Gelişmesi," *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 8, no. 1 (1996): 175–90; Ahmet Aksın and Erdal Karakaş, "Nüfus İcmal Defterine Göre 19. Yüzyılda Arabgir," *Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi (OTAM)*, no. 13 (2002): 91–125.

of the limitedness of the old town is based on a completely wrong mathematical formula to calculate the rate of migration.²³⁵ When correctly analyzed, his own data rather shows that 50% of the population lived in one part of the city *and* 50% of the absent people were from, again, one part of the city. Hence, there was a perfect equilibrium.

According to Nancy Munn, the physical features and aesthetic qualities of a place constitute an important pillar of “a place’s mode of existence” and its change in time.²³⁶ Karakaş and Aksin’s study based on census records of Arapkir shows the contrast between the few but large neighborhoods of the old town and the many but small and scattered neighborhoods of the new place in the 1830s, when the population was equally shared between the two towns.²³⁷ The density of the old town’s built environment fits the classic characteristics of all old towns in Anatolia, whereas the new town’s satellite form evokes Los Angeles’ (sub)urban form in the modern era. More details about the physical features of the new town come from Armenian sources written in the early twentieth century.

S. A. Bakhtikian’s work *Arapgir and Its Surrounding Villages: A Concise Historical-Ethnographical Treatise*, published in 1934, is one valuable source on the details of the town’s move. The author frames the initial move as an outcome of the malicious behaviors of incoming Turks against Armenians so that the latter, the original inhabitants, had to resort to the area of their gardens and vineyards, where New Arapgir lies today. By associating the coming of Turks to Arapgir with the invasion of Anatolia by Turks (11th-12th centuries), he conflates many

²³⁵ He calculated immigrants’ percentages for each neighborhood by dividing the number of missing people in that neighborhood by the total missing people. As a result, the old town with three big neighborhoods appears with high percentages in comparison to the new city with many small neighborhoods. Of course, he needed to divide the number of missing people in a neighborhood by the total population of that same neighborhood to get to any meaningful number, which he did not.

²³⁶ Nancy D. Munn, “The Decline and Fall of Richmond Hill: Commodification and Place-Change in Late 18th–early 19th Century New York,” *Anthropological Theory* 13, no. 1–2 (2013): 137–68.

²³⁷ Aksin and Karakaş, “Nüfus İcmal Defterine Göre 19. Yüzyılda Arabgir.”

centuries in his narrative, reducing the source's credibility. Who came first to Anatolia a millennium ago was of course, a political question, but nonetheless the statements about Armenians' having moved first to the new city at the turn of the nineteenth century and having occupied the central parts of the city cannot be dismissed as arbitrary instantiations of myth-making. Contrary examples could also be subsumed by the same myth, quite easily. So far two points in Bakhtikian's story resonate with additional data: it was the Armenians who first moved to the new town, and the new place was a garden and vineyard district. He also tells us that there was a monastery in this place, which came to be used as a church in the later decades—a good reason to make the place a destination for Armenians in the first place.²³⁸

The author continues that the new place was composed of two parts divided by a river. The dwellings were built first at the riverbank and then gradually extended towards the upper parts of both hillsides, ending up resembling the steps of an amphitheater. Turks came to the new place later and built their homes at the periphery since the center had already been occupied by the Armenians. Furthermore, the newly built town had different spatial characteristics compared to the old Arapgir. The above-discussed study based on census records showed the contrast between few but large neighborhoods of the old town and many but small and scattered neighborhoods of the new place in the 1830s. Bakhtikian seems to be referring to the same spatial organization when he writes that Armenians had many schools because their neighborhoods were far from each other.²³⁹

Another first-hand testimony from the turn of the century, Meliq Davit-Bek's *Arapkir's Dialectic*, published in Vienna in 1919, confirms these features: the author wrote in around the

²³⁸ Sargis A. Bakhtikian, *Arapkir yev shrdjakay giughery: patmakan-azgagrakan hamarot tesutiun* (Beirut: Tparan Vahagn, 1934), 16–17.

²³⁹ It seems that Bakhtikian had taken this observation from Srvandztiants' work of 1884, see Yarman, *Palu - Harput 1878*, 2:311.

year 1900 that the city (New Arapkir) had thirty to thirty-five thousand inhabitants, but it “looked like” a city of one hundred thousand people, because all the houses were built in gardens. He further emphasized that there were very few houses that did not have a garden in their front or backyard, or at their sides. These gardens could be quite spacious. Moreover, the new town had many steep streets because it was placed in a valley, but, more notably, it had quite a few wide and straight streets, too.²⁴⁰ These features conspicuously contradict the almost universal physical features of the old towns: narrow, snaking streets, stacked houses without any space in between, dense neighborhoods, and thus, contracted urban space. Old towns always look smaller than they are, not bigger. The new place, however, was composed of gardens and vineyards, and its neighborhoods were smaller in size, greater in number, and further from each other than those of the old town.

Aesthetically positive qualities in the contemporary commentaries on the new towns (similar to today’s treatment of the old towns), like ‘beautiful,’ are what Munn called “meta-aesthetic” and do not tell us much about the physical setting. As we will see in Garabed Penneyan’s comments on New Malatia below, the same features (houses with gardens) could be evaluated negatively (difficulty of walking through the town) by another contemporary. Here, I rather attempt to isolate the physical features of the places from their accompanying qualities and from the social values attached to them, in order to compare seemingly different processes in different places and in order to demonstrate the historical relation between those features and their qualities.

²⁴⁰ Meliq S. Davit-Bek, *Arabkiri gavarabarbarby: dzaynabanakan yev qerakanakan usumnasirutiu* (Vienna: Mkhitarian Tparan, 1919), 1–10.

In addition to a place's physical features and aesthetic qualities, Munn suggested that its identity is an important pillar of the place's mode of existence.²⁴¹ The information about the identity of the new town is little and indirect. The town was a residential compound for the Armenians in the nineteenth century, who, not coincidentally, were the rising element in the trade bourgeoisie at that time. Moreover, we are told that quite conspicuous wealth was in the hands of Armenians. Bakhtikian's account of the Armenian massacres in 1894-96 gives us further information to capture the new town's identity: In 1896, the city fell to ruin (*averag*); the big mansions of the rich did not exist anymore; the brides and the daughters at home did not fill gunnysacks with gold coins anymore; all wealth was lost either to fires or to the Turks.²⁴² When the indices of social life are stripped of value judgments, we reach the conclusion that the identity of the new place, as it is "integral to its inhabitants' own identities" according to Munn, consisted of relatively new social signs: monetary wealth (as opposed to land ownership) and the urban built environment as an index of richness (the mansions). The combination of these two social signs surprised Srvandztiants in the early 1880s when he was hosted in the ostentatious mansion of Simon Agha, who, Srvandztiants criticized, had spent his entire fortune on this house, to no avail.²⁴³

Based on limited evidence on the material features and identity characteristics gathered from contemporary sources, I hypothesize that the new Arapkir emerged as part of the suburbanization process, a cultural way of commanding the space by the rising bourgeoisie in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the Ottoman East. Although it is impossible to secure a direct causal link, high rates of out-migration from Arapgir (as well as from the neighboring

²⁴¹ Munn, "The Decline and Fall of Richmond Hill."

²⁴² Bakhtikian, *Arabkir yev shrdjakay giughery*, 24-25.

²⁴³ Yarman, *Palu - Harput 1878*, 2:309.

town of Eğin) might have contributed to the suburban character of the new town. According to Karakaş' data, the aggregate proportion of people registered as 'away' is striking: 981 out of 4169 registered Muslim men. Moreover, 720 of them were categorized as able men, namely as proper candidates for the army. It is possible that some were deliberately hidden, since the purpose of the census was conscription. But still, it is certain that Arapgir had many of its men working in other places, perhaps as seasonal workers or as tradesmen. Thus, it seems that Arapgir's (and Eğin's) urban economies were, like the developing countries' today, dependent on remittances coming from outside/abroad. The entry of money coming from other places generally creates a kind of wealth unaccustomed for the local economy. As we see in similar cases today, the incoming money might have been spent mostly on consumption items (clothes, etc.) and on the material environment (houses, etc.). For example, it has been shown that in today's Albania one of every four citizens lives abroad but still many of them build/refurbish a house in Albania; they have a "proxy presence" in their home towns.²⁴⁴ These ideas fit to historical records of Arapgir's extraordinarily beautiful and rich houses along with their notably high absentee population. Moreover, the new location of Arapgir might have been the place where the incoming money was spent on the built environment, where distinction via space was created.

In this section, I have aimed to demonstrate the following points. First, Arapgir's relocation in a close-by place was not simply a place-change, a change only in the physical background. Instead, the new place had a different social world based on ethno-religious and class differences. Second, the move from one place to the other involved a decades-long (perhaps even century-long) period during which the two places existed side by side. This dual existence

²⁴⁴ Dimitris Dalakoglou, "Migrating-Remitting-'building'-Dwelling: House-Making as 'proxy' Presence in Postsocialist Albania," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 16, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 761–77.

raises the question of why and how such a spatial separation took place in the first place. Third, even though we do not have direct evidence about the move, the descriptions of the new town's physical characteristics signal the features of a garden-town. Combined with the social characteristics in the available accounts, I propose that the new Arapgir might have functioned as a bourgeois suburb during the period of duality. This proposal shall be evaluated in light of the data about Malatia in the next section and Harput/Mezre in the next chapter. When taken together, the scattered information related to these three cases makes a strong case in favor of the suburbanization argument.

Malatia: The State Comes into Play

At the turn of the century, Malatya was the biggest town in the vicinity of Harput—so much so that in 1909-10 its townsmen struggled hard to dethrone Mezre as the provincial capital or, failing that, to have Malatya set apart as a full-fledged province unto itself.²⁴⁵ The rebellion seems to have worked in the long run, as Malatya became an independent province in the Republican period (1924) and developed fast enough from the 1940s onward to instill envy (which persists to this day) in the inhabitants of Mezre. This rival of Harput/Mezre, however, did not exist as an urban residence before the 1840s. As explained in Chapter 1, the imperial army under the command of Hafız Pasha had moved from Mezre to the Malatya plain in the summer of 1838 and invaded the city proper in the beginning of the winter, forcing the inhabitants to stay in their summer dwellings in Aspuzu. After the Nisib defeat in the summer of 1839, the army left the city, but in a ruinous condition. The inhabitants never moved back; Aspuzu became their new residence and Malatya was left a ruin. Today, what we call Malatya is located in Aspuzu, and the

²⁴⁵ Adnan Işık, *Malatya 1830-1919: Adıyaman (Hisn-ı Mansur), Akçadağ, Arabkir, Besni, Darende, Doğanşehir, Eskimalatya (Battalgazi), Hekimhan, Kahta, Pütürge, Yeşilyurt* (İstanbul: Kurtiş Matbaacılık, 1998), 660–689. The document the author refers to is PMOA, DH. MUİ. 64-2/4, 1909-1910.

Old Malatya assumed a new name, Battalgazi, in the Republican period and was eventually made a small district of greater Malatya.²⁴⁶

If Malatia's spatial shift was extremely fast (one-two years) and if it happened under armed compulsion, why would I want to delve into her story in order to analyze dual-cities (where the shift should be slow) and suburbanization (where the move should occur voluntarily)? The answer lies in the historical details that (as in Arapgir's case) challenge this story of Malatya's supposedly overnight move. Baptistin Poujoulat's *Voyage dans l'Asie Mineure, en Mésopotamie, à Palmyre, en Syrie, en Palestine et en Égypte* (1840), for example, not only gives us beautiful descriptions of New Malatia, but also describes the new town *before* the supposedly compulsory move in the summer of 1838.²⁴⁷ On 22 August 1837, Poujoulat wrote from Malatya that, "The Ottomans gradually abandoned Mélitène [the ancient name of Old Malatia] to settle amidst extensive gardens two hours south of Old Malatia." (327) Even though it was summer when he wrote these lines, it is clear that Poujoulat was not talking about temporary summer residence. Moreover, his subsequent descriptions of the new place and the old town suggest that permanent residence in and development of the new town had already begun well before the army came.

New Malatya was "a beautiful oasis located in the middle of a huge and horrible desert" (331), he wrote. All sorts of fruit trees decorated this garden town, this "earthly paradise," with colors and freshness. The urban center of New Malatya, too, did not "look like a city, but rather a

²⁴⁶ The same story can be found in any source about Malatya, but the best first-hand account is Helmuth von Moltke's letters from Harput and Malatya in 1838-39, which are available in German and in Turkish. Helmuth von Moltke, *Briefe über Zustände und Begebenheiten in der Türkei aus den Jahren 1835 bis 1839* (Berlin: Posen und Brombert, 1841); Helmuth von Moltke, *Moltke'nin Türkiye Mektupları*, trans. Hayrullah Örs, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1995).

²⁴⁷ M. Baptistin Poujoulat, *Voyage dans l'Asie Mineure, en Mésopotamie, à Palmyre, en Syrie, en Palestine et en Égypte* (Paris: Ducollet, 1840), 320-347; for the Turkish translations of some passages, see Işık, *Malatya 1830-1919*, 38-41.

multitude of dispersed villas” (333); one had to pay attention and look for them in order to see the houses embedded in the forest of trees. All houses were of a single storey, each surrounded by a low wall. Another striking feature of the new town was the lack of striking buildings. Public buildings, like churches or public baths, had not been built in a more robust fashion than the residential houses, as it was normally the case. The old town, on the other hand, “was completely ruined” (326); the city walls were collapsing. Only around 50 Turkish families were left in this old town, whereas 15,000 Turks and 5,000 Armenians resided in the new city, Poujoulat estimated.

The depiction of the new town reflects certain characteristics of garden-cities, as in New Arapgir. New Malatia did not *look like* a normal city, either. And Poujoulat’s portrayal testifies that the new town was not a very recent phenomenon for the inhabitants. Public services in the old city had already been to a great extent abandoned; hence, the old city almost ceased to function as a city. In the following years, the beauty of the new town was confirmed by other visitors, too. When the imperial army was moved from Mezre to Malatya in 1838, the headquarters was located at once in Aspuzu. Hafız Pasha and all the other high-ranking officials— as well as von Moltke— lived from the beginning in Aspuzu, in this “extraordinarily lovely” (“wunderlieblich”) place, which reminded von Moltke of the plains of Lombardy.²⁴⁸ A few years later, the French archaeologist Charles Texier was to visit the new town.²⁴⁹ He tells us that the old town was completely abandoned during three seasons of a year. Only in the depths of winter did

²⁴⁸ von Moltke, *Briefe*, 219, 305; von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 189, 258.

²⁴⁹ Charles Texier’s depiction of Malatia is based on his own observations during his visits to Anatolia in 1833 and 1843. The section on Malatia in the 1862 edition of his work was almost certainly written after his second field visit a few years after the imperial army left the city. Texier published the initial version of this work in 1839, namely before his second visit. Thus, it should in theory be possible to check if the Malatia section was already included in the first version. But I could not access either the original 1839 edition or its contents. Nevertheless, the details about the imperial army’s presence show that the observations were made in the early 1840s. And, if otherwise correct, the evidences is actually better for my arguments.

some families come to the old town, but eventually this place was destined to die as a city. In the new town, on the other hand, the houses had “une certaine élégance” among the gardens of fruit trees, which gave the place its unique look (“un aspect des plus singuliers”). Texier also mentions, passing, that the Pasha’s mansion stood in a town square.²⁵⁰

The old town’s filthiness, on the other hand, was described thus by William Ainsworth in 1838: “Malatiyeh is renowned, even among the natives, for its unhealthiness.”²⁵¹ Another traveler had already noted similar thoughts during his visit around 1800: “Malatia is a large town, but very dirty, owing to the streets in this country not being paved; and, as the post-house was excessively filthy, I took up my residence at the house of a Mutusullum (a pretended Mussulman).”²⁵² In other words, until the old town was completely abandoned, Malatya and Aspuzu lived together as the city and its summer suburb, as the ugly and handsome twins, in a certain duality. The coming of the army did not, as commonly argued, engender the duality by creating a new town, but in fact ended the duality by forcing the townsmen to choose one of the places. When, in November 1838, Helmuth von Moltke witnessed the confinement of Malatia’s inhabitants to Aspuzu with an official order,²⁵³ the inhabitants actually did not experience the move as a sudden rupture, as would be the case in another context. The old town had already

²⁵⁰ This work has not been published in English. I will mainly be using the complete Turkish translation of the three-volume 1862 edition; I also consult the original French version for critical terminology. Charles Texier, *Küçük Asya: Coğrafyası, Tarihi ve Arkeolojisi*, trans. Ali Suat, vol. 3 (Ankara: Enformasyon ve Dökümantasyon Hizmetleri Vakfı, 2002), 144–145; Charles Texier, *Asie Mineure: Description Géographique, Historique et Archéologique des Provinces et des Villes de la Chersonnèse d’Asie* (Paris: F. Didot, 1862), 588.

²⁵¹ William Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia*, vol. 1 (London: J. W. Parker, 1842), 297.

²⁵² Abu Taleb Khan, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe: During the Years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803*, trans. Charles Stewart, vol. 2 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810), 268.

²⁵³ von Moltke, *Briefe*, 332; von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 278. Ainsworth also witnessed the confinement of the people in Aspuzu: “... Hafız Pasha removed with his staff to Malatiyeh, and having ensured the permanent residence of the inhabitants of that town at their summer quarters, a market sprung up in the middle of the gardens, while Malatiyeh itself was abandoned, the soldiers burnt shutters and frame-work for firewood, and tore off roofs or pulled up floors, and the old city became a ruin.” Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia*, 1:295–296.

been falling to ruin, and the limited use of the old town did not end in 1838. The new town had already been settled and built in a suburban style, and it did not turn into a traditional Eastern city immediately. In fact, the following decades witnessed certain bureaucratic problems which emerged from the cessation of this dual life.

A decade later, complications arising from the bureaucratic status of the old town began to appear in official documents. In 1848, Malatia's inhabitants sent to the imperial center a petition with 40-50 seals, complaining about uneven tax allocations due to their virtual presence in the old town and actual residence in the new one. They alluded to Hafız Pasha's deeds as the reason for this unfortunate situation, and demanded justice.²⁵⁴ The official status of the twin towns was still vague when, in 1852, the governor of Harput paid a visit to Malatya to look into the allegations that the imams had left Malatya for Aspuzu but were still being paid for their service from Malatya endowments. The Pasha was surprised when he encountered an abandoned city; some houses were demolished, lumber had been transported to Aspuzu, the mosques were falling down from neglect, and, of course, most people had left the town. He called Malatya "a city in nothing but name" ("*şehir sanki ismi var cismi yok*") and decided to revive the old town, to save it from perishing. Back in Harput, the provincial council wrote to the imperial center that Malatia's people should repair their houses and spend the winters in the old town, as they once had. The governor wrote separately that one should not allow such a town to perish without reason.²⁵⁵

These orders were never carried out; the people did not move back. The administratively ambiguous status of the dual city of Malatya seems to have continued until, at the earliest, 1864,

²⁵⁴ Işık, *Malatya 1830-1919*, 540–546. The document the author refers is: PMOA, İ.DH. 169/8909. It was also stated that the plots they cultivated among the demolished houses in the old town should be considered as *mülk* (private property), since they were in an urban space, and should not be subject to agricultural taxation.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 529–534. The document the author refers is: BOA, A.MKT.UM. 91/93.

when Harput's governor Ahmet İzzet Pasha undertook the job of creating an administrative structure in Aspuzu at the neighborhood level (perhaps just to comply with the orders of the brand new Law of Provincial Administration). He reported that the people of Malatya were then living amidst Aspuzu's vineyards and gardens, each of which was located far from one another (similar to New Arapkir's dispersed neighborhoods, and unlike the old town's dense neighborhoods). Taxes had apparently not been distributed in a just manner in this new place of residence and notables seemed to have been paying less tax than they should have. As a result, the governor decided to parcel out the new town area into fourteen neighborhoods and, hence, gave it the official status of city. He also ordered the complete abandonment of the old town (*kasaba-i metruke*).²⁵⁶

It had taken twenty-five years to give the new town an official status, but even then the old town was not abandoned overnight. Armenian priest Srvandztiants' report based on his travels in Ottoman Armenia in 1878 mentions that a few hundred Turkish households still lived in the old town and they came to the new town in summers to look after their gardens.²⁵⁷ On the basis of an article published in *Masis* (an Istanbul-based Armenian newspaper) in 1881, Arshak Alpoyajian claims that there were still a few hundred Turkish and Armenian peasant families living in the old town, and Alpoyajian adds that only after that date the population of the old town decreased significantly.²⁵⁸ According to the Provincial Yearbook of 1884 there were 300 households living in the old town "among these ruins" ("harabazar").²⁵⁹ In 1891, James Barton wrote in his letter from Harput that there even was a small Protestant community in old

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 569–87. The document the author refers is: BOA, İ.MVL. 497/22471.

²⁵⁷ Yarman, *Palu - Harput 1878*, 2:327.

²⁵⁸ Arshak Alpoyajian, *Patmutiun Malatioy hayots: teghagrakan, patmakan yev azgagrakan* (Beirut: Tparan Sevan, 1961), 428.

²⁵⁹ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, 1884, 1:113.

Malatya.²⁶⁰ In other words, the alleged place-shift of Malatya did not occur in a few years, nor was it caused solely by the army's invasion. The new town was created well before, as a summer suburb, and the two places existed together much longer than generally assumed.

From the 1860s on, the suburb gradually turned into the center, but it nonetheless preserved its non-traditional physical features. As a Harput missionary, Crosby H. Wheeler, wrote in the 1860s, "... Malatya differs from most oriental cities in being less compact, and nearly all its houses having, as the summer-houses had, only a single story."²⁶¹ In the early 1880s, Srvandziantis observed, "The city is not visible at all. ... Various trees in the dense forest hide the city and its buildings from prying eyes."²⁶² A few decades later, English philanthropist Helen B. Harris wrote:

Malatya is the most beautiful city I have yet visited in Asiatic Turkey. If we use the word Paradise in the old Persian sense of park and garden, this place is [...] a paradise. It is a succession of beautiful gardens, planted with poplar trees and every variety of fruit trees, and watered by streams that descend out of the neighbouring mountains. Almost all the houses stand in the midst of their own gardens, and the impression of the city as one approaches it from outside is more like that of a long stretch of woods than of an inhabited place, as the houses are almost entirely hidden away.²⁶³

Another traveler in Anatolia who commented on Malatya was Gertrude Bell, in 1910.

She had already read von Moltke's published letters:

The gardens are no less exquisite now than they were in his time [von Moltke's time, 1838], and as we rode down the hill-side the houses were scarcely to be seen through their screen of fruit-trees. Even upon a nearer view the walnuts and mulberries are far more striking than the buildings of Malatayah ...²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰ ABCFM, Reel 696.

²⁶¹ Crosby Howard Wheeler, *Letters from Eden; Or, Reminiscences of Missionary Life in the East* (Boston: American Tract Society, 1868), 206–7.

²⁶² Yarman, *Palu - Harput 1878*, 2:327.

²⁶³ J. Rendel Harris and Helen Balkwill Harris, *Letters from the Scenes of the Recent Massacres in Armenia* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1897), 167.

²⁶⁴ Gertrude Lowthian Bell, *Amurath to Amurath* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1911), 336.

Arshak Alpoyajian's monumental *History of Malatia's Armenians: Topographical, Historical and Ethnographical* (1961) provides further details about both the old and the new towns based on first-hand observations the author compiled from nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Armenian sources, especially from the work of Rev. Karaped Penneyan. Interestingly, Penneyan reconstructs the history of the dual town as a story of two communities: townsmen (of the old town) and the people of Aspuzu, as he called them. He claimed that before the coming of the army the townsmen petitioned to the government to bring the Aspuzu people to the town, but the latter refused to move even though the government had backed the petition. Ironically, when the soldiers occupied the city, the townsmen had to stay in Aspuzu.²⁶⁵ This story, which is perhaps based on oral stories Penneyan had listened to, clearly suggests that Aspuzu had existed as a permanent place before the mass move.

Penneyan's description of the new town is even more supportive of the ideas proposed so far. He was not very positive about the new town (neither was Srvandztiants): Armenians lived in its center but the best places with good air were occupied by Turks. The houses were built such that walking from one neighborhood to another was difficult because, although the streets were wide enough, the gardens surrounding the houses were attached to each other; as a result, houses were far from each other and no passages existed. Most streets were dead-end.²⁶⁶ Even though Penneyan's evaluations are more nostalgic towards the old town and critical of the new, the physical features he describes are in perfect harmony with other sources. Like New Arapkir, New Malatya of the nineteenth century possessed the distinctive features of suburban living and garden-cities.

²⁶⁵ Alpoyajian, *Patmutyun Malatio Hayots*, 403.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 405. Vorberian also talked about the wide and well-organized streets of the new town, *Ibid.*, 433–434. For Paghtasar Perper-Yezikyan's account of the old town after 1838, see *Ibid.*, 426–428.

A century after the official orders of Hafız Pasha to confine the residents of Malatya to the new town, the latter continued to look like a garden-city. Ekrem Yalçınkaya described the city in 1940 as fully covered by green and composed of houses with gardens juxtaposed with each other. He observed that it was apparent from its dispersed neighborhoods that this town had not been founded as a city in the first place.²⁶⁷ It was in the 1950s-70s that a construction boom changed the built environment of all of Turkey, including the Eastern provinces (another such boom is happening today). New, concrete apartment buildings, one attached to another, replaced houses with gardens in all the small cities of Anatolia. This left a legacy of inelegant cities at odds with their nostalgically beautiful past—a past that generally conflates the nineteenth century with, say, the thirteenth, and invents a homogenous period of a millennium that covers anything pre-modern, namely anything not bad and not ugly. However, I suggest that the idea of urban beauty in today’s standards came to be realized only in a specific historical context, roughly between the 1830s and the 1940s, thanks to the special conditions of suburbanization in small Anatolian cities. The case of Harput/Mezre is a prime example of the consequent duality and suburban ideals.

Spatial Duality and Colonialism

This habit of residing in the gardens adjoining the towns prevails, in a greater or less extent, in all the towns which possess such suburbs, such as Amasia, Gurun, Malatia, Angora, &c. It exists to a much more limited degree in Smyrna and even in Constantinople.²⁶⁸

This observation belongs to American missionary Henry J. Van Lennep, who served in the Ottoman lands from 1840 to 1869. It is telling that he gave examples from the eastern cities

²⁶⁷ Ekrem Yalçınkaya, *Muhtasar Malatya Tarih ve Coğrafyası* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1940), 14, 25.

²⁶⁸ Henry John Van Lennep, *Travels in Little-Known Parts of Asia Minor; with Illustrations of Biblical Literature and Researches in Archæology*, vol. 1 (London: J. Murray, 1870), 213. I am indebted to Yaşar Tolga Cora for sharing this valuable reference with me.

and contrasted them with metropolises in the west. The present chapter also took inspiration from my realization that in the Harput area, as well as in other parts of the Ottoman East, the garden-town was a widespread phenomenon. The scholarly work on cities in the Ottoman East is still in its embryonic stage. Future works will augment the examples of dual-cities or shifted-cities (like Van, about which, see above) with their garden districts. In the Harput region alone, we know that the locations of Pertek and Palu, too, shifted in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, respectively.²⁶⁹ Why do we encounter so many towns that changed their location roughly between 1800 and 1950? From a *longue-durée* perspective, it is not unexpected to see cities change their locations, but it does not happen every other century. The evidence at hand points to no location-change for these cities in the preceding centuries, even in the preceding millennium. In this chapter, I have contested two of the most widespread explanations: natural causes and extra-local intervention.

Natural causes include both environmental factors, like earthquakes, and technological factors, like the means of transportation. I place the latter under ‘natural causes’ inasmuch as technological development is generally attributed to the natural progress of human history. In the first half of this chapter, I aimed to show that the scholarship on shifting cities tends to analyze their location changes as expected, foreseeable, and desirable milestones in the history of modernity. Even though the structural violence of state power is so apparent in the Halfeti case (did they vote for the building of the dam?), for instance, the academic work reconstructs the shift as something that should have happened sometime anyway. The same is true for the Swedish city Kiruna. Needless to say, such reasoning does not explain why the shifts did not occur earlier. It rather assumes that it had already been meant to be, but an external intervention

²⁶⁹ For the old and new Pertek, see Antranik, *Dersim: Seyahatname*, 104–105.

was needed to release the potential. In sum, I question all explanations that see these location-changes as somehow natural and indispensable in the long run by alluding either to the environment, or to the supposedly natural development of technology or of capitalism.

Another fallacy of these pseudo-explanations is the assumption that the movement from one location to the other occurred almost overnight. It is a common tendency of all progressivist historiographies to dismiss the contrary evidence as temporary ‘problems’ that would eventually be overcome. I suggest that these alleged problems in fact reveal the heart of the process, which is the duality in the urban experience. All the cities evaluated above, as well as Harput/Mezre, lived to lesser or greater degrees a dual life for a certain period of history. Therefore, I ask: How did urban duality affect the lives of the townsmen? How was it experienced? How did it emerge and die?

In the scholarship on urban history, the dual towns have been best studied by the works on colonialism. This body of literature paid special attention to the dual towns created by colonial power and to the spatial segregation imposed on the native populations. Janet Abu-Lughod’s now-classic article, “Tale of Two Cities: The Origins of Modern Cairo” (1965), opened the field of colonial urbanism, which became the dominant paradigm in understanding spatial duality.²⁷⁰ In ‘colonial cities,’ according to this paradigm, the colonialists created new, modern towns adjacent to the native, pre-modern city both as an expression of modernist ideologies about urban planning (à la Baron Haussmann’s Paris) and as safe enclaves from which they would govern the city and the country.²⁷¹ The duality in the city was a practical and

²⁷⁰ Janet Abu-Lughod, “Tale of Two Cities: The Origins of Modern Cairo,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 7, no. 4 (July 1965): 429–57.

²⁷¹ For a review of the literature, see Anthony D. King, “Colonialism, Urbanism and the Capitalist World Economy,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 13, no. 1 (March 1, 1989): 1–18. Lewandowski used the term “segmentary urban form” in Susan J. Lewandowski, “Urban Growth and Municipal Development in the

epistemological blueprint of colonial government. As Mitchell put it, “[c]olonialism did not ignore any part of the city, but divided it in two, one part becoming an exhibition and the other, in the same spirit, a museum.”²⁷² Similarly, Rabinow described the function of “*villes nouvelles*” (the new towns) in colonial Morocco as “[m]aintaining Moroccan cities close to but separate from a modern French society.”²⁷³

From the 1990s on, the colonial city paradigm has been criticized.²⁷⁴ A scholar recently proclaimed that “[t]he paradigmatic image of the racially partitioned colonial city has been dismantled in recent scholarship on British India as more a figure of political desire on the part of colonial administrators than an accurate description of urban cultural geography.”²⁷⁵ The reality on the ground, scholars recognized, was much more complicated than a form of ‘duality.’ Colonialism began to be studied, as the same scholar pointed out, as a more subtle process, in connection with capillaries of social control mechanisms in a city. However, despite their many virtues, these criticisms did *not* dissociate the idea of duality from external imposition. On the contrary, by making a distinction between the reality and the colonialist desires, they reinforced the bond between spatial separation and colonialism, saying simply that it was not successful. My aim, instead, is to show the local foundations of duality.

Colonial City of Madras, 1860–1900,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 02 (February 1975): 341–60. For a more recent work on Algiers, see Karim Hadjiri and Mohamed Osmani, “The Spatial Development and Urban Transformation of Colonial and Postcolonial Algiers,” in *Planning Middle Eastern Cities: An Urban Kaleidoscope*, ed. Yasser Elsheshtawy (London: Taylor & Francis, 2002), 29–58. For the literature on West Africa, see Liora Bigon, “Urban Planning, Colonial Doctrines and Street Naming in French Dakar and British Lagos, C. 1850–1930,” *Urban History* 36, no. 3 (December 2009): 426–48.

²⁷² Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 163.

²⁷³ Paul Rabinow, “Governing Morocco: Modernity and Difference,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 13, no. 1 (March 1, 1989): 34.

²⁷⁴ For a critical review, see Anthony D. King, “Writing Colonial Space. A Review Article,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 3 (July 1995): 541–54. Skovgaards-Peterson criticized the emphasis on the outside influence in colonial city literature and called for studying the local experiences. See the Introduction in Hans Chr. Korsholm Nielsen and Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, eds., *Middle Eastern Cities, 1900-1950: Public Places and Public Spheres in Transformation* (Aarhus University Press, 2001).

²⁷⁵ Eric Lewis Beverley, “Colonial Urbanism and South Asian Cities,” *Social History* 36, no. 4 (November 1, 2011): 482.

In this chapter, based on limited information on historic Arapgir and Malatia, I investigated the nature of duality by looking at the physical characteristics of the towns. Neither Arapgir nor Malatia acquired dual characteristics due to colonialism. In Malatia, almost the opposite occurred when the internal-colonial power (the Ottoman army) ended the duality. As a result, I focused on the suburban form and identity of the new towns and hypothesized that duality emerged as an outcome of bourgeois suburbanization. In Harput/Mezre, on the other hand, internal colonialism *did* have a significant share in creating the duality between Mezre and Harput (Ch. 1 and Ch. 12). Nevertheless, I claimed in Chapter 2 that the presence of the army in Mezre has been overemphasized to such an extent as to render the local experience after the 1840s invisible. Accordingly, the following chapter will give an in-depth examination of Mezre and its relationship to Harput between the 1860s and 1890s, when the dual town was left completely to its own inhabitants.

Chapter 5: Mezre and Harput: A Dual Town



Figure 5-1: Harput, from the South-West.²⁷⁶

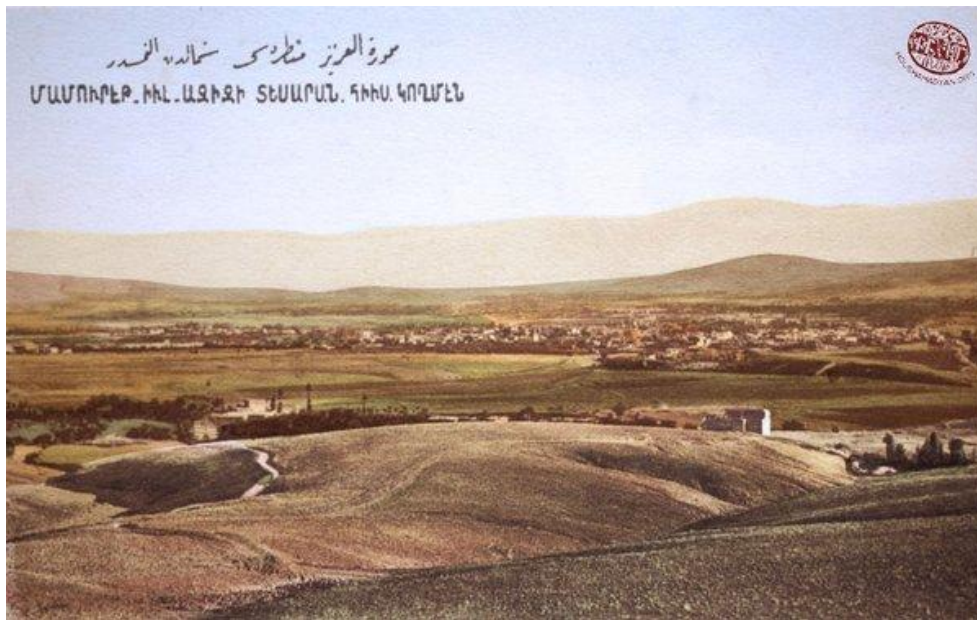


Figure 5-2: Mezre, from the North.

²⁷⁶ The source of both pictures is <http://www.houshamadyan.org>.

Harput's history, it is said, goes back to the Urartu Kingdom of the eighth century BC.²⁷⁷ And more than two millennia later, in the 1830s, the city of Harput was still the only major residential unit in its surrounding region. However, if we move forward just one more century, we find in the pages of *Cumhuriyet* [Republic] a headline that reads, "A City Shrank from 8,000 to 52 Households," announcing the death of Harput in 1948.²⁷⁸ The central city of the region was now Elazığ, with around 40,000 inhabitants in 1948, on the plains below Harput. The contrast is striking: an ancient city turned into a ruined neighborhood and, in close proximity to it, a middle-sized city born almost from scratch—all in the course of a hundred years. History seems to have worked almost like a Whac-A-Mole game: Harput was whacked into annihilation, and Elazığ popped up from a black hole. In reality, however, a U-tube is a better metaphor: people of Harput began moving from one arm to the other as the outside pressure changed. During this process, both arms of the tube were densely inhabited by the residents. And this relationship between the two arms, the phase of dual-existence hidden in a whac-a-mole, will be the subject of this chapter.

Historians' Mezre

The existing accounts without exception take the coming of Reşid Mehmed Pasha to Mezre in 1834 as the moment when Harput's decline and Elazığ's ultimate victory were sealed. In a handy manual, *Elazığ*, published in 1979, the author summarizes the story as follows:

Reşid Mehmed Pasha stayed two months in Harput. [Then], like the inhabitants, he also recognized that Mezraa was more suitable for inhabitation, and he

²⁷⁷ Nurettin Ardiçoğlu, *Harput Tarihi* (İstanbul: Harput Turizm Derneği Yayınları, 1964); Veli Sevin, Necla Arslan Sevin, and Haydar Kalsen, *Harput Kale Mahallesinde Osmanlı Yaşamı* (İstanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2011), 18–22.

²⁷⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 18 June 1948.

informed the Palace. Hence, Mezraa beat Harput. ... The year of 1835 is the date when Harput became history and Elazığ was founded in its place.²⁷⁹

In reality, at that time, perhaps no one had even thought about leaving the city of Harput and moving to the small hamlet on the plains. Neither is there any evidence supporting the argument that the Pasha decided to go to Mezre for its better settlement opportunities.²⁸⁰ And it is a sheer fantasy that Harput was replaced by Elazığ in 1835. But the fantasy is quite strong. A recent article conjectured that, when the new place was chosen, Mezre gained reputation in the eyes of the people and Harput fell from the grace.²⁸¹ This idea was expressed in the monumental four-volume work of İshak Sunguroğlu, a native of Harput, too. In 1958, he wrote with reference to stories from his childhood and also to the official yearbooks of the province that after the Pasha moved to Mezre, “Harput’s decline started from that day on, and Mezre’s star began to shine as Harput’s died away.”²⁸²

As indicated in the previous chapter, the suddenness and the inevitability of the place-shift are the main pillars of the dominant historical ideology about town movements. For the first author cited above, Harput’s decline was so inevitable that he refers to Harput of the seventeenth century in Evliya Çelebi’s work and concludes: “After this time, Harput gradually lost its importance. In the 19th century, the castle was forgotten, and the inhabitants left Harput for Mezraa where transportation and inhabitation were easier.”²⁸³ In other words, even before the coming of the Pasha, Harput was declining *anyway*. By the same logic, Nureddin Ardiçoğlu, the

²⁷⁹ Osman Yalçın, *Elazığ*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: Özyürek Yayınevi, 1979), 35–36.

²⁸⁰ The following recent publication also states that people had chosen the current location of Elazığ due to its topographical conveniences. Needless to say, there is no information that supports this idea. İlhan Oğuz Akdemir, “Elazığ’ın Kentleşme Sürecinin Coğrafi Analizi,” in *Geçmişten Geleceğe Harput Sempozyumu, Elazığ, 23-25 Mayıs 2013* (Elazığ, 2013), 1034.

²⁸¹ Ahmet Aksın, “Harput’un Mezra’ya Taşınması Sürecinde İlk Vilayet Konağı,” in *Geçmişten Geleceğe Harput Sempozyumu, Elazığ, 23-25 Mayıs 2013* (Elazığ, 2013), 101–10.

²⁸² İshak Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Elazığ Kültür ve Tanıtma Vakfı Yayınları, 1958), 203.

²⁸³ Yalçın, *Elazığ*, 38–39.

Minister of Tourism in the 1960s, known as the person who demolished Harput's old Armenian neighborhoods for the sake of tourism, ended his *The History of Harput* at the seventeenth century.²⁸⁴

Progressivism and teleology are well-known mistakes of history writing. What I want to emphasize here is rather the lack of room for dual existence in historical reconstruction. The idea in these accounts is that Harput *should* have lived its great times *before* the Pasha arrived and moved everybody to Mezre overnight, simply because if one was rising, the other should be declining. A mole would not pop up had the other not been whacked. Ironically enough, there is no indication that Harput was an important place before the 1830s. On the contrary, everything Harput is today famous for is a heritage of its nineteenth-century life: a regional capital, famous for its weaving manufacture, a cosmopolitan place, hosting a gorgeous American college, hosting a very refined population, and its many other renowned faces. There is no evidence that any of these characteristics existed before the 1830s in Harput. On the contrary, Harput turned out to be a cultural center of the Ottoman East thanks to later developments, including the American missionary presence, the Armenian enlightenment movement, and its becoming one of the commanding outposts of the imperial army in the East. In other words, not only did Harput not die, it actually was born after the 1830s! Harput and Mezre rose together; they lived their golden ages simultaneously. When their duality ended, in the first decades of the twentieth century, a single city was born and called Elazığ.

Mezre Becoming a 'Proper Town'

The decades of the 1850s and 60s were formative in the making of Mezre and Harput. As described in Part I, the retreat of the imperial army from the region in the beginning of the 1840s

²⁸⁴ Ardiçoğlu, *Harput Tarihi*.

left Mezre in an ambiguous position: it was still the residence for both the civil governor of the province and the marshal of the eastern army, but it did not host the real manpower of the army any more. War was continuing in Kurdistan, on the other side of the invisible border, but the highest ranks of the governors were now incompatible with the low profile Mezre, and even Harput. They ruled over the eastern provinces from some distance, keeping them—or perhaps keeping themselves from them—at arm’s length. For Istanbul, not Harput or Mezre, but only the fruits of the job in the eastern provinces (tax collection and conscription of men) were important. Similar to a factory in Marx’s times, the product was alienated from the spatial organization of the production, and the governors had not yet paid serious attention to the latter (as Fordism later would).

As a result, like the upper-class residences for Western managers in poorer countries today, or like the islands of gated luxury communities in the middle of conservative countries, Mezre became a nowhere place that but hosted somebody. Mezre was made not thanks to a state project but thanks to the lack of it. It was made by the staff of the state to create a high-profile living place for themselves. And the new Armenian trade bourgeoisie, who had dethroned the Çötelizades from crucial positions over the course of the 1850s, turned out to be the primary supporters of making Mezre a distinctive residence. When in 1860 three Çötelizade brothers were eventually dismissed from the local council (see Ch. 3), Mezre had already turned into a nice suburb.

Those who arrived in Mezre during Hafız Pasha’s reign in 1837-39 found perfect hospitality by the inhabitants, but nothing much of interest in the built environment. Von Moltke and his associate were welcomed to the Pasha’s residence. It was not very different from other houses of mud brick with flat roofs, although it was spacious. The divan and the floor were

covered with gray fabric, and the windows were covered by papers. Aside from that, there were no other furnishings—none of the tables, chairs, or curtains the German officer expected. In the end, it was just a village called ‘Messre’ that lay half-an-hour before the city (Harput).²⁸⁵

Similarly, when British Consul James Brant visited Mezre in the summer of 1838,

The [Háfiz] Páshá gave us a garden to encamp in, sent us a sumptuous breakfast in the Turkish style, offered tents, furniture, and everything we wanted, appointed persons to attend on us, and, in short, nothing could exceed his politeness and attention.

Mezirah is a small village in the plain about 2 miles from the town of Kharpút, lying 3618 feet above the sea; it was chosen by the Páshá for his residence, on account of a palace there which belonged to Is-hák, a former Páshá, who was decapitated by Reshid Mohammed Páshá. No habitation in the neighbourhood would have been extensive enough to have contained the harem and suite of the Páshá, and it possessed the additional advantage of being close to the camp.²⁸⁶

Von Moltke had also taken note how the Pasha personally visited them the next morning and brought them to the new barracks. In sum, Mezre of Hafiz Pasha was the place of military headquarters and of hospitality; it was the residence of commanding heights. But, it was not a town; as the governor İsmail Pasha put it in 1844, it was “a village called mezrea.”²⁸⁷ As put forward in Chapter 2, the second half of the 1840s became a stage for politicization of the built environment whereby the local government, on the one hand, and the Armenian community, on the other, appeared in the official documents with the buildings they wanted to erect or to repair/renovate. This continued in the decade of the 1850s when, first, the government house was renovated, and then, a new one was built after the old one burned down in 1858. Moreover, the barracks were repaired and a new warehouse for grain was built.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ von Moltke, *Briefe*, 215; von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 186.

²⁸⁶ James Brant, “Notes of a Journey through a Part of Kurdistán, in the Summer of 1838,” *The Journal of Royal Geographical Society of London* 10 (1841): 366.

²⁸⁷ PMOA, İ.MVL. 56/1081, 30 June 1844.

²⁸⁸ Aksın, “Harput’un Mezra’ya Taşınması Sürecinde İlk Vilayet Konağı.”

Consequently, Mezre had a new look in the 1860s. A new age was beginning for the town, and the European travelers who visited Mezre at the time testified to the unexpected physical characteristics of the new place. In 1864, Colonel Goldsmid thought “Mazra has a British-Indian look about it in the distance.”²⁸⁹ He later presented to the Bombay Geographical Society the view that “Mazra [is] a place which resembles in the distance an Indian cantonment rather than a common Asiatic Turkish town.”²⁹⁰ On March 24, 1866, Viscount Pollington took note of the following:

On arriving at the summit we looked down into a mountain-locked plain, much below the level of the lake, with several villages scattered over its surface. We descended, and rode across it, through three villages. Here civilization first stared us in the face in the shape of a common cart, like the plaustra of Persia. We had seen nothing on wheels since leaving Teheran. We passed some decent whitewashed barracks, surrounded by a wall pierced with windows, and were in Mazrah. ... The streets of Mazrah betokened awakening civilisation, probably owing to the proximity of this [American missionary] station. Some of the houses had wooden arched doorways with windows on each side, evidently new, and resembling some streets in German villages. Indeed, over one shop we observed ‘Pharmacie’ written up in French!²⁹¹

These lines were written about a place that was a small hamlet—not even a village—only three decades ago. Now, the place had a unique look—so much so that the experienced eyes of the travelers saw elements of “civilization” in it. Both observers referred to a mixed image of European villages and Oriental forms, and Goldsmid openly pointed to the colonial urban setting in India. In fact, Mezre’s fancy built environment had nothing to do with colonial presence. This small suburb was special because it had concentrated the upper segment of the local society in one place. Signboards in French and glass windows were less an index of colonization than a

²⁸⁹ Frederic John Goldsmid, *Telegraph and Travel; a Narrative of the Formation and Development of Telegraphic Communication between England and India, under the Orders of Her Majesty’s Government, with Incidental Notices of the Countries Traversed by the Lines* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1874), 442.

²⁹⁰ Frederic John Goldsmid, “Report on an Overland Journey from Bagdad to Constantinople, through Turkish Arabia and Asia Minor,” *The Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society* 18 (1868): 24.

²⁹¹ Viscount Pollington, *Half Round the Old World. Being Some Account of a Tour in Russia, the Caucasus, Persia, and Turkey, 1865-66* (London: Edward Moxon & Co., 1867), 375–78.

result of gentrification. The elements of modernity were brought to Mezre by its own inhabitants, not by strangers. This outcome is surprising not only for the travelers but also for us, the historians of the underdeveloped eastern provinces. And this surprise generally calls for explanations based on outside influence, even when there is none.

Pollington's assumption that Mezre owed its modern look to the missionary presence in Harput could not have been further from reality. The truth is, American missionaries, who had secured a nice spot in the upper town, hardly cared about the secular lower town on the plains. In 1860, Herman N. Barnum confessed in his letter from Harput that there was not much to report about the Mezre "outstation," although it was the closest one among fifteen outstations/villages in the Harput area: "It is the residence of the Pasha and though but a mere village is in a certain sense the commercial center for this whole region. Those who live there are worldly minded businessmen who seem to be almost utterly regardless of their spiritual interests."²⁹² Not much changed in the next few years. In 1863, he wrote: "In Mezereh, the helper being dissatisfied with his wages left the service. From year to year, the progress in this place is slow. It is the seat of Pashalic & the worldly influences there are more powerful than in the city even."²⁹³ Finally, in 1867, Barnum complained that Mezre's Protestants only wanted "to satisfy the claims of an enlightened conscience by putting away some of the gross superstitions of the old church & find an easy way of salvation without the necessity of a change of heart or even any essential change of life."²⁹⁴

American missionaries in Harput always kept Mezre at arm's length; they never moved the missionary compound to the new town, even in the 1910s and 1920s. This dismissal was also

²⁹² The Fifth Annual Report for the Year Ending May 1860, Harpoot, ABCFM, Reel 676.

²⁹³ The Eighth Annual Report of 1863, Harpoot, ABCFM, Reel 676.

²⁹⁴ H. N. Barnum's letter, March 12, 1867, Harpoot, ABCFM, Reel 677.

reflected in the missionary workforce. For example, in 1860, only two recently added outstations and Mezre did not have a school and a native helper. In 1862, compared to the 7 American missionaries and 5 native workers in Harput, Mezre had only one native schoolteacher, as there were only 6 female students and 8 adults receiving education. In 1867, only a native pastor, Murad Muradian, was employed in Mezre and a church was formed with 14 members.²⁹⁵ But even then, Mezre's pastor became one of the signees of a protest letter against the American missionaries with the support of the 'worldly-minded' wealthy Armenians of Mezre. He demanded better financial conditions.²⁹⁶

In a private letter from 1871, Dr. Raynolds complained about the same well-off classes of Mezre: One of them invited him to his house after Sabbath prayer seemingly to continue to pray together, but when the doctor went to their mansion, this prominent person insisted on his treating his sick daughter even though Dr. Raynolds resisted by saying that he was there today not as a doctor but as a pastor.²⁹⁷ Hence, until perhaps the 1890s, Mezre remained an anomaly for the American missionaries (unlike Catholic missionaries).²⁹⁸ They encountered persecution in many other small towns, especially in the early years of the mission, but not here. Mezre was liberal in every sense. In 1860, the Pasha openly bought a Turkish Bible,²⁹⁹ perhaps only as an exotic item to furnish his reception room along with Persian carpets and Arab swords. Liberalism also meant indifference. Mezre was too modern for the missionaries.

²⁹⁵ Annual Tabular Views & Annual Reports, ABCFM, Reel 676.

²⁹⁶ C.H. Wheeler's letter, February 24, 1870, Harpoot, ABCFM, Reel 679.

²⁹⁷ Mr. Raynolds' letter, April 3, 1871, Harpoot, ABCFM, Reel 678.

²⁹⁸ The Catholic mission was active in Mezre from the beginning. In 1859, we read in the journal of American missionaries that "At Mezereh, the seat of the Pashalic, where most of the would-be Franks reside, there has been, for two years past, a considerable Catholic party. Lately they have established a school in the city." "Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Allen, August 12, 1859" in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 55 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1859), 369.

²⁹⁹ The Fifth Annual Report for the Year Ending May 1860, Harpoot, ABCFM, Reel 676.

The secularism of the new town was a result of the symbiosis between Armenian businessmen and Turkish government officials. The latter were secular by education, whereas the former were by bourgeoisation. It is a commonplace in Ottoman historiography that Christian businessmen in the empire acquired status, wealth and prestige vis-à-vis Muslim businessmen in the course of the nineteenth century thanks to the integration with the world economy.³⁰⁰ Even though this argument is mainly based on evidence from the western provinces and especially from port-cities, we have reason to believe that the same was more or less true for major towns in the east, too. In Chapter 3, it was mentioned that the Çötelizade family encountered difficulties in the financial sector where Armenian bankers were tightening their authority. But the most important evidence of the enrichment of Armenians in Harput and Mezre comes from an insider informant. In 1878, the Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul, Nerses Varjabedian, appointed Archpriest Boğos Natanyan as the prelate of the Palu diocesan region, including Harput province. Natanyan not only visited many places in the region, he also wrote a very detailed report to the patriarchate about the socio-economic life and culture of Armenians in the Ottoman East. In this invaluable source, Natanyan gives us a snapshot of the new middle classes in the Armenian community of Harput, too:

Until thirty years ago Armenians did not have even a piece of land. The entire plain of Harput was owned by the Turkish *Beys* and *Ağas* [notable families and landlords]. But today, Armenians in the city as well as those in the villages have become landowners. One eighth of all land belongs to Armenians. It is always that Turks sell, Armenians buy. Trade and manufacture are in Armenians' hands. Even though they are subjects politically, they became sovereign economically.

³⁰⁰ The classic works on the Ottoman integration with the world economy are: Huri İslamoğlu-İnan, ed., *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820-1913: Trade, Investment and Production* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*.

So, they are doing well. If only they worked not only for materiality but also with their hearts, then the Bible could have escaped the oppression of Quran.³⁰¹

Natanyan clearly observed the changing class profile in Harput and, more importantly, his text made a distinction between Harput and Mezre. Turks were “unthrifty and drinkers;” that is why they started selling their lands to Armenians. And, there were “few rich ones” among them.³⁰² In Mezre “embellished with gardens,” on the other hand, Armenians were “quite wealthy.” Furthermore, many inhabitants of this place (Mezre) had come from outside, especially from Eğin (the distinctive place of origin of many Armenian upper classes in the Ottoman Empire, including the (in)famous money-lender class in Istanbul).³⁰³ On the other hand, as seen in the last words of Natanyan, affirmation of Armenians’ getting to the status they had always deserved was intertwined with remorse felt upon the loss of national and religious identity. Like the American missionaries, the Armenian archpriest criticized Armenian businessmen’s indifference in spiritual matters. Similar observations about the Armenian *nouveau riche* and Mezre were recorded by another priest, Garegin Srvandziantz, who was also appointed by the patriarch to visit Ottoman Armenia in 1878. He wrote:

Most of the land is in the hands of *beys* and, some exceptions aside, the title deeds are registered to their names. All villagers are sharecroppers [*maraba*] but they pay land tax to the state. Those Armenians from Eğin who live in Mezre and some in the city [Harput] own quite big lands with tenants. Harput *beys* and landlords are literally feudal lords, and their tenants are, in fact, slaves. They have been so enslaved that they do not even know whether they have right to complain against the *beys*.³⁰⁴

It is instructive to hear about Armenian embourgeoisement from Armenian intellectuals who had first-hand local information. They had ambiguous feelings about the upward movement

³⁰¹ Yarman, *Palu - Harput 1878*, 2:180–181.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 2:193.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 2:195.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:412.

of Armenians: on the one hand, they deserved it thanks to their hard-working character, but on the other hand, the landowning class was as exploitative as the Turkish landowners. Both priests worried about the corrosion of character among their people. Srvandztiants was even more disapproving than Natanyan regarding the moral issues. After confirming the progress in their economic well-being, he added, but “their mental and spiritual condition seems desperate.” A parable he cited summarized the situation: when Armenians of Harput were asked ‘what do you want to be happy in this world,’ they simply answered ‘bread, wine, women.’³⁰⁵

In other words, both Natanyan and Srvandztiants recorded Harput/Mezre’s Armenian society in a period of drastic transformation. It was a time when Armenians in general acquired higher economic status in an unprecedented fashion. The growth of a money economy based on trans-regional trade and business networks seems to have increased the supply of monetary wealth in the hands of a hitherto unprivileged group. Together with the commodification of land in the Ottoman legal system in 1858, the social characteristics of landownership in the region began to change in favor of Armenians. At the same time, both priests agreed that this new age introduced class differentiation as well as immorality among their own community. It seems to have been a period when money became everything.

The landownership of Armenians was only an aftereffect of the accumulation of monetary wealth. The real occupation of those “worldly-minded businessmen,” to cite Mr. Barnum again, was trade and manufacture. Krikor Garabet’s (Ipekciyan [silk weaver], later Fabrikatorian [factory owner]) success story was exceptional, but it still reflects the opportunities and expectations in the habitus of the greater Harput province from the 1850s on.³⁰⁶ According to

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 2:405, 412.

³⁰⁶ Krikor Garabet’s life story is compiled from his autobiographical essay published in the provincial gazette of Harput in 1883 and from the information at Houshamadyan which had been gathered from Vahe Haig’s and Manug

his own autobiographical essay, Krikor Garabet was born in the early 1830s (it was 1840s according to another source) in Arapgir and left his motherland at an early age like many in that town. He went to Erzurum and then to the Lebanese town of Junieh, where he worked in the silk factories. Later, he also went to Europe and continued his visits to silk factories. In the end, it took 16 years for him to settle back in his homeland and open his own silk and linen factories. But not in Arapgir. He rather started his career in Mezre. Things did not go well for his linen factory, but by 1883 the silk factory had become an empire-wide renowned trademark. In his autobiographical essay, Krikor Garabet tells the reader about his ambitious interest in technology and the new production techniques. His biggest aim was, he writes, to reduce the prices of his products for his fellow countrymen using new technology. In the 1890s, he even imported modern machinery from Europe and the United States. After he died in 1902, his five sons, known as the Fabrikatoryan [factory-owner] Brothers or *Beş Kardeşler* (Five Brothers), inherited their father's factory with hundreds of employees and with abundant trans-regional business contracts. The Brothers added onto the built environment of Mezre arguably the most gorgeous building of the entire region: a quintuple mansion composed of five identical two-storey residences attached side-by-side in a straight line (Figure 5-3). In 1915, neither the family nor the factory survived the genocide (but the mansion did, see Ch. 12).

K. Djizmedjian's works. *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 6, 18 November 1883;
<http://www.houshamadyan.org/en/mapottomanempire/vilayetofmamuratulaziz-harput/harput-kaza/economy/trades.html>.

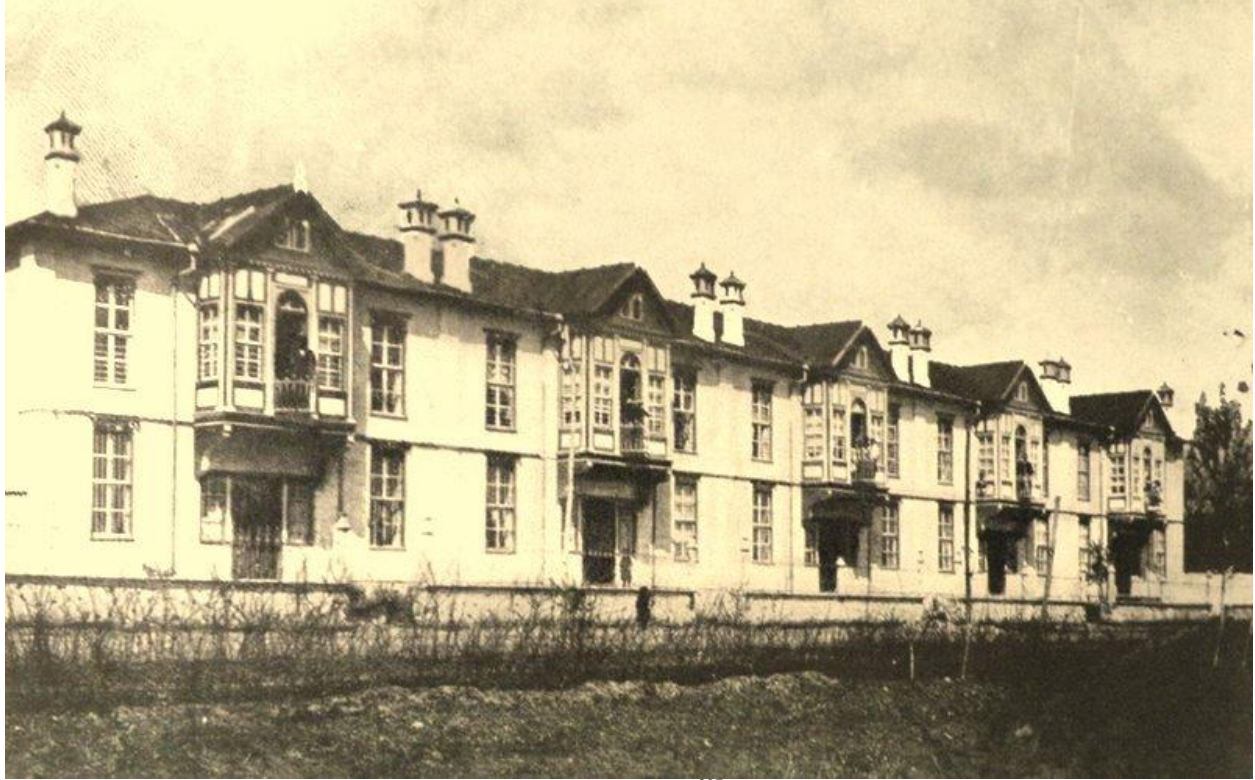


Figure 5-3: The mansion of the Fabrikatoryan Brothers in Mezre.³⁰⁷

Another successful silk factory was in the upper town, in Harput. Krikor and Sarkis Kürkciyan started production in the 1870s. Similar to Ipekciyan, Krikor Kürkciyan's son Khosrov went to Europe to visit silk factories and to get know-how in 1883. Later, under Khosrov's management, this factory also became famous in all parts of the empire and even abroad.³⁰⁸ Moreover, the father Krikor Kürkciyan's name was also in the list of 12 founding members of the Chamber of Commerce in Harput/Mezre in 1884.³⁰⁹ This new institution had 6 Muslim and 6 Armenian members, and the chair was an Armenian named Senekerim Misakyan. According to Rev. Boghos Natanyan, the Misakyans and Kürkcübaşıyans (possibly the same

³⁰⁷ <http://www.houshamadyan.org/en/mapottomanempire/vilayetofmamuratulaziz-harput/harput-kaza/economy/trades.html>.

³⁰⁸ During the massacres of 1895 (see, Part IV), the factory was damaged and the family received death threats. Upon that, Khosrov's brothers moved to the US, but Khosrov resumed his work until 1915. His family did not survive the deportations. Ibid.

³⁰⁹ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 22, 11 March 1884.

family as Kürkciyans) owned in Harput two manufacture houses that produced silk work. The Misakyans, an Eğin-originated family, had various members in very high official and civil positions in Istanbul in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Natanyan put the name of Senekerim Misakyan in the first place in his black list of “the names of the *chorbajis* [the wealthy notables] who served [only] for their own interests.” Moreover, the handful of names on this list also included Mardiros Ipekciyan, namely a member of Ipekciyan/Fabrikatoryan family.³¹⁰ Even decades later, in 1903-05, we see Mihran Misakyan and Bogos Misakyan on the Armenian political council of Harput, the former being the chair in 1905. And, in 1906, Manas Fabrikatoryan, one of the five sons of Krikor Garabet (Ipekciyan/Fabrikatoryan), was a member of the same council.³¹¹

In sum, Armenian entrepreneurs stood out as successful businessmen in the second half of the century. Their increasing economic power gave them political authority in the Armenian community (i.e. council membership). More significantly, they became the leading figures in the trading networks (i.e. Chamber of Commerce) in the city. This small elite group in the Armenian community was alienated from their own people, the priests would argue, due to their self-seeking attitude and worldly-mindedness. They rather seem to have collaborated with Turkish businessmen and bureaucrats, namely with the members of their own class and status group. And, most crucially for this study, this social alienation had a spatial aspect, too: Mezre was the

³¹⁰ Yarman, *Palu - Harput 1878*, 2:191, 200.

³¹¹ *1903 Intartsag Oratsuyts - S. Prgcyan Hivantanotsi*, vol. 4, 1900-1910 Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Salnâmeleri - Tıpkıbasım (Istanbul: Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Vakfı Kültür Yayınları, 2012), 342–3; *1904 Intartsag Oratsuyts - S. Prgcyan Hivantanotsi*, vol. 5, 1900-1910 Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Salnâmeleri - Tıpkıbasım (Istanbul: Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Vakfı Kültür Yayınları, 2012), 300; *1905 Intartsag Oratsuyts - S. Prgcyan Hivantanotsi*, vol. 6, 1900-1910 Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Salnâmeleri - Tıpkıbasım (Istanbul: Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Vakfı Kültür Yayınları, 2012), 299; *1906 Intartsag Oratsuyts - S. Prgcyan Hivantanotsi*, vol. 7, 1900-1910 Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Salnâmeleri - Tıpkıbasım (Istanbul: Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Vakfı Kültür Yayınları, 2012), 411.

residence of the worldly-minded bourgeoisie as well as the worldly-minded, educated Ottoman bureaucrats.

A Strangers' Town Becomes Official

Mezre was the place of new beginnings for those who abandoned the limited world of their small hometowns and sought to be a part of the trans-regional trade and manufacture business. In fact, Mezre was a place of strangers. From the very beginning of its life, Mezre was a place for people coming from somewhere else. It was a hamlet for the exiled landlords in the first place (Ch. 1). Soon, the appointed Ottoman governors and commanders arrived in this hamlet and turned it into a garrison town for soldiers and commanders: by definition, all were from outside. As Natanyan observed above, Mezre of later decades was still a place for outsiders coming from the smaller towns in the region, like Arapgir and Eğin, to embark upon a new life. Apparently this rootlessness of Mezre was not forgotten even in the first decade of the next century, when Malatya's townsmen petitioned to move the administrative center from Mezre to Malatya. The petitions were full of condescension about Mezre's qualifications as a provincial capital ("ignominious and poorer in quality than even a village" [*karyeden daha adi bir dereke-i pestide*]) among which was the following: "in particular, its inhabitants are composed of people from peripheral towns and villages" (*alelhusus, sekenesi mülhak kaza ve kurâ halkından müteşekkil olup*).³¹² Mezre did not have any genealogical claims. Mezre was a town without history.

Around the 1860s, this place of strangers was nevertheless made a beautiful residential town by these same stranger-residents. Mezre turned from a mere hamlet into a town that "betokened awakening civilization," a town that was remarked upon by visitors for its difference

³¹² Işık, *Malatya 1830-1919*, 660–680.

from other Anatolian towns, a town which reminded them of the novelty and orderliness of the British colonial towns of India. Mezre was made a town by its distinguished inhabitants, most notably by the government officials and the new businessmen. More importantly, they were aware of the fact that they were creating a new city. It almost became a deliberate project in 1867 when they proposed to Istanbul to make the new town official.

On January 13, 1867, the governing council of Harput province sent to Istanbul a detailed report on recent developments in the province. The report touched on the key pillars of the imperial center's to-do list and advertised the success of Harput province in regards to these pillars. Salterns (*tuzla*) in the hands of the Kurds were taken under the state property; many roads connecting Harput to its own periphery were renovated; a big bridge was built on the Murad river; large military buildings were erected in Hısnımansur and Akçadağ to intimidate (*gözlerine dağ olmak üzere*) the Kurds and tribes there; various tribes were sedentarized. Regarding Mezre itself, the mansion (*konak*) had burned twelve years before (in 1855) and the officials had been living miserably in scattered places; to put an end to this situation, a brand new government house was built. Moreover, "as something rarely seen in this region," across from the government house a mosque and a fountain were built by the Pasha ("*cânib-i sâmi-i hidâviyye*") in a very pleasant style ("*tarz-ı dil-pezîr*"). Thanks to the official subsidies, inhabitants now produced different crops than only barley and wheat, and the exports had increased. Accordingly, the welfare of the province was gradually ("*refte refte*") becoming better organized. As a result, the report continues, "this farm-village is fairly turned into a town" (*mezra'-ı mezkûrenin adeta kasaba heyetine girmiş ...*).³¹³

³¹³ PMOA, İ.DH. 558/38901, 13 January 1867.

The report ends with a special request—a rather unexpected one: “Because the name of *Mezra*, the seat of the government, is not an officially registered name and does not have any resemblance to any other place names, and taking into consideration its development appropriate to the pleasant works of the epoch,” and since this development took place in His Majesty’s time, the council requested the name of the province and the town be changed to *Mamuret-ül-Aziz*, meaning ‘made prosperous by Sultan Abdülaziz’ or simply ‘built by Aziz.’ The governor Ahmed İzzet Pasha, in his attached cover letter (Jan 16), also supported the request. He wrote that in Mezre many houses and shops had been added to the built environment. The new government house was built by his and some others’ donations, and accordingly the inhabitants, too, stood up with encouragement and desire (*şevk and hâhiş*) to add more buildings. As a result, Mezre had turned into a “proper town” (*bir mükemmel kasaba heyetine girmiş*).³¹⁴ In a separate letter, he emphasized again that the new name would please and encourage the inhabitants profoundly.

Consequently, the imperial government in Istanbul responded positively to this demand and the name of the province was changed from Harput Province (*eyalet*) to Mamuretülaziz Province (*vilayet*).³¹⁵ It is true that during the general administrative re-organization in the entire empire in 1867 many provinces were re-structured (from *eyalet* to *vilayet*), but Harput Province was the only province that received a brand new name. Moreover, when the province acquired a new name, its nameless center, namely the place that used be called Mezre (just a “*mezra*,” hamlet), was also named officially after the new name of the province: ‘the town of Mamuret-ül-Aziz,’ or ‘El-Aziz’ (Aziz’s) for short. In Republican times, the rulers of the new nation-state distorted Elaziz to Elazığ by inventing a completely made-up linguistic root (Ch. 12). In other words, the name of Elazığ in today’s Turkey originated in two successive inventions in its

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 374/57, 18 February 1867; A.MKT.MHM. 374/75, 20 February 1867.

history. In the following chapters, for the sake of clarity in my arguments on urban duality, I will continue calling the lower town Mezre (rather than Mamuretülaziz or Elaziz) until it turns to Elaziğ in the 1930s.

Forming a Bureaucracy in Mezre

By the end of the 1860s, then, Mezre had turned from a farm-village or hamlet into a town. This was true not only for the foreign visitors but also in the eyes of the local powerful inhabitants who wrote the self-promoting petition mentioned above. However, this was more a prescription than a description. During his 1878 visit to Harput, the above-mentioned priest Garegin Srvandztiants saw a town (Mezre) that “still cannot say ‘I am a city,’” while the ‘real’ city (Harput) could not seem to wrest the political power from the lower town.

Mezre, which is called Mamurat-ül-Aziz, is the seat of the government; and for many years there has been built administrative offices and houses of rich outsiders—most of whom are Armenians from Eğin—and shops and a khan have been opened there, but still it cannot say ‘I am a city.’ In fact, it is still a village. The original [*pun*] city has spent and still is spending enviable effort to retrieve the government, but in vain; on the contrary, it has been left uncared-for: no watchmen, no police, no trial court and commercial court, etc. About these deficiencies the townsmen have been complaining, considerably. Incidents happen quite often. In a city containing such many people and goods, something has to be done for security and comfort.³¹⁶

The duality between Harput and Mezre corresponded to the separation of the political and commercial sphere from the traditional urban life. The old city lacked the crucial mechanisms

³¹⁶ Garegin Vardapet Srvandztiants, *Toros Aghbar Hayastani jambord*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Tpagradun G. Paghatlyan, 1884), 85–86. My translation relies on the original edition in Armenian. The Turkish translation, albeit an invaluable contribution, changed and even skipped some words that are crucial for this academic study. For example, the word ‘original/real’ and the ‘trial court and commercial courts’ were simply not translated, although the former is crucial to understanding that the writer was talking about Harput. And, the writer did not say “Its name is still village”—where the translator added ‘its name’ and misled the reader. We actually do not know whether or not people used to say ‘village’ in referring to Mezre. Moreover, by saying “... Mamuret-ül-Aziz, where rich Armenians from Eğin built houses, opened khan and shops ...” the translator changed the meaning and lost the nuance that Mezre was a place of strangers in general, including Muslims, but Armenians from Eğin were the dominant group. Yarman, *Palu - Harput 1878*, 2:415.

needed for the new economy based on commerce rather than the extraction of surplus from the land. On the one hand, “the new material form of wealth,” as Foucault described for eighteenth-century England, “was no longer monetary; instead, it was invested in goods, stocks, raw materials, workshops, products to be shipped,” which were “vulnerable to theft.” Hence, police, or watchmen, were needed.³¹⁷ And, in another domain, the business of exchange necessitated trans-regional standardization of the rules of transaction and, more importantly, an administrative body to implement these rules. Thus, it was not a coincidence that Srvandztiants referred to the lack of police and of commercial courts in the same sentence.

It was the early 1880s when the local powerful groups really began to undertake measures that, they thought, were lacking in both parts of the dual-city. If Mezre became a town in the 1860s, it was transformed into a city in the 1880s, through a process which we can trace in the pages of the official provincial gazette *Mamuretülaziz* from 7 October 1883 on.³¹⁸ In the first official Yearbook (*Salname*) of the province in 1881, Harput was still designated as the center of the province, of which Mamuretülaziz was a sub-province (*sancak*). But from 1884 on, the Yearbooks took Mamuretülaziz as the center, whereas Harput became a district (*kaza*) of the center. Moreover, there was only one municipality in 1881, but in 1883 it was separated to two municipalities, one in Harput and one in Mezre (and in 1887 a third in Hüseyinik). Thus, after 1884, the Yearbooks distinguished between “the first-degree municipality” (“*birinci belediye dairesi*”) of Mezre and “the second-degree” of Harput (and, later, the third in Hüseyinik). In

³¹⁷ Michel Foucault, “Truth and Juridical Forms,” in *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion, Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 3 (New York: New Press, 2000), 68.

³¹⁸ In the first two issues of the gazette, the Gregorian dates were printed wrongly as November 7 and 21, instead of October 7 and 21. Moreover, in the entire series of the issues, there is quite often disparity among three calendar dates –one or two day shifts.

1907, the dual-city was combined in only one municipality again, but this time it was in Mezre; Harput had become a district municipality (*kaza belediyesi*).³¹⁹

Harput's becoming 'the second-degree' in the early 1880s was apparently a burning issue for the townsmen of both parts of the dual-city. Take the example of the telegraph and post office in Mezre, which may be the same place where G.P. Badger and his assistant J.P. Fletcher rested and watched the coming of the new Pasha from its balcony in 1842 (Ch. 2). In 1882/83, this telegraph office building was allocated to the newly founded military high school (*rüşdiye*) and, thus, the offices were transferred to a house in Harput donated by some "public-spirited" people for this specific function. But then the tradesmen and some other inhabitants of Mezre applied to the government on the grounds that Mezre needed a post office, too. Consequently, the Ministry of Interior dispatched an official permission that, in effect, allowed both parts to host a post office. However, the gazette tells us, some people of the town (*kasaba*, read: Harput) misunderstood the dispatch and began sending protesting telegraphs to the government about their refusal "to give back" (*iade*) the offices, and they impeded the move of the officials to the lower town. All of these, of course, spread "erroneous news" around; apparently some impertinent statements reached Mezre, too. But, the gazette continues, Harput's people were composed of scholars and wise people, and this reaction of theirs was perhaps only due to their wish to protect the convenience (*teshilat*) they had enjoyed for the past year. A few days later, the Governor arrived in Mezre from Malatya and dealt with this issue: two new officials were appointed to Harput as Mezre's old official was returned to Mezre successfully; moreover, a

³¹⁹ Serdar Özmen, "Sâlnamelere Göre Ma'muratü'l-Aziz Vilayetinin İdari Yapısı (1881 -1908)" (MA Thesis, Fırat University, 2009), 26–27, 93–97, 106. PMOA, ŞD. 1455/34, 11 May 1878; ŞD. 1459/26, 28 May 1882; ŞD. 1459/28, 2 July 1882; ŞD. 1459/55, 14 April 1883; ŞD. 1461/46, 16 February 1887; DH.MKT. 1412/101, 14 April 1887. For the naming of three municipalities as Mezre, Harput and Hüseyinik, respectively, in 1888, see *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, vol. 4 (Mamuretülaziz: Mamuretülaziz Matbaası, 1888), 37–38.

certain Ali Ağa was commissioned specifically with conveying the post between Harput and Mezre.³²⁰

Whether or not it was a general characteristic of Abdülhamid II's regime, bureaucracy and its functions were growing in Mamuretülaziz Province. Mezre, as the seat of the local bureaucracy, seems to have raised envy in Harput only recently. For the decades before the early 1880s, I have found no archival documents, no petition by Harput's inhabitants, not even a word in hundreds of letters written by missionaries since 1855 to imply that spatial segregation was felt as an imposition on Harput by Mezre. On the contrary, all of the accounts testify, if indirectly, to the ordinariness of the separation of government/business life (Mezre) from city life (Harput). Similar to what Matthew Hull has argued for Islamabad, the state was made in Mezre by its local staff for its own sake, not necessarily to govern other places or to exclude them.

Unlike most modernist projects that aimed to make aspects of a wider society legible to the government (Scott 1998), Islamabad was designed to make the government legible to itself, partly through isolation from the wider society and partly through its own internal order.... the spatial organization of Islamabad was not the project of an autonomous state actor, but an attempt to create such an actor by cutting the entanglements of the state bureaucracy with Pakistani society.³²¹

In other words, although Mezre looks like a classic example of a colonial city, especially when its 'modern' look in the 1860s as observed by the travelers is taken into account, there is no actual evidence to show colonial segregation imposed by Mezre between the two parts of the dual town. Inhabitants of Harput and its surrounding villages used to go to Mezre, perhaps, for some business work, or more likely for bureaucratic work: to demand tax exemptions, to save their sons from recruitment, to complain about this or that landlord, to be tried or imprisoned, even to be killed during the 1915 deportations. The people of Mezre were not dying for Harput,

³²⁰ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 11, 23 December 1883; no. 12, 30 December 1883.

³²¹ Matthew S. Hull, *Government of Paper* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 34–35.

either; the worldly-minded businessmen and officials would resort to the upper town during some celebrations (see below), or perhaps on Fridays or Sundays to show their faces in some central mosque or church. Spatial separation did exist, but not as an exclusion of one part by the other; in fact, the existence of the staff of the central state without an accompanying state-making project created a special symbiosis between them and the new Armenian bourgeoisie, and Mezre was thus built as an amalgam of suburbanization and state-making.

If the 1860s was the epitome of suburbanization, the 1880s was to be the decade of urban governance. The government offices in Mezre began to be so busy that regulations had to be issued about the daily schedules of the offices and about the unwelcome behavior of the officials, namely their visiting other bureaus and taking up others' time—as if their own laziness was not enough of a loss! Moreover, both the governing council and the court were invited to meet more frequently than before simply because files were piling up.³²² Not only the functioning of the state, but also its privileges had grown. In the legal cases of individuals indebted to the state, for example, the property of the indebted used to be auctioned off, but if no one bought the property, the state was not allowed to buy it. However, such a case from Diyarbekir was transferred to the Council of State in Istanbul, and the latter decided in favor of the state's purchasing the property. Since this jurisprudence was to be applied in all cases, Mamuretülaziz Province was informed, too.³²³

Perhaps the most important development was the growth of the state's presence in people's private issues through the formalization of the legal domain in general. As Avi Rubin has argued, the creation of the secular courts in the late nineteenth century did not, as widely believed, make the legal system more rational, or more just, or more centralized. The new system

³²² *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 11, 23 December 1883; no. 12, 30 December 1883.

³²³ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 15, 22 January 1884.

changed the formal features of the legal sphere more than the content of the laws.³²⁴

Formalization of law meant the bureaucratization of the legal staff and limiting the access of laymen to the procedural part of judicial work. Hence, paperwork increased, state-authorized licenses proliferated, court fees multiplied. In 1875, the *Law of Professional Attorneyship in the Nizamiye Courts*, for instance, “restricted legal representation to holders of licenses issued by the Ministry of Justice.” From then on, licensed attorneys were called ‘trial agents’ (*dava vekili*) to distinguish them from regular ‘agents’ (*vekil*), who supposedly were harming the proper functioning of the legal system. In 1880, the importance of professional attorneyship was touted to the provinces via a circular, too.³²⁵

In February 1884, a local trial agent, Mardiros Yazıcıyan, published a critique of lay agents on the pages of *Mamuretülaziz*. In accordance with the discourse in the empire’s center, he accused the agents of being uneducated swindlers who “seized” clients at the court’s door and kept the courts busy in vain. Therefore, before the Trial Agency (*Dava Vekilliği*) was founded, attorneyship had lost its reputation. But from then on, unlicensed attorneys would not be able to represent their clients in the courtroom (the critique also called out the judges who were responsible for implementing this rule).³²⁶ Two months before, Mardiros Yazıcıyan had written again about the problems in the legal world. This time, the topic was the insufficient use of the commercial courts due to ignorance about commercial law. Although being a tradesman was defined and restricted by law and although merchants had to comply with certain bookkeeping rules, many of them did not follow these rules and established firms like ‘such and such

³²⁴ See Chapter 3 “The Age of Procedure” of Avi Rubin, *Ottoman Nizamiye Courts: Law and Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 83–111.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

³²⁶ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 20, 27 February 1884.

Brothers' or 'such and such Co.' without really registering them. As a result, in cases of bankruptcy or decease, the claimants could not find and bring to court the people responsible.³²⁷

It is a fact that the bureaucratization of the legal and commercial field posed an impediment to the daily working of the system, at least until the necessary manpower was assembled. Similar to what had happened with the abolition of tax-farming in 1840, the requirement of licenses for attorneys in civil cases was repealed by the Ministry of Justice in 1886. As the formalization of law progressed, the growing need for legal representation was, ironically enough, not met by the shrinking pool of attorneys generated by the formalization itself.³²⁸ As discussed in Chapter 3, however, the failure of centralization in its classic sense should not veil a more important development, namely the statization of the provinces, whereby the same old local power-holders ended up with official titles. The new *Nizamiye* Courts' real peculiarity lay not in their being more rational or impartial than the *Şer'i* courts, but in their staff's being composed of local notables with official titles. In Mamuretülaziz, in 1884, the *Nizamiye* Court consisted of civil and criminal sections. The civil section was chaired by the *Şer'i* judge, *naib*, as expected;³²⁹ the two members were Hacı Hafız Mahmud Efendi and Avadis Efendi Kasbiyan. The criminal section was chaired by *müderris* [teacher] Ahmed Vehbi Efendi from the ranks of the *ulema* [theologians and scholars of Islam]; and the committee members were Çötelizade Hacı Bekir Ağa and Kasbar Efendi Keşişyan.³³⁰ Six months later, after the election of the new court members, the same Mahmud and Avedis Efendis were transferred from the civil to the criminal section, while Kasbar Efendi went from criminal to civil. A Çötelizade

³²⁷ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 8, 2 December 1883.

³²⁸ Rubin, *Ottoman Nizamiye Courts*, 104.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 78–79.

³³⁰ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, 1884, 1:51. Although the Yearbooks are excellent sources, they need to be complemented by other sources as well. In this particular case, the Yearbook does not give us the family names 'Çötelizade,' 'Kasbiyan' and 'Keşişyan,' which are quite significant for this study and which can be found in the gazette. *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 18, 13 February 1884.

accompanied him, again, but instead of Çötelizade Bekir Ağa, he was Çötelizade İshak Bey Efendi, this time.³³¹

In the early 1880s, we see many Çötelizades in the various official positions. The same Çötelizade Bekir Ağa and Çötelizade İshak Bey, for instance, were also registered tax-farmers of Tadım and Perçenç, respectively. Another tax-farming family member was Çötelizade İbrahim Bey of Sevenler.³³² Çötelizade Brigadier Osman Bey, who was mentioned in detail in Chapter 3, was the most senior member of the family at the time. During the accession ceremony for the newly appointed governor Hacı Hasan Bey in July 1884, Osman Bey was privileged enough to make a speech after the governor's oration. Moreover, during *Eid al-Adha* (the Feast of Sacrifice) in October 1884, he was officially delegated for the conscription of forced labor for the road construction.³³³ The highest official position was held by Çötelizade Ahmed Bey. He was one of the elected members of the administrative council; he also served on the indictment committee and the committee for overseeing road construction with Çötelizade Mustafa Ağa. In September 1884, he was chosen to go to Keban Maden and to organize the auction for the town's tax-farming.³³⁴ Under an open letter signed by many notables of the dual city, we see the following signatures that belonged to the same family: "from dynasty" (*hanedan*) Çötelizade Bekir, "from notables" (*vücut*) Çötelizade İshak, from dynasty Çötelizade Halid, from notables (*mütehayyiz*) Çötelizade Nuri, Brigadier Çötelizade Osman, from Zerteriç dynasty Çötelizade Mustafa, Çötelizade Mehmed Tevfik, from dynasty Çötelizade Ali Rıza.³³⁵

³³¹ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, vol. 2 (Mamuretülaziz: Mamuretülaziz Matbaası, 1885), 51. *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 58, 24 November 1884.

³³² *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 19, 20 February 1884.

³³³ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 40, 19 [21] July 1884; no. 51, 5 [6] October 1884.

³³⁴ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 6, 18 November 1883; no. 29, 4 May 1884; no. 47, 7 September 1884; no. 60, 7 [9] December 1884.

³³⁵ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 51, 5 [6] October 1884; no. 52, 12 [13] October 1884.

One more family member needs attention since he was right at the center of the urbanization process of Mezre. In March 1884, when Çötelizade Ömer Bey was appointed as the ‘deputy mayor’ of the Mamuretülaziz Municipality,³³⁶ there was only one mayoral position for the totality of the dual city, and it was occupied by ‘the second municipality’s’—namely Harput’s—mayor, Hacı Mehmed Efendi.³³⁷ The position in Mezre was registered next year properly as ‘mayor,’ too, when Mehmed Reşid Efendi replaced Çötelizade Ömer Bey.³³⁸ But it was not a peaceful replacement; it rather was a consequence of debates related to the urbanization of Mezre. In the two years between 1883 and 1885, Mezre acquired its own municipality, got the ‘first’ position in the hierarchy, and got rid of ‘deputy’ before the mayor’s title. Once again, as in the 1850s (Ch. 3), a historic transformation was marked by a Çötelizade’s being stripped of his office (see below, for the details of this struggle).

Urban Transformation in Harput and Mezre

In January 1884, the municipality in Mezre appeared on the pages of the gazette with a new public service: a pharmacy was opened and stocked with the best medicine transported from Istanbul; moreover, the doctor of the municipality was to treat the sick on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for free.³³⁹ Although it was a good sign, the inhabitants of Mezre expected more from the new municipality. The following article from the pages of *Mamuretülaziz* is worth quoting especially because it is the first self-reflexive piece by Mezre’s people after their request for a new name in 1867, which had stated that Mezre had become a proper town. Now they say, in effect, that it could not become a proper city:

³³⁶ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 23, 18 March 1884.

³³⁷ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, 1884, 1:53.

³³⁸ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, 1885, 2:53.

³³⁹ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 16, 29 January 1884.

In earlier times, the town of Mamuretülaziz was a village called *Ağavat Mezrası* [farm of landlords] composed of the mansions of some of the Çötelizades and of some Christian houses. Thanks to its being located in the middle of the villages and on the way to Baghdad, for fifty years it has been the center of the province, and with the growth of its population and with its public improvements, it became a middling town [*mutavassıt bir kasaba*]. Somehow, however, no attention has been paid to order in the planning and construction of the buildings and on the tidiness [*hendese, geometry*] of marketplaces' forms and streets' directions. Apparently, it has dealt only with [road] extensions but not with the aspects of organization and neatness [*tertibât ve tenzifât*]; hence, there is no road in good order besides the adjacent Baghdad highway [*caddesi*], and it is well known that even the latter's cleanliness has not been taken care of. Last year, the Governor had lanterns placed on the highway and in some other places, and it was decided that buildings should be whitewashed by lime or a sort of white soil and that some needy roads be extended and organized. But, because the Governor's visits in the periphery lasted until the beginning of the winter and because the municipality showed sluggishness and tardiness, the work has been delayed until today. For this reason, the assignment of Çötelizade Ömer Bey lately to the office of deputy mayor after people's requests [*istida'-ı ahali*] has relieved the hearts regarding facilitating the application of these wishes, and as a first step the work has began from an important point, from the organization of the streets. However, the fact that this attempt did not even last two weeks and was halted is being attributed to his retreat after a show-off [*bir nümâyışle geriye çekilmesine*], and it is rumored that the general regard towards him unfortunately has begun to decrease. Since the Governor's helpfulness and his genuine enthusiasm and desire are well known by all, it is regrettable to see that the deputy mayor and the municipal council are in a mood of hesitation and postponement, although it is time to collect the unpaid fees and on the other hand to focus on the work of organization and neatness that would be appreciated in the eyes of the public. According to our investigation, the city [*şehr*, read Harput] mayor and council have submitted to the government some important projects they had worked on and acquired approval from the administrative council. Thus, we humbly suggest that the mayor and council here [Mezre] seriously take into consideration that the works in the city will soon embarrass [*şermsar*] them.³⁴⁰

Before going further with the developments in the city, the ironic reference to road construction needs attention because almost every single issue of the gazette in 1883-85 gave as the first news the step-by-step progress in road building all over the province. Especially after 1875, the imperial state concentrated on roads (instead of railways) in order to channel the agricultural surplus to the nodal commercial towns. In her meticulous study, Özkan argued that

³⁴⁰ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 31, 18 May 1884.

the focus on roads was not an index of underdevelopment but the consequence of a deliberate economic policy that aimed to foster the internal market, on the one hand, and to situate the empire as an exporter of agricultural goods in the worldwide division of labor, on the other. For both ends, connecting the rural with the urban centers via roads stood out as one of the most important pillars of imperial policy in the Ottoman East during the 1870s and 1880s.

Accordingly, the project of the Minister of Public Works titled “The Project for Public Constructions in Anatolia” in 1882 was implemented in the following years, and the 900 km of roads in Anatolia in 1881 were extended to 10,400 km in 1888. The accompanying political ideology on imperial space was expressed in a nutshell by the governor of Sivas (1882-85): “A place which you cannot reach does not belong to you.” To carry out this burdensome task, moreover, the state imposed a compulsory labor regime which was known as ‘road tax’ between 1869 and 1889. The benefits of the roads used to be advertised so widely that the governor of Trabzon alleged in 1884 that the villagers participated voluntarily in the road work since they knew its future benefits.³⁴¹ The editors of the *Mamuretülaziz* gazette drew on the same discourse when they wrote on March 4, 1884: in the preceding years the forced-workers (*mükellef*) did not understand the benefits of the road construction, but this year they do understand; that’s why we hope that all forced-workers will do their job without need for compulsion.³⁴²

The gazette frequently published celebratory news on extramural road building, on the one hand, and criticized the neglect of the municipality regarding urban development (carefully exempting the Governor (*vali*) from criticism), on the other. The tension between state-making and city-making processes stands out very clearly here: State-making was the infrastructural

³⁴¹ Fulya Özkan, “A Road in Rebellion, a History on the Move: The Social History of the Trabzon-Bayezid Road and the Formation of the Modern State in the Late Ottoman World” (PhD Dissertation, SUNY Binghamton, 2012), 30–38, 61–62, 79, 141, 232.

³⁴² *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 21, 4 March 1884.

intervention by the imperial center in the vast and abstract land of the empire in order to make legible, to control and to have access to manpower and tax revenue. City-making, however, was the infrastructural intervention by the notable townsmen in the urban space in order to make legible, to control and to have access to a refined urban life. If the former can be labeled as economic, the latter should be called cultural. That is the reason why city-making can never be conceptualized under the rubrics of internal colonialism, governance or sovereignty, namely with impositions directed towards an Other. City-making targeted no one other than the city-builders themselves.

In the provincial world of the 1880s, then, one can detect two large realms: (i) the spatial realm that comprised the agricultural economy, the land regime, rural-urban connections, population censuses, and conscription; and (ii) the place-based realm that incorporated manufacture, business places, trans-regional nodes of commerce, and urban life. As I have argued in the preceding chapters, the Çötelizades appeared in the documents, almost without exception, as agents of the spatial realm. This was true when their power was challenged in the 1860s; this is also true now as Çötelizade Ömer Bey was targeted for the deficiency of his place-based works. The family had not lost power; they were, as we have seen, active as tax-farmers, local politicians, and court members. When the Chamber of Agriculture was established in Mezre in November 1884, at least one Çötelizade (Hacı Ali) was at the top of the members' list (probably as the chair).³⁴³ But when the Chamber of Commerce was founded in March of the same year, there was not even one person from the family among the twelve founding members;

³⁴³ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 56, 10 [9] November 1884.

it was instead chaired by Armenian businessman Senekerim Misakyan (the earlier-mentioned silk factory owner).³⁴⁴

Back to the municipality debate, a week after the quoted critique appeared in the gazette, a gentle response by Çötelizade Ömer (Tahir) Bey was published. He stated that he was even more encouraged by that critical essay and as a member of a family who had always been loyal to the state he would continue working for progress. However, in the end of his letter, he kindly reminded readers that the budget of the municipality was insufficient to meet the demands of the Governor, and he requested financial support.³⁴⁵ This public exchange was the milestone for the urban regeneration attempt that rapidly began in the following week. Perhaps on Saturday, May 31, the mayor, along with municipal and administrative officials and also accompanied by some notables, visited and carefully investigated the important streets and marketplaces of the town and decided on a plan composed of building sidewalks, streets and sewers, of extending some streets, of unifying the organization of the shops' shutters, of whitewashing the buildings facing the main streets and of painting the wooden ones. The gazette reminded its readers that even though these measures would create some cost to the townsmen, in the long run they were going to admit the benefits.³⁴⁶

The administrative council lost no time in confirming the plans, and the municipality was officially commissioned to implement them. Moreover, the secretary of the council, Hayrullah Efendi, published an op-ed on the recent developments in urban regeneration. Great importance is attributed to municipal work in civilized countries [*memalik-i mütemeddine*], he wrote, but the

³⁴⁴ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 22, 11 March 1884.

³⁴⁵ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 32, 25 May 1884.

³⁴⁶ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 33, 30 [2] May [June] 1884.

lack of order in our country unfortunately proves that our people have not yet comprehended it.

And he continued:

Since public opinion appreciates the good-natured people who have a taste for excellent food and dress and whose homes are without exception neat and well-ordered, if we follow the comparison, the streets and markets of Mamuretülaziz, which are needed by everybody to pass and to do their work, should also be always well-organized and gradually develop. Because here is not like the old towns that were built in the past and are difficult to transform to new styles, there is no doubt that the plans will be implemented here, and as long as the municipality superintends the processes and the projects of the construction of buildings, our country is going to become a very well-organized place.

No conscientious and refined person can accept the chaotic and miserable situation of Mamuretülaziz, which, as a precious product of God's power of creation, has been placed on the lovely bosom of a land of prosperity that is surrounded by colorful gardens and delightful greenery [*hadâ'ik-i rengîn ve çimenistan-ı dil-nişin*].

Especially when the difficulties lived through by the passerby right after the winter snow fills the streets are remembered, it is even more unfortunate that no inclination exists to build the roofs of tiles or, as American missionaries did in the town [*kasaba*, read: Harput], of painted timber.

It is already known how harmful the accumulation of waste water in the streets is for public health; besides these hazardous effects, how obscene it is from the medical point of view is also obvious. And, it is the foremost patriotic duty for the well-endowed and powerful townsmen to alleviate the costs of the sewers that are to be built by the municipality.³⁴⁷

Hayrullah Efendi's essay, along with the essay quoted at length before, can be read as a shamefaced response to the British travelers who visited Mezre two decades ago and praised its fabulous style. Mezre did not keep the promises its looks had given to the visitors. This "precious product of God" was not appreciated enough and fell into a "chaotic and miserable" situation. Nevertheless, there was hope because Mezre was a new place. Unlike Harput, it did not have a history to deal with; Mezre was rather a *tabula rasa* to realize modernist ideals. What happened in the following weeks was already a proof of this fundamental difference between Harput and

³⁴⁷ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 34, 7 [9] June 1884.

Mezre. The municipality began working quite rapidly, and in only a couple of weeks disturbances related to urban transformation began to rise in Harput. The gazette once again tried to quell the signs of protest by referring to civilized countries, to necessary compromises and future benefits. The last week of June 1884 in Harput (not in Mezre) was almost a microcosm of how urban transformation worked and works today. The municipality of Harput, as part of its recently growing interventionist activity, cut off the columns of the shops in the yarn market—the most active shopping street of the province—because they hampered the passages, reduced shopping activity and made the market appear smaller than it really was. Additionally, the shops were organized to stand on a linear line. Immediately afterwards urban transformation began to bear fruit and the shop owners increased the rents by 50%. Apparently some (or, maybe, many) shop tenants did not have formal contracts and, therefore, could not legally refuse the rent increase. Hence, disputes arose between shop owners and their tenants.³⁴⁸ It was not that easy to change things in an old town.

In Harput, after the yarn market, the saddlers' market was put in order. The new Governor visited these recently organized marketplaces during his visits to the *ulema* in the upper town.³⁴⁹ In addition, the municipality in Harput had been using temporary offices here and there since its establishment. In August 1884, the council decided to build new buildings in the vacant area called *kömür meydanı* (coal square) for the use of the municipality. Moreover, the butchers' scattered shops were seen as harmful to urban health (because of the wafting smell of rotten meat) and it was determined to collect all the butchers in a single place in *eskiciler çarşısı* (market of swag shops).³⁵⁰ In September, the municipality of Harput allocated a pack animal to

³⁴⁸ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 37, 28 [30] June 1884.

³⁴⁹ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 39, 12 [14] July 1884.

³⁵⁰ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 45, 23 [23] August 1884.

take the trash of the marketplace away from the city center on a daily basis; the shop owners were to pay 20 *para* a month to a person who was to be employed specifically to deal with the trash.³⁵¹ In October, the *kebab* and *leblebi* shops were also picked from their various places and located in a vacant area called *hiyarcılar* (cucumber market). In addition, the sewers and the sidewalks on the road to *kale meydanı* (castle square) were repaired.³⁵²

In today's terms, Harput was undergoing a process of urban transformation. The existing order in the built environment was targeted by the local authorities, which naturally precipitated protests by the damaged parties. In Mezre, on the other hand, the aim was to *create* an urban form in the first place. As the lower town was growing, new problems began to emerge. As an example of raising interest in urban issues, an article from *Ceride-i Havadis* (an Istanbul-based newspaper) on the problem of immigrant single men and their inappropriate life in Istanbul was published in the *Mamuretülaziz* gazette under the title "Cleanliness and Purity."³⁵³ The suburban setting of Mezre in the 1860s was gradually shattering as it was forced to acquire real urban measures. The hitherto unclear boundary between rural and urban in Mezre was becoming a problem. For example, once in July 1884, the camels that were used to transport goods to Mamuretülaziz were grazing in a pasture near the gardens of a certain Hacı İzzet Paşa. Some animals were poisoned and killed by the grass, and that became an issue of public health in the town. The gazette called on the municipality to take care of this undesirable scene in a city.³⁵⁴

In the meantime, Çötelizade Ömer Bey was dismissed from his post (deputy mayor) on the grounds that he was not competent enough due to his young age. Reşid Efendi replaced him

³⁵¹ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 52, 12 [13] September 1884.

³⁵² *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 56, 10 [9] October 1884.

³⁵³ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 42, 3 [5] August 1884

³⁵⁴ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 41, 26 [29] July 1884.

as the mayor of Mezre.³⁵⁵ However, Reşid Efendi's becoming the mayor was not free of public debate; in fact, it was a rare occasion in which a peripheral province found mention on the pages of an Istanbul paper. On September 18, 1884, *Tarik* [Road] published an anonymous letter allegedly sent from Mamuretülaziz. The letter was a fierce public demonstration and condemnation of Reşid Efendi's past and present deeds: In the recent past, Reşid Efendi had gotten hold of the chair of commerce (perhaps, the chamber) thanks to various malignant schemes and made many tradesmen suffer from his corruption. He intervened in and invaded every aspect of public life and suppressed people's rights. He had gotten everything he wanted; he turned from a poor, needy person into one who now owns gorgeous pavilions, gardens and farms ("muhayyer-i ukûl kasırlara ve bağçelere ve çiftliklere malik"). He was indebted to many and was sued by many, but either with threats or with sheer force he escaped most of the accusations. Nevertheless, at least, he was dismissed from his official duties due to his corrupt activity. Now, however, the Governor had appointed this person as mayor. The people were in a state of great discontent.³⁵⁶

Mamuretülaziz gazette carried the news onto its pages and published a short refutation about Reşid Efendi's connection to the gazette which was alleged in the same letter. Moreover, the new Governor's doings were praised and it was implied that his adversaries might have maliciously sent the letter.³⁵⁷ The next week, arguably the most-subscribed collective public letter was published with around 180 signatures by literally all segments of the notable groups—from religious scholars (*ulema*), to local dynastic families, from the Armenian tradesmen to the

³⁵⁵ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 39, 12 [14] July 1884.

³⁵⁶ *Tarik*, no. 176, 18 September 1884.

³⁵⁷ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 50, 28 [29] September 1884.

representatives of Assyrians.³⁵⁸ The announcement was not interesting; basically, the mayor was praised and the allegations were harshly refuted. Its importance lies in who it included and excluded. The honorifics give us a clear image: the aristocratic nobility (like the Çötelizades) collaborated with the commercial bourgeoisie (mostly Armenians, included Senekerim Misakyan) in order to support the government officials. In this picture, the only missing socio-economic group seems to be the artisans, whose space was perhaps usurped during the urban transformation in the marketplaces of Harput.

The New Mezre: Between Suburb and City

In 1884, the birthday of Abdulhamid II fell on June 11 (16 *Şaban* in *hicri* calendar) and was celebrated in Mamuretülaziz as well as in other provincial centers.³⁵⁹ Hayrullah Efendi (the author of the last essay quoted above) published in the gazette a detailed account of the festive evening, which interests us especially because of its descriptions of the suburban built environment of Mezre: At the time of noon prayer, the birthday of the sultan was announced with an artillery salute and by the evening every corner of the town was already illuminated by kerosene lamps. There were plenty of official visits between the governor's house and the military headquarters, but the civil side of the story is more interesting to tell here. Hayrullah Efendi was in fact one of the highest-level bureaucrats who were invited to dinner at Senekerim Misakyan's wonderful mansion. Naturally the deputy governor was there, too. Misakyan was, as

³⁵⁸ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 51, 5 [6] October 1884; no. 52, 12 [13] October 1884.

³⁵⁹ In the nineteenth century, and especially during Sultan Abdülaziz's reign (1861-76), two events in particular—the anniversaries of the sultan's birth and of his accession to the throne—began to be celebrated with notable pomp compared to earlier times and to other traditional ceremonies. In Abdülaziz's time, both of these festivities were seen as official festivals of the state, and therefore they used to be celebrated according to the financial (Gregorian) calendar. However, the emphasis on Islam during Sultan Abdülhamid's reign changed the system partially and made only the birth adversaries celebrated according to Islamic calendar (*hicri*). François Georgeon, "Temps de La Réforme, Réforme Du Temps. Les Avatars de L'heure et Du Calendrier à La Fin de l'Empire Ottoman," in *Les Ottomans et Le Temps*, ed. Frédéric Hitzel and François Georgeon (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 253–55. I am grateful to Burak Onaran for this reference and for his translation of the relevant parts of the article.

mentioned before, the chair of the newly founded Chamber of Commerce. His house was, in Hayrullah Efendi's words, "beyond compare" (*bî-nazir*). It was the garden and the view he was talking about: the waving of the trees and flowers with their beautiful forms and colors gladdened him; the pure water in the heart of the garden was lip-to-lip with the green surrounding it. At sunset, birds came up from the midst of the flowers and began singing as if they also were celebrating His Majesty's birthday, and at the same time the entire town embellished with lamps gradually appeared in gleam. The house of the judge in Upper Mezre also entered the scene, as it was completely illuminated from one end to the other in a brilliant way.³⁶⁰

An hour after sunset, the officials and notables left Misakyan's house for the center of the town in order to attend the official celebrations. The streets were crowded with people and buildings were decorated with lights, especially the governor's house. At the center of Mezre the bourgeoisie and the bureaucrats coming from the mansion joined the groups of the official ceremony with the governor and the commander. Hayrullah Efendi then proceeded to Harput from where Mezre looked beautifully illuminated as if it were located in the precious heart of a wide plain. His descriptions of the streets of Harput were even more joyful (singers, impassably crowded thoroughfares, etc.) but less elite. He visited places in the marketplace; he saw the new municipality in the *kömür meydanı* (coal square) which was also ornamented. His passage in this particular evening, I suspect, was from an elite suburban environment to the traditional old town, from a place of distance to a place of intimacy. His language changes, too, as he moves from Misakyan's mansion in Mezre to the pharmacist Artin's house in Harput; poetic descriptions of the garden and the lights give way to a chaotic account of a carnivalesque festival.

³⁶⁰ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 35, 14 [16] June 1884.

The celebrations of the anniversary of Abdulhamid II's ascension to the throne on August 31 were no different: exhaustive illumination of both towns, dancers and acrobats in the middle of the crowds, the military band and fireworks.³⁶¹ Two religious holidays, Ramadan and *Eid al-Adha*, were also celebrated with music bands around the triangle of the governor's house, the military headquarters and the İsmail Paşa Mosque in the center of Mezre.³⁶² The place where all these official celebrations took place was different than the small suburb of two decades ago. With the officialization of Mezre (under its new name, Mamuretülaziz) as the capital town separate from Harput in 1867, the public sphere had expanded in this lower town (perhaps at the expense of the upper town). The special context of Abdulhamid II's reign (1876-1909) should have helped, too. As Deringil has showed, during his reign imperial legitimacy was formed in the image of the sultan through local official rituals.³⁶³ Mezre, as the seat of the local governor, successfully hosted the new public sphere.

But Mezre was not only the seat of government; it was also the seat of the local bourgeoisie. And in fact the special beauty of Mezre, reflected on by the travelers in the 1860s, remained intact at least until the turn of the century. As seen in Hayrullah Efendi's admiring descriptions of the gardens of Mezre's mansions, and as reflected by the numbers in the census records (see below), Mezre retained its suburban characteristics in the 1880s. The inhabitants sought ways to furnish the town with urban structures that would allow them to modernize it without losing its beauty. They were not content with the unorganized spatial structure of Mezre and pushed for a more organized method of beautification, in the hands of the newly founded municipality. As Hayrullah Efendi pointed out, Mezre had a crucial advantage compared to other

³⁶¹ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 47, 7 September 1884.

³⁶² *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 41, 26 [29] July 1884; no. 51, 5 [6] October 1884.

³⁶³ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*.

cities in Anatolia: it was new, it was malleable, it was not like Harput where urban transformation would necessitate demolishing the old built environment and would need coercive measures.

As a result, Mezre became a laboratory in the 1880s and 90s for planned urbanism, for the designing of grid-style neighborhoods. As a rare stroke of luck, we have a plan of Mezre in the last page of the Provincial Yearbook of 1894-95 (Figure 5-4). The plan is so accurate that it exactly fits today's map of Elazığ (Figure 5-5). Mezre here consists of three main neighborhoods: the original *Çarşı* neighborhood where the Governor's house, the military headquarters, the mosque and the market are placed; *İcadiye* neighborhood in its north, and *Nail Bey* neighborhood in its west. And the last of these was designed in a perfect grid style.³⁶⁴ One would question whether this plan reflected reality or just intentions, were the *Nail Bey* neighborhood not to be found in today's Elazığ with the exact same plan and same name (see the lower left parts of the figures below). This proves that sometime between 1884 and 1894 a grid-style neighborhood was added into the built environment of Mezre as demanded on the pages of *Mamuretülaziz* in 1883-84. Still today, in the entire area of the city of Elazığ, with lots of newer neighborhoods, *Nail Bey* neighborhood is one of the few grid-planned places, and it is by far the most homogeneously organized one with its bigger blocks.

³⁶⁴ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Mamuretülaziz*, vol. 8 (Mamuretülaziz: Mamuretülaziz Matbaası, 1895).

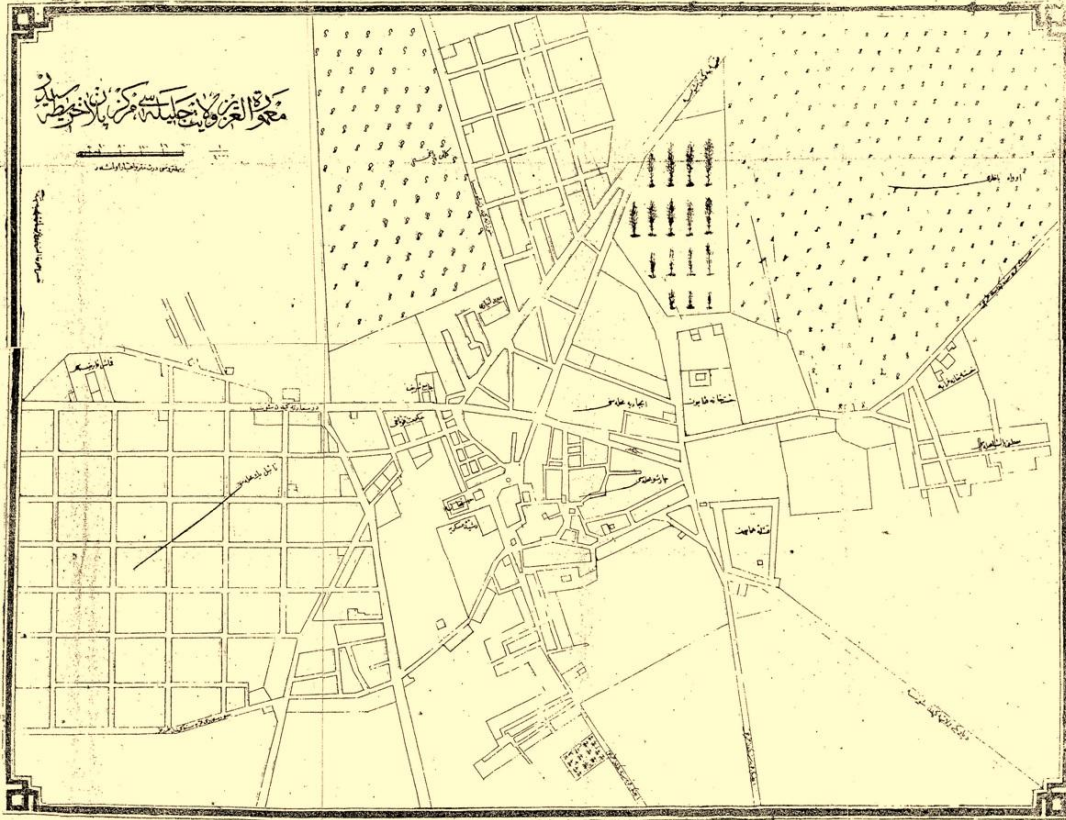


Figure 5-4: The Plan of Mezre, 1894-95.³⁶⁵



Figure 5-5: The Map of Downtown Elaziğ, 2015.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

The historic map also shows the initial steps of the town's growth to the north along the road to Harput. For example, some parts of today's *İzzet Paşa* neighborhood were built but not named; it was also in grid-style (see the upper center parts of the figures). In other words, Mezre seems to be gradually losing the disorganized suburban character that used to give the town its farm-like, pastoral, non-urban look. The spatio-cultural choices of the bourgeoisie began to change even though their economic activity did not alter much. From the 1880s on, both Harput and Mezre wanted to own everything a microcosm of life had to have. Mezre acquired urban functions, while Harput struggled to get some of the political functions. The division of labor between the two parts of the dual city began to cease to satisfy both parts' ambitions for absolute autonomy. Hence, the equilibrium of unequals broke down. But this does not mean that Mezre lost its bourgeois character and its beauty. On the contrary, it turned into a pleasant *and* convenient city in the middle of a region composed of either old, crowded, disorderly towns or simple villages. Mezre was still a place that had unexpectedly beautiful features, as testified by Ferdinand Brockes, who entered Mezre on 22 January, 1899:

Mesereh resembled a small German country town. When we looked at the city from afar, it made us feel at home, but unlike other cities in the Orient, not only when we saw it from outside, but also when we actually entered the town, it felt the same. Until now, in Asiatic Turkey, I haven't seen any city with such beautiful wide streets and pleasant houses.³⁶⁷

Characteristics of Duality

In 1884, the town of Mamuretülaziz (Harput) accommodated five of every six individuals in the dual city. 12,974 people were registered in Harput, whereas 2,674 heads were counted in

³⁶⁶ I have formatted the image taken from Google Maps by removing the labels and by slightly rotating the image to make it correspond to the 1894 plan.

³⁶⁷ Ferdinand Brockes, *Quer durch Klein-Asien; Bilder von einer Winterreise durch das armenische Notstandsgebiet* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1900), 111.

Mamuretülaziz “proper” (“*nefs-i*”), namely in Mezre.³⁶⁸ The accounts that keep telling us Harput was replaced by Mezre/Elazığ in 1835 could not be more wrong. Fifty years after Reşid Mehmed Pasha’s arrival in the farm-village called ‘farm of landlords,’ the village had only turned into a small town, but not into a proper city. Neither did it swallow and kill the old city on the summit of the hill. The story of Harput’s dying because of Mezre, however, has been quite strong. When Şemseddin Ünlü, who was born in Harput in 1928, wrote his novel *The Uppertown* (Yukarışehir) in 1986, it was not a surprise that it won the Orhan Kemal Prize for Literature, since the award was dedicated to acclaim realist works on provincial life. At the end of the day, the novel was about a gloomy small town that was completely abandoned by the state.

Salih Sıtkı Paşa had no pity for anyone. He also did what he said about the center of the province. He left alone the entire city, one hour away on foot, and he brought the center to Mezre. He turned the Uppertown into a subprovince [*sancak*] and appointed a subprovincial governor [*mutasarrıf*]. The wise people of the old town, with the town itself, felt the pain deep in their hearth as if fatally wounded.³⁶⁹

The mistaken historical memory is a projection of real experiences in mistaken form. The generation that knew the old Harput but witnessed the decline of the old town experienced something genuine. They produced inaccurate history not because they remembered wrong or because memory distorted the facts, but only because the dual existence in mutuality was beyond their imagination. Harput was really turned into a ruin in the 1930s and 1940s; one cannot exaggerate the disappearance of a thousand-year old city in a few decades. Şemseddin Ünlü was one of the insider-outsider authors of this loss. Like many other intellectuals, he had left Harput

³⁶⁸ *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 21, 4 March 1884.

³⁶⁹ “Kimsenin gözünün yaşına bakmadı Salih Sıtkı Paşa; vilayet merkezi konusunda da dediğini yaptırdı. Yaya yürüyüşüyle bir saat uzaklıktaki koca kenti kendi haline bıraktı, vilayet merkezini Mezre’ye aldı. Yukarışehir’e sancak dedi, mutasarrıf atadı. Eski kentin gün görmüşleri, yaşlı kentle birlikte, ölümcül bir yara almış gibi, acıyı yüreklerinin içinde, ta derinlerde duydular.” Şemseddin Ünlü, *Yukarışehir*, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: Dünya Kitapları, 2004), 97.

for Istanbul at a young age, and later he wrote an elegy for his hometown, perhaps when he recognized the inescapable reality of its disappearance.

İshak Sunguroğlu was another native of Harput, who was born there and left there and wrote about it (also see Ch. 12). Sunguroğlu was born in 1888 in Harput and moved to Istanbul in 1922. In 1944, after reading an article on Harput's unfortunate situation published in an Elazığ paper, *Turan*, which left him in tears, he began writing on his childhood memories of Harput. Over the years he extended the scope of his research, visited Elazığ for twenty days in 1948, and collected all kinds of stories and documents related to Harput's history and culture. He published the first volume of *On the Way to Harput (Harput Yollarında)* in 1958. In ten years, he published another three volumes and it is known that he was preparing the fifth volume when he died in 1977. *On the Way to Harput's* size and quality is beyond comparison to any published work of local history in Turkey. And this monumental work was based on a genuine experience of loss. When he visited Elazığ, Sunguroğlu of course went to Harput, too, and saw with his own eyes the complete disappearance not only of people but also of houses and neighborhoods.³⁷⁰ He could easily compare this scene to turn-of-the-century Harput; the contrast was striking. But it is most interesting that even he resorted to the historical scheme that Harput's star began to fade away as Mezre's began to shine in the mid-nineteenth century (203), even though he had experienced it otherwise. Here, far more than progressivism or nostalgia, a narrative ideology that lacks a spot for dual and coeval historical change seems to determine the historical story.

If the popular version of animosity towards duality reveals itself in nostalgic accounts, the academic version of it relies on the frame of colonialism. As I summed up at the end of the previous chapter, the literature on colonial urbanism in particular has conceptualized spatial

³⁷⁰ Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında*, 1958, 1:1–8.

duality as an artificial addition to the unified nature of the native urban setting. Even though the facts are solid enough to argue that in colonial Middle Eastern and North African cities the new city was built for white men and most native inhabitants were confined to the old town, the theoretical perspective that sees duality as an index of domination tends to privilege only one type of relation between power and space. The assumption seems to be that intimacy in both practical life and theoretical abstraction is and should be the right way of engaging with the other.³⁷¹ Hence, spatial separation as well as socio-spatial distance among agents are seen as (mere) instantiations of other inequalities in the domains of economy and power. Accordingly, Mezre could be a perfect example of an ‘internal-colonial town’ which was created by the modern state in the periphery of the empire for its own agents and their collaborators. Elazığ’s being one of the strongholds of the far-right nationalist movement in Turkey supports this thesis, not to mention the demolition of Harput during the formative phase of nation-state building in the 1930s, and nor yet to mention Elazığ’s serving as the military headquarters for the state during the Armenian massacres in 1895-96 and the Dersim massacres of Kurds in 1937-39. One could easily conclude, as I had at the beginning of my research, that Elazığ was a state project, an artificial town, or a commanding outpost in the East.

But evidence suggests otherwise. It is not inaccurate that at many points in time Mezre/Elazığ worked for the central government as a military and administrative unit in the East. However, this view is not only limited to how the state sees things, but it also ignores the fact that the formation of Mezre was never intended, ordered or even facilitated by the center. Instead, Mezre was an outcome of local suburbanization as much as the existence of state

³⁷¹ For a critique of this assumption, see Keane’s work for the theoretical abstraction and Sennett’s for practical life. Keane, “Self-Interpretation, Agency, and the Objects of Anthropology”; Richard Sennett, *Respect: The Formation of Character in an Age of Inequality* (London: Penguin, 2004).

officials and, even more, the latter mattered only when the state actually did not care about Mezre. In other words, infrastructural transformation (à la Giddens), war-making (à la Tilly) and the control of populations (à la Scott and Foucault) might of course have been intended by the imperial governments for the East, but not urban transformation. City-building has an excess of meaning for the locality that cannot be paid off by overarching central projects; the urban by definition interests the life world of the urbanites. The census records mentioned above defy not only the stories about Mezre's swallowing Harput, but also those of Mezre's being the state's agent to dominate the others: of 12,974 people living in Harput, 5,125 were non-Muslims (39.5%) and 7,849 were Muslims, whereas Mezre was composed of 2,126 non-Muslims (79.5%) and 548 Muslim inhabitants. In other words, Mezre was a town where the official local governance was seated but also where every 4 persons out of 5 were Armenians.³⁷² These numbers resist the idea of tracing the origins of nationalist Elazığ to the Ottoman Mezre and an abstract state-formation project.

Ironically enough, Mezre was the only capital town in the Ottoman East, except Van, with a majority of Armenians. And there is no evidence that this changed even after the Armenian massacres in 1895-96, perhaps until after the 1915 deportations. Mezre was a special case where a part of the Armenian bourgeoisie and the class of (mostly Muslim) state officials collaboratively created a separate place to live. I contend that the disappearance of Harput and the transformation of Elazığ into a unified city were not premeditated, nor were they foreseeable from the natives' point of view. As seen in the conflict over the post office, the two parts of the dual city resisted unification and protected their relative autonomy. Alterity in space, to use Sahlins' terminology, was not "a simple function of outside domination;" we need to count in

³⁷² *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 21, 4 March 1884.

“the local desires of alterity,” too.³⁷³ And I argue that the local desires of alterity in Harput/Mezre can be explained by the theory of suburbanization, which refers to spatial expression of the cultural differentiation of a newly rising bourgeois middle-classes under certain historical conditions. Furthermore, I add that, apart from bourgeois suburbanization, the idea of spatial separation of power center from ordinary urban life that was in effect in Mezre from even before the 1830s (see, Ch. 1) structured the sustainability of the Harput/Mezre duality. Bourdieu’s ideas on social distinction were well known in the Ottoman East by experience. You see it in Reşid Mehmed Pasha, who mimicked the feudal flamboyance of the landed nobility when he first moved to Mezre. The Ottoman governors sent from the center to Harput/Mezre did not create any Others, did not create alterity, but did fit into the political cosmology of the local.

The contrast between Mezre and Harput was undeniable in the beginning of the twentieth century. Contrary to Mezre’s “wide streets,” Gertrude Bell observed in Harput in 1910 that “the streets are so narrow that a cart can hardly pass along the cobbled ways.”³⁷⁴ In 1928, Melville Chater visited Harput on his way to Kurdistan and described it in vivid detail:

So I wandered through the tortuous, high-walled streets of the town—remotely perched among crags, like some dilapidated eagle’s nest—its quaint bazaar crammed with tiny open-faced shops. Windowless and doorless, save for the slablike shutters which were slammed to at night, they resembled supersized packing cases, set up on end with the lid off.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ Marshall Sahlins, “Alterity and Autochthony: Austronesian Cosmographies of the Marvelous. The 2008 Raymond Firth Lecture,” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 1 (2012): 151.

³⁷⁴ Bell, *Amurath to Amurath*, 330.

³⁷⁵ Melville Chater, “The Kizilbash Clans of Kurdistan,” *National Geographic Magazine* 54 (October 1928): 485.



Figure 5-6: A scene from Harput.³⁷⁶

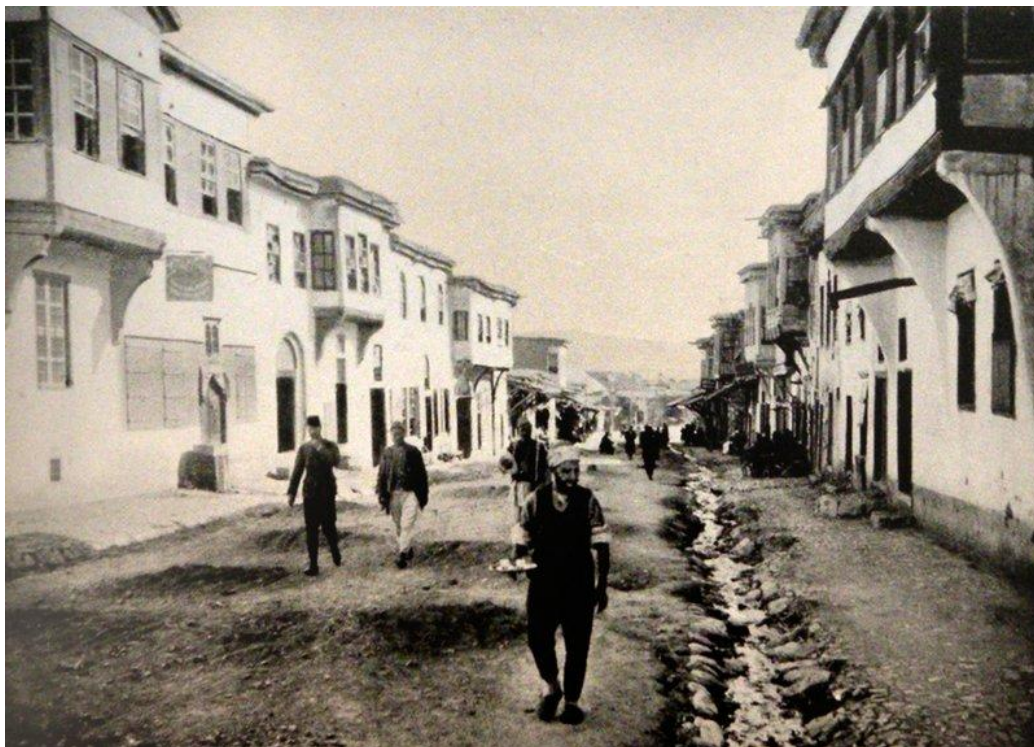


Figure 5-7: A scene from Mezre, 1914.

³⁷⁶ The source of both pictures is <http://www.houshamadyan.org>.

The images clearly show the contrast between the old town and the new town (Figure 5-6, Figure 5-7). Not unlike colonial towns, Harput and Mezre represented the primitive and the modern parts of the dual city. Nevertheless, until the first decades of the twentieth century, there was no indication that the people of Harput moved or wanted to move to Mezre. As will be shown in detail in Chapter 12, only in the Republican period was the dual city targeted as an untenable setting. For instance, in 1923 the official local paper of the new national regime was very critical of *Darü'l-Hilâfe*'s (the local office of the caliphate) being in Harput rather than in Mezre:

However, our province cannot benefit from the existence of this institution. This institution which was founded on behalf of the province lies at a distance of an hour, in the center of the Harput district. This institution was created for the province and it is the province's due. There are no sanitary or social grounds for having it in the district center. All along it was in a district center one hour away, namely in Harput; therefore, the budget has been wasted due to redundant expenditures for the institution. This is what the guardians of the country think. We plead from the office in charge to save us from this unusual situation.³⁷⁷

From then on, Harput was seen as a residue of the pre-modern times, as a ruin to be abandoned. But until then, Harput and Mezre lived as a locally created dual town. Mezre was a special suburban unit that brought together the new state elite and the new commercial elite of the Ottoman Empire. Neither Mezre nor Harput can be taken as the origin of Republican Elazığ. The truth is that both parts of the dual town called Harput-Mezre died when a single city called Elazığ was founded in the 1930s.

³⁷⁷ *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 40, 8 July 1923, in Erdal Açıkses and Zafer Çakmak, eds., *Satvet-i Milliye Gazetesi (Transkripsiyon ve Asıl Metin)* (Elazığ: Eleksav, 2003), 41.

Part III: Disrespectful People, Respectful Relations

Part III will tell the story of American missionaries and their relationship with Armenian Protestants in Harput. Chapter 6 will give a detailed account of the founding of Harput Mission Station in the 1850s and 1860s. The following chapter will focus on a failed love affair between an American missionary woman and an Armenian Protestant man. Here, I will lay out my inferences on colonial intimacy and distance. In the third chapter, I will put under the microscope a group of disrespectful missionaries, namely the Harput Clique as I call them, and their infamy even among their own missionary colleagues. The last chapter will turn the camera towards the Gregorian Armenian intellectuals and their critique of Protestant Armenians. The theoretical project of this Part consists of proposing short-distance social relations as a viable alternative to intimacy in relations with the ‘other.’

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Chapter 6: The Making of Harput Mission Station

Introduction

In the 1850s and 1860s, while Mezre consolidated itself as a suburban town for the new rich and the new bureaucratic class in the Harput region, the imperial center was going through a historic process no less than a cultural renaissance. On the one hand, the Imperial Reform Edict of 1856 promised equality in all public and civic matters to all subjects regardless of religion. On the other, educated new middle classes rose against the authoritarian rule of the Ottoman dynasty and of the dynastic elite families. The Armenian intellectuals' movement, which culminated in the Armenian Constitution in 1863, managed to limit the power of the patriarchate and the aristocratic families.³⁷⁸ The political unrest among the Ottoman intellectuals and bureaucrats paved the way for the Young Ottoman movement in 1865-67, which would bring about the declaration of the constitutional regime in 1876. In other words, the 1860s were marked by the beginning of bourgeois revolution and the emergence of a liberal public sphere in the empire.

New ideas were articulated by an emerging class of technocrat-intellectuals who aspired to reconcile their traditional society with western modernity. The commercial and intellectual connections between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, which had flourished since the 1830s, had created these cosmopolitan agents of reform, especially in the nodal cities of the trans-imperial economy. Port-cities were the primary junctions of the capitalist world economy as well as of liberal ideas; they were the quintessential places of trans-regional, trans-religion and trans-ethnic

³⁷⁸ Vartan Artinian, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Ermeni Anayasası'nın Doğuşu, 1839-1863*, trans. Zülal Kılıç (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2004).

encounters. The cities of the interior, on the other hand, were not cosmopolitan enough to be admired by future historians. Liberal ideas disseminated into the inner cities, too, but the periphery generally followed a different path, a crooked line. Engagement with bourgeois or socialist projects was mediated by the outgoing locals rather than the incoming foreigners. In provincial towns, strangers would occasionally pass by, but never stay. Liberalism was a story that was told, not lived. In this peripheral setting, however, an exceptional group appeared in the middle of the century.

Missionaries came to the inner cities one day, and unlike other visitors, they stayed tomorrow, and the next day, and the day after, until everyone admitted the fact that they were not going to leave. The coming of missionaries to Anatolian towns was an extraordinary event not because eastern people were encountering western modernity for the first time (remember the tradition of out-migration in the region) but because the encounter happened in their home towns. And it continued to be extraordinary since the missionary presence was always marginal and outside of ordinary life. Unlike the port-cities, these towns never became cosmopolitan despite the missionaries' decades-long stay. Unlike in a city, in a town strangers stay strangers. Thanks to their status in trans-imperial power politics, missionaries have always been too visible compared with their actual effect on social life—both in the nineteenth-century press and in historical accounts written today. In reality, they never ceased to keep the locals at arms' length, and vice versa. When some from both sides made considerable advances towards each other, they were called outcasts by their respective communities. The following chapters will focus particularly on these distant relations.

The missionary encounter was a remarkable—even a weird—one also because the newcomers were anti-cosmopolitan, undermining everything that was expected from them in the

age of westernization. They were men of principle, not men of negotiation. They had come to tell the truth, not to exchange ideas or cultures. A foreign businessman would taste as many local customs as he could during a short stay; a missionary would taste few during a life-long stay. This perplexing combination of physical proximity and social distance differentiated missionaries from other foreign faces in the empire. Their arrogant overconfidence was almost a blasphemy to the local people, considering that the latter treated missionaries as guests in the beginning. They turned out to be bad guests, though, who did not comply with any of the unwritten rules of hospitality.

Part III will tell the story of the American missionaries in Harput. Very recently a number of my colleagues have delved into the history of missionaries in Ottoman Anatolia—a hitherto virgin area. Before this recent turn, perhaps the first attempt to explore the subject was Moranian’s dissertation (1994) on American missionaries in relation to the Armenian question, although it was limited to post-1915 era.³⁷⁹ Hans-Lukas Kieser’s *Der verpasste Friede* (2000), which is yet to be published in English, was the only work that made extensive use of the missionary archives and is still the most comprehensive work for the eastern provinces.³⁸⁰ But in the five years between 2008 and 2013, six dissertations appeared directly on the topic, all of the best quality.³⁸¹ These works have given me a considerable advantage since I do not need to tell

³⁷⁹ Suzanne Elizabeth Moranian, “The American Missionaries and the Armenian Question: 1915-1927” (PhD Dissertation, The University of Wisconsin, 1994).

³⁸⁰ I consult the Turkish translation. Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Iskalanmış Barış: Doğu Vilayetleri’nde Misyonerlik, Etnik Kimlik ve Devlet 1839-1938* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005).

³⁸¹ Devrim Ümit, “The American Protestant Missionary Network in Ottoman Turkey, 1876-1914: Political and Cultural Reflections of the Encounter” (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 2008); Zeynep Türkyılmaz, “Anxieties of Conversion: Missionaries, State and Heterodox Communities in the Late Ottoman Empire” (PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 2009); Cemal Yetkiner, “American Missionaries, Armenian Community, and the Making of Protestantism in the Ottoman Empire, 1820-1860” (PhD Dissertation, CUNY, 2010); Elizabeth W. Shelton, “Faith, Freedom, and Flag: The Influence of American Missionaries in Turkey on Foreign Affairs, 1830-1880” (PhD Dissertation, Georgetown University, 2011); Emrah Şahin, “Responding to American Missionary Expansion: An Examination of Ottoman Imperial Statecraft, 1880-1910” (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 2011); Mehmet Ali Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’: Elias Riggs

the now well-known story of the American missionary enterprise in Ottoman Anatolia. Moreover, it is now easier for me to distance my story from the heroic narrative of pioneers in Oriental lands. The following chapters will look at the missionary history from a local point of view, from Harput. The world around, or the context, will be touched on only as an extension of the local (or the text).

Besides Kieser, the only scholar who has written on the local history of American missionaries in Ottoman Anatolia is Barbara J. Merguerian. Her work is particularly crucial for this study since Harput Mission occupies a special place in her writings. Even more so because I became aware of two of her articles only after I did research in the missionary archive and after I had ambitiously become interested in the same stories. However, when I examined Merguerian's work on Wheeler and Babcock, I realized that we read the same letters and memoirs from a completely different perspective. Reading her work helped me articulate my own interpretation even further, by contrast with hers. As a result, I became convinced that I needed to give my own account of these historic figures at the expense of occasionally making use of the same letters she had relied on. I hope that this exchange will turn into a productive debate among historians of the missionary encounter.

The most important point of departure for the following account is the awareness that most existing works on the subject have secular and humanistic assumptions or desires that underlie their analysis. These are crystallized in the notion of *encounter*, which has almost become a euphemism for the celebration of taming the extremes of the parties that encounter.

The basic assumption is that both parties to the encounter are parochial subjects who, thanks to

(1810-1901) and American Missionary Activities in the Ottoman Empire" (PhD Dissertation, The University of Utah, 2013). In addition, Ertem's dissertation on famine devotes a considerable attention to missionaries and their relief efforts. Özge Ertem, "Eating the Last Seed: Famine, Empire, Survival and Order in Ottoman Anatolia in the Late Nineteenth Century" (PhD Dissertation, European University Institute, 2012).

the encounter, will be transformed into (or else be sacrificed in the formation of) the liberal subject that is just local enough and just global enough—nothing more. In this process, the excesses of both sides are truncated; getting into contact shatters the pomposity of the parties and short-circuits their disdain for the other. Encounter evokes mutual recognition across radically different worlds and this recognition helps to create the new subject who short-distances himself from both *encounterees* by taking on only the moderate qualities of each. This schema is humanistic in the sense that it assumes a morally good person and a social path to create him, and secular in the sense that disenchantment is necessary before both parties can meet on a middle ground. It is also progressivist, since humans are best turned into liberal subjects *anyway*, not unlike the destiny of the towns that move to the vast plains from their limited, old locations.

Most missionary histories of our age adopt this framework and focus on the encounter, the contact zone, the middle passage, namely on the dream space where no religious or parochial extremities can find shelter. Needless to say, only archaic scholars would consecrate today the evangelical overseas projects without taking the natives into consideration; this dead language can be found only in the nineteenth-century texts. Similarly, too much attention to the native projects is confined to nationalist anti-missionary accounts, like most Turkish-language works on missionaries. This second path can also be seen in critical scholarship on colonialism's history but, nevertheless, primordialism or nativism are not the coin of the day. Accordingly, the third and dominant paradigm is the encounter paradigm that highlights the exchange processes (like conversion) as correctives of headstrong ideologies, be they religious or nationalist. The convert as a way of being has become the proof of human malleability and of intellectual alternatives against hardcore projects. The advantages of the encounter paradigm are beyond doubt, but I contend that they come at the expense of condemning strong ideas and beliefs as archaic

phenomena. In such a historical setting, we tend to seek only pragmatics (it is a ‘site of struggle’) but not conviction. In the section (later in this Part) where I discuss the work of Ussama Makdisi, the most representative work of the encounter paradigm, I will further elaborate this criticism.

In Part III, then, I will dwell not on convergences, but on the divergence of the encountering worlds by focusing in the distancing attitude of the American missionaries and of local anti-missionary Armenian intellectuals. Instead of taking these two ‘sides’ as given and instead of highlighting the Protestant Armenians (the middle ground) as the ideal amalgam, I aim to give a central role in my story to exclusionist, self-opinionated, distancing people. I would like to rescue these ‘wicked’ people from the historians’ contempt; for a reason, of course. Two scenes helped me to frame the following chapters. One is the photographs of Malinowski in elegant white dress among semi-naked black natives in the Trobriand Islands. Given the indisputable contrast between the anthropologist and the native, this was a very colonial-looking scene. However, James Clifford’s remarks made me realize that it was only so if we assume an intrinsic connection between distancing and exploitation. Although Clifford was wary about the ethnographer’s self-distancing (he did not say anything more than “an intermediate formation”), he was right to point out the fact that the ethnographer does not (and should not) “go native.”³⁸² This was an early revelation for me; since then, I have paid attention to numerous instances in critical scholarship in which distance is taken as something negative. Maybe, it is not.

The second scene comes from Richard Sennett’s *Respect*. The scene is one of encounter between predominantly white middle-class social workers and the predominantly black and poor residents of the Cabrini Green public housing complex in Chicago. The question lies in the attitude of the social workers, which was generally distant, cold, and sometimes even rude. The

³⁸² For Clifford’s discussion on these photographs published in *Coral Gardens and Their Magic* in 1935, see James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 1997), 74.

scene immediately invites all the catchwords of the critical turn in anthropology: governmentality, colonial supremacy, racial segregation, and what not. However, as Sennett points out, the distant behavior of the social-workers was also a way of refusing to act as if inequality can be overcome by sympathy: “Crossing the boundary of inequality might require reserve on the part of the stronger person making the passage; reserve would acknowledge the difficulty, distance could make a signal of respect, if a peculiar one.”³⁸³

Both scenes suggest a disconnection between individual sentiments towards the other and the character of the relationship with the other. Rather than adopting Sennett’s reading of the behavior of those in a position of power, I conclude that distance does not tell us anything about the parties’ aims: neither Malinowski nor the social workers had to be respectful people. But, the relationship might still have been a respectful relationship. As E.P. Thompson taught us decades ago, class relations might precede the existence of classes; and, as the affective turn recently taught us, social feelings might precede the existence of individual feelings.³⁸⁴ American missionaries in Turkey were generally attentive to the concerns of the local people, but I am interested in the occasions when they were not. And, I suggest, there was a relation of respect exactly when they were not.

The present chapter will give a detailed account of the founding of Harput Mission Station by American missionaries in the 1850s and 1860s. The following chapter will focus on a failed love affair between an American missionary woman and an Armenian Protestant man. Here, I will take issue with Merguerian’s interpretation of the affair and lay out my inferences on colonial intimacy and distance. In the third chapter of the Part, I will put under the microscope a

³⁸³ Sennett, *Respect*, 20.

³⁸⁴ Rei Terada, *Feeling in Theory: Emotion after the “Death of the Subject”* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

group of disrespectful missionaries, the Harput Clique as I call them, and their infamy even among their own missionary colleagues. The last chapter will turn the camera towards the Gregorian Armenian intellectuals and their critique of Protestant Armenians. Even though this last topic needs further research based on Armenian sources, I aim to present the other side of the picture, namely the other encounteree, in order to demonstrate the triadic relationship among natives, converts and missionaries *after* the encounter.

The Coming of the American Missionaries to the Harput Region

American missionaries spread to Anatolian towns in the course of the 1850s, right after British Ambassador Stratford Canning obtained an imperial ordinance from the Ottoman Sultan on behalf of the Protestant subjects in November 1850. The ordinance officially recognized a completely new community—the Protestants—separate from Armenians and Catholics (the latter was granted the same status in 1830).³⁸⁵ It was the first link in the chain of revolutionary events in the socio-religious life of the long decade of the 1850s, to be succeeded by the official transmission of the ordinance to the local governors (1854) and most significantly by the issuance of the famous Imperial Edict of 1856, which granted legal equality to all citizens regardless of their religion and ethnicity. In the same decade, dozens of towns in the interior were reached and settled one after another by the American missionaries.

In the Harput region, evangelical missions arrived first in the town of Arapgir (of course, the new Arapgir). George W. Dunmore made an excursion to the town from Diyarbekir on August 17, 1853, and stayed there around three months to get to know the region until he was

³⁸⁵ See Chapter XXIV in Rufus Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1872).

joined by his wife and the Clark family later, on October 1, 1853.³⁸⁶ The Dunmores soon returned to Diyarbekir, while William Clark officially launched the Arapgir mission. They were members of the generation of pioneers in the land beyond the already Europeanized port-cities. These early years of trans-regional and trans-cultural encounter, thus, bore the formative elements of the long-standing matrix of social relations among Armenians, Americans, Muslims and the state bureaucracy. Clark's first letters from the field are instructive about the world of Arapgir people. Even though the existence of American faces in these remote areas of the eastern provinces was almost unprecedented, the bourgeois culture of the town of Arapgir, and its remittance economy, had furnished the town with cosmopolitanism.

In Arabkir, there is much natural intelligence, with great independence and freedom of thought, a strong desire to study, discuss, examine, and a marked decision as well as pride of character. They are a kind of aristocracy in this region. This has resulted from their contact with the world. No city in the interior of Asia Minor is like Arabkir in this respect. They marry very young; and the men soon leave their families, go to Constantinople, Smyrna, Beyroot or Aleppo. They remain from five to ten years, acquire a little fortune, and then return. This custom prevails not only in the city, but in the villages around. In these different cities they come in contact more or less with Protestants, and Protestant missionaries, and in the influences of Christian religion. In returning, therefore, they bring something of the gospel and something of Frank enterprise. This custom of temporary emigration has given a peculiar character to the people. Though there is not a Frank in the city, the people have many Frank ideas and customs, and are somewhat elevated above others in this part of the empire.³⁸⁷

Clark was talking about Armenians; he referred to the influence of Christian religion simply because the Church of Gregorian Armenians was considered by the missionaries corrupt and quite far from genuine Christianity. Arapgir (as well as Eğin) was a quintessential place of the rising Armenian middle classes of the nineteenth century. As seen in Part II, the town was created as a bourgeois suburb and complied with the rules of progressive time thanks to its

³⁸⁶ "Diyarbekir – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, December 20, 1853" in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 50 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1854), 206.

³⁸⁷ "Arabkir – Letter from Mr. Clark, February 3, 1854" in *Ibid.*, 50:145.

competence in manufacture and trade. As Mezre also was, this town of new middle classes was more open to secular worldviews and different religious currents than many other towns. However, of course, the community, namely the Armenians, was officially a religious community and represented by the Gregorian church and the patriarch. Therefore, the missionaries encountered serious reaction first and foremost from the Armenian Church and the older and more conservative inhabitants. Missionaries were never considered a religious threat to the Muslim community.

Accordingly, in his first months in Arapgir, Clark and his followers faced persecution, threats, mob violence and even beatings by the authorities—namely by the Church and also by the official city administration. Eventually, the victims sent a letter to the Governor Ömer Pasha of the Harput Province and asked for his protection. The Pasha responded very enthusiastically: he immediately fired the director of the city, appointed a new one, and sent orders requiring “all the inhabitants of the city to treat me [Clark] with special honor” as he was “an honored guest of the Sultan.” Suddenly, everyone’s behavior changed towards Clark, who heard people now saying that “the Protestants have the power.”³⁸⁸ At least for another three decades, namely until the missionaries began to pose a political threat to the Ottoman government, the two would stay good friends. They were religiously and politically distant enough that socially they could live together without threatening one another. In Harput, too, it was always the Pasha to whom the missionaries first resorted whenever a problem arose.

The coming of the missionaries and the emergence of a new belief system instantly became the talk of the town. It was the trendy topic. “‘Discussion, discussion, discussion,’ said a brother to me to-day. ‘We hear nothing in the city but discussion upon the gospel and the

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 50:144.

principles of Protestants.” The rich and powerful Armenians had frequent closed meetings about reforming their church according to Protestant lessons since “they like Protestantism, [...] but not the name.” The bourgeoisie was powerful enough to dismiss the danger of persecution—in actual practice they were patrons of the church, anyway—but they were dependent on their trustworthy identity in the entire region, even empire, in order not to damage business relations. Their priorities made Clark formulate another long-lasting critique of the missionaries, which we will see in the Harput case in detail, about the worldly-mindedness of the middle class Armenians: “They love the world better than the truth. They seek the favor of men, rather than the favor of God.” They constantly checked the Armenian Bishop’s harsh treatment towards the Protestants (in order not to anger the government again), but they never left their church either.³⁸⁹

The Dunmore family from Diyarbekir re-joined the Clark family in Arapgir in May 1854, perhaps in order to search out suitable places for new mission outstations. Accordingly, they decided to send one of their “native helpers” in Arapgir to Harput.³⁹⁰ And, in the first week of July, the Clarks and Dunmores also went to Harput to investigate the state of things in the capital city of the province. As a matter of fact, the Americans were welcomed more warmly than they expected. The Governor Ömer Pasha, as soon as he heard of their arrival, sent a government servant who brought them to a comfortable house to stay as the Pasha’s guests. The next morning they rode down from Harput to Mezre to visit the Pasha in his reception room, and he

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 50:144–146. In a later letter, Benjamin Parsons wrote from Sivas: “The Armenians of Sivas are a very active and enterprising race; but the great majority are lamentably indifferent to whatever relates to their spiritual and eternal welfare. Having been obliged to have considerable dealings with them, I am constrained to regard each a sort of Ishmaelite. The extraordinary worldly-mindedness, selfishness and deceptiveness of the people are, I think, in a great measure attributable to the fact that the Pasha, and his almost countless subordinates, make the city and its neighborhood the sphere of their oppressive operations. ... Each [Armenian] is for himself. Each strives to get money, at whatever sacrifice of conscience. Truth, righteousness, justice, common honesty, became ashamed, or were frightened away, centuries ago; and now ‘a faithful man’ is hard to find...” See “Letter from Mr. Benjamin Parsons, January 17, 1856” in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 52 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1856), 116.

³⁹⁰ “Arabkir – Letter from Mr. Clark, June 25, 1854” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1854, 50:273.

treated them with great cordiality and said that everything he had done (regarding the protection of Protestants) was his duty and that they should send a message to him whenever they needed help. The chief secretary (perhaps the *defterdar*) also left a very positive impression on Clark and Dunmore; even a Muslim *derviş* visited them in the khan and asked for a Turkish gospel after expressing his dissatisfaction with the religion he had been instructed in. As a result, the Americans left Harput determined to request a missionary force from Boston for Harput.³⁹¹

The year of 1854 thus witnessed a tremendous rise in the public talk about missionaries and Protestantism. The official classes even in the small towns generally behaved positively, if not interestedly, towards the Americans.³⁹² The city governor of Çemişgezek, for example, obtained the scripture in Turkish and openly discussed its doctrines in public venues without any bias. As mentioned, the new Armenian bourgeoisie welcomed the trend, too, but they also kept their connection with the Church. Like the majority of ordinary Armenian people, however, the Church put a distance between itself and the Protestants, if it did not openly oppose them. Kurdish communities in the rural areas were another story; some of them, to the great surprise of the missionaries, showed sympathy to Protestant belief. In fact, a Kurdish chief, Ali Gako, from the Çemişgezek area declared himself a Protestant and, moreover, he ordered his villagers to become Protestants.³⁹³ He even visited Dunmore after he moved to Harput, stayed as his guest and participated in the Bible classes with great interest.³⁹⁴ In other words, the first years of

³⁹¹ “Arabkir – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, July 28, 1854” in *Ibid.*, 50:349.

³⁹² Clark wrote in a later occasion: “With respect to Turkish authorities, though there have been a very few exceptions, the majority are deserving of unqualified praise for their defense of religious liberty in behalf of the Protestants. Generally speaking, in our field, the Turks are our firm and decided friends; and not unfrequently they are our coadjutors in the work of evangelization. Were it expedient, we might present numerous facts relating to this Turkish class of the population, which would excite surprise, and show that many are not far from the kingdom of God.” See “Armenians – Station Reports” in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 51 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1855), 278.

³⁹³ “Arabkir – Sketches of Native Assistants” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1854, 50:380–81.

³⁹⁴ “Kharput – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, June 20, 1855” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1855, 51:340.

missionary presence in the Ottoman East invaded the urban and even the rural public spheres, perhaps dominated idle conversations, and brought a new, fashionable trend into the life there, with all its friends and foes.

Dunmore visited Harput again in February 1855 and spent a month there. He met with many open-minded Armenians including a priest who believed in and lived according to Protestant doctrines but, for the time being, stayed under the Church. It seemed to be only a matter of time before they would come together, leave the old Church and organize an Evangelical Church.³⁹⁵ Finally Dunmore moved to Harput and officially launched the new missionary station in May.³⁹⁶ Even his first letter in June reflected the sudden impact of Protestantism on the Armenian community. Apparently, the men of the patriarchate were seeking ways to prevent people from going to the Protestants' Sabbath meetings, and they approached the notables of the community for advice. They were told that the only way to attract people's attention was to do the same thing the Americans did, namely preaching the Bible in their everyday language instead of ritualistically reading the ancient texts in the church. Similar demands were brought forward about modernizing religious education by using American textbooks, too. And it worked; the Armenian Church let a young priest—who had actually been tutored by the missionaries—conduct the meetings in the modern language. As a result, as its opponents saw the process, “the stupid people of Kharpoot were all becoming Protestants, without being aware of it.”³⁹⁷

Optimism was everywhere. Rufus Anderson, the renowned secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1832-1866), wrote in October from Aleppo on

³⁹⁵ “Armenians – Station Reports” in *Ibid.*, 51:279–80.

³⁹⁶ American Board in Turkey, “Personnel records for George W. Dunmore,” ARIT Archive, Item #12084, <http://dlir.org/archive/items/show/12084> (accessed August 16, 2015)

³⁹⁷ “Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, June 20, 1855” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1855, 51:340.

Aintab's 700 people coming to Protestant meetings that, "I found it hard to realize that the large audience before me was actually Protestant."³⁹⁸ Around the same time, Jasper N. Balls was delivering news from Caesarea about the progress: "It is now rare to find one who will attempt to defend his church; and hardly any acknowledge 'the traditions of the elders.'"³⁹⁹ The 1850s, in other words, were years of social transformation in the sense that new ideas, new generations and new classes were born throughout the empire, especially among the non-Muslim communities, most notably among the Greeks in the west and Armenians in the east. Even in the eastern provinces, print capitalism helped to imagine the new Protestant community and attracted the younger generation, which was gradually exposed to European-style education with special emphasis on books. A year after Dunmore's transfer to Harput, two bookshops were opened in the dual city—one in Harput and the other one in Mezre.⁴⁰⁰ Bibles in both modern Armenian and in Turkish were available to the people of the region. It was very soon (August 1856) that Augustus Walker informed the Boston headquarters that the Kurdish Bible also reached Diyarbekir.⁴⁰¹

The Cemetery Conflicts and Reaction towards the Missionaries

The persecution against the Protestants took different forms. In Maden, for example, priests publically anathematized them and forbade the Armenian community from having interaction with them. In Arapgir, they tried to separate the wife of a Protestant from her husband; she was even taken by force to another house until the Ottoman administrator intervened and sent the woman back to her husband's house. But perhaps the most symbolic and

³⁹⁸ "Letter from Dr. Anderson, Aleppo, Syria, October 27, 1855" in *The Missionary Herald*, 1856, 52:39.

³⁹⁹ "Letter from Mr. Ball, November 16, 1855" in *Ibid.*, 52:47.

⁴⁰⁰ "Armenians – Annual Meeting" in *Ibid.*, 52:268.

⁴⁰¹ "Diyarbekir – Letter from Mr. Walker, August 15, 1856" in *Ibid.*, 52:332.

the most widespread reaction of the Armenian community was to prevent the burial of Protestant Armenians in the Armenian cemeteries. It was such a common problem in the early years that the Pasha in Harput provided official letters in 1854 for the Protestants in Arapgir, in Maden, and in Eğin specifically to secure them their right to bury their dead in their old cemeteries.⁴⁰² In the next two years, however, conflicts over the burial grounds would only increase, and eventually Protestants would be assigned separate cemeteries.

In the last days of May 1856, the official correspondence tells us, the son of a Protestant Armenian named Tüfenkçi Ohannes died in Harput. According to Dunmore, he was not a Protestant, he only “frequently attended our meetings,” but nevertheless, he invited Dunmore, instead of an Armenian priest, to bury his child.⁴⁰³ Dunmore and his fellows were first stopped by some Armenians at the entrance of Ohannes’ house on the grounds that they needed to wait for the bishop, who was in a monastery out of town. Dunmore, as expected, rejected this offer since he was not under the authority of the bishop, and he continued to the cemetery. At the burial ground, there was a larger crowd of Armenians waiting. They at once prevented the bearer from laying down the child’s body, but Dunmore himself resumed the interrupted work, laid out the body and began covering the grave with earth. At that moment, the crowd—who had not, perhaps, dared to touch the American until then—took action and held Dunmore with a few men to prevent him from finishing the burial. By the time he had struggled and finally escaped from their hands, the body had already been removed from the grave which was being filled with stones. And two police officers (*zaptiye*) entered the scene.

The police stopped the fuss and ordered everyone to wait for the vice-governor to decide the issue. Since it was Ramadan, Ahmed Refit Efendi (*defterdar* [chief treasurer] and vice-

⁴⁰² *The Missionary Herald*, 1854, 50:349–50.

⁴⁰³ “Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, July 30, 1856” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1856, 52:334–335.

governor) appeared in his office only in the late afternoon. According to Dunmore, the vice-governor treated the committee of Armenian clergy quite distantly, whereas he welcomed Dunmore “with greatest civility, rising on his feet to greet me.” He asked the Bishop the age of the child and after having learned that the child was only three months old, he concluded that the child was an Armenian even if his father had become a Protestant. So, the body was allowed to be buried in the Armenian cemetery. On the other hand, he also gave a lesson to the bishop and the priests:

It is a year and a half since a similar difficulty occurred at Maden, and why have you not procured an order from Constantinople in all this time, if you do not wish the Protestants to bury their dead in your grounds? Away with you; go about your business and behave like men, you lawless set.⁴⁰⁴

Ahmed Refit Efendi’s words might have been even more offensive since the Armenians of Harput composed a petition to Istanbul (June 1) alleging that he had uttered unspeakable words against the Armenian community leaders when they went to him about the cemetery controversy.⁴⁰⁵ This local event was quite discomfiting for the central state because of its international repercussions,⁴⁰⁶ so the local governor Arif Pasha (July 1) and the Armenian patriarch in Istanbul (July 9) were warned to prevent similar future controversies between Armenian and Protestant communities.⁴⁰⁷ The Armenian patriarch and the head of the Armenian

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 52:335.

⁴⁰⁵ Moreover, they said, he even changed the assigned spot for the grave and had the body buried right in the middle of the cemetery; the claim of exhumation, on the other hand, was totally untrue. PMOA, HR.MKT, 158/100, 12 September 1856. The place of the grave in the cemetery seems to have been quite important because Dunmore also referred to the Armenian priests’ proposal to bury the child a few feet from the chosen spot, which he did not accept.

⁴⁰⁶ The international self-image was significant for the empire. For example, the governors of some Eastern provinces, including Harput, were warned about the prospective visit of an American (*mösyö rayt*); homage was to be paid and all needed assistance was to be given to him wherever he would go. PMOA, HR.MKT, 159/84, 16 September 1856. For an earlier complaint about the unpleasant attitude of Harput *kaimakam* towards an American visitor and the central government’s reaction to it, see PMOA, HR.MKT, 79/60, 3 July 1854; HR. MKT, 80/96, 19 July 1854.

⁴⁰⁷ PMOA, HR.MKT, 150/12, 1 July 1856; HR.MKT, 151/70, 9 July 1856. In the official correspondences, Misakyan Kevork’s name appears as the chief instigator, where Dunmore accused Hovannes Vartabed [Father] in his account.

Assembly, however, reacted to the charges of creating public disorder and defended their rightful cause (July 18) with the support of the above-mentioned petition from Harput. They argued that the Protestants were of course not entitled to use the Armenian cemetery since they had become a different nation (*millet*); thus, they needed to bury their deceased in a separate, convenient place.⁴⁰⁸

In a few weeks (July 31) the Governor of Harput noticed another affair, this time in Arabkir where, although the deceased was unwillingly permitted to be buried in the cemetery, it was said that the Armenian people had taken a vow not to allow it to happen ever again. The Protestant community was so far reluctant to demand a separate cemetery because, the governor argued, they wanted to win a victory against the others. However, he advised, the head of the Protestant community in Istanbul must be ordered to set up separate cemeteries for his community; otherwise, the issue would keep popping up all over the place.⁴⁰⁹ Only a day later (Aug. 1), the head of the Protestant community, Stephan, complained about the Armenians' rumors (*kîl-u-kal*) and assaults, and finally requested separate burial grounds. The center's response was positive and the governor was ordered to allocate an appropriate burial ground in Harput only for Protestants (Sept. 12).⁴¹⁰ Dunmore wrote on October 15 that the burial ground was already allocated; in addition, a very favorable spot in the city was assigned for free for a future church.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸ P.M.O.A., HR.MKT, 158/100, 12 September 1856.

⁴⁰⁹ P.M.O.A., HR.MKT, 157/78, 2 September 1856.

⁴¹⁰ P.M.O.A., HR.MKT, 158/99, 12 September 1856.

⁴¹¹ "Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, October 15, 1856" in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 53 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1857), 80.

The cemetery conflicts, which were also seen in other provinces,⁴¹² crystallized the reaction of the Armenian community against the new trend—Protestantism—that some of its people had set out to follow. The conflicts began after Protestants were granted *millet* status (as an officially recognized community) in 1850 and its declaration in the provinces in 1854. Moreover, the famous Imperial Edict was announced on February 18, 1856, namely right before the event in Harput. It was a time of delicate international politics, since the Ottoman government was forced to grant civil rights to its citizens in exchange for military and financial support from Europe. Rumors of mistreatment towards Protestants or Americans in a remote town were the last thing the center wanted to hear. As a result, the Ottoman officials backed the foreigners and their local agents (as Protestant Armenians were considered) vis-à-vis the ‘real’ Armenian community.

For Armenians, on the other hand, the Protestants’ claim to the Armenian cemetery was an insult the like of which they had not seen even from Muslims. In the end, cemeteries were sacred spaces exclusive to one and only one community (*millet*): how dare a member of a different community bring their deceased here? Therefore, the government’s taking the side of foreigners rather than its own people regarding such an essential subject was frustrating for the community. In another cemetery conflict in Istanbul in July 1860, the tension was so great that the burial of a Protestant could be accomplished only in the presence of the Minister of War and several hundred troops (and still he could be buried only at a corner right at the border of the cemetery). Even then, in the following days, Protestants were bullied in the streets to the extent that the American Consul had to warn the Americans living in Istanbul against possible

⁴¹² One example was reported by George B. Nutting in Diyarbekir: In the town of Hainee, a quite wealthy Armenian died as a Protestant. His body was to be buried in the Armenian cemetery but a crowd prevented the ceremony. Here too, the Pasha was asked and he decided, based on the advices of the missionaries, that the burial was to be allowed. “Diarbekir – Letter from Dr. Nutting, October 10, 1855” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1856, 52:48.

dangers.⁴¹³ The coming of American missionaries, hence, not only created a split among the Armenian people (that had also happened in 1830 when the Catholic Armenians became a ‘community’) but also alienated the Armenian community from the government.

The year following the promulgation of the Imperial Edict (1856), then, witnessed high tension among the Armenian people in Harput. Besides the cemetery conflict over Ohannes, the Church was also concerned about the Americans’ conversion methods. For example, the same day the orders arrived on behalf of a separate Protestant cemetery, Harput’s governor was also warned about provocations by the Protestants in Arabkir, who were trying to convert the Armenians by saying that the Protestants were going to pay no more than 50 *kuruş* as tax. The patriarch and the Armenian political leaders expressed anxiety about the rumors (*kîl-u-kal*) of conversion in their own petition (Sept. 3), and the government was no less anxious about the possible consequences of these rumors about taxes; hence, the governor was ordered to prevent any action that would “invite rumors” (Sept. 12).⁴¹⁴ Dunmore was accused by the Church of being the propagator of this idea of tax exemption, as well as of exemption from military service/fee for Protestants.

As long as there was no talk of taxation, the government continued to protect the Protestants even against the Muslims. For example, two months later, another incident of attempted conversion was reported from Harput. On November 21, 1856, Stephan, the representative of the Protestant community in Harput, related the following scandal: a child of the Protestant community, of the age of 8 or 10, named Krikor, was seduced by some Muslims with gifts of clothing and money and made to accept Islam. Apparently, the district council

⁴¹³ Yetkiner, “American Missionaries, Armenian Community,” 1–4; Armayis P. Vartoogian, *Armenia’s Ordeal - a Sketch of the Main Features of the History of Armenia; and an inside Account of the Work of American Missionaries among Armenians, and Its Ruinous Effect* (New York, 1896), 56–57.

⁴¹⁴ PMOA, HR.MKT, 159/17, 12 September 1856.

approved the child's conversion and sent him to live with a Muslim family. Stephan, after denouncing the event, requested that the child be brought back to his Christian family to stay until he reached the age of discretion. The official orders to the local governor seconded the child's return to his family, and added that the case would be considered again only when and if the child came of age and converted properly according to the procedures.⁴¹⁵

In conclusion, the emergence of the Protestant community and the coming of American missionaries created the discourse, referred to above, that 'they have the power'. And this power was so unjust and recent that the insult was more a moral than a political one. Another incident combined international politics with local morality: One day in the last months of 1856, a scandal erupted when Dunmore was accused of adultery. According to the detailed report (Nov. 13) of the Harput Provincial Council led by the Governor Arif, Dunmore stayed in the house of a Protestant family during his visit in Halvenik village. However, in the evening, a woman was seen entering the house, upon which the neighbors resorted to the police and then went to the house. The woman was found inside, although no contact was seen between her and Dunmore. The next day, all who had been in the house were questioned.

According to their statements, the woman came to the house only to get some fire, and Dunmore and his interpreter Agop were asleep and they saw her only after the neighbors came in with the police. The landlady confirmed this story, too. The council was not entirely convinced, though: why did the woman go to this particular house to get fire when there were closer houses? Why did Dunmore stay in this poor house although there were richer Protestant houses in this village? In addition, since no one answered the door for a while when the police first knocked,

⁴¹⁵ PMOA, HR.MKT, 190/4, 16 May 1857.

they had had time to prepare their story. In sum, the report confessed that adultery could not be proved even though it could not help casting suspicions.

Upon these accusations Dunmore launched his counter-attack: He accused the police of breaking into the house without proper documents and orders. He also blamed the evening raid on two (Armenian) village notables, Tomacan oğlu Hacı Hagop and Dikici oğlu Arakil, and had them arrested. But still Dunmore insisted on harsher penalties; he did not accept the apologies of the people, and finally he went to the British Consul in Diyarbekir without giving any notice to the court where he was expected to appear. He came back to Harput with a letter from the Consul that denounced the unpleasant attitude against him. The governor of Harput was in a tight corner and related the case to Istanbul *sans recours*, but the center simply ordered that the truth be brought to light and said it was not permissible for Dunmore to slander the local notables. In the end, the council put the entire blame for what had been occurring lately on Agop, the interpreter, and demanded his banishment to somewhere else. However, Istanbul was not satisfied; it was ordered that in order to fend off the missionaries' claims the guiltiest party (one of the notables?) be imprisoned for another 14 days.⁴¹⁶

Progress at the Harput Station

Alongside all these conflicts between the Armenian community and the Protestants, the Harput Station was showing a good deal of progress in missionary business. In early October, 1856, when Dunmore had guests from other stations and societies (like the British Bible Society), the first Protestant evangelical church of Harput was organized with ten members, eight men and two women, between the ages of 15 and 50. Moreover, for the general Sabbath

⁴¹⁶ P.M.O.A., HR.MKT, 169/6, 3 December 1856; HR.MKT, 167/10, 17 November 1856; HR.MKT, 170/57, 20 December 1856.

meetings two houses in Harput and one in Mezre were arranged as chapels. Dunmore was excited about the rapid progress in the region and insistently demanded more “laborers,” namely missionaries, from Boston to this field. He could not do the entire job “in the midst of a vast harvest-field,” where “the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few.” He emphasized that “I can scarcely conceive of a more important and profitable work than this.”⁴¹⁷

In the next months, Dunmore’s previous appreciation of the Turkish officials disappeared for a while. The reason seems to be the little protection given by the government upon persecutions of Protestants in the smaller towns of the Harput region. He wrote in March 1857 that,

The Turks and Armenians having struck hands, and combined their forces against the Protestants, neither they nor I can longer obtain redress for insult or blows. Arif Pasha, after all his villany here, having promoted, started for Erzroom about a month ago. The former Defterdar is now vakil [deputy governor] here till Djemal Pasha shall arrive, who is, it is said, if possible, a worse man than his predecessor. Such is Turkey, and such are Turkish functionaries.⁴¹⁸

Dunmore repeated his thoughts at the Annual Meeting of the Northern Armenian Mission in Istanbul, May 19 – June 8, 1857, too. “Until within a few months,” he said, “no class of the Sultan’s subjects has had better protection in Kharpoot than Protestants.”⁴¹⁹ The current opposition he ascribed to the remarkable success of the mission, as it attracted hate. In July, for example, he received a letter from the Pasha of Harput due to the complaints about him by Harutiun Vartabed (Father), who was the most powerful of the Armenian clergy in the town. He was accused of preaching not only to Protestants but also to other Armenians. Dunmore

⁴¹⁷ “Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, October 15, 1856” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1857, 53:81–82.

⁴¹⁸ “Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, March 4, 1857” in *Ibid.*, 53:218.

⁴¹⁹ “Northern Armenian Mission – Turkey – Annual Meeting” in *Ibid.*, 53:291.

composed a detailed response to the Pasha explaining that this was indeed his duty; he also enclosed a New Testament in Turkish as a gift to the Pasha.⁴²⁰

Nevertheless, at the same Annual Meeting, good news came for the mission. Apparently Dunmore's persuasive demands for more workers for Harput had been taken seriously, since two new missionaries were appointed to the Harput Mission: Orson P. Allen⁴²¹ of Trebizond and Crosby H. Wheeler. They arrived in Harput on July 31, 1857, with their families,⁴²² and they were to create the peculiar characteristic of Harput Mission over the next decades. Dunmore was a pioneer; he was praised in all missionary writings after he returned to the USA, volunteered in the Civil War, and was killed on August 3, 1862, in his tent as a chaplain of a cavalry regiment.⁴²³ But what would make Harput Station special was four decades of collective work by C. H. Wheeler, O. P. Allen and Herman N. Barnum. Nowhere else did such mighty characters come together at the same station and influence the mission in such a great way. As will be seen below, the Harput missionaries managed to become a brand in missionary circles—sometimes a famous, at other times an infamous one.

The first report of the year of 1858, signed by Wheeler, was positive about the progress in the Mission; the previous year's controversies with the officials seemed to have ended. As a very

⁴²⁰ "Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, July 25, 1857" in *Ibid.*, 53:395–96.

⁴²¹ Orson Pardy Allen was born on November 6, 1827, in Smyrna, NY, to Marsena Allen and Hannah Gates (Percival) Allen. After graduating from the Amherst College and the Andover Theological Seminary, Allen sailed from Boston to Turkey on October 27, 1855, less than two months after marrying Caroline Redington Wheeler, the sister of Dr. Crosby H. Wheeler, the founder of the Euphrates College in Harput. After a half-year stay in Izmir and a full-year stay in Trabzon, they moved to Harput in July 1857 where Allen was to serve for thirty-nine years. Their son, Herbert Marsena Allen, born in Harput in 1865, also served as a missionary in Turkey. O. P. Allen, who died in Istanbul on June 21, 1918, is buried in the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery #3160. See, American Board in Turkey, "Personnel records for Orson P. Allen," ARIT Archive, Item #11547, <http://www.dlir.org/archive/items/show/11547> (accessed December 13, 2013) and John Haskell Hewitt, *Williams College and Foreign Missions: Biographical Sketches of Williams College Men Who Have Rendered Special Service to the Cause of Foreign Missions* (Boston, 1914), 599–600.

⁴²² *The Missionary Herald*, 1857, 53:399.

⁴²³ Anderson, *History of the Missions*, 2:73. American Board in Turkey, "Personnel records for George W. Dunmore," ARIT Archive.

significant step, Hagop Ağa, the head of the Protestants in Harput, was invited to the administrative council of Harput by an imperial order. The representatives of the non-Muslim communities had been given seats on the council before, but Protestants were only gradually accepted as a separate community and bestowed certain rights that were enjoyed by the Armenian or Catholic communities. Moreover, Wheeler tells us, the funeral of Hagop Ağa's wife was held without any interruption or unpleasantness, which was quite new and a relief.⁴²⁴ In a later letter in July, he wrote that the officials' treatment of Protestants was becoming nicer over time. They were also assigned a burying ground in Mezre, for example.⁴²⁵

Wheeler was a careful reporter; he did not like advertisements. Even though they sometimes gave high numbers of people attending the Sabbath meeting, he once said, this should not be misunderstood as if all these people had become Protestants. In reality, people used to come and go; few really changed their lives.⁴²⁶ The missionaries' great attraction came from the public services they provided, most importantly education services. The "Bible class" given every Sabbath morning was attended by 120-160 people in 1859. As a matter of fact, the Armenian Church imitated them and opened similar classes in order not to lose its members (even Catholics began to give similar services).⁴²⁷ The other distinctive thing about their services was the use of the modern tongue in preaching, but this was also slowly adopted by the old Church. For example, Priest Kevork worked with Dunmore for some time but then returned to his old church, so now, he was preaching in modern Armenian in the Church.⁴²⁸ In other words,

⁴²⁴ "Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Wheeler, January 18, 1858" in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 54 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1858), 165.

⁴²⁵ "Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Wheeler, July 14, 1858" in *Ibid.*, 54:354.

⁴²⁶ "Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Wheeler, November 13, 1858" in *The Missionary Herald*, 1859, 55:85–86.

⁴²⁷ "Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Allen, August 12, 1859" in *Ibid.*, 55:368–69.

⁴²⁸ "Northern Armenian Mission – Turkey – Annual Meeting" in *Ibid.*, 55:276.

the missionaries radically transformed what religion was in people's daily lives, but did not necessarily convert them all to Protestantism.⁴²⁹

It was difficult to join the Protestant community, even if the Pasha and the officials protected anyone who did. Social pressure was a vital problem. Once, two young people from Habusi came to the city to attend the missionaries' school against the wishes of their own families. They were beaten by their fathers, and even threatened with separation from their wives. One day, after the intimidation did not work, the mother of one of them came to Mardiros (the Armenian Protestant preacher) offering gold pieces and said "sell me my son!" After she was rejected, the young man's father begged Wheeler to send his son home at least for a short time. Wheeler refused to do that, either, since "he is of age."⁴³⁰ So the missionaries disseminated hatred not only in the conservative religious circles and in the Armenian Church, but also among ordinary families by challenging their social values and social practices. In the following decades, letters from Harput to Boston continued to relate numerous incidents regarding disintegrated families, generational conflicts and the resulting hatred towards the source of dissension, namely the Americans. Wheeler was once walking in the street and encountered an old woman who at once started cursing at him; when she was asked by Wheeler whether she thought him as bad as a Turk, she replied "yes, and a great deal worse."⁴³¹

Nevertheless, the year of 1859 had a special place in the history of Harput Mission because it was determined at the annual meeting that the theological seminary in Tokat would be transferred to Harput (due to its building having burned down). This meant that a larger

⁴²⁹ In the general report of 1860, for the Eastern Turkey Mission it was stated that "But the results of missionary labor are seen more in the general change of public sentiment and in the increase of knowledge, than in large numbers of converts or even of nominal Protestants." See "Annual Survey of the Missions of the Board" in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 57 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1861), 6.

⁴³⁰ "Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Wheeler, April 4, 1859" in *The Missionary Herald*, 1859, 55:215–16.

⁴³¹ "Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Wheeler, November 13, 1858" in *Ibid.*, 55:84–85.

workforce would be needed, and thus Herman Norton Barnum was assigned to Harput. He was born in Auburn, NY, in 1826 and would die in Harput in 1910. Arguably no American became so integrated into Ottoman society as Barnum did as the only Turkish-speaking missionary of the Harput mission. At the end of the century, he was perhaps the most trusted figure in the city. After these decisions in 1859, and after Barnum arrived in Harput in July and Dunmore left to Constantinople (and then to the US), the Harput missionary trio—as I call them—finally came together. The Theological Seminary was opened in the city in September 1859, and would in later decades turn the city into a major place for uninterrupted education—one could enter in kindergarten and graduate as a priest.

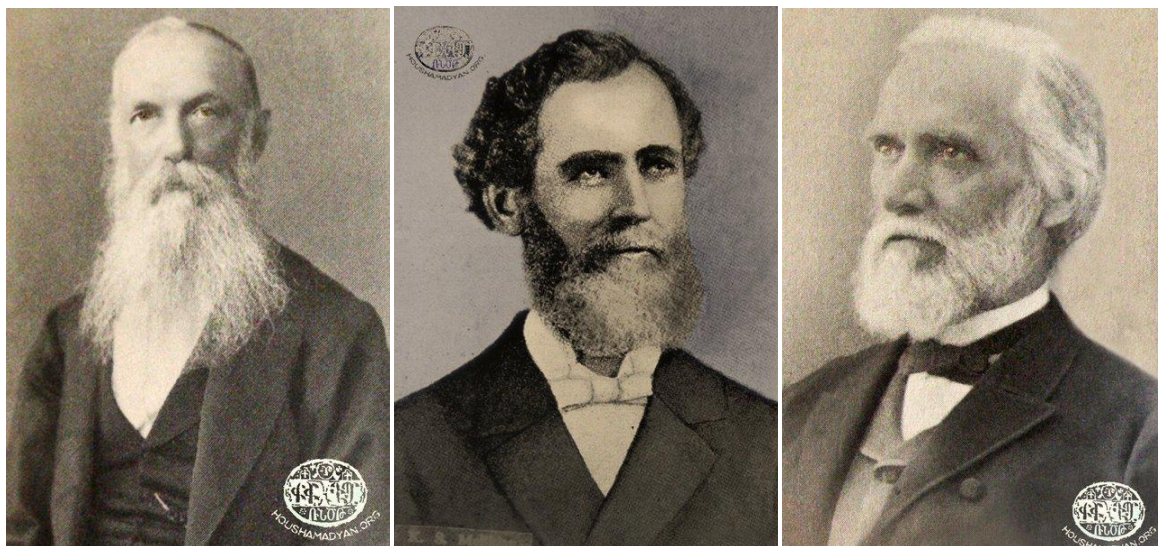


Figure 6-1: The Harput Missionary Trio: O.P. Allen, C.H. Wheeler, H.N. Barnum.⁴³²

As a result, the decade of the 1850s ended with the flowering of Harput Station. Dr. Fayette Jewett of Sivas visited the city and concluded that Harput was “the most important station yet formed in the interior of this mission.”⁴³³ This statement was confirmed by the fact that, for its first time in an inner city in Anatolia, the Annual Meeting of 1860 was held in Harput

⁴³² <http://www.houshamadyan.org/en/mapottomanempire/vilayetofmamuratulazizharput/harput-kaza/education-and-sport/schools-part-i.html>.

⁴³³ “Kharpoot – Letter from Barnum, September 28, 1859” in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 56 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1860), 76.

between May 22 and June 5, with 23 adult Americans and their 14 children meeting in this city, 750 miles from Istanbul. Edwin E. Bliss, writing about his arrival in Harput, compared the current situation to the old days: “Instead of hootings and stonings that used to greet the entrance of a missionary into the city, we were met a long way out from the suburbs, by a goodly company of horsemen and footmen, who had come out to welcome and escort us to our lodgings.”⁴³⁴ It was a time when, as mentioned in a previous chapter, the Commander Pasha visited the bookshop in Mezre and asked for a Turkish Bible, and was followed by the Governor Pasha, too. It was a time when the Çötelizade brothers were altogether dismissed from the governing council, when the new, secular middle-classes were transforming Mezre, when new educational facilities were opened for every community, and when there was no war in sight. The 1860s were to be a stage for the golden age both of Mezre, as we have seen, and of Harput and the missionary project.

The Model Station and its Discontents

If the first five years (1855-60) was the period of naïve flowering for the Harput Station, the 1860s would be an era of real challenges and subsequent maturation. Occasional persecutions against the Americans in the first years were displeasing, to be sure, but they were expected and also direct enough to stand up against. Successes, too, were numerical rather than deeply embedded in the society, as Wheeler was well aware. The decade of 1860s, on the other hand, was special for Harput’s history. As seen in the previous chapters, Mezre turned into a self-confident bourgeois suburb and received its new name (Mamuretülaziz). The new town was praised by European visitors in an extraordinary way. Simultaneously in the upper town (Harput), the American missionaries turned the young station into an exemplary one for the

⁴³⁴ “Northern Armenian Mission – Turkey – Letter from Mr. Bliss, June 18, 1860” in *Ibid.*, 56:267.

entire Near East mission. Having overcome various practical difficulties in the beginning, now the real battle for souls and hearts had begun. The topic of the day was no longer whether they could find a house for Sabbath meetings, whether the Armenian Church members would stone the followers of the new faith, or whether they would get permission to stay from the government. In the 1860s, the discussion was on belief, on the genuineness of someone's belief, and on the principle of self-sufficiency. It was the time of a newly emerging civil society in the entire empire, including Harput, and the public sphere became a stage for the battle of ideas. This decade, I believe, was the formative period for the missionary encounter in Turkey.⁴³⁵

The 1861 Annual Meeting of the Eastern Turkey Mission was also held in Harput in June.⁴³⁶ All stations in the region were showing progress and optimism. In the following years, the pages of *Missionary Herald* (the official monthly of the Board in the US) were full of accounts about the rising numbers of churches, of church members, of attendance at the meetings and of outstations. Regarding the latter, the Harput missionaries organized systematic trips to surrounding villages and small towns to establish churches and schools there, to spread through the countryside, including the mountainous regions mostly inhabited by Kurds. As a result, a new discourse about the Kurdish people emerged to the effect that they were represented as gravely ignorant but at the same time naïve and more open to Christianity than any other Muslim community. "I have seldom seen so gross ignorance," Barnum once wrote.⁴³⁷ These "all wild and semi-barbarian" people also affected the Armenians in the region: "Surrounded by Koords, even

⁴³⁵ It is almost a traditional narrative form in missionary accounts to focus on the early years and on the later phase, fast-forwarding past the formative middle period. Most works on the Ottoman missionary enterprise have very detailed accounts of the pioneers, on the one hand, and of the already-developed institutional framework in post-1890s period, on the other.

⁴³⁶ *The Missionary Herald*, 1861, 57:301.

⁴³⁷ "Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Barnum, September 27, 1861" in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 58 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1862), 23.

the Christian population have acquired a good deal of the rough, Koordish nature.”⁴³⁸ The relations with the self-claimed Protestant Kurdish chief, Ali Gako, continued but even his devotion was generally found shallow due to his ignorance of the true principles of the Bible. On July 22, 1863, Barnum noted “Oh, how black, as midnight, is the darkness resting on these mountain regions!” There was always a suspicion about Kurds’ “susceptibility to deep spiritual impressions.”⁴³⁹

The same suspicion existed also towards the educated, liberal classes of Harput, though. As Elias Riggs (of the Constantinople Mission) clearly observed during his trip through all of Turkey, missionaries tended to achieve less success in the commercial places, where vice was widespread, compared to the countryside.⁴⁴⁰ In that sense, the city of Harput was better than Smyrna, but worse than a mountain village. It was the years of American Civil War at home and, as a direct consequence, of financial difficulties in the field. In the beginning, some outstations began to be abandoned without having had the chance to develop; native preachers could not be funded any more, and some schools were closed. The possibility of terminating the mission was even raised at missionary headquarters.⁴⁴¹ After passing through the first shock of the war at home, however, the mission survived and even thrived. But the immediate consequence was that emphasis was put on the principle of self-support (financial independence of the local churches) more than ever, if not for the first time. At exactly that point, our anti-capitalist missionaries came face-to-face with their most immediate followers, namely the new middle classes, who owed their status to the integration of the empire into the world economy. The latter wanted

⁴³⁸ “Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Barnum, December 27, 1862” in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 59 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1863), 116.

⁴³⁹ “Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Barnum, July 22, 1863” in *Ibid.*, 59:309–312.

⁴⁴⁰ “The Missions in Turkey – Letter from Mr. Riggs” in *Ibid.*, 59:291–92.

⁴⁴¹ “Kharpoot – Letter from Mr. Barnum, September 7, 1861” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1861, 57:366.

more and more investment (from Boston) whereas the former insisted on a subsistence economy (self-support); the latter wanted better and better education, whereas the former needed only pious men.

As a result, the 1860s would be stamped by the confrontation between high-principled missionaries and liberal Armenians. It was the year of 1862 when the Harput missionaries informed their headquarters about a new “reform party” in the city, whose aim was to reform the Armenian Church according to the principles that had been disseminated by the Americans—specially that of using the modern language in religious rituals. They were respected by the Armenian community for not having chosen to become Protestants, but instead to reform their own church.⁴⁴² Apparently, the movement gained strength over time and towards the end of 1865 these “enlightened” Armenians founded the *Society for Reforming Armenians*.⁴⁴³ In 1867, there were three societies based in different parts of the city.⁴⁴⁴ Through most of the early years, the reform groups’ relation to the missionaries remained positive, even though this opportunity from within the Armenian community made many give up attending the missionaries’ meetings. But around the spring of 1867, one of these societies actively began to prevent people from going to the Protestants’ meetings; they set up their meetings at the same hour and “claim that there is no *substantial* difference between themselves and Protestants.”⁴⁴⁵ The same year would also see a more trans-regional and even transnational conflict between these two groups, which will be delineated in detail in Chapter 8.

⁴⁴² “Mission to Eastern Turkey – Station Reports” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1863, 59:210.

⁴⁴³ “Letters from Mr. Barnum, February 14 and 17, 1866” in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 62 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1866), 177.

⁴⁴⁴ “Letter from Mr. Barnum, February 11, 1867” in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 63 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1867), 202.

⁴⁴⁵ “Letters from Mr. Barnum, March 12 and April 19, 1867” in *Ibid.*, 63:248.

One can call the rise of civil society the main characteristic of the 1860s. In 1865, arguably as a counter-institution to these new societies among the non-Protestant Armenians, the *Harput Evangelical Union* was formed by the Protestant Armenians. The union was composed of all Protestant church communities in Harput Province.⁴⁴⁶ New ideas took hold throughout the entire Armenian community one way or another, giving birth to public discussions of reform in everyday life. In general, the missionaries were content with this silent acceptance of new ideas even when they were adopted in competition against—rather than in collaboration with—themselves. In 1864, Barnum proclaimed: “I think that our work, as a whole, never gave us greater encouragement than at present.”⁴⁴⁷ And when William W. Livingston of Sivas visited Harput in 1867, he took note: “I confess myself amazed at what God has wrought in that field. No words of mine can give an adequate idea of the extent and power of that work.”⁴⁴⁸ The success of the Harput field was also amazing to William F. Williams of Mardin, who could not hide his envy, as these words of his testify:

The ‘village work’ in the region about Kharpoot is a mystery and a marvel to me, for its contrast [*sic*] to all my own missionary experience. Like all the rural populations in Turkey, the people are ground down by oppression and exactions, and are poor, -almost all of them would pass for beggars in the United States,- living in dirt and want such as *you* may perhaps be able to conceive not the untraveled members of American churches. Yet they already do much to sustain the gospel among themselves, and *purchase* Bibles and books, to an extent which, before my own eyes, is incredible.

But Kharpoot is a strong station, strongly manned. There is there, will, and energy, and determination, (obstinacy if you please,) enough to sweep away

⁴⁴⁶ “Letter from Mr. Barnum, November 7, 1865” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1866, 62:74.

⁴⁴⁷ “Letter from Mr. Barnum, March 1, 1864” in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 60 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1864), 213.

⁴⁴⁸ “Letter from Mr. Livingston” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1867, 63:243.

common obstacles, and which has made *compelled* even, the Turkish administration to be, thus far, its assistance and helper.⁴⁴⁹

The peculiar characteristic of the Harput circle did not always create envy; it sometimes spread irritation to other missionaries. Towards the end of 1869, upon a critique of his station's financial indicators, George C. Knapp of Bitlis Station wrote a long letter to the Board, where he touched on the inappropriateness of a comparison with Harput. He would later understand that Wheeler was responsible for extremely critical language against the Bitlis mission, and he had also spoken arrogantly in the annual meeting about the work in Bitlis.⁴⁵⁰ Knapp's following words seem to reflect annoyance over the constant singling-out of the Harput Station in the entire region:

While each station is being compared with Harpoot as the model station, we hope this fact will be borne in mind, namely, that one fourth of their 75 helpers are placed over villages that were under the supervision of Diarbekir and Arabkir stations that had been worked by seven missionaries, each of whom had labored therein from two to fourteen years; while Bitlis field has never been worked by any other station, and no missionary, Mr. Dunmore excepted, had ever seen Bitlis city, when we came here eleven years ago!⁴⁵¹

In sum, throughout the decade of the 1860s Harput Station turned into a trademark among the missionaries in the entire empire and in Boston. Too successful and at the same time too arrogant were the members of the Harput clique, especially Crosby H. Wheeler. The station appeared in missionary letters both as a model station and as a problem station. The 1860s witnessed the Harput Mission reinforcing its character and putting a distance between itself and many other missionary stations and many Protestant Armenians. Its interest in the Kurdish countryside and the Armenian villagers stemmed from its opposition to more elitist approaches

⁴⁴⁹ "Letter from Mr. Williams, February 13, 1865" in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 61 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1865), 175.

⁴⁵⁰ Letter from Knapp to Clark, Bitlis, November 15, 1869, ABCFM, Reel 677.

⁴⁵¹ Letter from Knapp to Clark, Bitlis, November 12, 1869, ABCFM, Reel 677.

looking for civilized natives. And it was no coincidence that the same decade was formative for the Harput/Mezre duality, in which a new Armenian middle class was formed and had separated itself from the people of the old city in Harput. The American missionaries, however, always remained in Harput, unlike the French and German missions which settled in Mezre. The Harput clique of American missionaries stood against all the values Mezre stood for: trans-regional mobility, elite tastes, higher education, Westernization, urbanism. Moreover, I contend, the character of the Harput Mission was strengthened (maybe even formed) due to encounters with the new secular, middle-class person in the region in its formative decade. In other words, much as what looked like internal colonialism in Mezre was in fact suburbanization, here also what looks like a missionary effect was rather the local impact *on* the missionaries. In the next two chapters, I will look into the 1860s in detail to see the moments of encounter and of conflict between the Harput missionaries and all the others.

Chapter 7: Colonial Intimacy in Harput

This chapter tells the story of a love affair—a failed one. It is not news at all that intimate associations between the missionaries and the natives engendered discontents if not scandals. The histories of missionary involvement all around the world contain numerous incidents of failed attempts at mixed marriages. Needless to say, the same was even truer for colonial encounters. My aim, though, is not to repeat the conclusion of the critical studies on colonialism, namely the undeniable fact that otherization (i.e. racism) worked through the intimate capillaries of social relations in the colony. The puzzle is that scholars generally take the formal and informal prohibition of mixed coupling as an index of unequal power relations, although the opposite (assimilation through marriage) is also interpreted in the same way. When it comes to missionaries, the puzzle is more challenging because this group of people came to the native lands to help, not to exploit. What word but ‘hypocrisy,’ then, can describe the behavioral economy of ostensible intimacy and hidden distance? The critique of colonialism, I believe, is mostly an act of disclosing the hypocrisy of powerful. But what if there was no ostensible intimacy in the first place? Do we still need critical scholarship if there is nothing to reveal? The following two chapters aim to give a positive answer by emphasizing that the ethnography of the event can challenge the assumptions common today. In this particular case, the common assumption should be that distance was something to be ashamed of, something to be covered by fake intimacies. It was not.

Tomas Boyajian

Dunmore arrived in Diyarbekir in November 1851 and the first significant event he reported, in February 1852, was that “a young man of high rank, of fine talents and education, who had long been vacillating, boldly declared himself a Protestant, rejecting every proposal of his Bishop to effect his return to the Armenian church.”⁴⁵² This young man of 19, named Tomas Boyajian, had to go through all kinds of social pressure in the following months not only by the Church but also by his relatives and associates, both Armenian and Muslim. He was forced out of his successful business in silk manufacture and excluded from the trade network. Nevertheless, he refused the bishop’s proposal to give him a monthly salary for returning to the church. Accordingly, this bright and brave young man was selected by the missionaries—along with five others—to be sent to the Bebek Seminary of Cyrus Hamlin in Istanbul for higher education. He was to bring his brother and older sister with him, while his younger sister was to stay with the Dunmore family.⁴⁵³ Right before the journey, Boyajian’s former creditor, a wealthy member of the city council, tried to imprison him on unproved accusations of debt, but the case was resolved and the six men set out for Istanbul, accompanied by Dunmore until Erzurum, on May 24. In the villages on the way, Boyajian was already ready to lecture the local people about the true religion.⁴⁵⁴

After studying at the Bebek Seminary, Tomas Boyajian returned to his home town (perhaps in 1854), Diyarbekir, and worked for two years as a “native preacher,” as the missionaries called it. In 1856, however, he determined to go back to Bebek Seminary for a further two years of education in theology to be trained as a pastor. “He has been of the greatest

⁴⁵² “Diyarbekir – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, February 5, 1852” in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 48 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1852), 148.

⁴⁵³ “Diyarbekir – Letter from Mr. Dunmore, May 7, 1852” in *Ibid.*, 48:233.

⁴⁵⁴ “Diyarbekir – Mr. Dunmore’s Journey to Erzurum” in *Ibid.*, 48:333–36.

value to us and our work,” wrote Augustus Walker of Diyarbekir, and added that he wished Boyajian would come back to his town as the pastor of the Protestant church.⁴⁵⁵ He was supported by the local community, too; they voluntarily collected monetary support for him before he departed to Istanbul in September. George C. Knapp said, “I think he has not a superior among the native preachers in the empire.”⁴⁵⁶ In 1858, Boyajian really came back to Diyarbekir to work in his native town; at the same time, his sister, who was trained at the Hasköy Female Seminary in Istanbul, also returned and began teaching at the girls’ school in Diyarbekir.⁴⁵⁷ In 1861, when H. G. O. Dwight of the Constantinople Mission visited Diyarbekir, it was Boyajian who made the opening speech in the welcoming meeting and expressed gratitude to the missionaries for all they had done on behalf of Armenians. He was the most sought-after and the most suitable candidate to become the pastor of the church.⁴⁵⁸

Finally, during the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Turkey Mission held in Diyarbekir on May 18-25, 1863, when many missionaries were present from other places, including Mr. Elias Riggs from Istanbul, Tomas Boyajian was ordained as pastor of the First Evangelical Church in Diyarbekir. His ordination was said to be the most interesting event of the meeting: “The examination of the candidate was full, and remarkably well sustained. The ordaining services were necessarily in the open air, and were conducted in Armenian, Turkish and Arabic. More than a thousand adults were present, besides hundreds of children, and the attention and interest were unflagging to the end.”⁴⁵⁹ Next year, when Walker was absent, Tomas acted as the head of

⁴⁵⁵ “Diyarbekir – Letter from Mr. Walker, August 15, 1856” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1856, 52:333.

⁴⁵⁶ “Diyarbekir – Letter from Mr. Knapp, November 1, 1856” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1857, 53:87.

⁴⁵⁷ “Diyarbekir – Station Report” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1858, 54:174.

⁴⁵⁸ “Diyarbekir – Letter from Mr. Dwight, of Constantinople, May 22, 1861” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1861, 57:307.

⁴⁵⁹ *The Missionary Herald*, 1863, 59:262.

the Protestant community in Diyarbekir.⁴⁶⁰ And he did it so well that when Williams visited Diyarbekir in February 1865 he was surprised at the “great prosperity under the pastorate of the Rev. Tomas Boyajian,” despite the fact that for a year no missionary had been present in the city. Even in this unfortunate year of famine and high prices, the church members had contributed hundreds of dollars to support the pastor, the schools and the poor.⁴⁶¹

After Walker’s return, though, Boyajian left the town again for Istanbul, and then to the UK and the US, in order to raise funds for an evangelical church building in Diyarbekir.⁴⁶² Walker took care of the station for more than a year until he died of cholera on September 13, 1866.⁴⁶³ As a result, Diyarbekir was left without any strong and able pastor or missionary. When Barnum visited the city in November 1867, the pastor (Boyajian) had been missing for two and a half years, and no missionary was appointed there, but still the community was growing and the services were held by a preacher in a regular and successful manner.⁴⁶⁴ Boyajian would come back to Diyarbekir again soon to work there for another three decades—first as pastor of the church and then as the British Vice-Consul. In the early years of his career, namely in the 1860s, however, he was confronted by the Harput missionary circle more than once. Especially his relationship with Wheeler was to be normalized only in the next decade, after Boyajian had been the recipient of many furious verbal attacks. The conflict seemed to be one of principle about missionary policy, but the following first encounter rather testifies that it was also about colonial intimacy.

⁴⁶⁰ “Mission to Eastern Turkey – Station Reports for 1864” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1865, 61:171.

⁴⁶¹ Anderson, *History of the Missions*, 2:251.

⁴⁶² “Diarbekir – Letter from Mr. Walker, December 19, 1865” in *The Missionary Herald*, 1866, 62:110.

⁴⁶³ Anderson, *History of the Missions*, 2:272.

⁴⁶⁴ “Harput – Letter from Mr. H. N. Barnum, December 17, 1867” in *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 64 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1868), 117.

Arabella Latham Babcock

At the Annual Meetings of 1860 and 1861, it was determined to open a Girls' School in Harput, and the missionaries of the station requested a female teacher from the Board for this purpose.⁴⁶⁵ This teacher was to be Arabella Latham Babcock, who was born on March 30, 1840, in Thetford, Vermont, to Elisha Gulliver Babcock and Eliza Hibbard.⁴⁶⁶ In March 1862, she was already expected by the Harput circle; she was even asked to collect some support for a new chapel before going to Harput.⁴⁶⁷ Babcock departed on May 31, 1862, from New York, with the Bird and Jewett families.⁴⁶⁸ She was accompanied by Maria West from Istanbul to Merzifon (Marsovan) and by Wheeler from there to Harput.⁴⁶⁹ She arrived in Harput on September 28, 1862.⁴⁷⁰ At the time of her arrival, the Walker family of Diyarbekir was also in Harput, where they had spent the summer. Walker's first impression of Babcock was quite positive: "We were glad to welcome Miss Babcock who gives good promise of adaptation to her work." Moreover, he noted that the sister of Diyarbekir's preacher—Tomas Boyajian—was to move to Harput to help her in the school business.⁴⁷¹ In her first months, Babcock showed good progress in Harput. She started learning Armenian, and by December, she was already involved in meetings with local women.⁴⁷² In the entire following year, as Barnum testified on a later occasion, she was seen to be "in almost every respect admirably fitted for the place" and she had done good amount of work.⁴⁷³ Everything was fine, until that evening.

⁴⁶⁵ Letter from Barnum, Wheeler and Allen to Anderson, June 15, 1861, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁶⁶ Clarence Winthrop Bowen, *The History of Woodstock, Connecticut - Genealogies of Woodstock Families* (Norwood, Mass.: The Plimpton Press, 1935), 1.

⁴⁶⁷ Letter from Babcock to Anderson, March 27, 1862, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁶⁸ *The Missionary Herald*, 1862, 58:229.

⁴⁶⁹ Letter from Barnum to Anderson, October 15, 1862, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁷⁰ *The Missionary Herald*, 1863, 59:13.

⁴⁷¹ Letter from Walker to Anderson, Kharput, September 12, 1860; Diarbekir, October 29, 1862, ABCFM, Reel 678.

⁴⁷² Letter from Barnum to Anderson, December 27, 1862, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁷³ Letter from Barnum to Anderson, December 18, 1863, ABCFM, Reel 676.

It was a day in early November of 1863. Walker (of Diyarbekir) was again in Harput; the examinations of Armenian students were being accomplished, and the results were promising enough. One of those evenings, Babcock called all the missionaries to her room and gave the news that would trigger a scandalous chain of events. Walker relates the moment as: “But this hope [about examinations] vanished in the evening following when she announced to the missionaries in a body her engagement to be married to the native Pastor of the church in Diarbekir!”⁴⁷⁴ Allen would write later to her family: “But what was our grief and astonishment when she called us together at her room & announced to us that she was engaged to be married to one of the native pastors.”⁴⁷⁵ This native pastor was none other than Tomas Boyajian, who had been ordained as the pastor of the First Evangelical Church in Diyarbekir six months ago.

We are told by later testimonies that the following day she acceded to the opposition of all the missionaries present and agreed to step back and to break off the engagement. However, in mid December, the missionaries began to suspect that she and Boyajian had resumed their plan to marry. On December 15, Allen finally wrote a letter to her family, but he did not send it because Babcock informed them of her decision to leave Harput to go back to the US. The very next day, Babcock officially announced her decision with the following circular:

Circular Letter to the Mission of Eastern Turkey & to the Prudential Committee
ABCFM

I feel convinced that God does not require me to remain any longer in this foreign land away from my mother, brothers and sisters. Therefore I have asked to go to America. Believing as I do, that I am doing the will of God, I trust all the results both as regarding myself and as affecting Christ’s cause in the hand of Infinite Wisdom.

⁴⁷⁴ Letter from Walker to Anderson, Auburndale, August 8, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 678.

⁴⁷⁵ Underlined in original. Letter from Allen to Mrs. Eliza Babcock, Mr. Henry Babcock, Miss Isabella Babcock, Kharpoot, December 15, 1863, ABCFM, Reel 676.

Arabella L. Babcock⁴⁷⁶

In her letter to her family two days later, she did not mention the engagement; she only wrote that it was “very trying to my nervous system” “to live in the foreign land” and that she was “no longer able to endure the burden and perform the duties.”⁴⁷⁷ Two weeks later, she wrote another letter, this time only to her mother—a rather long and detailed one, in which there was no trace of conviction that she had done anything wrong. Instead, she introduced to her family a perfect groom candidate when she wrote: “... a short time before the close of the school-year, I became engaged to a young man whose excellencies I cannot essay to describe (...) a man whose reputation is wide as the country, and who is the acknowledged flower of the Armenian nation.”⁴⁷⁸ He was educated in Istanbul and knew better English than her Armenian; he was a gentleman; his style of dress, customs, and home, were all after American fashion; he was highly respected by all missionaries; he was an orphan whose parents had died in 1848 of cholera, after which he took care of his sisters; and, his former wife had died last year, with whom he had a four-year-old son. She also said that instead of teaching, she would be a better worker for Christ as a pastor’s wife here. As a result, they were engaged and determined to marry in two years because she could not leave the school work suddenly; Boyajian agreed to wait. However, she continued, when she called everybody to give the news, she encountered an unexpected reaction.

This announcement was received in such a manner, and after that the course pursued by the missionaries was such, that I have since considered it as beneath me as your daughter as well as compromising my Christian character to retain any longer the position of teacher of this school.

And she added that, during those weeks, her respect for Boyajian only increased.

⁴⁷⁶ Circular Letter to the Mission of Eastern Turkey & to the Prudential Committee ABCFM by Babcock, Kharpoot, December 16, 1863, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁷⁷ Letter from Babcock to her mother, brothers and sisters, Kharpoot, December 18, 1863, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁷⁸ Letter from Babcock to her mother, Kharpoot, January 5, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 676.

The events following her circular were written to Boston from each missionary hand separately, in very long letters. The letters written right upon her decision to return to the US were mild in tone. Allen, as mentioned, abstained from informing her parents, whereas Barnum showed some understanding by saying that he did not question her feelings, but simply “the error was one of judgment.”⁴⁷⁹ But a little later, it seems, more dramatic events began. In mid-December, she ran away from home to the house of Harput’s pastor (who was married to Boyajian’s sister). The pastor welcomed her, but he also notified Barnum because she had been staying at Barnum’s since the Palu trip during which, she claimed, Wheeler had proposed to her that she become his second wife. In fact, Allen wrote, she thought that Wheeler was against her engagement with Boyajian simply because of his own plans to marry her, and that Mrs. Wheeler approved this plan because she was very ill. So that evening, Barnum wrote, she even told the pastor that the missionaries were planning to kill her and that she did not feel safe with them. Nevertheless, Barnum went to the house of the confused pastor and convinced Babcock to come back home.⁴⁸⁰

Babcock then moved to the Allens’ house and stayed there three weeks. During these weeks, she once went to the pastor again and wanted him to bring her to Mezre since the Pasha there could send her to Diyarbekir, namely to Boyajian. The pastor convinced her not to go but to send a telegram. She did and Boyajian replied that she should stay and that he would come to Harput as soon as the weather permitted. But she could not wait long. One day in the following weeks, she made a deal with a hostler and went to Mezre, where she tried to persuade a native helper to bring her to Diyarbekir. The helper refused to help without a permit, for which he

⁴⁷⁹ Letter from Barnum to Anderson, December 18, 1863, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁸⁰ Letter from Allen to Mrs. Eliza Babcock, Mr. Henry Babcock, Miss Isabella Babcock, Kharpoot, February 8, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 676. Letter from Barnum to Anderson, January 7, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 676.

notified Allen, who went to Mezre the next morning and brought her back to Harput. In Mezre, Babcock had stayed at a church member's house; in Harput, too, she wanted to stay at a Protestant Armenian's house but the pastor made her stay with him and his wife.⁴⁸¹

In the following weeks, according to Allen's and Barnum's letters, Babcock sank deeper into her depressed and paranoiac state of mind. She once protested against a male guest at the pastor's house, assuming that he was there to marry her, while the others tried to assure her that he was not. On another occasion, she went to the Armenian Church and stayed there until the end of a wedding ceremony; the missionaries, in the end, removed her by force and carried her home. Wheeler described the day as follows:

[We] bring her through the streets of the city to my house where I now have her, having taken precautions to prevent her fleeing again, to do which we shall, if necessary, use force. You can little imagine how deep to us & especially to our ladies, is the humiliation of such scenes that are now the talk of all, both Armenians & Turks.⁴⁸²

In the coming days an Armenian woman was hired to look after her, and her door was kept locked in order to prevent another scandalous occasion. Allen wrote to her family: "You will certainly agree that we had better keep her, even by force if necessary, than that she fall into the hands of unprincipled Armenians or Turks, as she might, were she to succeed in getting away from us."⁴⁸³

The conflict between Babcock and the other missionaries was not only a result of power and gender inequality; it was a conflict of principles, too, as least with Wheeler. Babcock was determined to marry Boyajian and even surrender her nationality. She was even said to have

⁴⁸¹ Letter from Allen to Mrs. Eliza Babcock, Mr. Henry Babcock, Miss Isabella Babcock, Kharput, February 8, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁸² Letter from Wheeler to Anderson, January 26, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁴⁸³ Letter from Allen to Mrs. Eliza Babcock, Mr. Henry Babcock, Miss Isabella Babcock, Kharput, February 8, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 676.

thought that she would be respected more in the city as a quasi-Armenian than as an American.⁴⁸⁴ Her greatest discomfort in the mission compound was the lack of intimacy between missionaries and the natives. Allen related, for example, that she told the pastor and his wife (Boyajian's sister) that "all they [missionaries] desire and seek is their own honor and greatness, they have no love for your people, all the missionaries are the same, I wish to become one of you and dress as you do."⁴⁸⁵ Apparently, she had started talking against the missionaries even in her early months; nevertheless, the pastor seems never to have been convinced by her anti-missionary statements, which eventually made her draw away from him, too, towards even 'more native' houses in Harput and Mezre, as seen above. That she did not feel that she belonged to either community seems to have made her sink into depression. Barnum concluded that "she is unquestionably insane to a degree. Perhaps it is nothing beyond monomania,"⁴⁸⁶ whereas Allen thought she was not insane, she just wanted them to think that she was insane.⁴⁸⁷ When Walker reached Harput on March 18 to take Babcock back with him to America, he agreed with Barnum that one could tell she was insane just by looking at her face.⁴⁸⁸

Wheeler, on the other hand, was inclined to see her as a sane person. "She seems to be utterly destitute of reason & shame, but she is not insane," he wrote.⁴⁸⁹ He was also aware that the fundamental problem rose from the incompatibility between Wheeler's deliberate and sane policy of cultural distance and Babcock's equally deliberate and sane policy of cultural intimacy. Babcock wanted to transgress the invisible border between the two communities by volunteering to be one of the others. By going to the other side as a wife, she was to establish an unbreakable

⁴⁸⁴ Letter from Barnum to Anderson, January 7, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁸⁵ Letter from Allen to Anderson, April 22, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁸⁶ Letter from Barnum to Anderson, March 22, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁸⁷ Letter from Allen to Anderson, April 22, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁸⁸ Letter from Walker to Anderson, Auburndale, August 8, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 678.

⁴⁸⁹ Letter from Wheeler to Anderson, Kharpoot, January 26, 1864 ABCFM, Reel 679.

bond between Armenians and Americans. Wheeler, however, dedicated his life to fighting against both the missionaries and the Armenians who tended to dismiss the natural difference between the two nations. As the next chapter will show, his main principle was one of distant relationship with the natives in order to give them only the correct ideas, not a developed civilization or some Western customs. About the probable consequences of the Babcock affair, he wrote:

However great the danger to which our children have been ex[posed] in this vile land, yet, hitherto, our supposed elevation in social position above the people has kept those seeking wives from attempting to invade our family circles; but, with such an example before them, we shall have constant anxiety lest others try to delude our daughters into an equal or greater indiscretion.⁴⁹⁰

Finally, on March 28, Walker and Babcock departed from Harput for the US, undertaking a trip which, in Walker's words, was to contain "thousands of her queer motions [*sic*] & doings on the road." In the very beginning of the journey, while waiting for the ferry to cross the Euphrates, she felt anxious among the waiting crowd and begged Walker "not to sell her to these Koords." She said: "How little I thought when I left my mother that I should come to this miserable end. It were better that I drown in the river than be sold to these Koords." Her behavior was full of anxiety towards everybody around her. When the ferry finally came, she at first refused to get on; and when they crossed the river, she then refused to get off. Wherever they stayed the night, she feared that "our host in the village would never let her go from the village." In Aintab, she was afraid of being abandoned by Walker; then, in the ship to Liverpool, she asked the officers to "protect her from that man [Walker]." On May 18, a Wednesday, she even tried to throw herself into the water, but Walker prevented her from committing suicide. When in Liverpool, Walker was sure that she needed to be immediately placed in an asylum, but he

⁴⁹⁰ Letter from Wheeler to Anderson, November 20, 1863, ABCFM, Reel 679.

decided to resume the trip in order to bring her to the US as soon as possible. On June 7, 1864, they arrived in New York.⁴⁹¹

After the Separation

A year after she arrived home, Babcock sent a letter to the Board from Framingham to ask for the continuation of financial support from the Board until she fully recovered her health. She had already turned down two offers of a teaching position due to her inability to resume to work, yet.⁴⁹² Six months later, on December 7, 1865, she married her cousin David Tenney Goodwin (1838-1913), the son of Arabella's mother's sister Mary Hibbard and David Goodwin. They had three children: William D. (b. Jan 12, 1867), Albert Henry (b. Nov 2, 1868 - d. June 16, 1891), and Mary Arabella (b. Oct 26, 1876).⁴⁹³ Both she and her sisters Isabella and Frances worked as teachers at the Thetford Academy, from which they had graduated.⁴⁹⁴ Having survived her husband, who died in 1913, Babcock lived until October 1, 1921.⁴⁹⁵

The Babcock-Boyajian affair was of course not made public. The *Missionary Herald* did not tell us anything more than that, "Miss Babcock has returned to the United States in consequence of ill health ..."⁴⁹⁶ But it was not easily forgotten inside the missionary world. The possible dangers of sending single white women to the field had already been known to Anderson, the secretary of the Board, and to Wheeler even before the Babcock affair, with which the danger was embodied and acquired a name. Two years later, in 1866, regarding his exchange

⁴⁹¹ Letters from Walker to Anderson, Andover, June 2, 1864; Auburndale, August 8, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 678.

⁴⁹² Letter from Babcock to Anderson, Framingham, June 3, 1865, ABCFM, Reel 676.

⁴⁹³ Mary Arabella went to Woodstock Academy, of which her father was a trustee, and Middlebury College. Walter E. Howard and Charles E. Prentiss, eds., *Catalogue of Officers and Students of Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, and of Others Who Have Received Degrees, 1800 to 1900* (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College, 1901), 214.

⁴⁹⁴ John Eaton, ed., *Thetford Academy, Thetford, Vermont - Seventy-Fifth Anniversary and Reunion. Thursday, June 28, 1894*. (Concord, N. H., 1895), 67–68.

⁴⁹⁵ Bowen, *The History of Woodstock, Connecticut - Genealogies of Woodstock Families*, 1.

⁴⁹⁶ *The Missionary Herald*, 1865, 61:5.

with headquarters about the need for female teachers for the Girls' School in Harput, Wheeler commented, "I wish to see here [not] a second Miss Babcock ..."⁴⁹⁷

On the other side of the story, Tomas Boyajian was married in 1869 to an English woman,⁴⁹⁸ Eliza Ann.⁴⁹⁹ They welcomed a daughter on October 16, 1870,⁵⁰⁰ and another one on February 3, 1873, in Diyarbekir.⁵⁰¹ In the following years, Boyajian's connection with the UK gained the upper hand vis-à-vis his relation to the US and the American missionaries. On July 27/28, 1880, for example, he gave an address in the Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, on the famine in Armenia.⁵⁰² The same year, Major Henry Trotter, then British Consul of Kurdistan, described him as an excellent person.⁵⁰³ And from the mid-1880s on, he acted as the British Vice-Consul in Diyarbekir until he died on September 6, 1895, in Harput.⁵⁰⁴ Barnum wrote the following note upon his death:

Probably no Armenian in the interior Turkey had a higher reputation than he. He was a man of noble character, a very eloquent preacher, and a successful diplomat withal. He was held in great respect by Turkish officials of every grade, and his services to the English government were highly valued. He worked hard, and the labor which he performed was useful to both governments. Few men had a clearer knowledge of the present delicate political status, and few men took a broader

⁴⁹⁷ Letter from Wheeler, Kharpoote, December 21, 1866, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁴⁹⁸ Letter from Barnum to Clark, Harpoote, June 26, 1869, ABCFM, Reel 677.

⁴⁹⁹ Pilikian and Khorshidian state that Boyajian's wife was Catherine Rogers, a descendant of the English poet Samuel Rogers (1763-1855). However, I could not find any record in British papers and at ancestry.co.uk that relates Catherine Rogers to the Boyajian family. In all records (birth, immigration, death), we find Eliza Ann Boyajian as Zabel and Henry Boyajian's mother and T(h)omas Boyajian's widow. On the other hand, Isabelle/Zabel's middle name is Catherine and Henry's is Samuel Rogers, which cannot be a coincidence. Khatchatur I. Pilikian, "Zabelliana -- 95th Anniversary of Zabelle Boyajian's Armenian Legends & Poems" (Hayashen - Centre for Armenian Information and Advice- London. UK, March 27, 2011), <http://norkhosq.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/ZABELLiana.pdf>; Tridat Khorshidian, *Zabel Boyajian: gyanki yev steghdzagortsudiuni* (Yerevan: Hayastan, 1990), 10, 28.

⁵⁰⁰ "Births," *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, November 29, 1870.

⁵⁰¹ "Births," *Hastings & St. Leonards Herald and Observer and Fashionable Visitors' List*, March 29, 1873, p. 2.

⁵⁰² "The Famine in Armenia," *Glasgow Herald*, July 29, 1880.

⁵⁰³ Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Majestelerinin Konsolosları: İngiliz Belgeleriyle Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki İngiliz Konsoloslukları, (1580-1900)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 272.

⁵⁰⁴ Prof. Pilikian argued that Tomas Boyajian became a victim during the 1895 Massacres; however, he died more than a month before the massacres occurred in Harput. There is no evidence that he died because of collective violence against the Armenians at the time. Pilikian, "Zabelliana -- 95th Anniversary of Zabelle Boyajian's Armenian Legends & Poems."

view of the situation. In the midst of his political work he did not lose his interest in spiritual things. A great crowd, probably not less than 2,500 persons, attended his funeral. The Armenian Bishop and six priests sat in the pulpit, and one of them made an address.⁵⁰⁵

Right after Boyajian died his family went through the difficult days of the 1895 Massacres (see, Part IV), but they survived and left the country. The massacres continued to haunt their work, though. In 1896, having settled in the UK, Eliza Ann Boyajian relayed a letter from the same massacre region to *London Times*.⁵⁰⁶ His daughter, Isabella (Zabelle/Zabel) Catherine Boyajian, published a novel entitled *Esther* (1901) about the Sasun Massacres in 1894, written under her pen name Vardeni. Later in 1914, she described her last year in the Ottoman Empire: “I survived the massacres of 1895, having barely escaped with my life. I shall never forget the wretchedness and hopelessness of the Armenians that we saw in every town and village on our 15 days’ journey to the sea-coast.”⁵⁰⁷

The family ended up in London, where Zabel Boyajian was to become a well-known artist in the 1910s-30s. Her artistic talent was attested even by her childhood work. In 1884, while living in Diyarbekir, in a handwork competition for children organized by *Little Folks*, a London paper, we see 11.5 year old Isabella C. Boyajian, who won the third prize in the category entitled “single dolls in costume.”⁵⁰⁸ A year later, at *The ‘Little Folks’ Proverb Painting Book Competition*, she could win only an honorable mention, as she did the following year, as well.⁵⁰⁹ On all occasions, she stood out with her non-European surname and with her town “Diarbekir, Turkey in Asia” among many names in the lists. In the census of 1901, she was recorded as “art

⁵⁰⁵ *The Missionary Herald*, vol. 91 (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1895), 432.

⁵⁰⁶ “To the Editor of the Times,” *The Times (London)*, September 11, 1896, p. 8.

⁵⁰⁷ Zabelle Catherine Boyajian, “Russian Protection for Armenia,” *Ararat - A Searchlight on Armenia* 2, no. 17 (November 1914): 177.

⁵⁰⁸ “Awards of Prizes in the 1884 Special Competitions,” *Little Folks*, January 1, 1885, p. 62.

⁵⁰⁹ “The ‘Little Folks’ Proverb Painting Book Competition,” *Little Folks*, [1886], p. 119. “List of Honour,” *Little Folks*, [1887], p. 61.

student,” living with her mother Eliza Ann in Hampstead, London.⁵¹⁰ In 1911, they had moved to 33 Marlborough Hill, St. John’s Wood, and had Hagop Melcon—a US citizen Armenian from Turkey—as a visitor during the census days.⁵¹¹ When in February 1916 she and her mother were naturalized as British citizens (Eliza Ann went through “re-admission” as a former citizen), they were the only ones from the Ottoman Empire on the naturalization list, and Isabella’s occupation was already stated as “artist.”⁵¹² She published her major work, *Armenian Legends and Poems*, in 1916, which was followed by *Gilgamesh: A Dream of the Eternal Quest* in 1924 and *In Greece With Pen and Palette* in 1938.

Eliza Ann Boyajian died on July 3, 1923, at the age of 77.⁵¹³ Isabella/Zabel’s brother, Henry Samuel Rogers Boyajian,⁵¹⁴ studied at the Institution of Civil Engineers between 1897 and 1903.⁵¹⁵ He later moved to India, where his mother had been born,⁵¹⁶ and worked for the British Rail Company. He died in 1932. Henry was not much into his Armenian roots and culture, but Zabel was. Throughout her entire artistic life, she was involved with the politics of the Armenian

⁵¹⁰ 1901 England Census. Class: RG13; Piece: 122; Folio: 129; Page: 32. Ancestry.com, accessed July 19, 2015, <http://ancestry.co.uk>.

⁵¹¹ The fourth member of the household was Edith Smith (20), who was recorded as “servant.” 1911 England Census. Class: RG14; Piece: 584. Ancestry.com, accessed July 19, 2015, <http://ancestry.co.uk>.

⁵¹² *The London Gazette*, 3 March 1916, p. 2369. *Accounts and Papers - Miscellaneous, State Papers*, vol. 38, 1917, 4.

⁵¹³ “Deaths,” *The Times (London)*, July 5, 1923, p. 1.

⁵¹⁴ Henry Boyajian’s records contain his father Tomas Boyajian’s name, too: “he is a subject of the Ottoman Empire, having been born at Diarbekir, Turkey in Asia; and is the son of Thomas and Eliza Ann Boyajian, both subjects of the Ottoman Empire; of the age of twenty seven years; a civil engineer; is unmarried.” UK, Naturalisation Certificates and Declarations, 1870-1912. Ancestry.com, accessed July 19, 2015, <http://ancestry.co.uk>.

⁵¹⁵ “Institution of Civil Engineers,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, March 27, 1903, p. 8. *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, vol. 131 (London: Institution of Civil Engineers, 1898), 269; *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, vol. 154 (London: Institution of Civil Engineers, 1903), 136.

⁵¹⁶ According to 1901 England Census, Eliza Ann Boyajian was a British subject born in Bengal whereas Isabella Boyajian was a Turkish subject born in Turkey. 1901 England Census. Class: RG13; Piece: 122; Folio: 129; Page: 32. Ancestry.com, accessed July 19, 2015, <http://ancestry.co.uk>.

cause and research into Armenian culture, which she reflected in her works (poems, illustrations, painting exhibitions). She passed away on January 26, 1957.⁵¹⁷

Colonial Intimacy

Babcock and Boyajian's failed attempt to marry can be read as an index of white supremacy and racism among the missionaries. The hostile attitude of the senior missionaries can also be seen as hypocrisy given the universalist doctrine of the evangelical movement. Barbara Merguerian's interpretation of this affair is one such reading. She wrote that Babcock's experience

offers useful insights into the character of the missionaries and inconsistencies in their approach. Coming from a nation founded on the principle of the equality of all citizens and preaching a religion that assumed the common parentage of humankind, the American evangelists clearly perceived themselves as distinct from the indigenous peoples among whom they lived and worked. This sense of distinction easily came to imply superiority, an attitude that did not escape the attention of the local populations, and thus adversely affected the outcomes of missionary efforts.⁵¹⁸

After demonstrating the disparity between the missionaries' reaction to the engagement and their alleged principles, Merguerian opined that, "Babcock took seriously the Protestant teachings about the equality of all peoples, whereas the other Americans, consciously or unconsciously, assumed the superiority of the Americans." (492) Thus, the Babcock affair should be seen as distilling the quintessence of colonial and racial relations between the Western missionaries and the Eastern locals. She concluded that "[r]elations were harmonious on the surface, and the missionaries often visited the Armenian Protestant families, and vice versa. But while preaching the equality of all people in the eyes of God, the Americans nonetheless drew

⁵¹⁷ Pilikian, "Zabelliana -- 95th Anniversary of Zabelle Boyajian's Armenian Legends & Poems."

⁵¹⁸ Barbara J. Merguerian, "Social Relations in the American Mission to Kharpert: The Story of Arabella L. Babcock, 1862-1864," in *Between Paris and Fresno: Armenian Studies in Honor of Dickran Kouymjian* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2008), 476.

clear boundaries between themselves and the indigenous peoples among whom they lived and worked.” (495-96)

It is indisputable that most—if not all—missionaries saw Ottoman subjects as inferior to Americans: inferior in mental capacity, or in culture, or in soul. However, Merguerian’s heroic account of Babcock’s struggle against missionary orthodoxy is based on the (modern) assumption that social distance is a wrong to be cured by intimacy. According to her point of view, the dream-world of encounter based on mutual sacrifices and mutual understanding (namely, their marriage) seems to have been shattered by the interventions of racist missionaries. The opportunity to create half-American Boyajian and half-Armenian Babcock was lost for good. Narrow ideologies defeated the resistance of multi-culturalism.

This resistance argument, however, dismisses the fact that Babcock and Wheeler represent two equally viable theoretical approaches to relating with the ‘other:’ keeping distance vs. going native. By assuming that the latter was or should have been the norm for relating to the natives, Merguerian invents a hypocritical missionary ruling-class who advocated for going native but behind the curtain continued keeping their distance. In fact, these approaches were being openly discussed in missionary circles, and more often than not missionaries pointed out the dangers of ‘going native.’ The Punjab Missionary Conference held in December 1862-January 1863 in Lahore, India, had a specific session on the topic: “Sympathy and Confidence: How Can Foreign Missionaries Secure, in the Highest Degree, the Sympathy and Affectionate Confidence of Their Native Brethren?” The lack of warm relations between missionaries and the native Protestants was discussed in detail. Some speakers directly blamed the missionaries and suggested that only their “love” could secure sympathy, whereas others implied the impossibility of real sympathy given the embedded inequality of power between Europeans and natives. In

later years, many experienced missionaries condemned ‘going native’ as hypocrisy, since sympathetic behavior could abolish only the appearance of separation, not its reality.⁵¹⁹

This does not mean that the Harput missionaries did not feel superior towards the Ottomans. They certainly did, like all missionaries including, perhaps, Babcock. For instance, her opinion of the Kurds, reflected in her anxiety about being kidnapped by them (a detail missing from Merguerian’s account), put Babcock in the same boat with all the other missionaries when it came to otherizing ‘wild’ native elements. Even in the Armenian villages where they stayed on the way to America, she felt the same anxiety towards the villagers. In fact, it can be argued that Babcock’s compassion extended only to Westernized Armenian Protestants like Boyajian. One can further claim that she wanted to overcome short-distance relations with the community that was socially closest to the Americans, while she took long-distance relations with the others for granted. She praised the ‘noble’ element in Armenians, which for her meant their being modern—namely being European. In that sense, Babcock can be seen as an embodiment of cultural imperialism even more than the other missionaries.

My aim is not to discredit Babcock. At the end of the day, we have little evidence about her real thoughts or her character. However, based on the limited material we have, I suggest that we historians take the love affair as a laboratory of two competing perspectives (even philosophies) about how to speak to ‘the other,’ rather than as a manifestation of a naïve and good missionary’s struggle with mealy-mouthed and evil ones. The latter reading is based on an assumption which is widely shared: social distance is an outcome of domination, generally domination that comes from outside, and mostly from the west. In the end of Part II, I discussed the same assumption in regards to spatial separation, and I referred to Sahlin’s focus on local

⁵¹⁹ Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1940* (Stanford University Press, 2002), 87–89, 225.

sources of alterity. Now, I want to remind the reader of the debates that followed the publication of Malinowski's diary, because it was received by the anthropology community in much the same way that the Babcock-Boyajian affair was perceived by Merguerian. Geertz wrote upon the debates around the diary:

The myth of the chameleon field-worker, perfectly self-tuned to his exotic surroundings—a walking miracle of empathy, tact, patience, and cosmopolitanism—was demolished by the man who had perhaps done the most to create it.⁵²⁰

Similarly, Wheeler, Allen and Barnum were among the most highly-regarded and able missionaries of the entire crew of the Board. Like most readers of Malinowski's diary, Merguerian was disappointed by the 'real' face of our supposedly empathetic, cosmopolitan and tactful missionaries: how can we possibly protect the missionaries from the attacks of the nationalist historians if they *really* were agents of imperialism?

As Geertz said, however, the issue here “is not moral; it is epistemological.” The fact that Malinowski had disrespectful things to say about the islanders came as a shock to his readers only because of the widespread presupposition that to understand the native well, one needs “some sort of extraordinary sensibility, an almost preternatural capacity to think, feel, and perceive like a native.”⁵²¹ Similarly, the behavior of the missionaries in Harput is a shock for us simply because we assume that successful missionaries needed to win the hearts of the people through compassionate relations. Ironically, critical scholarship shares this assumption with nationalist historiography; the only difference is that the latter does not get surprised when the real face is revealed. In reality, however, neither did the Harput missionaries ever aspire to a mixed society, nor did the Harput Armenians have some sort of false consciousness about the

⁵²⁰ Clifford Geertz, “‘From the Native’s Point of View:’ On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding,” *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 28, no. 1 (October 1974): 27.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

missionaries' project. The Harput clique always argued for the preservation of distinction and boundaries. This was so not only in their private letters but also in the published letters and books of the Harput missionaries, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. They were politically incorrect in the eyes of many of their fellow missionaries, as well as of many of us today. Contrary to the expectations of colonial studies, it was not that the Harput missionaries said 'good' things but did 'bad' things; they also said 'bad' things. Or, maybe, not so bad things.

Chapter 8: On Cultural Distance

The Principles of the Harput Missionaries

The rise of the Harput clique in the 1860s among the American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire was an amalgam of fame and disrepute, as mentioned at the end of Chapter 6. The Babcock-Boyajian event was the crystallization of the Harput clique's characteristics and perhaps it even contributed to the maturing of their relatively firm principles, among which financial self-support and limiting the education extended to natives were the most important ones. In this section, I will delineate these principles with regard to actual practices. I focus on two conflicts: the conflict between the Harput missionaries and the other missionaries (especially, those in Istanbul), and the conflict between the Harput missionaries and the liberal Protestant Armenians. I believe a study of these two conflicts will prove more informative than the conventional discussion of missionary business as a tense relation between Muslims and missionaries, or at best between Gregorian Armenians and missionaries. The latter two are too obvious to require further attention; the former two are more obscure and more illuminating as regards a social analysis of cultural otherization.

In 1864, a group of ten Armenians representing the Diyarbekir Protestants signed a letter addressed to the Board in Boston. In this letter in Armeno-Turkish,⁵²² the local congregation showed gratitude for the Board's years of support and for Walker's labor, and then they basically asked for the continuation of financial support even in the absence of any missionaries in town.

⁵²² Turkish in Armenian letters.

Tomas Boyajian, as the chairman of the congregation, was the first signee.⁵²³ What was behind this petition was, of course, the decrease in financial support by the Board during the American Civil War, and Walker's having left Diyarbekir, which had also put the town in an unprivileged position. As mentioned before, the Diyarbekir station was doing pretty well even without any missionary presence thanks to Boyajian's highly-praised work. But Boyajian was determined to go abroad to collect funds for the sake of his town's community, anyway.

The absence of Tomas Boyajian from Diyarbekir for more than two years between 1865 and 1868 was to become a milestone in the tense relationship between him and the missionaries. The conflict arose upon his travel to the US in fall of 1867 in order to raise funds for a new Protestant church building in Diyarbekir. The Prudential Committee of the Board was furious at this "unauthorized," "individual and irresponsible" action which was taken without consulting them. Williams sent a letter from Mosul to Boston specifically to denounce the native pastor's US visit, saying that Diyarbekir was the least needy station of them all and it had already been supported by American churches more than any other church in the region. Moreover, he continued, the people in Diyarbekir did not request such a visit, which they learned of after Boyajian left. Nevertheless, he added, "it is not likely they will object," "it would be very easy for anybody to alienate them [from the idea of self-support], by proposing to do everything for them. They are poor, and it requires vigorous self-denial to sustain their own institutions; and if outsiders will volunteer to carry all their burdens, it of course will seem pleasant; but it will never plant Christianity."⁵²⁴ And Barnum would add, "no *church* should receive aid from abroad. ... If aid must be sought, he would have it sought from neighboring churches. ... [not from] a

⁵²³ The 4-page Armeno-Turkish letter and its translation are contained in ABDFM, Reel 676.

⁵²⁴ "Letter from Mr. Williams, December 21, 1867" in *The Missionary Herald*, 1868, 64:120-122.

distant, unseen, and practically, for them, an impersonal power.”⁵²⁵ In June 1868, Barnum related, Pastor Boyajian was still absent from the Diyarbekir station and local issues were being taken care of by the pastor of Harput, Mardiros Shimavoniah, who was the husband of Boyajian’s sister.⁵²⁶

Boyajian’s US visit revealed the fundamental tension between missionary policy and native demands. Natives had to marry natives; similarly, natives had to get money from natives. Boyajian had broken both laws by being engaged to Babcock and by his fund-raising trip to the US. The Harput missionaries began expressing frustration about him, and they determined that the underlying reason was the “too much education” policy of the other missionaries. Once the Armenians were given enlightenment in western standards, it was difficult to stop them demanding more and more. Thus, the principle of self-help was intimately connected to the idea of cultural distinction and to the anti-imperialist policy of the Harput missionaries. Throughout the 1860s, self-support and limited education were to become the main principles of the Harput missionaries and their field of struggle against other missionaries.⁵²⁷ Crosby H. Wheeler of Harput was the most outspoken defender of the self-help principle in the entire missionary network in the Ottoman Empire.

Wheeler began articulating his ideas on the principle of self-help in his private letters as early as 1860. He was particularly adamant about the high standards of the Bebek Seminary in Istanbul (remember that Boyajian was a graduate of Bebek) and about the high expectation of its graduates:

We take it for granted that while so many towns in N.E. are unable to secure & supply educated preachers, it will be found in less difficult in Turkey, &, if we

⁵²⁵ “Sound Doctrine at Harpoot” in *Ibid.*, 64:161–62.

⁵²⁶ “Letter from H. N. Barnum, June 4, 1868” in *Ibid.*, 64:284.

⁵²⁷ For the similar discussions in India, see Chapter 7 in Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines*.

expect the mass of the villages to be supplied with preachers, we must take it for granted that they are to have men who, while truly pious, have enjoyed more limited advantages than Bebek or even Tokat furnish.⁵²⁸

Therefore, he concluded that the correct way to proceed with the missionary encounter was “our idea of the small amount of preparatory training which is essential to permanency in the pastoral office.”⁵²⁹ Wheeler’s dislike of the Bebek graduates increased in time. In 1862, he criticized a neighboring station (without giving its name) for hiring two Bebek graduates for a salary twice as much as the Harput salaries. But, he continued, these graduates expected an even higher paycheck “because all his classmates get more.”⁵³⁰ Wheeler also alluded to the counter-arguments put forward by his fellow missionaries to the effect that seven years of education at Bebek would naturally make the pupils deserve a higher standing and that the missionaries should pay their “market value” to keep them at work. But Wheeler was unbending: if these graduates would not work unless they were highly paid, this only meant that the wrong people had been educated!

Regarding the Harput Seminary, he was against the idea of having the school as “a mere expedient for an emergency to give a partial training to such persons who lack the time or the ability to be suitably educated at Bebek.”⁵³¹ He was rather fond of “giv[ing] to all such training as the present condition of the work demand, leaving a higher degree of education to coming times, when the people will appreciate & demand it.” Wheeler’s irritation towards Bebek Seminary and the missionary force in the imperial capital increased to the extent that he was furious even at his fellow Barnum who went to Istanbul, “perhaps the most expensive city in the world,” to take care of the Goodells (his in-laws). He wrote that the Goodells could have come to Harput,

⁵²⁸ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoot, July 7, 1860, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoot, June 28, 1862, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵³¹ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoot, December 5, 1862, ABCFM, Reel 679.

instead of staying in Istanbul and costing the Board a fortune, if they really wanted to live in this country!⁵³²

In a nutshell, then, the self-help principle meant refusing to help the natives by distributing knowledge and money as charity. On one occasion, he was enraged by Van Lennep at Tokat—not only on account of the high salaries in his mission, but also because of the new chapel, similar to the one in Harput, he built for \$1,400 for 400 people, when Tokat had hosted only 27 people at the last Sabbath meeting!⁵³³ Wheeler was against the idea of gift-giving in general. For instance, he once wrote that people did not easily get accustomed to paying for the doctors' service; it was generally considered a gift from the missionaries.⁵³⁴ And, contrary to his fellows, he did not believe that distributing free services, or free books, or building churches would create interest in true Christianity over time. Gift-giving would not create counter-gifts, for Wheeler, since the “inevitable force of Oriental ideas” was effective even for the upper classes:

They, equally with the lower classes, firmly believe that the man who does them a favor does it for his own & not their good, &, while some, as Dr. Nutting himself testifies, are too proud spirited to avail themselves of medical practices on such terms, others set its time money value upon it & thank the physician, being, however, doubly careful that he get not his supported hoped for pay in their adhesion to his foreign faith.⁵³⁵

On December 18, 1865, Wheeler sent a 23-page hand-written letter to Boston to Rufus Anderson, the renowned secretary of the Board for more than forty years (1823-66). This exceptionally long dispatch, almost an essay in its content, was the first articulation of Wheeler's principles of good missionary work and his fierce attacks on his fellow missionaries in Turkey.

⁵³² Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoot, July 27, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵³³ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoot, November 29, 1864, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵³⁴ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoot, August 15, 1861, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵³⁵ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoot, June 10, 1863, ABCFM, Reel 679.

As a doomsayer in the midst of seemingly splendid progress, he wrote: “It has long been my impression, wh. has now become a settled conviction, that, in its essential features, the miss’y work in nearly all the stations of Northern Turkey has been a failure, &, with regard to some places, I may say even worse, a positive disaster to the communities”⁵³⁶ Although he also targeted the missionaries in Erzurum, Trebizond, Sivas, Tocat and Marsovan, his main enemy was the Constantinople mission, and especially the missionary Cyrus Hamlin, founder of the Bebek Seminary. The more Hamlin’s great work was applauded by Armenians and by other missionaries, the more Wheeler raised his voice from back-of-beyond Harput against this evil in the imperial capital. The exclusive emphasis given to education was ruining the work of evangelization there, he asserted, which had led Hamlin even to “make preparations for opening at Bebek a separate Theological Seminary for Turks & -when this ... plan was defeated by the Prudential Committee- to gather into Bebek proper some young Turks the memory of whose conduct is still a stench in our nostrils, &, I hope, in his too.”⁵³⁷

The apparent secularization of the missionary schools in the capital and in many other cities was the chief cause of the failure of mission work in Turkey. The educated Protestants were inclined to give the upper hand to worldly matters at the expense of the real aim of missionary education.

It may be surely said that a very large share of the intelligence & culture derived from Bebek by its pupils is today in use to hinder rather than help the missionary work. Then, too, it is to be remembered that, in so far we give a people intelligence without leavening that intelligence with the gospel, we make the work of their evangelization not easier, but more difficult.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁶ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharput, December 18, 1865, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

Moreover, the educated young were too ready to give the cold shoulder to pastoral work and frustrate the entire reason d'être of the theological seminaries. The pastor of Harput Church, himself a graduate of Bebek Seminary, told Wheeler that they did not use the Bible as a textbook in any of their classes in Bebek and that most of his classmates, in fact, did not enter the service of the Board. Thus, Wheeler continues,

[a] mistake was made in too highly educating those intended for this service. The young men & women in the two seminaries in Constantinople, partly from the influences which surrounded them in the capital & partly from the kind of training given & the length of its continuance, were generally lifted out of sphere of sympathy with those among whom they were to labor. It has been almost uniformly found that the graduates of Bebek were less able than the missionaries to bear the inconveniences of travelling & laboring among their own people.⁵³⁹

Some of these Bebek graduates volunteered to work in distant villages of their own country, but only for very high salaries. And they left the service entirely when their offer was refused. The worst, for Wheeler, was that many “missionaries, instead of regarding themselves in their true character as ambassadors sent merely to awaken revolted subjects to a sense of their duty, & to show them how to do it, have put themselves in the position of recruiting officers sent to enlist & to pay recruits for a foreign service.”⁵⁴⁰ They basically paid for higher education and in turn paid high salaries to the highly educated; they also financially supported the native churches instead of forcing the inhabitants to support them. As a result, instead of lightening the load, these “most ruinous outlays” hindered the mission more than any persecution meted out by Ottoman society.

⁵³⁹ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoot, December 18, 1865, ABCFM, Reel 679. In a later letter, he protested again: “‘Education! Education! Give the people education!’ has been the cry of too many missionaries, forgetting that not mere education, but the right kind of education is to be sought, and that the nature of the impulses given to and by it make education either a great blessing or a greater curse, or, if not ultimately a curse, yet such in its immediate relations to the evangelization of an ignorant and degraded people.” Letter from C. H. Wheeler to N. G. Clark, Kharpoot, January 14, 1867, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵⁴⁰ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoot, December 18, 1865, ABCFM, Reel 679.

In the course of the 1860s, his encounters with the natives reinforced—if not formed—Wheeler’s ideas on the mission’s duties. He became infamously adamant and insistent in standing up for the self-help principle in various venues in Turkey and in the US, so much so that he “became the champion of self-support,” as James Barton, later secretary of the Board, once called him.⁵⁴¹ He was self-confident enough to accuse the other missionaries of being “afraid of being called ‘mean Yankees,’ if they tried to economize the Board’s money, or to get any from the people.”⁵⁴² It is not arbitrary that he chose the term ‘Yankee,’ since many missionaries were afraid of being seen not only as stingy, but as rich and stingy. Even Rufus Anderson, who was a loyal supporter of Wheeler, was wary of the local implications in Turkey of the privileged class background of American missionaries. Wheeler was not:

I do not agree with the idea once expressed, as I think, by yourself, that missionaries should be very careful not to produce the impression that they are rich. To produce the contrary impression were impossible, even if desirable, at least in Turkey. In vain would the disbursements of so large sums seek to impress the people with an idea of their poverty. To produce this impression, not only must we cease disbursing money for missionary purposes, but to the ruin of health & efficiency & the shortening of our lives & those of our families must go down of cheap low & degrading habits of living which prevailed among the people around us.⁵⁴³

Wheeler was an outcast. Not only most of the missionaries of his time but also the historians of the twenty-first century assume that the missionary business consisted of ‘going native.’ Nationalist historiography saw this as a sinister plan to govern ‘them’ (imperialism). Liberal historiography took the same phenomenon as part of sincere devotion; for them, the missionaries’ lack of sympathy was the problem. Thus, in the entire literature on missionaries in Turkey, there is disproportionate attention paid to Cyrus Hamlin of Constantinople, the great

⁵⁴¹ James L. Barton, *Daybreak in Turkey* (Boston, New York: The Pilgrim press, 1908), 225.

⁵⁴² Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoat, December 18, 1865, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*

educator, the rebel against the conservative Board, the expellee from the mission, the heroic fighter for freedom of education, the founder of Robert College (today's Bogazici University), in the end, the champion of trans-regional liberalism. I have chosen a different path. I tell the story of the Harpoot clique and especially of Wheeler, the adversary of Hamlin and of the liberal Armenians, the enemy of higher education, the opponent of any kind of cultural exchange, the mean and "wicked" man of principles and, in the end, the missionary most hated by both Armenians and his fellow missionaries. I chose to tell the story of a man who openly refused to go native, *who refused to help the other*.

In another long, 26-page letter, this time to Nathaniel G. Clark, the successor of R. Anderson as the Secretary of the Board (1865-94), Wheeler himself touched on the problems of the politics of intimacy among the missionaries:

It cannot be denied that missionaries by their excessive & often unwisely expressed sympathy with the real or apparent poverty of the people have increased the difficulty then, the kind hearted miss'y, instead of teaching his convert the grace of chr. liberality, as he ought to do, ... , begin to heal him as a pamper & to encourage the universal oriental greed for "bakshish"[gratuity], he not only harms the man, but inflicts a greater wrong on the church of wh. he is to be a member, by teaching it also to "sit & beg."⁵⁴⁴

Thus, he condemned the widespread policy of 'helping' the natives as "bribery." In an anti-imperialist fashion, he not only attacked his fellows but also revealed his hatred for the native men who conceded their inferior and dependent position:

Reasoning a priori we sh'd suppose that to make a pastor dependent upon any others than his own flock, & especially to make him dependent for bread upon the representatives of a foreign society, w'd be fatal to all proper appreciation of the responsibility & dignity of his office.... The man, if indeed a man, will feel that his nominal position as an ambassador of Christ is inconsistent with the humiliation of going once a month to receive alms from a foreigner....⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴⁴ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to N. G. Clark, Kharpoot, January 14, 1867, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

This public feeling of condescension towards those who depended on missionary money was also expressed by the Armenian pastor of the Harput Protestant Church at a meeting of Harput Evangelical Union in 1866: “How long shall we remain in subjection to the beneficence of others!”⁵⁴⁶ As a result, towards the end of the 1860s, the station of Harput emerged as an annoying blight on the missionary map to many. From this point forward, the Harput clique would be named in much of the missionaries’ personal correspondence and in all public criticism by Armenians as a locus of rudeness, recalcitrance and arrogance. What follows is an account of the converts’ war against their proselytizers, in which, of course, the Harput clique was to be a special target.

The Natives’ Rebellion

In 1866, the Armenian Protestant pastors in Istanbul held meetings about the problem of the independence of the evangelical churches and decided to call for a general meeting with the participation of all Protestant churches throughout Turkey. The aim was to create a network of native agency in order to limit the power of the missionaries in managing church affairs. Accordingly, a “Circular to the Evangelical Churches of Turkey” was put on paper and the missionaries were delegated to circulate it among the pastors in their own mission field. To Crosby H. Wheeler in Harput the news came from Edward E. Bliss, who transmitted the circular with the accompanying letter of Tomas Boyajian, who, after his scandalous affair with Babcock, was for Wheeler no more than the embodiment of the degenerate parvenu.

Boyajian’s close contact with the missionaries and pastors in Istanbul came to light thanks to their collaboration in this Circular. In his report to the Board, Wheeler enumerated several arguments against the proposed idea of a general meeting: lack of money, lack of time,

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

lack of need. But his real criticism focused on the dangers that would emerge out of an encounter between the pastors of the interior and the pastors of the capital.

You say you hope that your men w'd "catch something of the selfdenying working spirit" of our pastors. Dear brother, have you forgotten that nothing but grace of God can give that, & that there is far greater danger that our men w'd return with their minds filled with those peculiar notions of independence & 'honor' wh. seem to lie at the root of their circular, & wh. at least to fill the minds of the leading men of the capital & vicinity as to make them, as it seems to us, hinderers rather than helpers of the Lord's work? ... And can you wonder that we sh'd fear the effect of having our simple-minded men of homespun meet in such an assembly as the one proposed threatens to be? No!⁵⁴⁷

The proposed meeting was never held. When he signed his letter containing the Circular, Boyajian was on the way to the US to raise funds for a new church building in Diyarbekir. In New York, he did not hesitate to publicize the demeaning treatment of Armenian Christians by American missionaries. In his talk at a special meeting in New York in 1867, Boyajian explained the discomfort of the Constantinople pastors under the tutelage of the missionaries in the same field. With their proposal for a general meeting rejected, Boyajian asserted that "the missionaries exercise unlimited control over our Churches."⁵⁴⁸ On the one hand, he criticized the Constantinople missionaries, but on the other hand, without referring to him by name, Boyajian responded to the main criticisms of Wheeler, who had never agreed with those missionaries' policies anyway. Almost exclusively, Wheeler was meant by "some of the missionaries," as in these comments on education policy:

Just now, when there is a great demand for educated Christian ministers, they have closed the Bebek Seminary, under Dr. Hamlin, and established three others much inferior to that, Some of the missionaries declare even that they "do not desire to have educated pastors," and that "they do not require more knowledge for the present." In reply, I say we must keep in our mind the people to whom the

⁵⁴⁷ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to N. G. Clark, Kharpoot, December 20, 1866, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵⁴⁸ *The American Missionaries and the Armenian Protestant Community [pamphlet]*, 1869, 5.

missionary effort is directed; they are not savages and heathens, but civilized Christian people, though ignorant and superstitious.⁵⁴⁹

In summer of the same year, the Constantinople Protestants—as they called themselves—more openly targeted Wheeler himself. In June 1867, a public letter was published in *Manzume-i Efkar* in the Armenian language,⁵⁵⁰ apparently upon a visit by Wheeler to Vlanga (Yenikapı) Church in Istanbul: “A tall and thin man went into the pulpit, who spoke the Armenian language with an uncouthness that at once betrayed him an American missionary.” He was there to tell about the achievements reached in Harput but, as the letter said, he started cursing educated Armenians. He was reported to have said: “Knowledge is a hurtful thing. It is not needful for a preacher of the gospel to know much. The knowledge of the English language is hurtful. Don’t you see how the students, who have been at Mr. Hamlin’s school, at Bebek, all speak against the missionaries?” The signees expressed disappointment with the missionaries, who made “splendid promises” in the beginning but who “are now afraid of our knowing too much.” So, Wheeler’s “wicked address” that called the audience “beggars” was the last straw. Regarding Harput province, they wrote, while Rev. Mardiros of Harput and Rev. Pastor Tomas [Boyajian] of Diyarbekir deserved the gratitude of the community, Mr. Wheeler deserved their hatred.

In 1867-68, Wheeler also was in the US. George W. Wood proposed that he meet with Boyajian to establish peace and cooperation. Dr. Wood even suggested that Wheeler apologize for his harsh language about him and for what happened during the Babcock affair. Wheeler did not step back, though. He openly re-stated that Boyajian’s engagement with Babcock and his desire for a new church building in Diyarbekir were all wrong. It was indicative of Boyajian’s

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁵⁰ We have the unpublished English translation of this letter at ABCFM, Reel 676.

aspirations that he had been searching for “a learned wife” for more than two years, anyway.⁵⁵¹

This character defect was closely related to education in English in some mission stations, most notably in Istanbul and Marsovan.

Wheeler visited these stations again on his way back to Harput and his negative convictions grew even stronger. In Istanbul, he saw a “selfish & sensual herd of so-called pastors,” and as for Marsovan, where free English instead of spiritual life was taught, he wrote that “the teaching of English in the seminary is a worm at the root of all good.”⁵⁵² In 1869, Boyajian was already married to his English wife, and Wheeler could not help referring to this relationship in his critique of English-language instruction: If young people were to be filled with “foreign taste” through secular education in English, they would, like Tomas, go to England to find a wife!⁵⁵³ In another letter about a new school in Harput, Wheeler wrote that only the ordained pastors were brought together in the summer and taught English to the degree that was needed for their work “without much fear of its carrying them off from their proper work on fortune hunting journeys in England and America”—an obvious reference to Boyajian.⁵⁵⁴

In 1869, a greater controversy emerged at the Vlanga Church when the missionaries locked the doors of the chapel—their own property—in order to protest the election of Sdepan Eutujian [Ütücüyan] as its temporary pastor. The church members were not intimidated; they dismissed the warning and entered the chapel on Sunday, but the missionaries came by with police and had some of them arrested. The representatives sent letters complaining of this scandal to the headquarters in Boston, and they also publicized the issue in the pages of *The Levant Times and Shipping Gazette* and *The Levant Herald*, both published in Istanbul. “One of

⁵⁵¹ Letter from Wheeler to Wood, Mission House, November 20, 1867, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵⁵² Letter from Wheeler, Harpoot, November 21, 1868, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵⁵³ Letter from Wheeler, Harpoot, July 24, 1869, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵⁵⁴ Letter from Wheeler to F.M.A. Society, Malatia, November 19, 1869, ABCFM, Reel 679.

the People,” “Fair Play,” “One of the American Missionaries,” “An Armenian Protestant” were among the signatures seen under the polemical letters read in the newspapers. Of course, the missionaries of Istanbul also published an official response with their real names under it: they accused a clique among the Protestants of electing someone in an undemocratic fashion and of incorrectly presenting themselves as representatives of the entire community. As a result, they said, they could not permit the Board’s building to be used by these rebels for religious activity. With mutual recriminations the event seems to have lasted from April to September, 1869, when a commission was formed to investigate the charges as a sign of moderation by both sides.⁵⁵⁵

Around the same time, Boyajian was back from the US, having collected some funds to build a new church in Diyarbekir. He and his associates applied to Mr. Williams of Diyarbekir for the deed to the existing chapel in order to erect a new building on the same spot. They made a reasonable offer of \$660 in six annual installments to repay the Board the cost of the old building, and this was accepted by Mr. Williams. However, when the Harput missionaries were asked about the issue, they insisted that the \$660 should be paid at once, which was impossible for the Diyarbekir community. In his letter asking for help from S. M. Minasian, Boyajian concluded that “the missionaries in these parts, especially those of Kharpoot, are exercising extraordinary oppression over the people.”⁵⁵⁶

In the following decade, in the 1870s, the discomfort in Harput grew. The missionary H. J. Van Lennep, who had always expressed sympathy to native demands in the face of the Board’s dismissive attitude, translated and circulated some letters sent from Harput and had them published in an Armenian newspaper in Istanbul. The editor of the paper was Simon Eutujian,

⁵⁵⁵ *The American Missionaries and the Armenian Protestant Community [pamphlet]*; Vartooguian, *Armenia’s Ordeal*, 60–61.

⁵⁵⁶ *The American Missionaries and the Armenian Protestant Community [pamphlet]*, 59.

for the last decade the head of the counter-missionary Protestant movement in the capital city. These published letters from faraway Harput were basically meant to represent the repressed voice of Armenian Protestants in the provinces. In a direct and ironical parallel to what Wheeler had reported to Boston about the ‘failure’ of the other missionary stations, the letters now announced the real, “sad” condition of the Harput field as opposed to how it kept being represented by the missionaries. The churches and congregations in this province were actually “almost ready to fall;” the real members of the churches were fewer than advertized. Ignorance was prevailing because “the so-called Harpoot Seminary contains a handful of dull, unpromising scholars.” Predominantly married men were encouraged to enter the seminary in order to restrict the young single men from higher education.

In order to raise awareness, ten pastors of Harput and its vicinity had submitted a petition to lengthen the education in the seminary for two more years, but because of “Mr. W.” five of them withdrew their signatures out of fear, and the petition was rejected. Hence, Wheeler was exerting “a real Papal power under the name of Protestantism!” In another letter published in the same paper with the title “An Echo from the Depths of Harpoot,” Wheeler was quoted as saying that “The Constantinople Pastors are the Miss’ dogs: they take their money, go up into the pulpit, bark a little, and then come down.” Still another letter called Wheeler a “crazed religious despot” and “a systematic persecutor.”⁵⁵⁷

The pastors’ rejected petition was addressed to the “Missionaries of Harpoot.” In a nutshell, they demanded more financial support from the Board for churches and also an increase in their own salaries since they did not want to “cheerfully dwell in hovels, where he [Wheeler] would not even lodge his donkey.” The last demand for better education was pitifully justified by

⁵⁵⁷ ABCFM, Reel 680.

the their apparent ignorance compared to other pastors. The petition reads: “Our Theological Seminary and our course of instruction has become a subject of derision at Marsovan and Cons’ple, and we dare say everywhere else, and so has the poverty and ignorance of the Pastors of this District.”⁵⁵⁸ Wheeler’s interpretation of the petition affair in Harput was short and dismissive: most pastors confessed that they had been forced to sign the petition upon the insistence of a few ringleaders. He was proud that the missionaries did not retreat and quelled the disturbance successfully.⁵⁵⁹

Cultural Distance

Wheeler was a man of distance. In addition to his war against financial and cultural patronage, he refrained from showing the sympathy so common among writers of his time in regard to the Armenians. In his book, he described the steamer from Constantinople to Samsun (on the way to Harput) as full of the “squalid wretchedness of the crowds of Armenians, Turks, Greeks, Persians” especially in “the closeness, filth, smoke of the ‘second cabin,’” in the middle of a “sickening mass of squalid humanity.”⁵⁶⁰ There was no difference for Wheeler between Christians and Muslims of the Orient; both lacked civilized manners. Thus, missionaries should always keep a distance from the local way of life. For example, “the children cannot be allowed to associate with the children of the place . . .;”⁵⁶¹ they were to be raised according to the customs of an American middle-class environment, which was truly created in home-spaces in the missionary compound isolated from the rest of the city.

⁵⁵⁸ ABCFM, Reel 680.

⁵⁵⁹ Letter from Wheeler, Harpoot, February 24, 1870, ABCFM, Reel 679.

⁵⁶⁰ Wheeler, *Letters from Eden; Or, Reminiscences of Missionary Life in the East*, 28–29.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 284.

In Harput, even before the gorgeous college campus was built towards the end of the century (Figure 8-1), the missionaries used to rent and live in the best houses of the city, so much so that, as Susan Anna Wheeler recalled, “living in such a house, among such a people, gave us a position at once.”⁵⁶² And the interiors of their apartments were decorated as a New England ‘home,’ which was, according to Mrs. Wheeler, admired by the Armenian women, who called it “‘Jannet, Jannet’ (Heaven, Heaven).” She used to teach the women how to beautify their houses, by planting flowers or whitewashing the walls, and always presented herself in neat dresses in the reception room, which was kept very tidy (surprisingly to them, they were not allowed into the other rooms).

⁵⁶² Susan Anna Wheeler, *Missions in Eden: Glimpses of Life in the Valley of the Euphrates* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1899), 44.

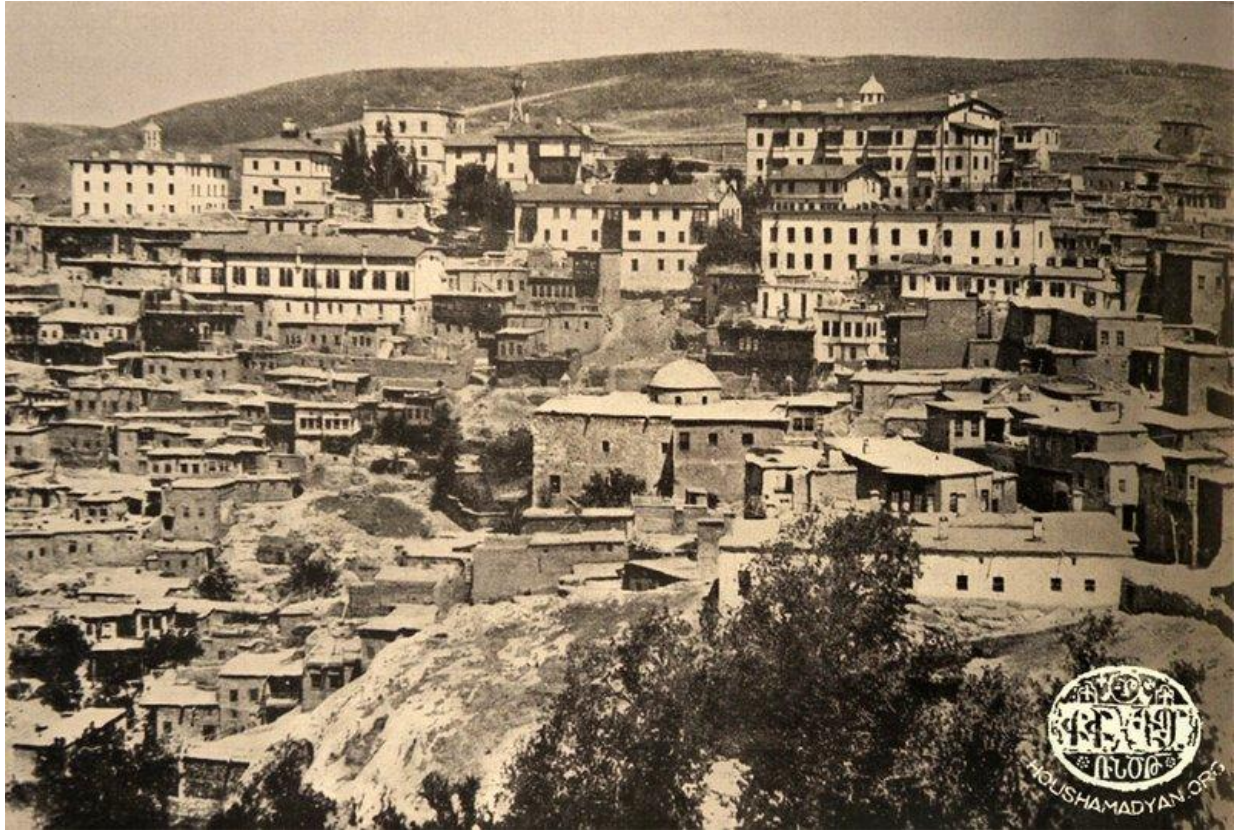


Figure 8-1: The Euphrates College Complex.⁵⁶³

The Wheelers were outspoken about the barriers they kept between missionary and native in daily life. In fact, the books written and co-written by Crosby Wheeler were public defenses of colonial separation in intimate and public spaces. He once said, “You see that we missionaries sit upon chairs at table, and in general have things in our houses much as we did in the home-land. When we go abroad we of course conform largely to oriental habits; but why make our home a Turkish one, and thus make foreigners of our children?”⁵⁶⁴ Mr. Parmelee’s packing list for the new arrival H. S. Barnum included, besides medicine and injector, an “air cushion for your wife’s saddle,” canned oysters, arrowroot, an oil lamp and “sewing machine is a sine qua non.”⁵⁶⁵ The natives entered the private space of the missionaries only when they were bound by a labor

⁵⁶³ <http://www.houshamadyan.org/en/mapottomanempire/vilayetofmamuratulazizharpot/harpot-kaza/education-and-sport/schools-part-i.html>.

⁵⁶⁴ Wheeler, *Letters from Eden; Or, Reminiscences of Missionary Life in the East*, 61.

⁵⁶⁵ Letter from Parmelee to Barnum, Trebizond, March 23, 1867, ABCFM, Reel 678.

contract rather than friendship. “‘Missionaries keep servants,’ I have heard said. Yes, we have one, who, for six dollars per month boards himself, and takes care of the horses and donkeys used in touring.’”⁵⁶⁶ Thus, the missionary ‘home’ was less a place of proselytizing, less a place to intervene and control the natives’ mind, than a shop-window in the arcades of civilization. It was not a secret passage of conversion, not a metonymy of colonialism, not a microcosm of Western influence; it was the demonstratives of what they *had* rather than what they had come to *give*. Missionaries, like the phantasmagoric capitalism of Walter Benjamin’s era, affected lives and minds not by giving (as many historians have assumed) but by keeping visible *and* apart. As Mrs. Wheeler put it neatly, what the missionaries needed was respect: “You say you [as a future missionary] care little what they think about you? This is *all wrong*. If you wish to influence them you *must* command their respect.”⁵⁶⁷ And creating respect needed distance, but not remoteness. When she heard that many Armenian women were gossiping about the missionaries’ customs, houses, dresses, manners, etc., Mrs. Wheeler was pleased because:

These discussions in the families about us were just what we were glad to hear. If we had been able to talk with them at first, we might have committed some very great mistakes. Now we were there in that Konak [mansion] for them to study us, and we had the people spread out before us like a panorama, as day by day we studied their language and their customs.⁵⁶⁸

“Like a panorama” the curious gazes lined up in front of the shop-window, and their observational manners were in turn observed by the shop owners, the better to command those manners. The missionaries had a shiny commodity—Western modernity—the exhibition of which brought people to them of their own accord. But in fact, the missionaries were not eager to bring the natives close to them, even metaphorically. On the contrary, Wheeler was not simply

⁵⁶⁶ Wheeler, *Letters from Eden; Or, Reminiscences of Missionary Life in the East*, 246.

⁵⁶⁷ Wheeler, *Missions in Eden: Glimpses of Life in the Valley of the Euphrates*, 58.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

advertising Western civilization in order to provoke modernist desires among the people of Harput. In fact, he was a strict cultural relativist and an opponent of selective acculturation. In his more official book, he wrote:

But, to say nothing of the differences of language, manners, customs, race, etc., as indicating necessary differences in political and educational systems, it should be remembered that many things which are highly beneficial and even necessary to us, because we have been educated up to them, and because, as a fruit of our national culture, they are peculiarly our own, may not be only unsuited to any other people, but, in their peculiar circumstances, positively pernicious in their influence.⁵⁶⁹

The commodity exhibited behind the shiny glass shop-windows was not there for the people who already had wealth to buy it. The appeal of the arcades, for Benjamin, was in their distance from the common people who were supposed to develop capitalist spirit in their hearts.⁵⁷⁰ The *nouveaux riches*, on the other hand, were an unintended consequence of the unequal development of cultural and economic capital. The appeal of new capitalism was interesting not because it served something buyable but, on the contrary, because it brought into proximity what was not buyable by the common people. In fact, if the aura was to remain, it not only could not, but also should not be bought. Consequently, different types of intermediary social characters, most notably the *nouveau riche*, were despised, hated and cursed by both upper and lower classes. For Wheeler too, the Armenians who were *too* ready to buy the influence on offer were to be criticized, harshly. Tomas Boyajian was one of them, but hardly the only one.

The Degenerate

It is quite a serious question how many and what changes we shall advise those who become Protestants to make in their customs. At first many got the impression that they should change everything, even the usual forms of

⁵⁶⁹ Crosby Howard Wheeler, *Ten Years on the Euphrates: Or, Primitive Missionary Policy Illustrated* (New York: American Tract Society, 1868), 87.

⁵⁷⁰ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

politeness, and, in attempting to do so, they became, as the Harpoot pastor once told them, ‘a people destitute of good manners, so that Protestant and boor meant the same thing.’ Our advice to them is to change only those things which are wrong, and in all other customs to continue to be one with the rest of their nation.⁵⁷¹

The quintessential sign of change among the new converts or those who simply emulated the foreigners was their dress. In criticizing an Armenian couple’s manners, Wheeler told us that “...he, and especially his wife, are altogether too *progressive*. While in the seminary, rather against our protest, -we telling him that the change might excite prejudice,- he exchanged his oriental dress for the European style, and his wife, whom he recently married, has done the same.”⁵⁷² Although the old, strict dress codes distinguishing the ethno-religious communities did not survive into the nineteenth century, Ottoman society was sensitive to dress as one of the most important signs of social position. However, it was an unreliable sign during the age of the money economy simply because the dress could be acquired without having the necessary social standing. In fact, Mahmud II lifted the restrictive dress codes in 1829 due to the pervasive practice of imitation, especially of official costumes, and the degraded symbolic value of clothing.⁵⁷³ Armenians who adopted European suits before anything else were seen by missionaries like the Wheelers and also by more parochial Armenians as adulators who were trying to be seen as one of ‘them.’ Moreover, they not only imitated, but they imitated unsuccessfully. Almost like an immigrant community in a foreign land, these emulators’ effort was always represented as halfway by both groups of critics. Mrs. Wheeler, for example, could not hide her contempt towards quasi-adaptation:

⁵⁷¹ Wheeler, *Letters from Eden; Or, Reminiscences of Missionary Life in the East*, 298–99.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 234.

⁵⁷³ Donald Quataert, “Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 3 (August 1, 1997): 403–25.

Her husband was very anxious that the new dress he was to get her should be à la Frank, and came to ask how much material would be needed and if we would help her make the dress. She looked well in this dress; but we could never teach her to button the sleeves at the wrist. When reminded that the buttons were put on to be buttoned, she would reply with a smile, ‘O, I forgot it.’⁵⁷⁴

On the other hand, as I will mention in the next chapter, the Gregorian Armenian writers of Harput who created the Armenian realist village literature towards the end of the century were also critical of this degenerated Armenian character as a betrayer of native culture. While Americans expressed condescension towards these half-moderns, the localists were ashamed of the same people, their own national fellows. In both cases, irritation was shown towards the practice of emulation which was taken as a sign of a desire to identify with the other, with the foreign. Although it is generally taken as a weak feeling compared to anger, irritation—as a relatively non-subjective public emotion—has strong potential to determine the direction and content of social anger.⁵⁷⁵ The fact that what was emulated was less evangelical manners than the American way of life led localist Armenians to react against cultural imperialism. Vartugyan, a harsh critic of missionary policy, seems to be alluding to our poorly-dressed half-moderns when he attacked the missionaries, who “had come to dress the Armenians with a garb which was made for a people of different form and condition, and could not fit the Armenians. They had come to impose their form of religion on the people in Turkey,”⁵⁷⁶ The reality of this mismatch was agreed upon by the missionaries, as Wheeler made clear. In response to the critique of cultural imperialism, the missionaries insistently argued that (in Barton’s words)

⁵⁷⁴ Wheeler, *Missions in Eden: Glimpses of Life in the Valley of the Euphrates*, 79.

⁵⁷⁵ See Chapter 4 on irritation in Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

⁵⁷⁶ Vartoogian, *Armenia’s Ordeal*, 49.

“they were not attempting to transport into Turkey American churches, and American schools, and American customs and dress or anything else that is American.”⁵⁷⁷

The missionaries, on the other hand, put the blame on a lack of spirituality among the Armenians. As mentioned earlier, the Bebek graduates were used as a metonym for the intellectual class of Armenians with few non-material concerns. But even in the small towns and the villages, the predominant inclination to some kind of material gain acquired via missionaries frustrated these workers for Christ. Mr. Walker wrote in 1860 that in Chermoog (a village in Harput province) “The chief hindrance ... is the great lack of the religious element in the people. They have very little zeal for their old Church.”⁵⁷⁸ Apparently, even the priest of the native church was complaining about the villagers’ unwillingness to support the church. A decade later, in 1871, Dr. Raynolds was complaining about the same problem, this time among the inhabitants of Mezre. After one Sabbath prayer, he was invited to the house of a wealthy and prominent person whose daughter was ill. Raynolds said that that day he was not present as a doctor but as a missionary, but the father assured him that they would pray together and convinced him to come. However, during their conversation, despite Raynolds’ attempts to open religious topics, the father constantly brought the issue of his daughter’s sickness to the table.⁵⁷⁹ The lack of interest in spiritual matters continued to irritate the missionaries in the following decades, too. H. N. Barnum, after living forty years in Harput, expressed his disappointment with the Armenians as a whole in 1897: even the massacres of 1895 could not wake them up to the truth.

The thing which discourages us most is the lack of spirituality among this people. We had hoped that the great shock which the whole Armenian community had throughout the Empire would arouse them from their worldliness and spiritual lethargy, but they seem as worldly as ever, only there is an unwonted readiness to

⁵⁷⁷ Barton, *Daybreak in Turkey*, 223.

⁵⁷⁸ Letter from Walker to R. Anderson, Kharput, September 12, 1860, ABCFM, Reel 678.

⁵⁷⁹ Letter from Raynolds to Rev. Clarke, April 3, 1871, ABCFM, Reel 678.

listen to the preaching of the gospel, and an absence of prejudice such as we have not seen before. I suppose that this may be accounted for largely by almost utter hopelessness of their surroundings.⁵⁸⁰

Barnum wrote in 1867 that all the Armenians wanted was

... to satisfy the claims of an enlightened conscience by putting away some of the gross superstitions of the old church & find an easy way of salvation without the necessity of a change of heart or even any essential change of life.⁵⁸¹

The Country and the City

Many political reformists, cultural revolutionists, leftists and anthropologists expressed sympathy towards the untouched, innocent, pure village life as opposed to adulterated, contaminated, impure city culture. They visited or lived in these remote places in order to get rid of the excess of modernity and to get in touch with the local life. Politically, they promoted a more natural phase of human development in preference to modern evils; epistemologically, being in the field allowed intellectuals to claim to represent the most reliable knowledge about the other human culture. Wheeler was no exception. In his private letters and his published books, he devoted a fair amount of time to convincing the reader that missionary life in the interior was not something desirable or easily bearable, as some visitors back home would have it.⁵⁸² His reference point was, of course, the very image of bourgeois sociality that emerged from the life of the missionary circles of the Western Turkey mission, most notably that of Istanbul. But the interior was different. Even reaching Harput from Istanbul was a lot more troublesome and exhausting than reaching Istanbul from Boston; and that was a stroke of luck. Wheeler wrote: “We are glad that Harput *is* so far from the outside world, farther now than China or

⁵⁸⁰ Letter from H. N. Barnum to Barton, Harpoot, November 25, 1897, ABCFM, Reel 696.

⁵⁸¹ Letter from Barnum to Anderson, Kharpoot, March 12, 1867, ABCFM, Reel 677.

⁵⁸² He once spoke to his readers: “Now if ever you go back to America, or write to your friends, don’t do as some *travelers* have done after enjoying a rather extra dinner got up in their honor, telling how extravagantly the missionaries live, and how they go among the heathen just to have a good time. If you do, we may let you make out your own bill of fare next time, and fill it from the market, even to the uncombed butter and bread which is blacker than ours.” Wheeler, *Letters from Eden; Or, Reminiscences of Missionary Life in the East*, 63.

even India, since steamboats and railroads have already brought them almost to our doors.”⁵⁸³

Thus, the Harput mission was one of the most distant mission stations of the Board in the world, not spatially but culturally, and this was an opportunity for the most genuine knowledge about the other and the least contaminated evangelization in a corrupt world.

While those who labor in the missionary work in Beirût, Smyrna, Constantinople, and other cities along the coast, where the people come more into contact with the outside world, enjoy one advantage in the greater development of manly independence among the people, giving greater stability to the purposes and character of converts, this advantage is probably more than counterbalanced by the pernicious influence which that same outside world too often exerts, even when it bears the name of Christian, and sometimes even the distinctive title of evangelical.⁵⁸⁴

Similarly, Susan Wheeler observed in Trebizond, the port city on the Black Sea coast, that “the evangelistic work here among the Armenians has not made the progress that it has in many an interior city. The people are surrounded by many influences that make them more worldly, and they seem more satisfied or preoccupied.”⁵⁸⁵ Harput, on the other hand, was an excellent example of a relatively isolated interior city, since it neither had direct connections to the Western world nor was it in the orbit of Russian modernity as some other Eastern cities, like Kars or Erzurum, were. Accordingly, in this Trobriand island of Anatolia, the Wheelers, Barnums and Allens enjoyed the opportunity to work closely with the natives. When advertising to Boston his success in self-support, for example, Wheeler gave the secret formula thus: “we in Kharpoot have learned from experience,”⁵⁸⁶ as opposed to those in cosmopolitan cities who did not have real experience among real natives. Harput was the ethnographer’s locus.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 40–41.

⁵⁸⁴ Wheeler, *Ten Years on the Euphrates*, 23.

⁵⁸⁵ Wheeler, *Missions in Eden: Glimpses of Life in the Valley of the Euphrates*, 17–18.

⁵⁸⁶ Letter from C. H. Wheeler to R. Anderson, Kharpoot, December 18, 1865, ABCFM, Reel 679.

But at the end of the day Harput was a city, too. It attracted the ambitious inhabitants of the surrounding villages as a gate to the outside world. Once Wheeler was notified about a village helper's demand for a higher salary, and after examining his expenses he concluded: "That brother, born and brought up in a village, has, by fourteen months' residence in the city, become so accustomed to city bread that he can no longer eat the bread of the village! Shall we increase the salary? No. 'Tis more probable we shall *decrease* the number of helpers by one. Don't you think that a man so easily *cityfied* ought to be dismissed?"⁵⁸⁷ The degenerated young Armenian—a character Wheeler hated, as we have already seen—was one who betrayed his nature by their culture. The Euphrates College in Harput was supposed to be a place of spiritual rites of passage to Christianity. However, these expectations were frustrated by the unceasing interest in city life, in Istanbul, in the Bebek Seminary, and finally in America. When Rev. Ward travelled through Anatolia in 1880s, he clearly saw the unexpectedly high influence of American missionaries in daily life:

I expected to see a great missionary work, and I have found all that I expected in converts, churches, and schools. But I have seen what I was not prepared for (...) that it is not their converts only whom the American missionaries are converting, but the whole community about them; that they are the great, I may say the only, power at work to civilize the land. (...) In Constantinople the cultivated Turks all affect French ways and talk the language. I expected to find it so in the interior, but found that as I left the seacoast, I left French behind. Along the track I have followed, English is much more spoken than French, and that wholly through American, and not English, influence. (...) All the scholars in the higher Protestant schools insist on being taught English[.] (...) The people know much more of America than of England. (...) Every ambitious young man among the Christians is anxious to go to America, if possible to remain there, and engage in business or practice medicine. (...) In these larger interior cities the American missionaries may be said to set the fashions in almost everything. They are the first to introduce 'Frank' dress, tomatoes (called 'red egg plant'), potatoes,

⁵⁸⁷ Wheeler, *Letters from Eden; Or, Reminiscences of Missionary Life in the East*, 280.

window-glass, chairs, tables, bureaus, and especially roomy houses *outside* the city limits.⁵⁸⁸

Conclusion: On the ‘Makdisi Paradigm’

We neither bolted our doors nor ‘Kept our dogs, to keep people away.’ // We remembered that we were missionaries sent out by the churches to evangelize the people to whom we were sent. // Whatever we found that was good we were to strengthen, whatever was bad must be rooted up. // We were not sent to change the customs of the people, or to make sport of them (...). In fact, we did not go to Americanize the people (...).⁵⁸⁹

The irony in Crosby H. Wheeler’s story is that in the following twenty-five years he was to become the founder and president of Euphrates College, one of the most important higher-education institutions in the empire. In the 1870s, the Board changed its strict policy against higher education and opened new colleges in Aintab and Harput with advanced curriculums similar to that of Cyrus Hamlin’s Robert College in Istanbul. By the end of the century, more colleges were opened in Marsovan, Tarsus and Konya; furthermore, dozens of high schools were established both for boys and for girls.⁵⁹⁰ Once the Board stopped resisting the increasing demand by Armenians for good education, schools of every level rapidly proliferated throughout the empire. In Harput, the missionary school complex included a kindergarten, primary school, intermediate school, high school and the college, with a total of 1051 students in 1898-99 (see Figure 8-2).⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁸ Henry M. Field, *The Greek Islands and Turkey after the War* (New York: C. Scribner’s sons, 1885), 105–6.

⁵⁸⁹ Wheeler, *Missions in Eden: Glimpses of Life in the Valley of the Euphrates*, 50.

⁵⁹⁰ Julius Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions in the Near East* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910), 133–134; and see especially Part III in Frank Andrews 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).

⁵⁹¹ Frank Andrews Stone, “The Heritage of Euphrates (Armenia) College,” in *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2002), 209–38.

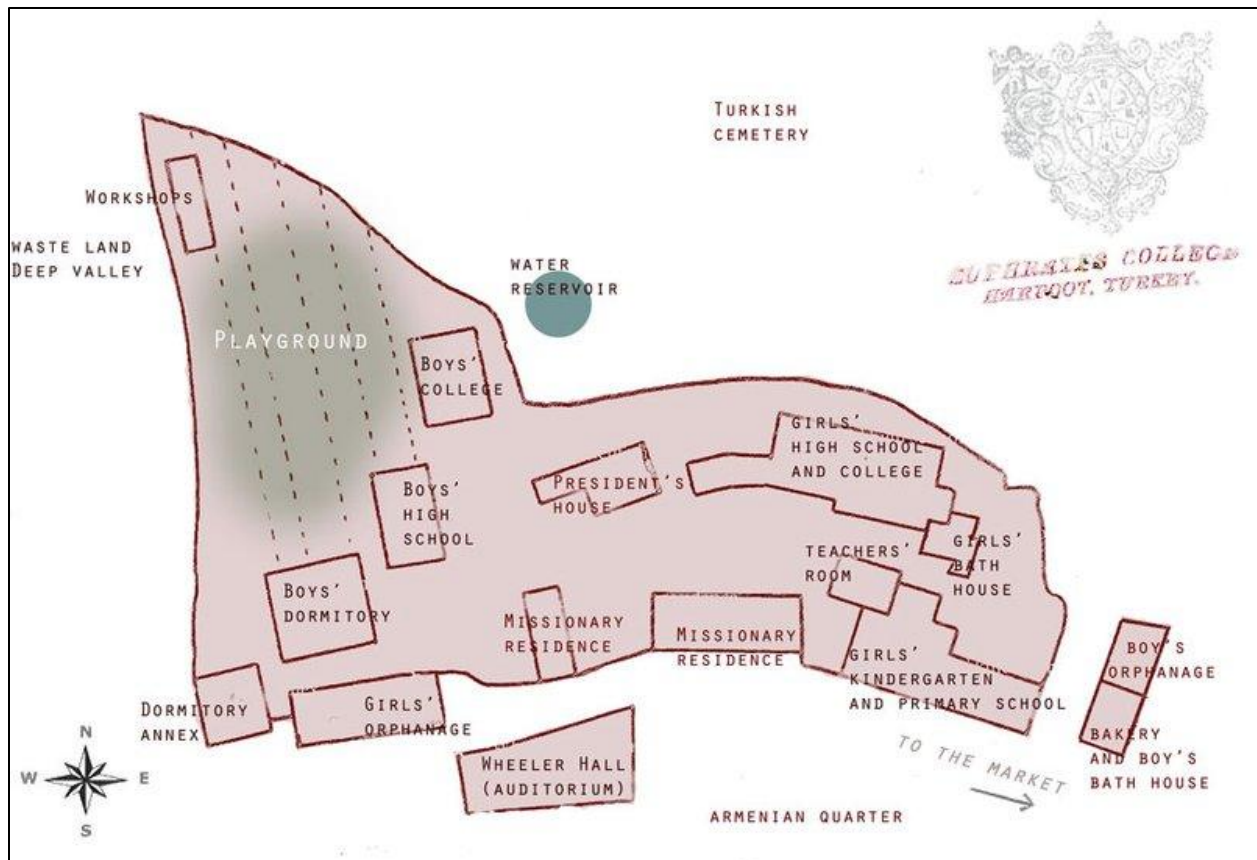


Figure 8-2: General Plan of Harput's Euphrates College.⁵⁹²

Wheeler's perplexing turn from being a fierce opponent of higher education to becoming a college president has been written about by Barbara Merguerian. She meticulously laid out Wheeler's early war against education-based mission policy and his later effort in creating one of the strongest colleges in the entire Near East.⁵⁹³ She argued that Wheeler had adapted to new circumstances in the 1870s in the face of growing demand for education by Armenians and of the growing need for trained personnel by the missionaries. He had a "pragmatic approach" (42); thus, "[h]e looked at the situation from a practical point of view, and he did not let his earlier beliefs dictate his conclusions" (47). It is true that "Wheeler was a man of firm principles," but—

⁵⁹² <http://www.houshamadyan.org/en/mapottomanempire/vilayetofmamuratulazizharput/harput-kaza/education-and-sport/schools-part-i.html>.

⁵⁹³ Barbara J. Merguerian, "Saving Souls or Cultivating Minds? Missionary Crosby H. Wheeler in Kharpert," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 6 (1993): 33–60.

Merguerian continued—“he also had a practical American bent of mind” (40). And, thanks to this pragmatic malleability of ideas in mission circles, “a narrow effort designed to ‘save souls’ [could be transformed] into a broad program to ‘cultivate Christian minds’” (36).

Merguerian’s narrative relies on a distinction between idealism and pragmatism, in which the latter receives all the positive marks. Early missionary policy on Christian education was “narrow” and in a modernizing world, *naturally*, they adopted a “broad” policy of secular education. In this narrative, having principles is represented as outmoded compared with being pragmatic and adaptable. Insistence on instruction in vernacular language (as opposed to English), for example, is seen as rigid and old-fashioned in a world of trans-regional connectivity. Thus, in the end, Wheeler’s transformation was to be applauded as the victory of pragmatism. My concern with Merguerian’s narrative lies in her reliance on the arguments of Wheeler’s critics and on their conceptual framework, while at the same time she primitivizes the other side’s arguments in the same debate, casting them as simple narrow-mindedness. While Wheeler’s early position is seen as ‘ideological’ (read: bad), the alternative policy is represented as open-mindedness. The truth is, we have read a battle of ideologies, namely a battle of *two* ideologies.⁵⁹⁴ As in the Babcock-Boyajian case, however, Merguerian (mis)leads the reader to assume that secular liberalism was and should have been the norm for all people in the world.⁵⁹⁵ In fact, it was just another ideology.

Secularist otherization of religious policies as outmoded remnants of a pre-liberal age is very pervasive in academic works and best exemplified by the work of Ussama Makdisi.

Makdisi is one of the most influential twenty-first-century historians of the Middle East and

⁵⁹⁴ For Barthes, to show an ideology as norm is the crucial step in “myth-making.” Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972).

⁵⁹⁵ After the collapse of the Soviet bloc, similar narratives on the benefits of pragmatism and the harms of firm ideologies invaded the popular media.

certainly a revolutionary in missionary studies. Makdisi's entire work can be considered as encounter studies *par excellence*: the encounter between America and the Middle East, between Protestant missionaries and the Orthodox Christians of the East, and between colonialism and nationalism. He has fought against the (still dominant) modernization paradigm and demonstrated how, from the nineteenth century onward, western narratives and the accompanying colonial practices invented a backward nation (Lebanese people), a backward religion (Islam), and a backward social formation (sectarianism). He has also criticized nationalist theses and broken to pieces a number of conspiracy theories (like the equation of missionaries with imperialism) through in-depth research in both Ottoman and American archives. His focus has been on encounter rather than unidirectional intervention and his real interest is in what kind of a person the encounter gave birth to: the hybrid.

The Culture of Sectarianism (2000) was an attempt to re-conceptualize the violent Druze-Maronite conflict in Ottoman Lebanon in 1860.⁵⁹⁶ To challenge essentialist theories that alluded to primordial characteristics of Arab society, Makdisi took the most fundamental feature of these theories, namely sectarianism, and argued that it was invented by European colonialism and the Ottoman reform process (internal colonialism) in the nineteenth century. Ottoman people's multiple ways of co-existing were dismissed by the governors and a new form of spatial-legal partition based on sectarian lines was imposed on them. The result was sectarian violence. Notwithstanding its virtues, Makdisi's overall narrative in this book is formed by two assumptions that are not necessarily true: that separation (or segregation, or alterity, or distance) breeds violence, and that separation is artificial (a result of outside domination, not natural). Namely, one of the root causes of the extraordinary violence of the modern world has to do with

⁵⁹⁶ Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

the artificially-imposed barriers between people and with the otherization of people. In this dissertation, I have suggested that separation and distance do not necessarily create social disturbance *and* that they do not necessarily originate from outside.

In *The Culture of Sectarianism*, religion was a “site of colonial encounter;” it was just a *form* in which material, worldly relations were articulated. This secularist reading of religious conflicts as inventions and/or as mere appearances resonated in *Artillery of Heaven* (2008), as well.⁵⁹⁷ In this later work, specifically on the missionary encounter, Makdisi tells a more balanced story of encounter as opposed to a more one-sided narrative of ‘invention.’ We are first introduced to the Arab world, on the one hand, and the American missionaries’ world, on the other, as two equally coherent subjects that were to encounter one another in the middle part of the book. After the encounter took place, Makdisi was most interested in the emergent typology, which he identified with Asad Shidyaaq, an Arab Protestant convert who was persecuted and imprisoned by the Maronite Church and finally died. The merits of Makdisi’s analysis lie in the fact that he deconstructs and repudiates not only the Maronite Church’s but also the missionaries’ later narratives about Asad. Asad’s dual identity did not fit either side’s projects for him. Asad separated Protestant belief from American culture and tried to reconcile his new belief with his own culture. Similarly, Butrus al-Bustani, the other key figure for Makdisi, “was, and remained until his death in 1883, a leading member of the Protestant community, but, paradoxically, he also came to embody a secular antithesis to a sectarian age” (181). Makdisi concluded, “Bustani’s ecumenism, in reality, was neither indigenous nor foreign, neither American nor Arab: rather it was a synthesis of elements from all of these” (182).

⁵⁹⁷ Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*.

This idea of “synthesis” is at the center of Makdisi’s latest book, *Faith Misplaced* (2010), too:⁵⁹⁸ “The bridge to cultural understanding cannot be built from one side alone: it needs individuals who can appreciate two perspectives with equal sensitivity” (13). Nevertheless, it is a *particular* synthesis. When discussing the founding of Syrian Protestant College in 1866, Makdisi refers to annoyance expressed by Rufus Anderson (an ideological comrade of Wheeler’s) as a protest in vain. The college’s opening was “a turning point in the history of the mission” (52); Daniel Bliss (the founder of the college), by inviting members of all religions to the school, “had turned the history of the American mission on its head:” “Rather than zealous exhortation, persuasion would be used; rather than spiritual belligerence, tolerance would be emphasized; rather than unrealistic expectations, there was measured aspiration” (53). In sum, Makdisi, like Merguerian, celebrated (here by referring to Bustani) the abandonment of “narrow evangelical work for a much broader secular outlook” (63).

As I laid out in the Introduction, encounter studies privileges the hybrid individual who manages to get rid of the idiosyncratic excesses of both parties to the encounter. In the case of missionary encounters, the excesses that were to be truncated in creating the ideal subject were religious and nationalist aspirations. These aspirations are represented as narrow ideologies—at the expense of misrepresenting the liberal-secular subject as a norm above and beyond all ideologies. In fact, as Foucault showed, it is a very special ideology, the *liberal ideology*, that holds that the middle ground freed from all extremities will bring about the just and normative situation.⁵⁹⁹ In the last two chapters, I have shown that keeping the natives at arm’s length was a

⁵⁹⁸ Ussama Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations: 1820-2001* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010).

⁵⁹⁹ For example, for the liberal economic policy, Foucault wrote: “So there will no longer be any scarcity in general, on condition that for a whole series of people, in a whole series of markets, there was *some* scarcity, *some* dearness, *some* difficulty in buying wheat, and consequently *some* hunger, and it may well be that *some* people die of hunger

practice developed by some missionaries as a theoretical orientation aimed at creating a peculiar kind of relation with ‘the other.’ But in the scholarly literature I have referred to, social distance has been condemned to be either an archaic element of religious zealotry or a colonial imposition by the outside powers. I suggest remembering Wheeler simply because he refused to go native, refused to buy respect with privileges (money and culture), refused to flatter the natives’ pride or prejudice, refused to change his American middle-class way of life, and, in the end, refused to *help the other*. As Stone once said, “Wheeler especially opposed what today we might call cultural imperialism.”⁶⁰⁰ He never acted *as if* there were no social distinction, no inequality between them. Because there was. Distinctions might be *just* in an unequal world.

after all. But by letting these people die of hunger one will be able to make scarcity a chimera and prevent it occurring in this massive form of the scourge typical of the previous systems. Thus, the scarcity-event is split. The scarcity-scurge disappears, but scarcity that causes the death of individuals not only does not disappear, it must not disappear.” (my emphasis) Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78* (New York: Picador, 2007), 53.

⁶⁰⁰ Stone, “The Heritage of Euphrates (Armenia) College,” 12.

Chapter 9: The Natives' Attitude towards Armenian Protestants

In the preceding three chapters, I have concentrated on the relationship between American missionaries and Armenian Protestants in the twin city of Harput and Mezre. I have shown that this relatively close relationship precipitated a more radical disposition towards cultural otherization compared to the relatively distant relationships between Gregorian Armenians and the missionaries or between the Muslims and the missionaries. Social proximity in practice was (intended to be) negated by cultural estrangement. This picture, however, would remain incomplete without taking into consideration the other side of the story: the Gregorian Armenians' attitude towards Protestant Armenians—yet another short-distance relationship. Protestant Armenians had a dual identity that involved proximity to two opposing social universes; they carried the characteristics of both sides but were represented by both as not competent enough to belong to either side. In other words, they were not only excluded, but also they were not included on the enemy's side, either, even in the eyes of the enemy's enemy. Protestant Armenians, in other words, did not suffer from otherization; they suffered from half-otherization.

In the second part of the chapter, I will present examples from fictional and non-fictional work written by Armenians in order to demonstrate the main characteristics of how Protestantism affected the Armenian community in Harput. Some background on the emigration to North America and on American influence in the Harput region is necessary for the reader to grasp what Protestantism meant for the inhabitants in the first place. Therefore, the first half of this chapter is devoted to the material and bodily relationship between Harput and America.

Lastly, this chapter should be thought of as only a glimpse into the other side of Armenian Protestants' dual proximity. It is outside the scope of this dissertation to evaluate the entire field of Armenian literature; and, my interest in emigration has been limited to its perception and to scattered, individual stories. The reader will find mention of Harput's diaspora in America in Part V, too, in connection with mid-twentieth-century nostalgia for Harput's past.

Emigration from Harput to the United States

For people of the Harput area, especially for merchants, it was not uncommon to go to Russia, to Arab lands, to Europe and to the US for varied periods of time. Even though these short-term and small-scale sojourns are difficult to follow in the archives, we can see the individuals' traces when something judicial occurred. When people died abroad, for example, an exchange between consular authorities had to start; the relatives had to be reached, business relations had to be dealt with, and the inheritance, if any, had to be distributed. Or else unpaid debts could create inter-imperial paperwork; one had to submit petitions to the consulates or the courts used to summon the absent party via consular communication.⁶⁰¹ But the emigration to North America roughly between the 1880s and 1920s from the eastern provinces of the empire was very different than these individual experiences abroad; it was rather a societal event. The transhemispheric migration wave to the US was a global and historically specific phenomenon that involved, first and foremost, labor migration for the burgeoning industry of the post-slavery

⁶⁰¹ *Hariciye Hukuk* (Foreign Affairs - Civil) folders in the Ottoman archives include individuals' cases that were subject to inter-consular communication for non-political purposes. Unlike *Hariciye Siyasi* (Foreign Affairs - Political), this series has not been cataloged; the researchers need to go through the folders according to consular cities. A selection of the debt and inheritance cases about people from Harput province is the following. London: HR.H. 108/30, 20 June 1896. India: HR.H. 105/44, 30 December 1874. Russia: HR.H. 141/12, 20 August 1871; HR.H. 141/13, 3 September 1871; HR.H. 156/14, 11 May 1875; HR.H. 157/8, 18 February 1874. Austria: HR.H. 219/4, 21 January 1889. United States: HR.H. 226/18, 6 July 1887; HR. H. 226/24, 18 September 1890; HR.H. 226/25, 4 December 1890; HR.H. 226/26, 8 January 1891; HR.H. 226/28, 19 May 1891; HR.H. 238/14, 14 September 1901; HR.H. 238/33, 10 February 1909; HR.H. 238/37, 18 March 1912.

new world. It changed the lives of millions of families throughout the world (especially in southern Europe). In the Ottoman lands, Mount Lebanon was the primary source of emigration, with more than two hundred thousand (mostly Maronite) immigrants; the second region was the eastern provinces of Anatolia, from which over seventy-five thousand (mostly Armenian) people left to work in the new world.⁶⁰²

Harput province had a peculiar place in this transhemispheric migration wave to the Americas from the Ottoman East. This dissertation project actually began with an interest in the Ottoman migration to the United States and only later evolved into an urban history of the city that overwhelmingly dominated the migration narratives, namely Harput. As Robert Mirak observed, “[t]he single largest Old World group [of Armenians] to emigrate to the United States was from the Kharpert Plain, and they naturally comprised the largest single regional group in many communities such as Boston, Worcester, Lynn, Providence, and Whitinsville.”⁶⁰³ Harput narratives were so dominant in the memories of the American Armenians that the makers of the documentary “Voices from the Lake,” an oral history project about the genocide, had to devote one of three films to Harput.⁶⁰⁴ In another context, Marc Nichanian commented that, “[in the early 1900s] it would have been exceptional to find someone in Kharpert without a father, brother, uncle, or son living in the United States. Worcester, Boston, New York, Chicago, and Fresno were ‘suburbs’ or ‘satellites’ of Kharpert. (...) Kharpert was the center of a social network that stretched to the farthest reaches of the United States, and emigration became a

⁶⁰² Akram Fouad Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001); Kemal H. Karpat, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860–1914,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, no. 02 (May 1985): 175–209; A. Deniz Balgamis and Kemal H. Karpat, eds., *Turkish Migration to the United States: From Ottoman Times to the Present* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

⁶⁰³ Robert Mirak, *Torn between Two Lands: Armenians in America, 1890 to World War I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 124.

⁶⁰⁴ J. Michael Hagopian, ““Voices from the Lake: The Secret Genocide,”” in *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2002), 347–88.

ritual, a rite of passage, and an obligatory stage on the way to adulthood.”⁶⁰⁵ Varjoujan Karentz noted that the Armenians of Rhode Island had mostly come from Harput and Palu.⁶⁰⁶

David Gutman’s meticulous work recently uncovered the fascinating layers (the origins, the passage, and the return) of the Ottoman emigration and of the exceptional relationship between Harput and North America. Besides his other original contributions, Gutman explains why Harput stood out among other provinces of the Ottoman East: First, the eastern provinces in general were relatively isolated from the nodes of globalized trade capitalism (as opposed to the port-cities). As a result, at least from the late eighteenth century on, men used to go to distant places (like Adana, Tiflis, Aleppo, Istanbul) to work. In other words, there was a tradition of long-distance male-only labor migration in the region. Second, in the Ottoman East, the Harput region was politically more stable than the provinces lying further east. The relatively autonomous character of Kurdistan/Armenia had also brought more violent solutions by the central state, like the formation of *Hamidiye* regiments from some Kurdish tribes. In consequence, the failure of centralization was compensated for by officializing the irregular militia, inflicting even more instability and violence on ordinary families. However, there was no Hamidiye regiment in the Harput region. In consequence, for people of the Harput plain, labor migration was both necessary and viable.⁶⁰⁷ Gutman’s explanation is particularly important

⁶⁰⁵ Marc Nichanian, “Vahan Totovents: *Simulacrum* and Faith Lent,” in *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2002), 428. Harput was also present in the national press in the US. For example: “Secretary Harry Wade Hicks writes from Harpoot that upon returning to that city recently he met hundreds of Arabs and Armenians going to Samsoun and eventually to America. All these persons were young or middle-aged, able-bodied men, representing the strongest element of the population in that country, and sufficiently well off to make the necessary ‘gift’ to leave Turkey and pay their passage to America. It is estimated that 1,200 families have left the vicinity of Harpoot since last April, and the tide of emigration is continually rising.” “Famine Drives Them Here”, *New York Times*, 29 December 1907.

⁶⁰⁶ Varoujan Karentz, *Mitchnapert (the Citadel): A History of Armenians in Rhode Island* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2004), 66, 152, 196.

⁶⁰⁷ See Chapter 1 of David Gutman, “Sojourners, Smugglers, and the State: Transhemispheric Migration Flows and the Politics of Mobility in Eastern Anatolia, 1888-1908” (PhD Dissertation, SUNY Binghamton, 2012).

because it puts emphasis on local economic and political characteristics rather than relying only on the strong presence of American missionaries (which, of course, was also an important facilitator).

From the late 1880s onward, the Armenian migration was a political problem for the Ottoman authorities because the returning young men could and did bring back noxious revolutionary ideas and global connections with illegal organizations. Moreover, those who had acquired American citizenship sought to benefit from its privileges and immunities upon return. In 1888, the government officially banned Armenian migration to North America (upon arresting seventy Armenian migrants from the Harput region).⁶⁰⁸ Even though many Armenians managed to leave the country regardless of the ban, this leak was to become a more serious problem for the Ottoman government after the 1895 massacres (see Part IV) because more people wanted to emigrate and more attention was being paid to the issue by the international powers. Thus, all travelling Armenians were strictly monitored. For instance, in October 1895, the month the massacres took place in Harput, forty-five Armenians were stopped at the entrance to Istanbul although they had the necessary papers. After communication with Harput, it was decided that these men were merchants who regularly came to the capital for business, so they were let go.⁶⁰⁹ The legal ambiguity about immigrants continued in the following months. Even the Legal Affairs department of the central government admitted that there was no law explicitly preventing Ottoman subjects' acquiring another citizenship.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., 50–51.

⁶⁰⁹ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM, 660/17, 31 October 1895. A few months later, when the Allens and Gates were travelling back to the US, their Armenian servants' accompanying them up to Istanbul became a problem. Again, after communications with the province, the permits were granted. PMOA, A.MKT.MHM, 658/28, 31 May 1896.

⁶¹⁰ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM, 708/11, 16 July 1896.

Nevertheless, in 1896, the government of Mamuretülaziz kept receiving applications for family reunion.⁶¹¹ In July 1896, the Governor of Mamuretülaziz, Rauf Bey, openly asked the central government whether or not permission should be given to applicants. He stated that there were many families in Harput who had members in the US and if one family was given permission to join their husbands or fathers, all the others would demand the same right.⁶¹² As a result, partly due to international pressure in response to the massacres and partly because the government's primary aim was to cut the human relationship between the two continents, applicants were given permission to emigrate only if the entire family left and waived their right to return. As a result, the volunteers had to sign a document waiving their imperial rights, sell or transfer all their taxable property to end all financial relations with the state, and submit photographs and other personal information for identification purposes in case they attempted to return.⁶¹³ In November, Rauf Bey wrote that no difficulties were raised to the applicants; all had received permits as long as the paperwork was completed.⁶¹⁴ In consequence, hundreds of families left the province in the following decade.⁶¹⁵ In a detailed file, for example, we have a list of 70 women (and their children) from Harput province who applied in late 1903 for permission

⁶¹¹ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM, 658/29, 13 April 1896; A.MKT.MHM, 658/31, 13 April 1896; A.MKT.MHM, 658/32, 13 April 1896; A.MKT.MHM, 658/35, 11 May 1896; A.MKT.MHM, 658/41, 30 June 1896; A.MKT.MHM, 659/15, 24 November 1896; A.MKT.MHM, 659/21, 1 January 1897. Apart from applications for family reunion, individual men applied for immigration permit, too. PMOA, A.MKT.MHM, 659/13, 19 November 1896.

⁶¹² PMOA, A.MKT.MHM, 658/42, 6 July 1896.

⁶¹³ Gutman, "Sojourners, Smugglers, and the State," 49–63. For the procedure, see PMOA, A.MKT.MHM, 538/31, 20 December 1896.

⁶¹⁴ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM, 538/26, 22 November 1896. However, the young men who did not have families abroad were turned down. PMOA, A.MKT.MHM, 538/30, 16 December 1896.

⁶¹⁵ For a limited sample, see A.MKT.MHM. 637/21, 3 May 1898; A.MKT.MHM. 545/24, 28 August 1900; HR.SYS. 2742/68, 17 July 1904; HR.SYS. 2742/69, 27 August 1904; HR.SYS. 2742/71, 24 December 1904; HR.SYS. 2742/73, 28 January 1905; HR.SYS. 2742/75, 29 March 1905; HR.SYS. 2742/81, 1905; HR.SYS. 2742/76, 11 April 1905; HR.SYS. 2743/6, 25 January 1906; HR.SYS. 2743/10, 15 March 1906; HR.SYS. 2743/17, 17 June 1906; HR.SYS. 2743/21, 23 August 1906; HR.SYS. 2743/23, 29 September 1906; HR.SYS. 2743/24, 21 October 1906; HR.SYS. 2743/40, 28 August 1907; DH.TMIK.M. 180/1, 20 July 1904.

to join their husbands in the US.⁶¹⁶ The local perception of emigration was expressed in a letter by missionary Carrie Bush:

Yesterday ten orphans left here for Smyrna, together with a great number of citizens, among them, Br. Mesrob Yeshilian and family! There were fifteen wagons left this city, alone! Teachers and scholars were much decreased in number by this exodus.⁶¹⁷



Figure 9-1: The emigration of the Keşişyan family from Çarşı Neighborhood in Mezre.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁶ PMOA, HR.SYS. 2743/1, 15 October 1905.

⁶¹⁷ Letter from Miss Carrie E. Bush to Barton, Harpoot, Dec 1, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 696.

⁶¹⁸ PMOA, FTG. 889/1, 5 March 1908. The caption of the back of the photo says: "About the emigration of Kara Keşiş oğlu Ohannes (54), his wife Nazlı (49), their sons Karabet (27) and Mihail (23), and their daughters Yeghnar (19), Prapion (8), and Zabel (7)." I am grateful to Dzovinar Derderian for deciphering the names of the daughters.

At the same time, many migrants were returning to homeland, too. In 1905, it was estimated that 400-500 Armenians had come back to Harput province from North America in the last five or six years. Even though this was illegal and the returnees were to be deported (as suggested by the Governor of Mamuretülaziz), the authorities in Istanbul decided to deport only those who were politically suspicious, not the majority who were simply peasants.⁶¹⁹ The government had nothing to lose in accepting back citizens who would bring money and manpower. The same concern was eloquently expressed in a detailed report of the Council of State in 1902 in response to a petition by Kevork Beşketyan. He was born in Harput in 1866, left for the US in 1886 and acquired US citizenship in 1890. He married a British woman and they were living in Linden, MI. He petitioned for his US citizenship to be approved; he had no intention of returning to Turkey, so he accepted that his Ottoman citizenship be annulled. However, the Council gave the government a sociological lecture about how society was composed of individuals and we should not harshly punish those who have not committed any political crimes but who were only seeking their bread and butter. Thus, the Council advised that Beşketyan's Ottoman citizenship should not be completely annulled, but left as an open case.⁶²⁰

If the returnees were politically suspicious, however, they were thoroughly prosecuted.⁶²¹ In fact, the authorities were not just paranoid. In 1903, Hagop (Kalusd Antreasian) and Hapet (Hagop Tevekelian) were caught in Elaziz (Harput-Mezre) with hidden guns, ammunition, and documents. According to confiscated letters, the guns had been sent by someone from Harput living in the US. Moreover, interrogations led the police to Garabet Tashjian, who was living in

⁶¹⁹ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 659/51, 19 September 1905; A.MKT.MHM. 550/1, 26 October 1905.

⁶²⁰ PMOA, Y.A.RES. 115/28, 22 January 1902.

⁶²¹ For example, PMOA, HR.SYS. 2743/18, 12 July 1906.

Hüseynik (adjacent to Mezre). His house was searched and an encrypted message was found; the message was about the Russian threat and a possible European mandate in the eastern provinces (see Appendix).⁶²² Deranian's invaluable book *Hussenig* confirms that Garabed Tashjian had secret meetings with Hagop and Hapet. Tashjian had also lived in the US from 1885 to 1903, where he became a member of the Hnchag Party.⁶²³ This case was unique because Hagop and Hapet also killed a boatman while trying to escape; therefore, they were publicly executed in Mezre. Boghos Jafarian, another migrant from Harput, had just returned from his seven-year sojourn (1897-1904) in the US:

Soon after my return to Mezerih, two Armenian brothers were executed in the public square. The day of killing of Hagop and Hapet by the Turks was a terrible day! Hagop and Hapet were loyal supporters of the Hunchag Party. Hapet was beheaded in front of our house. There was danger for every Armenian. On that day I did not go to open the store, but went to my brother Nishan's house to ask him whether we should go to business. At the entrance to the governor's residence stood two policemen, two gendarmes, and a sweeper. Brandishing a whip, the sweeper rushed at me ordering that I ask for mercy or run. I did neither. I just continued my usual pace of walking and he was disappointed.⁶²⁴

The political connections between Harput and the US were visible in the following murder case, too. Hovannes Tavşancıyan was born in Istanbul in 1864. At the age of 19 he went to New York and became a very successful businessman. In the early 1900s, like many other big Armenian merchants in the US, he was threatened for money by the revolutionary Hnchag Party, but he refused to support the organization. On July 22, 1907, as he came to his office in the morning, he was killed by Bedros Hamparsumyan from Mezre. The investigation hinted that he

⁶²² PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 659/42, 14 July 1903; A.MKT.MKM. 659/48, 12 December 1904. For the real names of Hagop and Hapet, see <http://www.houshamadyan.org/en/mapottomanempire/vilayetofmamuratulazizharput/harput-kaza/education-and-sport/schools-part-i.html>.

⁶²³ Marderos Deranian, *Hussenig: The Origin, History, and Destruction of an Armenian Town*, trans. Hagop Martin Deranian (Belmont, Mass.: Armenian Heritage Press, 1994). In 1890, a court warrant based on a debt case was sent from the first-instance court of Mamuretulaziz to Garabed Tashjian in Worcester, Mass. PMOA, HR.H. 226/25, 4 December 1890.

⁶²⁴ Boghos Jafarian, *Farewell Kharpert: The Autobiography of Boghos Jafarian*, ed. Leon Mangasarian, 1989, 60.

might also be related to another murder case, the killing of priest Vartanyan two months before in Chicago.⁶²⁵

America in Mezre

One single thing I found which had escaped destruction. High on the wall of a ruined house, in the second storey, a photograph was nailed. We sent for a pole and got it down. It was a group of Armenian workmen from a factory at Worcester, Mass., and had doubtless been sent home by some happy emigrant to his relations. [Harpoot, July 25, 1896]⁶²⁶

These words belong to J. Rendel Harris, who travelled in the eastern provinces for relief work after the 1895 Massacres (see Part IV). He found the photograph in a village house in the Harput plain. The emigration to North America had significant social effects. As already mentioned, a great number of families now had connections with the United States via their migrant relatives. At the same time, the American government's influence was rising in the region, too. Ottoman authorities did their best to gloss over the recurrent requests of the American government to open a consulate in Harput after the massacres,⁶²⁷ but eventually, in the last days of 1900, Thomas H. Norton arrived in Mezre as the first consul of the United States in the province, although it took him another year to get official recognition.⁶²⁸

Besides political presence, economic influence was not negligible in the province, either. While talking about the calico trade in 1902, a British diplomatic report on Diyarbekir mentioned that “it is not at all unlikely, as is already the case in the neighboring province of Kharput,

⁶²⁵ PMOA, Y.A.HUS. 514/47, 21 August 1907. For Hovannes Tavşancıyan, see *1908 Intartsag Oratsuyts - S. Prgcyan Hivantanotsi*, vol. 9, 1900-1910 Surp Pırgıç Ermeni Hastanesi Salnâmeleri - Tıpkıbasım (Istanbul: Surp Pırgıç Ermeni Hastanesi Vakfı Kültür Yayınları, 2012), 469.

⁶²⁶ Harris and Harris, *Letters from the Scenes of the Recent Massacres in Armenia*, 151–152.

⁶²⁷ PMOA, Y.A.RES. 113/21, 10 July 1901.

⁶²⁸ Barbara J. Merguerian, “Kharpert: The View from the United States Consulate,” in *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2002), 273–325.

American goods in this line will compete with those from the United Kingdom.”⁶²⁹ These words were confirmed by the US consular reports. Consul Norton wrote on May 14, 1901:

There is a growing demand at Mezreh and Harput for boots, shoes, and men’s furnishings, such as shirts, collars, cuffs, neckties, suspenders, underwear, etc. (...) The temporary presence here of some hundreds of former residents of the United States, who have brought their taste for wares of American make, as well as the gifts sent back to their families by emigrants from this vilayet [province], all contribute to cultivate a marked demand for such goods.⁶³⁰

In the first decade of the twentieth century, American commodities entered the Harput plain in a very rapid fashion. 150 sewing machines were sold in fifteen months by the official agent of the Singer Company in Mezre.⁶³¹ The market was hungry for clocks and watches, textiles, shoes and even for life insurance.⁶³² The local entrepreneurs were demanding the importation of well-drilling machinery for irrigation purposes,⁶³³ American vehicles like carriages,⁶³⁴ American nails and steel roofing,⁶³⁵ and varnish and paint.⁶³⁶ There was a rising demand for bicycles after the excitement Norton’s own bicycle created. As a result, to meet all this new demand for American goods, the “American Agency for Eastern Turkey” was founded in Mezre and Harput, chaired by an Armenian entrepreneur who had studied at Robert College and at the Massachusetts Agricultural College. “The time is ripe and the conditions are peculiarly

⁶²⁹ *Diplomatic and Consular Reports. Annual Series, 2771-2820, 1902, 17.*

⁶³⁰ *Consular Reports - September-December 1901* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), 138.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, 529.

⁶³² *Consular Reports - May-August 1902* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 43–44, 157; *Consular Reports - January-April 1903* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 251.

⁶³³ *Consular Reports - September-December 1901, 94–95.*

⁶³⁴ *Consular Reports - January-April 1903, 143–144.*

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 250.

⁶³⁶ *Consular Reports - May-August 1903* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 166–167.

propitious for American manufacturing enterprise” in Mezre, wrote Norton.⁶³⁷ He even suggested that the American bank system be imported here. “It is practically ‘virgin territory.’”⁶³⁸

The Armenian Response to Armenian Protestantism

The reaction to Protestantism by some Armenian intellectuals needs to be understood in this context of the rapidly rising presence of American capitalism, which came hand-in-hand with new bourgeois tastes. The Protestant Armenians and the Armenians who were fond of American values were not only criticized by the Harput missionaries. In fact, a group of native Armenian intellectuals, who arguably belonged to the field most ideologically distant from the missionaries, also looked down on the same in-between group. Hovhannes Harutiunian, known as Tlgadintsi after his village Tlgadin (Kuyulu), was the most prominent face of this group. Tlgadintsi was born in 1860, graduated from Smpadian School in Harput, and became the principal of the same school in 1884. In 1887, on land belonging to the oldest school of the city (founded in the 1820s), next to St. Hagop church, a new school was founded: *Azkayin Getronagan Varjarian* (National Central School). It was also called “Red School” after the color of its outside walls. Tlgadintsi was appointed as the director of this new school at the age of 27. The school building was burnt down during the Events of 1895, but it was re-built and re-opened in the following years. Later, in 1903, upon the capture of the two revolutionaries Hagop and Hapet from the Hnchag Party (see above), many Armenian intellectuals in the town were arrested. Tlgadintsi was one of them; he was forced to resign from his position by the Ottoman

⁶³⁷ *Consular Reports - September-December 1901*, 190–193; see also, *Consular Reports - September-December 1902* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 23–24; *Consular Reports - January-April 1903*, 245.

⁶³⁸ *Consular Reports - January-April 1903*, 253.

authorities and imprisoned for nine months. After his release he returned to his position. Hence, he supervised the Red School for almost 30 years, until he was killed in 1915.⁶³⁹



Figure 9-2: Tlgadintsi with the graduates of the St. Hagop Central School, 1910.⁶⁴⁰

Tlgadintsi was not only a vigorous educator for decades, he was also a writer—and not an ordinary one. He preferred to write about village life, the ordinary people of the provincial towns, the economic hardship of peasants, and on Harput. Today, he is considered the founder of realist Armenian literature. Some of his pupils became writers in the same genre, too. Ruban Zartarian, an 1892 graduate of the Red School, is one of them; he continued to work as a teacher at Tlgadintsi’s school. Vahan Totovents (1889-1938), another member of this realist literature circle, was educated in the same school by Tlgadintsi and Zartarian. Hamasdegh (1895-1966),

⁶³⁹ <http://www.houshamadyan.org/en/mapottomanempire/vilayetofmamuratulazizharput/harput-kaza/education-and-sport/schools-part-i.html>.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

who was to become a well-known diaspora writer, was also brought up intellectually by Tlgadintsi.

Harput's village literature did not remain isolated in the province. In the 1890s, the Armenian press in Istanbul gave space to pieces by provincial writers. The idea was, in Chobanian's words, that "in order to have an ethnic literature we must recognize the spirit of the race, which is spread throughout the provinces." The true culture of Armenian people in the eastern provinces (namely, in historic Armenia) was set against ordinary Istanbul literature. In the following years, this juxtaposition even inspired a debate about "the Literature of Tomorrow" on the pages of Armenian papers. Authentic literature of the provinces was competing against the inauthentic, elite literature of Istanbul. The latter was criticized for being alienated from the real life of real people, for not dealing with social problems outside the elite neighborhoods. The new literature should be inspired from the birthplace of Armenian culture. In all these debates, the Harput writers, especially the "Kharpert duo" Tlgadintsi and Zartarian, were the leading figures.⁶⁴¹

One of the recurrent themes of Tlgadintsi's writings was the connection between Harput and America. He published critical pieces on emigration, on the missionaries, on the decline of traditional culture in Harput area. For example, in a short story "Küğatsi Ginerı – Tsimran Badger" (Peasant Women – A Winter Scene), Tlgadintsi satirizes the way of life of Armenian bourgeois women in Istanbul. He compares, with full irony, the difficulties of life for women in the village and in Istanbul. Winter was boring for Istanbul women because of the rain and everything, he wrote. But he was serious when he talked about the real difficulties of women 'here.' At one point, he wrote that while the girls here are unable to find even a piece of thread to

⁶⁴¹ Krikor Beledian, "From Image to Loss: The Writers of Kharpert and Provincial Literature," in *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2002), 239–72.

mend their torn socks, a girl could be sent back home by her American teacher simply because she entered the school with a few stitches ripped at the hem of her uniform. In another short story, “Emile – Amerigatsi Misionaruhii Dibar Mr” (Emily – An Exemplary American Missionary), Tlgadintsi set out to uncover the hypocrisy of the rich American missionaries living in Harput. At center stage, Emily was advertising Christian doctrines and giving moral lessons, living an ascetic life, but in the back-stage, as Tlgadintsi described her, she was perpetuating her life of wealth, constantly changing her dresses and hats. He teased Emily’s competence in the local language, too. Of course she was not unfamiliar with local culture, Tlgadintsi said satirically, she certainly understood the Armenian of Istanbul people or of Assyrians in Harput, but not of Armenians of Harput!⁶⁴²

Tlgadintsi never left Harput and was very critical about the trend of going to America that prevailed among the youth. In “Harput and Emigration,” he warned against the dangers of rising indebtedness to moneylenders (to fund overseas travel) and subsequent loss of property in the hometown; he was also worried about the depopulation of the small towns and villages.⁶⁴³ He was especially furious about the rising social value of having a relative, or better a husband or son, in the US. He associated the popularity of America in daily conversations with moral decay and the dissolution of native tradition. In a piece called “The Child in the Picture,” he wrote:

After settling in America, whoever wishes for a fiancée from Harput sends a hefty sum – enough to cover travel and engagement expenses – to his parents, or if they are not alive, to a relative and asks them to find one of the fresh virgins of the country and bring her immediately, or, if they are not able to come themselves, to send that fresh young fish under the care of someone. A girl to his specifications or more than his specifications is soon found. For, if a suitable bride-to-be is not to be found in this house, there is bound to be two or three behind that door, there. On display in the hamams, churches, orphanages, there are thousands of girls who

⁶⁴² Tlgadintsi, *Erker* (Antilias: Tparan Kilikio Kataġikosutian, 1992), 29–31, 255–257.

⁶⁴³ S. Peter Cowe, “T’lgadintsi’i as Ideologue of the Regional Movement in Armenian Literature,” *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 12 (2003): 39.

resemble blooming lilies of the valley and would come to resemble withered poppies soon. (...) When the day of bargaining arrives, the woman on the male side, the mother or relative, will engage in such charlatan behavior to assure a favorable outcome that their sweet tongues can talk even a snake out of its hiding hole. Ah, the pupil of their eye is a lord over there, earns so many dollars a week, many rich girls are pursuing him but he rejects all and is adamant in wanting a girl from his country. When the mother or relative hands over the photograph of their precious one to the girl's guardians, she is sure to mention the age: past 28, but not quite 29. A young man built like a bull, the apple of his boss's eye.⁶⁴⁴

Tlgadintsi's work was of course not obsessed with Protestant Armenians or Americans; his main target was moral decadence in the society and the Armenian clergy and businessmen were his recurrent targets. Nevertheless, it was common in his writing to represent vice by using Protestantism. For example, one of his plays was, in Cowe's words, "a rogues' gallery of worthies from the upper echelons of Kharpert society, wealthy notables, moneylenders, members of the town council, the priest and director of the orphanage. Their abuse of the populace's trust and preoccupation with nefarious intrigues and illicit profit became the target of his sarcasm (...)"⁶⁴⁵ But even here, Tlgadintsi associated the relationship with Americans to moral corruption. The director of the orphanage, for example, left the Armenian Church and joined the American missionaries, used his medical expertise in his conversion work on others, and spent the orphanage's allocations for his personal benefit.

Vahan Totovents also wrote about these trends in his memoirs and short stories.

Totovents was born in 1889 in Mezre to a well-off family. He travelled extensively after 1908 to Istanbul, Europe, and the US; he studied literature and history at the University of Minnesota. In 1915, he volunteered to fight in the Caucasus. After travelling again in the west between 1920 and 1922, he settled in Yerevan, Armenia. Although he survived the Ottoman deportations in

⁶⁴⁴ Rober Koptaş, "Voice of the Countryside: Tlgadintsi," in <http://agoslifeasis.blogspot.com.tr/2007/07/voice-of-countryside-tlgadintsi.html>

⁶⁴⁵ Cowe, "T'lgadintsi'i as Ideologue of the Regional Movement in Armenian Literature," 36.

1915, he fell victim to Stalin's persecutions in 1937 and was killed. In a short story from 1921, Totovents also recalls the popularity of America in Harput:

In those days, G.... was farther away from Kharpert than America was. For who had ever heard of anyone who hailed from our parts going to G...? In contrast, someone left for America every day. Every week we got a letter from America; all our loved ones were there. We felt closer to America; who had ever gone to G...? G.... was a remote, unknown country, although it was right under Kharpert's nose.⁶⁴⁶

Although Totovents followed many fellow Armenians and went to North America, he was supportive of his mentor's critique. Aping another culture could bring nothing but artificiality. Mimicry gave birth to fake cosmopolitanism. In that sense, we can place Totovents even closer to the missionaries in regards to condemning the parvenue character. Totovents described his mentor Tlgadintsi's obsession with America as follows:

It is not hard to understand why Tlgadintsi devoted so much time and attention to America. There was not a single family in Kharpert that had no one living in the United States. There was not a single girl who was not on fire with the idea of going to the United States as a young bride. America was *the* subject of conversation among the people of Kharpert, and their ideal. To travel to America and back, to return from America, and to return – how? Clean-shaved, with a few words of bad English under their belts, a big coat made to last in their backs, boots of the sort American street-sweepers wear on their feet, and, inevitably, one or two gold teeth, even if they weren't really necessary ... None of this, of course, was safe from Tlgadintsi's cannon and sword.⁶⁴⁷

Totovents' autobiographical fiction about his early life in Mezre, *Life on the Old Roman Road*, has interesting scenes about Protestantism, too. One day, he writes, a missionary called Jacob comes to the city and begins distributing "Holy Ghost" to people.

No, no, you didn't hear wrong, neither more nor less, Mr. Jacob was handing out Holy Ghost.

But, how was he doing that?

Mr. Jacob, after preaching a sermon in the church, would shut his eyes, open his arms and pray. After the praying, every time there was deep silence for a couple

⁶⁴⁶ Quoted in Nichanian, "Vahan Totovents: *Simulacrum* and Faith Lent," 428–29.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 429.

minutes, and eventually Mr. Jacob would speak:
“Those who reached the Holy Ghost, stand up.”
At first, only a few people used to stand up, but in time their number went up.⁶⁴⁸

As humorous and satirical as his mentor Tlgadintsi, Totovents made fun of the popularity of this new fashion among the Armenians of the city. These days, he writes, whenever somebody gets mad at the priest of the Armenian Church, he or she would go to Jacop and convert. Suddenly, this thing turned into a hot topic in daily conversations: “Hey, have you got the Holy Ghost? No, I haven’t, yet. Then, go tomorrow and get it!” Eventually, the value of this Holy Ghost fell through the floor:

“Hey, look, what does this Holy Ghost look like? Does it have a horn?”
“Does this Holy Ghost look like my thing?”
“I think it looks like my feet.”⁶⁴⁹

Totovents was critical of the mannered behavior of those who returned from abroad, too. What they brought from America was no more than “a couple of suits of clothes, a few English words, and a habit of speaking in a fake accent” even while speaking Armenian. All the returnees had gold teeth, too. Thanks to the dignity these golden teeth had given them, they could marry the most beautiful women in the town. Totovents, however, was not unfamiliar with American culture or hostile to it; as said above, he had studied in the US. As he mentions in his memoir, he used to hate the English language until he went to the US and read great writers.⁶⁵⁰ In other words, similar to the missionaries, Totovents and Tlgadintsi were critical about the artificial, fake manners of the people who lost their native culture but could not internalize the foreign culture,

⁶⁴⁸ Vahan Totovents, *Yitik Evin Varisleri*, trans. Najda Demircioğlu (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2002), 122; this is my translation from the Turkish version. For the English translation of this work, see Vahan Totovents, *Scenes from an Armenian Childhood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁶⁴⁹ Totovents, *Yitik Evin Varisleri*, 124.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 127–128.

either. They would flatter American culture, try to mimic it, at the expense of swallowing their pride and their own culture.

Besides Tlgadintsi and Totovents' realist fiction, we have three monographs about Harput villages written by native Armenians retrospectively in their later decades in the US. These works contain critical moments against Armenian Protestantism, too. Manoog B. Dzeron, born in 1862 in Perçenç village of Harput province, went to school in Harput, where he later taught with Tlgadintsi. Somewhere in the 1890s, he immigrated to the US and never returned. In the 1930s, as an active member in Armenian diaspora societies, he undertook his great project of writing the five-hundred-year history of his village and of providing information for the 'New Parchanj' project, which was to be built as a new neighborhood in Yerevan, Soviet Armenia, next to 'New Kharpert.'

Dzeron's description of the missionary effect in his town has parallels with Tlgadintsi and Totovents' narratives. Even though he appreciated the progress in educational field the missionaries brought, he also disliked their top-down approach to cultural indoctrination and their contempt for local culture. They came as "supermen," he wrote, instead of working through native institutions. Here too, however, the criticism was actually directed at degenerate Protestant Armenian culture. Women were suddenly unveiled and put on dresses of the latest western fashion; families were broken apart because of "hate-inspired quarrels" between converts and the others; moral and spiritual life worsened; an extreme form of individual freedom was advertised against the "cooperative spirit" of the traditional social structure; people's religious rituals were looked down on as "pagan" practices.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁵¹ Manoog B. Dzeron, *Village of Parchanj: General History, 1600-1937* (Fresno, Calif.: Panorama West Books, 1984). This work was originally published in Armenian in 1938.

Ghazarian's *A Village Remembered*, about Habusi village of Harput, made mention of conflicts arising among Armenians because of conversions to Protestant belief, too. Where to bury the body of the deceased, how to organize joint weddings, the prohibition of drinking among Protestants—all created confrontations in the community.⁶⁵² Deranian's work on Hüseyinik village of Harput was not critical of Protestants or missionaries, but even he could not help drawing a comparison between American values of home life and traditional Armenian domesticity. Unlike the distant parent-child relations in the US, family members were more attached to each other in his village.⁶⁵³

Conclusion

Tlgadintsi and his pupils' reaction to American influence is a very familiar one. The writers' ideological position might be called localist, nativist or simply nationalist. In any context of rapid social transformation and increasing contact with foreign culture, we would encounter a group of local intellectuals writing against degeneration and loss of cultural authenticity. My purpose, however, was neither to pay homage to this intellectual tradition nor to accuse it of parochialism. I want rather to draw attention to its resemblance to the missionaries' attitude. Armenian nativists and American missionaries are perhaps the remotest parties in the social universe of Harput, yet they gave the same moral message: don't imitate, be real. Wheeler lived his entire life in a small town in the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire with the aim of changing natives' minds, but he refused to sacrifice even the slightest component of his lifestyle and world-view. He refused to help the other (since helping implies at least extending a hand); he

⁶⁵² Vatche Ghazarian, *A Village Remembered: The Armenians of Habousi* (Waltham, MA: Mayreni Pub., 1996).

⁶⁵³ Deranian, *Hussenig*, 22.

simply showed the truth, ordered what should be done, and insulted those who did not do it. He was the most disrespectful missionary ever. He refused to be a cultural imperialist.

Tlgadintsi and his colleagues were also determined to educate Armenian society. They were soldiers of enlightenment. Like the missionaries, they criticized the traditional clergy and tried to replace the archaic rituals of the church with the moral values of modern man. They were not respectful towards the dual-life experience of Armenian Protestants, nor were they fond of cultural amalgamation. They kept their distance from the missionaries and distanced themselves from the native Protestants. From today's cosmopolitan viewpoint, in other words, neither the Tlgadintsi clique nor the Wheeler clique has any noble attitude that might rescue it from the contempt of future historians. However, their short-distance relations with the people they wanted to change can be seen as an alternative way of creating a relationship with the other.

This entire section of the present dissertation was inspired by Sennett's *Respect*. He proposed to reflect on the possibility of theorizing respect as a relation independent of whether or not the parties in relation were respectful towards one another. It is a commonplace in the academy today that relations might have preceded, not anteceded, the subjects in relation. But it is equally difficult to actually demonstrate the difference between these two modes of thinking. I deliberately focused on the Harput missionaries, who always kept the others at arm's length. So did the local writers. This array of distant relationships brought about the most influential missionary group of the empire, on the one hand, and the most influential group of writers in the empire, on the other. The distant relation bred, even perhaps created, both subjects. The emergent relationship is one of respect in the sense that the parties did not intervene in each other's world even though their primary aim, as public intellectuals, was to change the other's mind. It is a relation of respect between two disrespectful parties.

I highlight these distant and short-distance relationships in Harput in order to suggest an alternative to narratives that assign positive value exclusively to intimacy between and malleability of social groups. Makdisi's project is the most notable one in the literature on missionaries in the Ottoman lands. By focusing on respectful missionaries (to debunk the nationalists' thesis of cultural imperialism) and on converts' experiences (to show cultural exchange), he successfully debunks conspiracy theories about missionaries, but he does it at the expense of dismissing the distant relationships as indices of domination and power. By contrast, I prefer to focus on the Harput cliques in order to stress the difference elaborated in Sennett's work between doing something good and behaving well. As in the Harput-Mezre case, consistent duality brought about a golden age for each party to the distant relationship. If there is something called living together with differences, it should be looked for in the short-distance relationship of duality.

Part IV: Distance and Mediation in the Conduct of Conduct

Part IV is a microhistory of the event known as the 1894-96 Armenian Massacres. It focuses on the day of November 11, 1895, in Harput, and reveals the details of the event from a local perspective. The first chapter gives an account of what happened on the ground before, during and after the massacres. I also analyze the way different parties narrate the event. The second chapter aims to get at the theory of collective action embedded in contemporary narratives of the massacre. I examine the moments of deception in the texts and develop an approach based on a theory of deception as an alternative to the more common provocation thesis. In its entirety, Part IV is a case study demonstrating the importance of short-distance relations in understanding the social universe of Harput and Mezre.

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Chapter 10: The 1895 Massacres: Rumors, Violence and Collective Feelings

Orson P. Allen, in his unprecedentedly long 26-page letter to his “dear Brothers, Sisters and all friends of Missions and humanity in the US and England,” written on November 14, 1895, minutely described the horror experienced in the missionary compound and in the Christian neighborhoods attacked on Monday, Nov. 11. “Our beloved Harpoot Mission field, where we have labored for 40 years, is desolated from one end to the other,” he concluded.⁶⁵⁴ It is true that in the preceding months missionaries were not unaware of the intangible but quite palpable atmosphere of aggression directed at Christian subjects. Allen himself had written on March 9 that almost all industry and trade was halted in Harput due to a “wide-spread paralysis” and that “[t]he misery, unhappiness and anxiety about is far beyond anything I have ever known.”⁶⁵⁵ In July, he had reported from Van that “[o]utrages of the worst character take place almost every day.”⁶⁵⁶

It is also true that in October quite tangible and sorrowful news was brought by refugees from the northern towns concerning the plunder and massacre at Erzincan. And lately, similar incidents were heard of happening in the closer towns like Pertek and Peri. Nevertheless, in spite of these (to a historian’s eye) clear signs of the upcoming storm, neither the experienced missionaries nor the native Christian leaders expected that it “would be permitted to come near the city.” The repeated assurances of the local government, Allen wrote, deceived all Christians in the city insofar as they even surrendered their weapons on Sunday (Nov. 10), just a day before

⁶⁵⁴ Letter from Allen to ‘dear Brothers . . .,’ Harpoot, November 14, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁶⁵⁵ Letter from Allen to Barton, Harpoot, March 9, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁶⁵⁶ Letter from Allen to Barton, Van, July 2, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695.

the massacres. Thus, upon what happened on Monday, he gave his final word: “After forty years acquaintance I have a [nice] idea of the perfidy, treachery and crue[ilty] of which some Turks are capable. [However,] I did not believe that all would condescend to such a depth of perfidy and treachery.”⁶⁵⁷

This chapter has taken inspiration from the outstanding weakness of the word “depth” in this statement. Allen was clearly unable to express his bewilderment, to give meaning to his own astonishment during the events. He was not just angry; he was confused about what he felt.⁶⁵⁸ Neither life-long missionaries nor the local population expected that what happened would happen in their town. Despite terrifying news from all around, an attack in the capital city of Harput province was apparently seen as unlikely. This collective feeling of unlikelihood was of course not an index of naïve confidence in the government; in other words, the perplexity did not arise from a sudden disappearance of such confidence. Every inhabitant of the imperial lands—and of all lands, to be sure—knew that the state was more a performance than a sincere friend. If it was only sophistic words, empty promises, unfulfilled assurances, or theatrical shows of power, no one would be puzzled. But, what if it was deceiving? States could kill people and lie about it, as they did about other things, but would they deceive people?

Part IV seeks to answer this question by conducting a microhistory of the massacre of Armenians on November 11, 1895, in the dual city of Harput and Mezre. This event was part of the empire-wide calamity known as ‘the 1894-96 Armenian Massacres’ or ‘the Hamidian Massacres.’ More than one hundred thousand Armenians were killed by militias, by soldiers and/or by ordinary Muslims, mostly in the eastern provinces of the empire. The event was the

⁶⁵⁷ Letter from Allen to ‘dear Brothers ...,’ Harpoot, November 14, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁶⁵⁸ Ngai takes the affective state of confusion as one of “a meta-feeling in which one feels confused about *what* one is feeling.” Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, 14.

outcome of the convergence and culmination of multiple trends of the 1890s: the weakening of the Kurdish tribal economy during its integration to the world-economy,⁶⁵⁹ the increasing violence of the market,⁶⁶⁰ the reign of scarcity and famine,⁶⁶¹ increasing mobility and the growth of private agents to facilitate that mobility,⁶⁶² the decentralization of politics,⁶⁶³ the empowerment of the local intermediary positions,⁶⁶⁴ the emergence of armed local militia (mostly Kurdish),⁶⁶⁵ and ethnic tension.⁶⁶⁶ The immediate political context of the Massacres involved the ‘reform talks’ between the Ottoman government and the European powers. In 1895, the latter increased pressure for social and political reforms in the eastern provinces, where Armenians predominantly lived. The newly founded Armenian revolutionary parties also intensified their propaganda activity. In this tense atmosphere, the Sultan’s official recognition of some of the reform demands in October 1895 was the final straw. Muslims rose up all over the empire to attack Armenians.

There is scant academic work on the 1894-96 Massacres, and all other references to this event are mostly irrelevant projections based on Armenian Genocide (1915) studies. This chapter aims to contribute to the slowly growing literature on these pogroms by a strictly local study of

⁶⁵⁹ Zozan Pehlivan’s forthcoming dissertation.

⁶⁶⁰ Şevket Pamuk, “The Ottoman Empire in the ‘Great Depression’ of 1873-1896,” *The Journal of Economic History* 44, no. 1 (March 1, 1984): 107–18.

⁶⁶¹ Ertem, “Eating the Last Seed: Famine, Empire, Survival and Order in Ottoman Anatolia in the Late Nineteenth Century.”

⁶⁶² David Gutman, “Agents of Mobility: Migrant Smuggling Networks, Transhemispheric Migration, and Time-Space Compression in Ottoman Anatolia, 1888–1908,” *InterDisciplines: Journal of History and Sociology* 3, no. 1 (2012): 48–84.

⁶⁶³ Cenk Reyhan and Nizam Önen, *Mülkten Ülkeye: Türkiye’de Taşra İdaresinin Dönüşümü (1839-1929)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011).

⁶⁶⁴ Uğur Bahadır Bayraktar, “Periphery’s Center: Reform, Intermediation, and Local Notables in Diyarbakir, 1845-1855,” 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, 2015).

⁶⁶⁵ Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁶⁶⁶ Achille Mbembe enumerated all of these trends as pillars of imagining politics as a work of death. Achille Mbembe, “On Politics as a Form of Expenditure,” in *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, ed. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 299–335.

the event.⁶⁶⁷ As I did in Part III, I will mention the wider context only to the extent that it was referred to locally. My interest lies in the questions of how violence was perceived by the observers at the time and how the events were *theorized* by the local actors. In this chapter, the reader will find a day-by-day expositions of the occurrences around November 11 and a discussion of the immediate narrativization of the event. Chapter 11 will focus on the theory of collective action from the Ottomans' point of view.

The Kurds' Uprising

In the months following the Sason Massacre of 1894, the number of reports of assaults by Kurds against Armenians unprecedentedly increased, so much so that Allen wrote from Van in April 1895: "I am almost weary with chronicling daily events. There is tragic sameness to them all. Day after day the pitiful story is told over and over again of pillage, burning, torture, murder, violence, rape, abduction, confiscation, desecration of churches &c."⁶⁶⁸ Van was a stronghold of the Armenian revolutionary movement surrounded by Kurdish villages, whereas the Harput region was relatively distant from the most grievous armed conflicts, so far. However, rumors had begun to arrive. On the same day as Allen's, Bush's otherwise conventional letter from Bizmishen village of Harput ended with a short note: "It is said that 200 Koords were coming

⁶⁶⁷ For some of the recent work specifically on the 1894-96 Massacres, see Joost Jongerden, "Elite Encounters of a Violent Kind: Milli İbrahim Paşa, Ziya Gökalp and Political Struggle in Diyarbakir at the Turn of the 20th Century," in *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbakir, 1870-1915*, ed. Jelle Verheij and Joost Jongerden (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 55-84; Jelle Verheij, "Diyarbakir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895," in *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbakir, 1870-1915*, ed. Jelle Verheij and Joost Jongerden (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 85-146; Nadir Özbek, "The Politics of Taxation and the 'Armenian Question' during the Late Ottoman Empire, 1876-1908," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 04 (October 2012): 770-97; Mehmet Polatel, "The Complete Ruin of a District: The Sasun Massacre of 1894," 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, 2015); Selim Deringil, "'The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed': Mass Conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895-1897," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 2 (2009): 344-71. Additionally, Edip Gölbaşı's forthcoming dissertation will include new research on the event based on primary sources.

⁶⁶⁸ Letter from Allen to Barton, Van, April 30, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695. Nothing could better express the archival experience of the historian of violence than "tragic sameness."

against the village to destroy all, but a postaji [postman] met them persuaded them to turn back, f[or] fear of the government. It is said to be well known that T's [Turks] say, 'You think that other gov'tment_ will make you __; the minute it is done we will rise & __.' I have thought, for a long time that this might be. Is anyone providing any protection against such a day?"⁶⁶⁹

It was the end of May when Barnum and the Armenian envoy (*murahhas*) went to the government in Mezre to inform the governor of the rumors that the Muslims of Çemişgezek planned to massacre the Armenians. Reportedly, these Muslims had come to see Salim Bey, a prominent man in the city of Harput, to get permission to launch attacks but he turned them down; nevertheless, Diyab Ağa from Dersim declared the support of the Kurds and called for massacring the Armenians.⁶⁷⁰ Accordingly, words were circulating that on *bayram* (the Eid - June 4-7, 1895) Muslims would attack Armenians here in the city. For the governor Mehmed Şerif Rauf Pasha this was only a rumor, since its source was just a letter received by Barnum. He assured Istanbul that the rumors were groundless, but nevertheless necessary precautions were taken.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁹ Letter from Bush to Barton, Bizmishen, April 30, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 696. Underlines exist in the original letter.

⁶⁷⁰ Diyab Ağa (1852-1934) was one of the most powerful and controversial figures of Dersim. In the Republican times, he collaborated with the national government. During the deportations in 1915, it is reported that he actually helped the Armenians. For more information, see Yarman, *Palu - Harput 1878*, 2:465. According to the 1910 report of the Armenian Patriarchate about the seized property of Armenians, Diyab Ağa, the grandson of Kahraman Ağa from Ulak tribe, seized by force the Surp Nişan Monastery with its 1000 *dönüm* land in Çemişgezek and secured an official deed from the government. *Teghekağir Hoghayin Grawmants Handznazhoghovoy*, vol. 1 (K. Polis: Tpagr. T. Toghrmajian, 1910), 5. *Anadolunun Mahal-i Muhtelifesinde ve Arazi-i Magsube Hakkında Ermeni Patrikhanesince Teşekkül Eden Komisyon-i Mahsus Tarafından Tanzim Olunan Raporun Suret-i Tercümesi* (Doğramacıyan Matbaası, 1327), 9.

⁶⁷¹ PMOA, Y.A.HUS. 329/139, 2 June 1895. The fact that two different Raufs served as the governor of Mamuretülaziz one after another causes confusions, especially because the position-shift occurred right before the massacres. Mehmed Şerif Rauf Pasha (1838-1923) served as the governor of Mamuretülaziz first in 1892 for six months, and then in 1895 for nine months until he was appointed as the governor of Erzurum in September 1895 (where he stayed uninterrupted six years). On November 1, 1895, [Mustafa] Rauf Bey, the *mutasarrıf* of Dedeoğaç, was assigned as the new governor of Mamuretülaziz where he arrived only after the events of November 11. He served here for eight years until 1903. Sinan Kunalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali (1839-1922) - Prosopografik Rehber* (Istanbul: Isis, 1999), 35, 104, 117. For the former, namely about Mehmed Şerif Rauf Pasha, Chambers wrote: "In 1895 the civil administrator, the vali, of Erzurum, was a man with a sincere desire to do his work well. The massacre was carried out by the military authorities apparently over the heads of the civil

A day before this official correspondence, on June 1, a private letter was sent by one of the missionaries to the British Consul of Erzurum, R. W. Graves, describing the same incident.⁶⁷² Graves transmitted the news from Harput on June 5th to Sir Philip Currie, the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, who conveyed the news on June 24th to John Wodehouse, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. As a result, the idea that Muslims or Kurds would attack Armenians circulated not only among the ordinary people in the city of Harput but also among the Ottoman and British secretaries of state. Even though nothing happened during the Eid, the circulation of rumors created anxiety if not panic. Allen took note in July that “there is a feverish excitement among the people to know what is to be done”⁶⁷³ during the irritating wait regarding the fate of the reforms in the eastern provinces that were being pressed by the European powers and the Armenian political organizations but deferred by the Ottoman government.

On September 30, thousands of Armenians poured into the streets of Istanbul to protest the government’s reluctance in initiating the promised reforms.⁶⁷⁴ The march of the protesters from the patriarchate to the government to submit a list of demands prepared by the Hnchak Party was, however, stopped by the police and violent clashes ensued. Although some of the revolutionaries were prepared enough to resist, many demonstrators were subjected to arbitrary

administration.” William Nesbitt Chambers, *Yoljuluk: Random Thoughts on a Life in Imperial Turkey* (London: Simpkin Marshall, 1928), 88.

⁶⁷² “Excerpt from Private Letter [to Consul Graves],” Kharpout, June 1, 1895, in *Turkey. No. 6 (1896)*.

Correspondence Relating to the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey: 1894-95., [C.8108] (London, Harrison & Sons, n.d.), 340. I am grateful to Mehmet Polatel for sharing this source with me.

⁶⁷³ Letter from Allen to Barton, Harpoot, July 24, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁶⁷⁴ It is unfortunate that the classic source by Nalbandian has a mistake regarding the Rumi/Gregorian dates. Although she generally gave both dates, like 18/30 September 1895, at one point she wrote that “the demonstration took place on Monday, September 18, 1895;” however, the demonstration took place on September 18, 1311, or September 30, 1895, Monday. Louise Nalbandian, “The Origins and Development of Socialism in Armenia: The Social Democrat Hunchakian Party, 1887-1949” (MA Thesis, Stanford University, 1949), 34; Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties Through the Nineteenth Century* (University of California Press, 1963), 124.

brutality. Especially in the following days, pogroms took place in residential neighborhoods across the entire city against all Armenian people. In response to the anxiety of the central government about possible repercussions of these events in the eastern provinces, Ali Emiri Efendi, the acting governor of Mamuretülaziz,⁶⁷⁵ wrote on October 10 that no incident had taken place in Harput, yet. However, he warned, if these events caused by the “light-brained (*sebükmeğazâne*) behaviors of Armenian riff raff (*ayaktakımı*)” in Istanbul could not be stopped, they would naturally spread to the provinces, too. Therefore, he suggested that the soldiers parade in Harput/Mezre once or twice a week, accompanied by the military band, as a demonstration of power to insiders and outsiders.⁶⁷⁶ Soon enough, on October 16, the commander-in-chief of the Imperial Army (*serasker*) circulated more precautionary measures for the Eastern provinces. Most importantly, the circular ordered the call-up of the reserves under arms because it was understood that Armenians were going to attack Muslims in these provinces.⁶⁷⁷

On October 20, the Ottoman government finally accepted a Reform Bill that promised to undertake at least some of the reforms proposed by the Armenian political parties and the European states.⁶⁷⁸ The news rapidly spread to the provinces. Sarkis Narzakian, a native of Garmari village of Çemişgezek, makes mention in his memoir of the moment in Aleppo when he

⁶⁷⁵ Ali Emiri Efendi was appointed as the treasurer (*defterdar*) of Mamuretülaziz in July 1895. In October, however, he was assigned as the treasurer of Erzurum. Nevertheless, he did not leave Mezre perhaps because the governor Mehmed Şerif Rauf Pasha was also appointed to Erzurum and Mamuretülaziz was left now without a governor. Only on November 1, the new governor Rauf Bey was ordered to govern the province, and the same day Ali Emiri was ordered to stay in Mezre as the acting-governor until the new governor arrived. PMOA, BEO. 649/48666, 2 July 1895; A.MKT.MHM. 720/9, 22 October 1895; A.MKT.MHM. 657/5, 5 November 1895.

⁶⁷⁶ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 675/2, 10 October 1895.

⁶⁷⁷ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 721/4, 16 October 1895.

⁶⁷⁸ Ali Karaca, *Anadolu Islahatı ve Ahmet Şakir Paşa (1838 - 1899)* (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1993), 52–55.

opened the pages of the Armenian newspaper *Punch* (meaning: bunch)⁶⁷⁹ received from Istanbul by post. Delighted and excited by what he saw on the first page, he ran to his friends to give the news. In a week, however, massacres began one after another across the entire Ottoman East.⁶⁸⁰

The first incident in Harput took place on the 24th of October, a Thursday. When the acting governor Ali Emiri was informed that the Armenians in Harput had closed their shops out of fear (apprehension, “*bir vehme tabi olarak*”)⁶⁸¹ he at once sent the colonel to the upper town and summoned the leading members of the *ulema* (Islamic clergy) as well as Hacı Hurşid Efendi, Herman N. Barnum—whom Ali Emiri highly respected⁶⁸²—and some other notables. They were to assure Armenians and Muslims that there was nothing to fear under the rule of the sultan and that harmony should not be disturbed “under the influence of lusts and passions of only a few light-brained people” (*yalnız bazı sebükmeğazın heva-u-hevesine etba*). The efforts were successful and the shops were re-opened in an hour without any further disquiet.⁶⁸³

On November 3rd, Sunday, Ali Emiri was still confident about the order of things in the city; in his report of that day, he treated the recent attack of “Kurdish bandits of Dersim” on some neighboring villages as a trivial incident.⁶⁸⁴ But the very next day, on Monday the 4th, Caleb Frank Gates, the president of Euphrates College, described the rather apprehensive atmosphere in the city in the following words:

⁶⁷⁹ *Punch* was an Istanbul-based weekly newspaper published from 1860 on by Hampartsum S. Alacacyan. Garegin Levonyan, *Hayots parberakan mamulee: patmakan tesutiun skzbits minchev mer oreree, 1794-1894, endardzak tsanooutiunnerov* (Aleksandrapol: Tparan Abraham M. Malkhasiani, 1895), 215–222.

⁶⁸⁰ Sarkis Narzakian, *Memoirs of Sarkis Narzakian* (Gomidas Institute, 1995).

⁶⁸¹ *Vehm* means “fear, apprehension of something future,” a fear that is oriented toward something that has not yet happened. James William Redhouse, *Redhouse’s Turkish Dictionary*, 1880, 867. Similar to anxiety and paranoia, it is a feeling without a definite object.

⁶⁸² Ali Emiri, *Osmanlı Şark Vilayetleri (Osmanlı Vilâyât-ı Şarkıyyesi)* (Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi, 1992), 11–12.

⁶⁸³ PMOA, HR.SYS. 2812/2, 24 October 1895. Gates’ later account of the event is in harmony with Ali Emiri’s account: “Some ten days ago there was much unrest in the city because of apprehension that the Turks were about to attack the Christians. The authorities showed much earnestness and ability in coping with that trouble, and tranquility was restored.” Letter from Gates to Smith, Harpoot, November 6, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 700.

⁶⁸⁴ PMOA, DH.EO. 290/42, 3 November 1895.

The whole country seems to be in state of upheaval. There is some kind of trouble going on at Diarbekir. It is said to be from Koords, and it has been going on for three days as nearly as we can learn. There has also been trouble at Bitlis, and in many other places. Of course all kinds of rumors are rife, we make it a point to believe only those which are authenticated. Our school is still open though the number in attendance is few. The whole city is tossed with apprehension, expecting an attack from the Koords. Some say the Koords have government sanction, others that the Turks in the city are in league with them etc. A few soldiers parade the quarter, but I do not suppose they would amount to much in the case of an actual attack.⁶⁸⁵

Soon after Gates wrote these lines, later in the day, the news reached the city that a big crowd of Kurds had crossed the Euphrates River, which lay only four hours north of the city. This was not something ordinary. They were coming from the mountainous and semi-autonomous Dersim region, which had the reputation of being impassible for outsiders, especially for the armies. Since the time of Reşid Mehmed Pasha (see Part I) the Ottoman state had been trying to govern the region, but mostly in vain. The Kurdish tribal confederation system had survived the strikes of modern governmentality so far. Nonetheless, they traditionally waged defensive war, protecting Dersim from outsiders; it was not common to hear of them crossing the Euphrates, namely the natural border between Dersim and Mamuretülaziz (Harput), and trespassing into the plains. But now they had, and the news was confusing and horrifying for the people of the city. It was said that Kurds had already plundered two Armenian villages on the way and were headed towards Harput! All inhabitants of the city were now “in a state of terror and upheaval;”⁶⁸⁶ “the shops in the city were closed ... The people were in hourly expectation of an attack.”⁶⁸⁷

The government was alarmed, too. On the one hand, Armenians’ closing their shops and retreating to their homes aroused suspicion and paranoia among Muslims who were jittery and

⁶⁸⁵ Letter from Gates to Peet, Harpoot, November 4, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 700.

⁶⁸⁶ Letter from Gates to Peet, Harpoot, November 5, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 700.

⁶⁸⁷ Letter from Gates to Smith, Harpoot, November 6, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 700.

too ready to attack the Armenians. In order to abate this tension inside the city, Ali Emiri collaborated once again with Muslim notables and with Barnum. “The strongest assurances were given by government officials and leading Turks of the city” to appease both sides. Finally, Armenians were convinced to re-open their shops and to resume their daily activity.⁶⁸⁸ Gates gave great credit to three people for preventing a probable clash: Ali Emiri, Barnum, and a Muslim notable called Bey Oglon [perhaps: Bey Oğlu / Beyzade]. Later in the week, Gates heard Muslims talking about this incident on Monday; they said that if the shops had been kept closed for just another two hours, very serious events would have erupted.⁶⁸⁹

On the other hand, military precautions were being taken against the upcoming Kurdish invasion. The military commander made a call to people living in the gardens and farms surrounding the city to move into the city center. Troops were immediately dispatched to the north to stop the devastating influx of the Kurds. To the surprise of the Kurds, the army really fought against them and drove them back.⁶⁹⁰ The following day, on Tuesday, they eventually managed to make these 300-400 well-armed Kurds retreat to the other side of the Euphrates,

⁶⁸⁸ Letter from Allen to ‘dear Brothers ...,’ Harpoot, November 14, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁶⁸⁹ Letter from Gates to Moore, Harpoot, November 7, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 694. The tone of Gates’ letter suggests that the Muslims were talking about probable attacks by Muslims against Christians as if they were not the members of the former group, or more correctly, as if the group’s behavior was independent of the will of its individual members. Thus, rather than intimidating, they warned against the danger which would be inevitable if the provoking situation lasted since the responsibility for it lay with the provoker rather than the agent of the attacks. The same was suggested to anthropologist Veena Das and her husband when they offered a ride to a Sikh man on the eve of the anti-Sikh violence in India right after Indira Gandhi was assassinated on October 31, 1984: A group of men approached the car and warned them, “in conspiratorial tones” according to Das, about a mob further ahead who might attack to them if they saw a Sikh in the car. “The men shook their heads sadly and said they were doing their best – what more could *they do* except warn us of what lay ahead?” Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent Into the Ordinary* (University of California Press, 2007), 125. Das was interested in the panic driven by the men’s warning that caused the Sikh man’s leaving the car in order to prevent any possible assault to them; the reader gets the impression that if they had been sincere -not conspiratorial- fellows, the same advice would have been appreciated by the people in the car.

⁶⁹⁰ Gates wrote: “When soldiers began to fire upon the Koords, it is said, the latter called out to them: ‘Why do you fire on us? You summoned us.’” Letter from Gates to Peet, Harpoot, November 5, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 700.

leaving behind 700 head of livestock they had seized from the villages.⁶⁹¹ This good news quelled the anxiety and tension in the city. That day, Gates took note: “I think the worst is over here. The Koords have been driven across the river. There is an ugly element in the city, but the authorities seem vigilant and they give every assurance of their earnestness in desiring to keep order.”⁶⁹² Next day, he repeated these words in another letter, with a small addition: “unless something unforeseen occurs I think the worst is over here.”⁶⁹³

The capital was saved but the same was far from true for the other parts of the province. Armenian villages were the most exposed targets; day after day refugees from plundered villages poured into the city of Harput in desperation, with horrible stories to tell. The small towns, too, were vulnerable given the weakness and/or the reluctance of the local army forces. On Tuesday (Nov. 5), the neighboring town of Malatya reported that all measures were being taken to prevent unrest (*şuriş*) inside the city, including the recruitment of 200 reserves,⁶⁹⁴ but still there was no sufficient force to cope with 2000 Kurds.⁶⁹⁵ In fact, it was heard that armed conflicts were indeed happening in Armenian neighborhoods throughout the entire week.⁶⁹⁶ Peri, on the other hand, was reportedly surrounded and besieged by 3000-6000 Kurdish bandits. The town had already been attacked and plundered. It was confessed on Thursday (Nov. 7) that the army had not been able to suppress the assaults in the last four days and could only protect the government buildings. Kurdish chiefs were promised official titles with triple, quadruple wages, but they

⁶⁹¹ PMOA, DH.EO. 290/40, 5 November 1895. This account of Ali Emiri is in concordance with Gates' above referred accounts of the events on Monday and Tuesday.

⁶⁹² Letter from Gates to Peet, Harpoot, November 5, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 700.

⁶⁹³ Letter from Gates to Smith, Harpoot, November 6, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 700.

⁶⁹⁴ PMOA, DH.EO. 290/48, 5 November 1895.

⁶⁹⁵ Letter from Gates to Peet, Harpoot, November 5, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 700.

⁶⁹⁶ Letter from Gates to Moore, Harpoot, November 7, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 694.

were still leading the bandits. Hence, the plunder of Peri kept going, not distinguishing between Muslims and Christians. Moreover, the bandits were heading for Harput.⁶⁹⁷

Conflicts Come Close-by

The march of Kurdish rebels from the northern lands towards the provincial capital was followed by reports from close-in towns about conflicts between resident Muslims and Armenians. The anxious waiting for the outcome of the Kurds' invasion of the Harput plain had put an extreme strain on communal relations in the cities. The Kurds were stopped before entering the capital city, but the news from all over the plain continued pouring into the everyday conversations of the inhabitants. These were the worst kind of news, that the "pen cannot portray," as Gates wrote.⁶⁹⁸ As a result, some local Muslim groups began harassing and attacking Armenians in the streets. On Thursday the 7th, for example, an armed conflict erupted between Armenians and Muslims in Kesrik, which lay only fifteen minutes from Mezre. Soldiers and even the reserves were sent to the town. It was finally reported that a group of drunken Armenians had gathered in the house of the prominent Krikor Yağcıyan⁶⁹⁹ and started shooting guns, upon which "excitement" [tumult]⁷⁰⁰ emerged (*heyecan hasıl olarak*) among the Muslims,

⁶⁹⁷ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/16, 7 November 1895; A.MKT.MHM. 657/17, 7 November 1895.

⁶⁹⁸ Letter from Gates to Moore, Harpoot, November 7, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 694.

⁶⁹⁹ Krikor Yağcıyan was among the notables of the city. According to the official gazette, he was the tax-farmer of Alpavut village and he had managed to raise the amount of tax from 60,558 *para* in 1882 to 77,743 *para* in 1883, namely 28% (celebrated as the 7th best score). *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 19, 20 February 1884. In another record, he was among the signees of a public refutation against an article published in an Istanbul paper criticizing the mayor, Reşid Efendi, and the secretary of provincial council, Süleyman Efendi. In this open letter signed by more than hundred Muslim and Christian notables of the city, Yağcıyan Ohan from the Esteemed (*muteberandan*), Yağcıyan Krikor from the Esteemed, and Yağcıyan Krikor exist among the signatures. *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 51, 5 October 1884; no. 52, 12 October 1884. In 1906, another member of the same family, Medzig Yağcıyan, was one of the seven members of the Armenian political council (*meclis-i siyasi*) of Harput. *1902 Intartsag Oratsuyts - S. Prgcyan Hivantanotsi*, vol. 3, 1900-1910 Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Salnâmeleri - Tıpkıbasım (Istanbul: Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Vakfı Kültür Yayınları, 2012), 411.

⁷⁰⁰ In the nineteenth-century context, *heyecan* (ar. *hayajan*) meant disorder, tumult, excitement. I prefer using 'excitement' in order to preserve its link to emotions in its contemporary meaning. In today's Turkish, *heyecan* is an individual feeling rather than a collective situation.

who then started shooting back, and it ended up with bullets showering by and at both sides. Two people were injured. The conflict was quelled by the soldiers; they arrested Yağcıyan but, Ali Emiri noted, he was too drunk to give testimony when he was brought to Mezre in the evening.⁷⁰¹ This incident among the locals made Gates write the same day: “Now it is the Turks who are doing the work and they are worse than the Koords.”⁷⁰²

This seemingly small event made the Armenians of Harput close their shops again. Ali Emiri was perhaps even more alarmed this time, because the next day was a Friday and in many other cities, like Diyarbekir the week before, violence had tended to rise right after the Friday prayers in the mosques.⁷⁰³ In his “very urgent” telegram to Istanbul on Friday the 8th, he complained about Armenian noxiousness (*muzırrat*)—by which he meant their closing the shops—that brought about a general indignation (*infial-ı umumi*) among the Muslims. The city itself had to be protected by soldiers because Harput had a big Armenian community with arms and in case the Armenians were to attack the Muslims of the city would not hesitate to severely retaliate. However, there were not enough soldiers in the city because they had been dispersed to various places in the vicinity where plundering and disorderliness (*iğtişâşât*) were still continuing.⁷⁰⁴ Fortunately, Ali Emiri’s fears did not come true; Harput got through this second crisis, too. Assurances were given, Armenians were convinced, and the shops were re-opened. Indeed, nothing happened after the Friday prayers. Gates took note: “Today in the mosques and

⁷⁰¹ PMOA, DH.EO. 290/27, 7 November 1895.

⁷⁰² Letter from Gates to Moore, Harpoot, November 7, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 694.

⁷⁰³ For a detailed account of the events in Diyarbekir on November 1, Friday, see Verheij, “Diyarbekir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895.”

⁷⁰⁴ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 638/34, 8 November 1895.

churches the people are being exhorted to open their shops and keep the peace. We are all well.”⁷⁰⁵

But the Kurdish invasion of the greater Harput plain did not stop. In a way, the city of Harput was gradually surrounded by invaded, plundered and burned villages and towns. By the weekend, the coming storm was no longer hearsay; it was visible to the eyes of people in Harput-the-uppertown that commanded the plain from above. In their relatively isolated, gorgeous campus on the south-west side of the city, the missionaries saw the villages burning in the Harput plain. On Saturday the 9th, Annie Allen, the daughter of the Allen family, saw through a window smoke rising from a nearby village: “with the spy glass [they] could see the crowds of people rushing along the road toward the city.” In the evening, they stayed on the roof and watched the burning villages: “we could see smoke rising from one and another village until the number had reached that night the sight was a weird one as the [...] flames would burst out suddenly the blackness of the night. There was a certain wild fascination in watching the scene which one could scarcely resist.”⁷⁰⁶

The fires in the surrounding villages lasted the whole night. Next morning, on Sunday the 10th, Harput’s inhabitants were on full alert. During the day, at some point a rumor that “They are coming!” caused panic (“terror stricken to my heart,” wrote Annie Allen), but apparently it was a false alarm. The entire day the missionaries watched the plain below and the road coming up to the city.⁷⁰⁷ And in the meantime, they were trying to calm down both communities in the town. They even handed over their five revolvers to the Colonel in order to appease the Muslims’ paranoia that missionaries would supply weapons to Armenians. Upon this gesture, the

⁷⁰⁵ Letter from Gates to Moore, Harpoot, November 8, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 694.

⁷⁰⁶ Letter by Annie T. Allen to Smith, Harpoot, February 4, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

Colonel “replied that he would be cut in pieces before any harm should come to them.”⁷⁰⁸ On this long Sunday, nothing happened in the upper-town.

The acting governor in Mezre, on the other hand, was dealing with a fire in Kesrik—where the shooting affair had taken place on Thursday. According to Şükrü Bey, the acting inspector, it was the Armenians who started the fire,⁷⁰⁹ whereas Ali Emiri connected it to the arrival of Kurdish bandits. He sent some notables and some members of the *ulema* (Islamic clergy) to alleviate the disorder but he confessed in his report to Istanbul that this time they could not succeed. If the situation was not going to change, he added, the officers might have to resort to armed intervention.⁷¹⁰ The replies from Istanbul were very short and concise: the provincial governments would be held responsible for the Kurds’ depredations, since it could not call all reserves to arms on time;⁷¹¹ and it should be clearly announced to the rebels that those who stood against the state would face a far greater response by the state.⁷¹²

Monday, November 11, 1895

The people of Harput and Mezre woke up on Monday to hear that the worst was, finally, happening. The city was surrounded by thousands of Kurds who were determined to enter the city. Ali Emiri’s “very urgent” telegram in the morning was a testimony of paralysis in the local government; it was wired to Istanbul from a provincial capital city that was basically under siege by insurgents. This time, they had really come! Ali Emiri reported that notables, representatives

⁷⁰⁸ “Official Control of the Destruction of Mission Buildings at Harpoot,” [December 1895], ABCFM, Reel 694. In a later letter by Barnum, those who had promised protection by saying “unless we were cut in pieces...” were Mustapha Naim Pasha, Brigadier General-Commander of the Army division in the district, and Shukri Bey, the Colonel who was in charge of the defense of the city. Letter from H. N. Barnum to Smith, Harpoot, January 23, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 696.

⁷⁰⁹ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/16, 10 November 1895.

⁷¹⁰ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/18, 10 November 1895.

⁷¹¹ In the following days, the commander-in-chief of the imperial army kept dealing with the question of reserves, asking detailed information from the provinces, especially implicating Harput government for being slow on call-up. PMOA, DH.EO. 290/99, 13 November 1895.

⁷¹² PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/18, 10 November 1895.

of established families and religious leaders were sent to the rebels to explain that only the state had the right to establish order and that the sultan had given no permission for their actions. The crowd at first retreated upon such persuasive talk, but then came back to the perimeter of the city. It would be gravely dangerous to use guns against such a big crowd; thus, everybody was waiting.

The rebellious crowd had a message, though. When asked what they wanted from the people of Harput, they complained about the Armenians: They were always being protected by the government. Even ten-year-old kids were called *Bey* or *Ağa*, and despite these comforts they still demanded autonomy and ever more privileges, they sent revolutionaries (*fedai*) everywhere to destroy humanity, and in Zeytun and other places they had already wrecked the Muslims. In sum, the Kurds said, they, as subjects of the sultan, could not help attacking these infidel Armenians. Ali Emiri concluded that with “this idea” the entire Kurdish population “had been moved” (*yerinden oynamiş durumda*). The notables tried to explain that this idea that Armenians were to get more privileges was an Armenian plot to discomfit the government, but in vain. Kurds responded with “meaningless” words like “No, no! This is God’s order, there is no other way.”⁷¹³

The nervous standstill did not last long. The crowd began to enter the city. It was followed by sounds of gunshots from the inner city of Harput, causing great panic among the Christians. Some rushed to seek shelter in the homes of friendly Muslims and in the missionary compound, while some others fled to Mezre to take refuge with the government. When the soldiers arrived in Harput, the Kurds were initially dispersed. The missionaries were watching the manoeuvres of the soldiers and the invaders from the window: they saw how two cannons

⁷¹³ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/19, 11 November 1895.

were deployed by the soldiers at the hill and how the attacking crowd regrouped just below the city's entrance on the slope between Harput and Mezre.

A little after noon a body of horsemen and footmen straggled up the [sic] towards the soldiers with the cannon. The men on horseback were chief Turks from surrounding Turkish villages accompanied by their retain[ers]. How many of them were Koords is doubtful, but probably not many. We have reason to believe that many of them were Redif in disguise. We know that the Redif (reserves) were mustered into service only a few days before. The horsemen and footmen came together in a body not more than 100 yards from the cannon. We watched these movements narrowly with field glasses, and at first were not a little puzzled to know what it all meant.⁷¹⁴

In the meantime, some prominent members of Harput's Turkish community arrived, too. They approached the soldiers and then headed towards the threatening crowd, possibly in order to persuade them to retreat. However, the anxious waiting of the observers turned into a state of perplexity when they saw the cannon being turned away from the crowd. The consequent march of "the marauding rabble" into the city was followed by gun shots and cannon shots but, Allen wrote, the fact that almost no damage was done to the assailants indicated that they were not really aiming. This was "the farce of defending the city."⁷¹⁵

In the following hours, extensive violence was witnessed in the city's Christian neighborhoods. The buildings of the missionaries, which sheltered the Americans, the native pupils of the boarding schools, and the Armenian refugee families (450 people in total), were physically threatened, too. The doors of the college were forced open; relatively unprotected houses and school buildings were plundered and set afire. And Allen and the other missionaries were even shot at unsuccessfully during their escape into the main building. After all managed to

⁷¹⁴ Letter from Allen to 'dear Brothers ...,' Harpoot, November 14, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁷¹⁵ He later wrote about the so-called defense of the city by the soldiers: "... all a sham, a well understood arrangement on both sides, to give an appearance of defending the city." He also reported that many "pseudo-Koords" from the city and close-by towns joined the assailants. Letter from Allen to Dwight, Harpoot, November 26, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695.

take shelter in the relatively safest College building, the soldiers came and suggested that they leave the building and go to the governor's place in Mezre where they would be given protection. The officers said that they could not protect them if they chose to stay in the mission compound. Barnum turned down the suggestion with a strict "No!" on the basis that the security powers had not protected them before, when they should have and could have. The officer's reply, "What could I do against 15,000 Koords," was immediately discounted because

There were not a large number of Koords in this quarter of the city. The raiders were for the most part Turks from Harpoot city and surrounding villages, aided by Redif soldiers, disguised as Koords. There were Koords among the raiders, but they were used as a mere cover to conceal the real authors of this diabolical outrage. I am credibly informed that the orders for the attack were issued from the house of Mustafa Pasha himself, the general commanding the military force in this region and he of course acted under orders from his superiors. The Koords themselves affirm that they were given license to despoil and kill the Christians. The pretended defense of the city was a very thin sham, too thin to cover the deliberate plan (...).⁷¹⁶ [underlined in the original hand-written letter]

In the meantime in Mezre, Ali Emiri was urgently corresponding with Istanbul. He boldly wrote that he would continue to act in the name of the absent governor only if he was granted the right to use arms against the invading Dersim Kurds.⁷¹⁷ The imperial center's response is not known, but the very next day, on Tuesday, Ali Emiri was reprimanded on the grounds that the disturbances had been allowed to happen in the first place due to his weak measures. As mentioned before, he had already been appointed to Erzurum but he was waiting for the new governor's arrival. Upon the latest events, he was allowed to leave and Ali Rıza Pasha, the sub-provincial governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Malatya, was hurried to Mezre as the new acting governor of Mamuretülaziz.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁶ Letter from Allen to 'dear Brothers ...,' Harpoot, November 14, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁷¹⁷ PMOA, DH.MKT. 2071/60, 11 November 1895.

⁷¹⁸ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/16, 14-16 November 1895; A.MKT.MHM. 657/20, 17 November 1895.

Neither in the Ottoman documents, nor in missionaries' letters, is there a detailed account of what happened in the Armenian neighborhoods on this long Monday.⁷¹⁹ From Ali Emiri's Tuesday report we know that fires in the city could not be controlled until morning, although the unrest (*şuriş*) had been suppressed earlier. Officially, 27 Armenians, 9 Assyrians and 8-10 Kurds were killed; more than 100 Armenian houses and 4 Muslim houses were burnt along with one church and 4 Protestant school buildings. On Tuesday morning, 2000-3000 Kurds surrounded the city again but this time the officials' efforts worked and they turned back without causing any more harm. The Armenians whose houses were burnt were placed in Muslim homes and in an evacuated khan.⁷²⁰ Meanwhile, in order to re-establish order in the city, the government was seeking ways to send back 7000-8000 refugees who had fled the plundered and burned villages. On Wednesday the 13th, Commander of Harput Mirliva Mustafa Naim Pasha wrote, the Kurds eventually retreated to the other bank of the Euphrates and the Muslim villagers were sent back to their home villages.⁷²¹

As a result of criminal proceedings, 98 people ended up being arrested and imprisoned in the barracks on Wednesday.⁷²² Although we do not know who they were, the new acting governor Ali Rıza Pasha's suggestion that they be released one by one and made to explain the power of the state to their fellow people implies that they were people spontaneously arrested by the soldiers in the middle of the events, perhaps mostly Kurds, rather than, say, Armenian revolutionaries.⁷²³ Ali Rıza Pasha warned that although for the time being the events had faded away, the Kurds of the region had become accustomed to plundering and no assurance could be

⁷¹⁹ Future research on sources in Armenian language will hopefully shed light on these details.

⁷²⁰ PMOA, Y.PRK.UM. 33/83, 12 November 1895.

⁷²¹ PMOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 108/47, 13 November 1895.

⁷²² PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/25, 13 November 1895.

⁷²³ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/16, 16 November 1895.

given that they would not rise again, considering their susceptibility to the Armenians' vicious ideas (*muzır fikirleri*). Nevertheless, his demand for the declaration of martial law was turned down by the center, which expected more from the provincial governments and wasn't about to give them more freedom and privilege with martial law.⁷²⁴ Thus, to meet the demands of the center, the local commanders focused on the recruitment of new privates, on regular patrols inside and outside the city and on establishing command posts at strategic points.⁷²⁵ Besides the military measures, of course, official permission was given to the local government to "reward" some tribal leaders with cash (4,500 *lira* had already been paid; 15,000 *lira* was authorized to be given) perhaps to keep them away from the cities.⁷²⁶

'What' Happened?

The preceding story of the events in Harput in early November points out one simple fact that is completely missing in any existing account of the 1894-96 Armenian Massacres: this was a massive Kurdish uprising. Thousands of Kurds living in the mountainous countryside literally poured down into the plains, invaded the villages and towns, plundered anything they found, and destroyed everything that belonged to urban life even when no material gain was involved. The basic distinction in all written accounts was between outsider Kurds and people of the plains. In Ali Emiri's telegrams, there was a clear separation between local incidents of sectarian violence and the invasion by Dersim Kurds. According to him, the former was caused by foolish

⁷²⁴ Later, on November 28, Ali Rıza Pasha complained again about the absence of the new governor (Rauf Bey) and, like Ali Emiri, asked to be vested with more authority, if the new governor's arrival was to be further delayed. PMOA, DH.EO. 292/59, 28 November 1895.

⁷²⁵ A dialogue between Ali Rıza Pasha and the center reveals another instance where the locality pushed for declaring state of exception and the center resisted. Apparently, 100 privates were "temporarily" enrolled upon grave need and allocation for payments and sustenance was demanded; however, the center opposed the idea of 'temporary soldiers' and ordered again the call-up of all reserves. Ali Rıza Pasha nonetheless insisted since the Kurdish danger was still present and, at the end of the day, more soldiers needed to be able to recruit the reserves. Eventually, the center accepted to authorize the allocation. PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/39, 13 November – 15 December 1895.

⁷²⁶ PMOA, Y.A.HUS. 339/25, 16 November 1895.

Armenians who managed to provoke some Muslims, but it was not difficult to suppress such instances. The real threat was the approach of the Kurds, which also spread fear and instigated those local conflicts. This was an extraordinary moment when the periphery rose against the center, sans-culottes aimed at the heart of culture, mountaineers challenged urbanites.

There was a ‘wild’ element in the events which should not be dismissed for the sake of political correctness. All missionary accounts of the massacres across the empire mentioned some sort of savage brutality during the events. Dr. Caroline F. Hamilton, for example, wrote right after the events from Aintab:

[Nov. 16, 1895] A great mob was surging through the streets, to a quarter so near that we could look down on the houses being plundered and torn to pieces—could watch the mob as it filled the streets and courtyards, and could hear the yells of the Kurds and the shrieks of terror from the poor defenseless people—while all the time the constant firing of the Kurds (for they are permitted to carry arms), with, underneath all, a hoarse roar like that of wild beasts, made up a frightful combination of sounds.⁷²⁷

The next day, on Sunday (Nov. 17), the attacks on the city of Aintab continued: “hearing again and again a great noise as this new mob were repulsed in their attempts to gain entrance into the city.” But eventually they managed to enter the city: “Never can I forget that sight. They were not men, but beasts, wild to get at their prey.”⁷²⁸

Similarly, the accounts published in *Droşak* in Armenian also pointed out the wild element in the attacks. In Arapgir, for instance, hundreds of Kurds surrounded the city in the morning of October 25th. When they entered the city, they were “ravening” (*moleknel*) and so greedy that they not only plundered the church and the houses but also took off the valuables worn by the women and girls. Some “monsters” even stripped women and seized their golden

⁷²⁷ Arman Ĵoni Kirakosyan, ed., *The Armenian Massacres, 1894 - 1896: U.S. Media Testimony* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State Univ. Press, 2004), 118–121.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*

ornaments and silk underwear. The invaders had already brought carts in order to carry the loot; during the plunder, they amassed the loot in heaps on the hills surrounding the city.⁷²⁹

Interestingly, the author of this letter from Arapgir gives us a graphic description of brutal killings only in the second part of the letter. It is important that the monstrosity in the first part is related without any reference to homicide; there was a wild element in the looting and plunder itself. In fact, according to another letter, this time from Harput, the plunder went so aggressive that the invaders could not carry everything they looted and had to sell things cheaply before they left.⁷³⁰

‘Kurds as wild beasts’ is of course a representation in the sense that the narratives of the events were shot through with racist stereotypes. However, these scenes cannot be dismissed as arbitrary and imaginary inventions of an otherizing mind. The *form* of violence in 1895 had a peculiarly destructive element towards material wealth: the invaders plundered the villages and towns, they destroyed everything they did not need or did not want to carry, and in the end they burned the houses. Needless to say, they also killed people, often in a brutal way. The target of this destruction was Armenians: Armenian houses, Armenian wealth, Armenian people. As to why Armenians were the target, various explanations can be found in the literature (the Armenian revolutionary movement, European support of Armenians’ demands, sectarian hatred, etc.) but the *form* of the violence seems to be determined particularly by the rise of a new Armenian bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century Ottoman world. As discussed in previous chapters, the Armenian *nouveau riche* in Harput and Mezre was not necessarily extremely rich, but its wealth was more visible compared to the old landed gentry’s wealth. Houses and dress (including jewelry), in particular, were two quintessential signs of the new bourgeoisie. And the

⁷²⁹ “Arapgir – I,” *Droşak*, no. 6 (20 February 1896): 47; “Arapgir – II,” *Droşak*, no. 7 (1 March 1896): 54-55.

⁷³⁰ “Kharpert,” *Droşak*, no. 1 (1 January 1896): 6-7.

American missionaries, with their outstanding buildings, seemed to be one of the sources of this richness. Hence, these signs were targeted by the gradually impoverished Kurds of the periphery. The wildness in the event was an index of a specifically destructive form of violence.

In conclusion, two aspects of November 1895 tend to be missing in the existing literature: that it was a Kurdish uprising and that it predominantly took the form of material destruction. Thus, it would be a grave mistake to evaluate the events in comparison to or as a prelude to the Armenian Genocide in 1915. We are faced here with an event that has formal similarities to the riots in Los Angeles in 1992 or to those in Paris in 2005. Perhaps the best comparison should be made with the anti-Jewish riots in Istanbul in 1955, when Jewish homes and shops were plundered in a demonstrative fashion (rather than simply for looting).⁷³¹ My aim is not to trivialize anti-Armenian policies and discourses in the Ottoman world; I neither dismiss politics nor overvalue economics. My purpose is to temporarily and deliberately forget the context (including the name given to these events) and to give full credit to the historical documents produced in that moment (not later). And this historical ethnography of the event tells us one thing, boldly: this was a destructive Kurdish uprising. It is important to emphasize this, again and again, because it will take only a few months for Kurds to disappear from all narratives.

Kurds Disappearing

Most analyses of the 1895 events use the documents produced before, during and after the events indiscriminately. However, such a reading misses the revelatory moment that Allen

⁷³¹ Göçek analyzes collective violence by distinguishing three forms of harm the event produces: physical, material, and symbolic harm. She also argues that 1915 anti-Jewish pogroms were primarily acts of material harm whereas 1894-96 massacres were primarily acts of physical harm. It is certainly true for Istanbul and for many other towns in the east that violence was directed to Armenian lives. I believe that the case of Harput has different characteristics and that future micro-studies will reveal more divergence among places of violence. I reach the conclusion that in the event in Harput material harm was primary form of violence. Fatma Müge Göçek, *Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians, 1789-2009* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 15–16.

was trying to express (unsuccessfully) in the beginning of this chapter. Social movements like the 1895 uprising are generally sudden events, but always, in the aftermath, many parties develop competing theories to explain the unexpected. These theories almost always imply that the events were *actually* foreseeable if only the truth had not been hidden. After the event, Allen and Barnum interpreted the event as a diabolical plan of the Turks and/or the government. As will be seen below, the government interpreted the event as a diabolical plan of the Armenians. No matter which of these statements was correct and which invented, both share one point: the event would have been foreseeable if only nothing had been concealed. The problem with teleology is not only its fallaciousness; in addition, it tends to cover up the moment of ‘surprise’ at the event. Contrariwise, we should not let Allen’s astonishment (at the “depth of perfidy”) slip through our own story. Narratives concocted after the event should not make us lose our grasp of the fact that no matter how self-confident the later narratives, the event itself was unexpected and the way it happened was surprising. And, it was about a Kurdish invasion—a fact that will disappear in a moment.

The first detailed report of the events based on on-site investigation was prepared by Sami Bey, a member of the Council of State, and Abdullah Pasha, the second divisional general (*ikinci ferik*) of the Ottoman army.⁷³² One particular moment in the middle of this very early official report (early December) is worth mentioning, since such a moment would not exist in

⁷³² Brigade General (later Field Marshall) Abdullah Paşa (Kölemen) (1846-1937) was the head of one of two high-level commissions delegated by Sultan Abdülhamid to the eastern provinces to restore order. He arrived in Diyarbakir on December 17, 1895, and stayed there until April 1896. The foreign consuls in Diyarbakir had a positive relationship with Abdullah Paşa. The French Vice-Consul, Gustave Meyrier, reported on his valuable efforts against the Governor Enis Paşa, who was implicated as one of chief instigators of the massacres. As Verheij showed, the consular reports from Diyarbakir did not create a negative picture of the central state; they rather regarded the envoys like Abdullah Paşa as honorable statesmen. Verheij, “Diyarbakir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895,” 109, 130–133. After the Diyarbakir mission, Abdullah Paşa was appointed to Musul as a temporary acting-governor. After 1908, he was going to be the commander-in-chief of the Forth Army in the eastern provinces, and then, of the West Anatolian Army. In 1918, for little more than one month only, he served as the Minister of War.

later reports: The committee was travelling across a northeast-southwest axis from Sivas to Diyarbekir, passing through Mamuretülaziz. When they left Sivas behind and arrived in Malatya, they wrote that the entire atmosphere changed. During the investigations, (Muslim) people in Sivas province had shown anxiety regarding their responsibility in the events and shown fear of being prosecuted. In Mamuretülaziz, on the other hand, the people blamed Armenians for the events. Here, there was an excitement (*heyecan*), as if they were already entitled to discipline and punish (*tedib and tenkil*) the Armenians.

The authors of the report were clearly surprised by the conviction among the Mamuretülaziz people about Armenian complicity and the Muslim right to take action. That is to say, the two high-level bureaucrats were (rightfully) expecting to investigate a Muslim rebellion, not an Armenian plot. The report continues that, upon hearing such words, the committee began explaining to Kurds, to tribes, and to villagers on the road that only the government was entitled to punish wrong-doers and that any kind of civil participation would be considered rebellious. In addition, they recommended to the central government that “people with such ideas” be kept where they were and prevented from moving anywhere else.⁷³³ The report caused an immediate reaction by Istanbul towards the governor of Mamuretülaziz. The Porte’s very next telegram to Mezre referred to the statements in the report and asked whether it was true that, despite repeated contrary orders, some people still thought that bringing the (Armenian) bandits into line was left in their hands. The dispatch ended with: “this should never happen!”⁷³⁴

⁷³³ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/46, 6 December 1895.

⁷³⁴ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/46, 9 December 1895.

Field Marshal (*müşir*) Mehmed Zeki Pasha, perhaps the most powerful person in the entire Ottoman East,⁷³⁵ wrote his version of the events on January 10, 1896, in an encrypted letter to the center. This account constitutes a breaking point in the narratives of the event, since it was the first version of what we today call the ‘provocation thesis.’ In a nutshell, the Armenian plotters (*erbâb-ı mefşedet*) provoked and seduced (*tahrîk ve teşvîk*) the entire Armenian community with the idea of achieving autonomy and, for that, of inviting foreign intervention. They attacked the mosques and in some places the government buildings; as a result, disorder (*şûriş*) arose in the towns and the cities. On the one hand, naive Armenian people were seduced by the plotters’ provocation; and on the other, rumors about new privileges given to the Armenian community affected and disappointed Muslims very deeply (*pek fena tesir eylediğinden*). Consequently, disorder spread to ordinary people and to the villages, too. Nonetheless, thanks to the efforts of the government soldiers, the disorder was finally quelled.⁷³⁶

Zeki Pasha’s report was the first of its kind. Today, the same story is repeated in uncritical accounts although, at least in Harput, it had nothing to do with reality. But there is something more important in this report, something that is today repeated even in critical scholarship, something not invented but forgotten: there was *no* mention of Kurds in his account, *not even once*. It is amazing to see the difference between two reports one month apart. In the second one, not only was all the blame put on Armenian shoulders (in the same way the first report accusing people in Malatya does), but also the Kurdish uprising disappeared from the scene *in toto*. Zeki Pasha’s silence about the Kurds’ uprising may be attributed to the fact that he

⁷³⁵ In the 1890s, *Müşir* Mehmed Zeki Pasha was the commander-in-chief of the Fourth Army (Eastern Army) and the top commander and one of the founding fathers of the Hamidiye Light Cavalry. His rapid ascension to the highest military rank made a foreign observer comment on him as “by far the most powerful in influence throughout this part of the Turkish Empire.” Quoted in Klein, *The Margins of Empire*, 76.

⁷³⁶ PMOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 109/61, 17 January 1896.

was the chief executive of the Hamidiye Light Cavalry project, in which select Kurdish tribes were armed in order to create an official regional militia in the Ottoman East. As recent scholarship has argued, in many places Hamidiye Cavalries (and Zeki Pasha) were responsible for the massacres of Armenians.⁷³⁷ But even this important historical discovery does not bring back what was lost with Zeki Pasha's report. I believe that today it is less crucial to reveal the complicity of Kurdish militias than to reveal the Kurdish *uprising*, no matter how unsettling it is to use such a positive term (uprising) alongside such a painful one (massacre).

A week after Zeki Pasha's report, the above-mentioned Abdullah Pasha prepared his 15-page report, perhaps the most detailed account of the Events.⁷³⁸ In sharp contrast to his earlier dispatch, dated December 6, this long report starts with a clear judgment in its very first sentence: "Wherever disorder (*iğtişâş*)⁷³⁹ arose, the reason was the numerous preceding offences of the Armenians." Abdullah Pasha then proceeds to dismiss the religious hatred argument by referring to 600 years of coexistence and to Islam's peculiar characteristics that prohibit any kind of bigotry (*taassub*). The real reason behind the events was historical: the idea of independence was transmitted to the mind (*dimâğ*) of the Armenian zealots (*havâdârân*) through an article included in the Treaty of Berlin (1878) regarding the need for reforms in the provinces inhabited by Armenians. However, since they are disproportionately weaker than Muslims in terms of quantity and power, they tried to turn circumstances to their advantage by a principle they invented, which is 'taking advantage of defeat' (*mağlûbiyetden istifâde*). As a result, the last 8-10 years' events prove that Armenians have been by all means following the plan of making

⁷³⁷ For a critical review of this thesis, see Jongerden, "Elite Encounters of a Violent Kind: Milli İbrahim Paşa, Ziya Gökalp and Political Struggle in Diyarbekir at the Turn of the 20th Century."

⁷³⁸ PMOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 109/69, 25 January 1896.

⁷³⁹ This interesting word does not exist in J.W. Redhouse's dictionary. Şemseddin Sami, on the other hand, gives the following meaning: "Although it is generally used to mean disorder, it has no such meaning in Arabic, its real meaning is: to be deceived by a trickster's suggestions aiming deceitful and fraudulent purposes." Şemseddin Sami, *Kamus-ı Türki* (Istanbul: İkdâm Matbaası, 1899), 133.

themselves a target of Muslim violence by exciting (*tehyât*) them and hence trying to benefit from the feelings of compassion (*hiss-i rikkat*) they leave in the hearts of people (*kulûb-i amme*), and perhaps they have been promised from abroad that their sacrifices in this way will not be in vain.

As a flawless summary of the provocation thesis, Abdullah Pasha's second report followed Zeki Pasha's in shifting the focus from Kurdish rebellion to Armenian plots. Moreover, in the Harput section, he confined his narrative to the incident in Kesrik on Thursday, November 7, and surprisingly he remained *completely* silent about the main events of Monday the 11th. As mentioned before, the acting governor Ali Emiri had recounted the Kesrik event as a relatively insignificant conflict caused by some drunken Armenians. According to the present account, gunshots from the house of the notable Yağcıyan Krikor Efendi injured three Muslim notables, İstanbullu zade Mustafa Efendi, Bekir Efendi zade İsmail Efendi and (Vartafilli?) Ali Efendi. Given that Armenians in Harput had closed their shops without any reason a few days prior, and given the special influence (*tesir-i mahsusî*) of Armenian disturbances on public opinion (*efkâr-ı umûmiye*), Muslims reacted to the incident in a spirit of self-defense, which left three Armenians killed. Having heard the incident, Kurds gathered around, and in Hüseyinik a few of them as well as an officer were killed by Armenian bullets. As a result, Kurds got agitated (*galeyâna gelmiş*), but thanks to the deployment of the imperial troops, a probable disturbance was successfully prevented.

To give Abdullah Pasha his due, he did mention Kurds in this account, but only as a reactive group who *came upon* the local incidents. However, it was clear from both missionaries' and officials' letters and telegrams that local incidents *antedeceded* the Kurdish invasion of the plains. In this report, Harput's invasion by the Dersim Kurds was reduced to an unfortunate

disturbance caused by evil agitation. In sum, Zeki Pasha's and Abdullah Pasha's reports not only blamed the Armenians for their misery but also effaced the Kurdish uprising from history.

Today's critical scholarship has so far faced up to the former, but not the latter.

The Structure of Feeling

The provocation thesis is generally taken by contemporary critics as a wrong or a loose theory. Verheij, for example, responded to the provocation arguments with irony: "One gets the impression that thus provoked, these acts were understandable, reasonable, even fair and just."⁷⁴⁰

In discussing the Armenian Genocide (1915), Suny pointed out that such arguments "neglect to evaluate the social and political conditions out of which resistance and protest grew and lay the blame on 'outside agitators' and Armenian ingratitude."⁷⁴¹ In a most sophisticated way,

Libaridian challenged the teleological logic behind the provocation thesis when he wrote:

The provocation thesis ... is correct to the extent that leaders of the parties accepted the consequences of their strategy, although it is unclear if they expected the harshness of the Ottoman reaction, particularly the onslaught of the 1894-96 massacres. The argument that the parties invited repression and massacres, in order to achieve Great Power intervention on their behalf is a false one. It is an argument that takes for granted the existence of Ottoman policies of collective punishment of a whole people through massacres, and thus shifts the responsibility for massacres from Ottoman government to the victims.⁷⁴²

In the case of Harput, there is no question that the provocation thesis was completely irrelevant to the reality on the ground. Nevertheless, I believe that critics' focus on the *aim* and the *function* of the thesis overshadowed its *structural* and *procedural* characteristics. When seen as a theory of collective action, rather than an ideological tool, two crucial mechanisms stand out

⁷⁴⁰ Verheij, "Diyarbakir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895," 99.

⁷⁴¹ Ronald Grigor Suny, "Writing Genocide: The Fate of the Ottoman Armenians," 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: Oxford University Press, 2011), 25.

⁷⁴² Gerard J. Libaridian, "What Was Revolutionary about Armenian Revolutionary Parties in the Ottoman Empire?," 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), 100.

in the provocation thesis: the mechanism of provoking the other and the mechanism of getting to collective action. To my knowledge, no critical account has tried to understand these two junctions of the theory. In the following chapter, I will discuss the former question: how to provoke the other. Here, I want to point out one aspect of the latter mechanism, that is, collective feelings.

In the provocation thesis, the act of provoking is followed by a collective move. While the agitating act has specific agents and directionality, the resulting move is a collective one without any determined plans or leading agents. In other words, it is a “crowd” behavior, as Gustave Le Bon called it in 1896 (see, next chapter).⁷⁴³ The reader may have noticed that almost all narratives evaluated in this chapter made mention of this mysterious moment of collective effervescence with special terms, most commonly with *excitement* in English, *heyecan* in Ottoman Turkish, and *huzumn* in Armenian. The common element in all three terms is that their meaning today has close connections with *individual* emotions, which they lacked back in the nineteenth century. I surmise that the closest definition of their older meanings had to do with collective feelings or affect.

Many of the missionaries’ letters referred to excitement among Muslims due to Armenians’ suspicious behaviors—like closing their shops. They also pointed out similar collective feelings among the Armenians in response to the signs of the upcoming storm: excitement, anxiety, fear, and insecurity. Armenian publications were not short of descriptions of collective feelings among the Armenians, either. The first news from the Harput area published in *Droşak* in December 1895 was from Eğin, where massacres were avoided but the

⁷⁴³ Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (Courier Dover Publications, 2002).

“excitement” (*huzumn*) of the residents was highly increased.⁷⁴⁴ When this rich city of Eğin was finally plundered a year later in September 1896, the anxiety in the region greatly intensified, reported Barnum. Although the government gave assurances, fear among the people was not entirely dissipated.⁷⁴⁵ A week before, Barnum had already written his perception of the collective feelings among both Armenians and Muslims: “Since the affairs of last November there has been no such wide spread and deep anxiety as at present. Turks, too, some in the way of friendly warning, and some by threats, are talking very freely of coming troubles. The news which the last post brought of troubles in Constantinople [the Ottoman Bank takeover – 26 August 1896] has greatly excited the Turks.”⁷⁴⁶

In the Ottoman officials’ reports, as seen above, *heyecan* was a key term to define the same collective effervescence. Although it is certainly out of the scope of this study to reach conclusions on social relations through etymological analysis, Ottoman documents’ use of *heyecan* seems to me best understood by the help of its original meaning based on *heyc* (dust): “the getting into motion, rising (of dust or bodies of men).” Similarly, the verb form *tehyic* had connotations of “a causing (dust) to get into motion and blow about.”⁷⁴⁷ In Armenian, too, *huzel*, *huzumn* and *huyz*, all related today to emotion and to agitation, had connotations of thorough examination by delving into something, to turn everything upside down when searching something, not unlike the blowing about of dust. I do not claim any connection between the nineteenth-century meanings and ancient original meanings of these words; I want to make a case solely based on my reading of the documents that these terms were used to tell of a kind of

⁷⁴⁴ “Godoradzner – Agn,” *Droşak*, no. 21 (15 December 1895).

⁷⁴⁵ Letter from H. N. Barnum, Harpoot, September 22, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 696.

⁷⁴⁶ Letter from H. N. Barnum, Harpoot, September 15, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 696.

⁷⁴⁷ Redhouse, *Redhouse’s Turkish Dictionary*. I am grateful to Gottfried Hagen’s warning that dictionary meanings cannot be taken as social meanings of the words because dictionaries tended to use old Arabic meaning instead of the vernacular one.

collective mood of ‘moving’ in the texts. When provoked by agitation or simply by the circulating news, people tend to ‘get into motion’ collectively. Thus, what Veena Das called (after John Austin) the “perlocutionary force of words” in her discussion of rumors’ role in collective violence was the main analytical tool used by people in Harput to interpret the behavior of masses.⁷⁴⁸

In two recent contributions to the scholarship on Armenian massacres, Verheij and Suny call attention to the emotional dimension during moments of violence. Verheij rightfully criticizes the efforts of critical scholarship to represent Armenians as “motionless victims of Muslim aggression” by constantly ignoring the revolutionary activity just in order to escape Turkish denialist theses. Instead, he claims that anti-denialist explanations have overlooked “the fear factor” regarding the Muslims. Due to widespread rumor and scaremongering, he argues, Muslims were deeply affected by “exaggerated views on the reforms” and developed “a sense of injustice and outrage.”⁷⁴⁹ The point, however, is that Verheij has grasped the feelings of historical subjects through one petition signed by the local Muslim notables, where they expressed their sense of injustice. Although he reads Governor Enis Pasha’s 12-page report critically, namely with a historian’s distance and suspicion, he refrains from questioning the words of the petition.

In his analysis of the Armenian Genocide, Suny also focuses on feelings. He aims to find a middle ground between structuralist and agency-oriented explanations of genocide.⁷⁵⁰ As a

⁷⁴⁸ Veena Das, “Specificities: Official Narratives, Rumour, and the Social Production of Hate,” *Social Identities* 4, no. 1 (1998): 117. Das, *Life and Words*, 121. In the latter work, Das warned against possible misunderstandings, perhaps as a response to criticisms on the earlier article, by saying that: “I am not making the argument that language itself had the power to *make* these grievous event, out of nothing, but rather that memories that might have lain inert came to life in the form of rumors.” *Ibid.*, 109.

⁷⁴⁹ Verheij, “Diyarbakir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895.”

⁷⁵⁰ For a discussion of these two perspectives, see Türkyılmaz’s very inspiring and original dissertation. He convincingly refutes all teleological arguments about the genocide and rejects the structural views that it was foreseeable, planned or traceable in the previous massacres. He rather puts exclusive emphasis on the real-time choices of the political actors. The problem in this view, I believe, is that the connection between political choices

result, he suggests that “affective dispositions,” namely the Young Turks’ “feelings” against Armenians that developed over time due to various historical reasons, be taken as an explanatory framework for the genocide. Suny argues that the genocide was not long planned; it was created as a “pathological response” in the middle of a crisis, but the response was framed by “affective dispositions.” Because of complex restructurings that were happening at the time, like modern state formation and the integration with world capitalism, Turks “began to see” Armenians in a way that bred feelings like “resentment” and “anxiety.”⁷⁵¹

It is very valuable that both scholars consider the emotional universe as a serious component of violence studies. Nevertheless, in the last instance, they refer to *individual* feelings even though these feelings were generated by societal forces. And thus, the analysis inevitably comes to *motives* and *intentions*. However, as the following chapter will discuss, the intrinsic paradox in the idea of motive remains unsolved: acts are explained through motives while it takes a lot of acts to get to motives. Motives and individual feelings are unreachable in historical research; they can only be assumed.⁷⁵² I rather propose that the non-subjective and *social* universe of feeling, which was called “structure of feeling” by Raymond Williams,⁷⁵³ be taken into consideration as a component of a theory of collective action from the native’s point of view. For the narrators of the 1895 Massacres, collective effervescence was the bridge between

and the behavior of the masses remains missing. Türkyılmaz sacrifices the agency of the masses and the historically embedded cultural constructions about the others in order to save the agency of the political actors and to dismiss structuralist perspectives. Türkyılmaz, “Rethinking Genocide.”

⁷⁵¹ Suny, “Writing Genocide: The Fate of the Ottoman Armenians”; Ronald Grigor Suny, “Thinking about Feelings: Affective Dispositions and Emotional Ties in Imperial Russia and the Ottoman Empire,” in *Interpreting Emotions in Russian and Eastern Europe*, ed. Mark D. Steinberg and Valeria Sobol (Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), 102–27.

⁷⁵² Brubaker and Laitin pointed out the common logic between culturalist approach and the ‘security dilemma’ of the realpolitik specialists. In both approaches, the relationship between fear and violence is not questioned; they diverge only about the source of the fear (objective vs. subjective). The weakness of the culturalist approach is that it looks at propaganda only, and simply assumes that it was internalized by the members of the society. Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin, “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 423–52.

⁷⁵³ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 128–135.

provocation and action, namely the answer to the question ‘*how to act* once provoked?’ In the following chapter, I will examine the other component of collective action, namely the question ‘*how to provoke* the other?’

Chapter 11: Deceiving the Unprovokable

Three days before the Harput massacre, on Friday (Nov. 8), the central government in Istanbul sent a circular to the Eastern provinces, the first paragraph of which deserves to be fully quoted:

As a result of the rising among Muslims caused by the revolutionary movement the Armenians put up in some places, mutual slaughter and pillage between the two parties emerged. Some of the Armenian mischief-makers, who stand out as the chief cause of the emergence of this worrying situation and who committed the major crime of disturbing the public order, dressed up as Muslim clergy by wrapping a turban on their heads, and suggested and spread hypocritical and diabolical words among Muslim villagers who are ignorant of the real situation, words like that Armenians are rising against Muslims, like that it is a sacred duty to immediately take revenge, words which stirred up the communal bigotry of those who are not able to distinguish the real meaning of such a mischievous language's contents, and by spreading inappropriate words [well knowing] that they [Muslims] were bound to repeat them, in order to make Muslims responsible for the mutual slaughter and plunder in the eyes of strangers, such a fraudulent plot is being carried out to the advantage of evil-wishers.⁷⁵⁴

This long statement seems to be a classic example of the provocation thesis. It includes the argumentative components discussed in the previous chapter: a group of Armenian evil-wishers provoked the Muslim community with the perlocutory force of words and rumors; as a result, Muslims rose up in collective mode. Nevertheless, the middle part of the circular contains something redundant for the argument. There is something, at least for today's eyes, excessive in this paragraph: that is, the cross-dressing. In provocation theory, it should be sufficient to state that infidel Armenians produced malefic rumors and thus provoked Muslims to act against themselves. Why did a serious circular, then, make mention of Armenian mischief-makers

⁷⁵⁴ P.M.O.A., D.H.E.O. 290/52, 8 November 1895.

dressed as Muslim clergy— something quite bizarre and almost funny? Shall we take these words simply as rhetoric or narrative strategy, or as an invented pretext? But, why was a pretext needed in the first place, given that the provocation thesis in the first sentence already explained everything?

This chapter refuses to ignore this bizarre moment in the document and seeks to understand the complex theory of action embedded in the entirety of the quoted paragraph. The missing link between circulating words and collective action will be investigated here by asking a crucial but rarely asked question: *how* to provoke the other? The idea in this circular, that people would change their appearance by cross-dressing, pretend to be one of the others, and hence inoculate ideas into others' minds cannot be taken as a simple leitmotif. Neither can we dismiss it as an index of the narrator's one-sided ideology. The persistence of the same moment in narratives from *all* available perspectives requires it to be treated as a fundamental component of the theory of collective action at the time of the events.

Misrepresentation of the Self

The previous chapter began with missionary Allen's perplexity upon what he witnessed on Monday, November 11, in Harput. His phrase "depth of perfidy" was a testimony to the missionaries' inability to express their shock at seeing the frightening likelihood of what they had taken to be unlikely. In their narratives in the immediate aftermath of the events, this perplexity was overcome by a special theme: that of deception. The logical conclusion was that the missionaries had not expected that what happened would happen because they were deceived by tricksters. Two months later, for example, Allen referred to insincerity as a way of acting out: "Can any sincere Mohammedan approve of the course which is being pursued by many who

profess to be Moslems?”⁷⁵⁵ In his first letter from the attacked missionary compound on Wednesday (Nov. 13), which started with the words “By the grace of God we are alive,” Gates related their conclusion: “we can trust no one.”⁷⁵⁶ Tomorrow, on Thursday, Allen confirmed that the missionaries had been “completely deceived.”⁷⁵⁷

Deceiving the other worked through misrepresenting the self in the public sphere. The reader will remember that in his long report about the events in Harput on Monday, November 11, Allen wrote of the invaders: “How many of them were Koords is doubtful, but probably not many. We have reason to believe that many of them were Redif [reserves] in disguise.”⁷⁵⁸ Barnum’s response to the officer who expressed his weakness against a huge Kurdish invasion has also been mentioned before: “The raiders were for the most part Turks from Harpoot city and surrounding villages, aided by Redif soldiers, disguised as Koords. There were Koords among the raiders, but they were used as a mere cover to conceal the real authors of this diabolical outrage.”⁷⁵⁹ Another piece of evidence was to be related by the missionaries in the following months. Gates’ house, for example, had escaped being burnt down during the events but the money in the safe (40-50 *liras*) had been taken.⁷⁶⁰ Twenty bullet holes made by Martini rifles were already partial evidence for soldiers’ complicity in the attack, but the testimony of Mihran [Ma]dzadoorian from Habusi completed the picture: Apparently, he was hiding in Gates’ house when “a man in Koordish dress with an axe—probably a soldier in disguise—broke it [the safe] open, and (...) some fifteen soldiers divided the spoil.”⁷⁶¹

⁷⁵⁵ Letter from O. P. Allen to Peet, Harpoot, January 21, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁷⁵⁶ Letter by Gates to “Friends”, Harpoot, November 13, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 694.

⁷⁵⁷ Letter by O. P. Allen, Harpoot, November 14, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁷⁵⁸ Letter from Allen to ‘dear Brothers ...’, Harpoot, November 14, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁰ Letter from H. N. Barnum to Rev. J. K. Brown, Harpoot, November 13, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 696.

⁷⁶¹ Letter from H. N. Barnum to B[arton], Harpoot, April 29, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 696.

These “pseudo-Koords,” in other words, were Turks disguised as Kurds in order to deceive the audience, namely the Armenians, the missionaries, and the foreign powers. Also during the Sasun Massacres a year ago (in 1894), missionaries had reported that “some of the troops assumed Koordish dress and helped them in the fight with more success.”⁷⁶² And a year after the Harput massacres, Barnum was very much disappointed by the overruling belief that it was Armenians who brought on the massacres by inciting the Kurds, and he boldly emphasized that “those ‘Koords’ are imaginary beings.”⁷⁶³ Ironically, missionary accounts against the provocation thesis shared with the official reports (discussed before) the disappearance of Kurds as “imaginary beings” from the narratives of the event.

As a result, the missionaries saw the Turkish government as responsible for the events. Even when Kurds were involved, too, the government was the real instigator. Although they did not have any sympathy towards the Armenian revolutionaries (see below), they refused the Armenian provocation thesis. In response to a letter from Dr. Hepworth that implicated the Armenian revolutionary movement in what happened, Barnum replied in January 1896 that at least in the Harput region the situation was completely different. Armenians here

never meddle with political matters in any form. The more intelligent men who live in the cities, have, from the beginning of the agitation, been utterly opposed to the schemes of the revolutionists, so that the revolutionary sentiment never gained any foothold here. Before the troubles in 1895 two young men came from America, and began to stir up other young men, but they found little sympathy and left. I reported them to the Vali, and they were frightened.⁷⁶⁴

In other words, he continued, the facts in Harput were dissimilar to what Hepworth described for other regions, and he self-confidently concluded: “If there was a single revolutionist in all this region I failed to hear of him.”

⁷⁶² “Facts Regarding a Massacre at Sassone,” [1895], ABCFM, Reel 694.

⁷⁶³ Letter from H. N. Barnum, Harpoot, September 15, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 696.

⁷⁶⁴ Letter from H. N. Barnum to Dr. Hepworth, Turkey, Jan 26, 1898, ABCFM, Reel 696.

Hence, the missionaries challenged the classic provocation thesis and argued that a more hidden plan on the part of the government distorted the perception of the event (by deceiving all of them). In a report on the destroyed mission buildings, Allen was more direct in claiming Commander Mustafa Pasha's complicity than he had been in the early reports: "The horde" was directly ordered by him to attack the mission buildings. However, the people in the street hesitated before attacking such a big building and took action only after they were promised the support of the army's heavy artillery, and that promise was kept.⁷⁶⁵ Allen insisted on demanding a large indemnity for the buildings that had been burned down and rejected the Ottoman state's argument that the state was not responsible since a large, uncontrollable Kurdish mob had done the destruction. Reliable sources testified, he wrote, that "the leaders in these raids of plunder, murder and destruction were Turkish aghas and military and civil officials." The Kurds were violent enough, he accepts, but "the prime movers were Turks aided if not led by the officials."⁷⁶⁶ "No one here who knew the facts had the slightest doubt that the whole thing was deliberately planned and carried out under the direction and aid of gov.t. officers and soldiers."⁷⁶⁷ In fact, only two days after the massacres, Barnum had already written that: "The single fact is that this whole business was planned in Constantinople. The Turks have the idea that the idea was to create Armenia into a principality but the government determined that if any Armenians were left, they should be in a state of complete dependence on their Mohammedan neighbors."⁷⁶⁸

It was not only the missionaries, but also the Armenians who were deceived by the Turks. Take the story of Kasap [butcher] Manug, published in *Droşak* right after the second wave of massacres a year later, in 1896: The rich town of Eğin had escaped the massacres in 1895 by

⁷⁶⁵ "Official Control of the Destruction of Mission Buildings at Harpoot," [December 1895], ABCFM, Reel 694.

⁷⁶⁶ Letter from Allen to Peet, Harpoot, December 6, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 695. Underlined in original.

⁷⁶⁷ Letter from Allen to Smith, Harpoot, February 4, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁷⁶⁸ Letter from H. N. Barnum to Rev. J. K. Brown, Harpoot, November 13, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 696.

paying substantial ransom money to the attackers. However, in the autumn of 1896, news of new massacres began to circulate and the Turks of Eğin started to feel guilty and disloyal to their brothers for having not killed anyone a year ago. A simple order would be enough, this time, to enrage them against the Armenians. A certain Kasap Manug was working with his fellow Turkish artisan in their friendly workshop. One day, this Turkish fellow warned Manug that nearby Kurds would soon attack the city in order to massacre Armenians; he also suggested that Manug had better take his friends and relatives and hide in the mountains outside of the city. Since Manug was a simple-minded and credulous (*barzamid yev türahavad*) person, he complied with the suggestion and took his friends and relatives out of the city. However, it turned out that the local government was the creator of this plan; and when the group went and hid in the mountains, the governor represented the group as revolutionary militia and easily got permission to pursue the dangerous mob. This was the sign that Turks were waiting for. Accordingly, the massacre began on Tuesday, September 3, 1896, in Eğin. The depth of perfidy was so great that some old notables were deliberately left alive in order to make them sign “the fraudulent letters” that had long been a state tradition.⁷⁶⁹

Historians are generally suspicious of these kinds of naïve stories that represent the actors as having less agency than they most likely had. And in Manug’s case, it is true that military correspondence told a very different story: In the daily reports of the Ottoman officials in September 1896, Kasap Manug was not a “simple-minded and credulous” fellow who had been deluded by his Turkish friend; rather, he was the leader of the Armenian guerillas in the city who dictated the events in Eğin. And there was a real armed conflict going on between his and the state’s forces. On September 15, Field Marshall Zeki Pasha himself reported that Kasap Manug

⁷⁶⁹ “Agn Kağaki Godoradzı,” *Droşak*, no. 26 (15 November 1896).

had retreated to Sandık village (of Eğin) with his 340 men; and on September 21, the commander-in-chief announced that he had finally been killed in a place called Kurt Deliği.⁷⁷⁰

Which version of the story is correct? We cannot know; perhaps both are partially true. I suggest working on the totality of the narratives instead of preferring one narrative to the other. The aim, though, is not to reach to multiplicities, to miscellaneous truths or varied perspectives; on the contrary, I will show that the totality of narratives give us relatively *few* theoretical components, which are shared by *all* narrators. There was only *one* way of perceiving collective action; it was through the frame of deception. And, even though they put blame on opposite sides, Armenian revolutionaries and Ottoman commanders theorized the events in the same way, i.e. as a matter of deception.

The memory of the deception of Armenian fighters by seemingly friendly Turks during the massacres of 1894-96 was discernible even decades later. In his 1934 book on the town of Arapgir, Bakhtikian reconstructed the 1895 events from a letter he received from K.K. Yegavyani on March 15, 1933, who had been among the imprisoned Armenian resisters in Arapgir. According to Yegavyani, the Armenians of Arapgir were made to stop resisting and resume normal activity by the sinister news circulated by town criers to the effect that the massacres had stopped and security was guaranteed. As soon as the Armenians stepped out of their hiding places, however, 105 people were arrested, some of whom stayed in jail in Harput until 1899, including Yegavyani himself. The Armenians were deceived, he concluded.⁷⁷¹

The Turkish fellow's story in the Kasap Manug case was one of misrepresentation of the self in the public realm, of which cross-dressing was the most common (but not the only) form. In the official circular quoted above, it was Armenians who cross-dressed as (notable) Kurds to

⁷⁷⁰ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 659/3, September 1896 – June 1897.

⁷⁷¹ Bakhtikian, *Arabkir yev shrdjakay giughery*, 24.

(mis)lead the Kurds. The same plot can be seen in another community's, the Assyrians,' interpretation of what happened on Monday. In Ali Emiri's first report on Tuesday, on November 12, we were told that prominent Assyrians explained why they had nine victims in spite of their community's docile character as follows: They had not been supportive of the Armenians' mischievous behavior lately; as a result, some Armenians had dressed up as Muslim clergy, wrapping their heads with turbans, and approached the Kurds, showing them Assyrian houses and saying "these are the houses of infidel Armenians, hurry, attack!"⁷⁷²

One should not assume that this plot was simply invented by the acting governor. In fact, on January 14, the acting patriarch of the Assyrian Church in Istanbul delivered an official petition sent by the Assyrian notables in Mamuretülaziz on December 20. The petitioners demanded that the Assyrian community be "distinguished" (*tefrîk*) from Armenians in every aspect. They said that although they had been living in perfect loyalty and gratitude, during the events they had some of their members killed and their properties plundered simply because the Armenians who dressed as Muslim clergy with turbans wrapped on their heads agitated the Kurds. Assyrians had always lived with their Muslim neighbors as a family and those who used to disturb the peace were always Armenians. The Armenians used to intervene in their prayers and rituals; they used to prevent them burying their dead in cemeteries. Armenians wanted to gradually ruin the Assyrian community.⁷⁷³

In these examples, cross-dressing was a way of misrepresenting the self employed by a small group of Armenians (revolutionaries or simply mischievous groups) to direct the conduct of a larger segment of society. In the classic example, as in the above-quoted circular, Armenian revolutionaries/bandits cross-dressed as Kurds in order to deceive the entire Muslim community.

⁷⁷² P.M.O.A., Y.PRK.UM. 33/83, 12 November 1895.

⁷⁷³ P.M.O.A., Y.A.HUS. 344/4, 14 January 1896.

But it did not have to be the Kurds, necessarily; a report from December 1895 said that in Tokad many Armenians in Georgian dress and with Martini rifles had attacked Muslims.⁷⁷⁴ In other types of narratives, though, a small group of Armenians deceived the Armenian community itself. We have already seen in Zeki Pasha's report (Chapter 10) that Armenian plotters are claimed to have seduced the entire Armenian community.⁷⁷⁵ Meanwhile, in other accounts by Ottoman state officials, "light-brained" Armenians appear as the deceived party in the narrative. Now, I will give two more examples of the same idea used in the massacre accounts, one by the missionaries, and the other by Armenians.

The American missionaries had always been irritated by the Armenian revolutionary cause (not unlike most Armenian people). Already in January 1891, Barnum criticized the agitation strategy of the Armenian revolutionary groups, namely the idea that if a few hundred Armenians were killed, Russia or Europe would intervene on behalf of the Armenian nation. Barnum found dangerous this "silly talk of a few Armenians about 'autonomy.'"⁷⁷⁶ Two months later, he was even more anxious: "A national party has grown up among the Turks also, quite distinct from the religious fanatics, & even more dangerous. These blind, unreasoning fanatics among the Turks, & the equally unreasoning nationalists among both Turks & Armenians constitute a very dangerous & easily excited element throughout the country."⁷⁷⁷ Upon the February 1891 protests about the prisoners in Van, Mrs. Allen wrote: "There is a good deal of excitement among the people and it is quite uncertain what developments there may be among this easily excited people."⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁴ PMOA, DH.EO. 293, 5 December 1895.

⁷⁷⁵ PMOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 109/61, 17 January 1896.

⁷⁷⁶ Letter from H. N. Barnum to Smith, Harpoot, January 23, 1891, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁷⁷⁷ Letter from H. N. Barnum to Smith, Harpoot, March 13, 1891, ABCFM, Reel 695.

⁷⁷⁸ Letter from C. R. Allen to Smith, Van, February 10, 1891, ABCFM, Reel 695.

The idea that the “easily excited” people will be excited by the Armenian revolutionaries’ deed was shared by many American missionaries (and many Armenian businessmen, as well as by today’s Turkish nationalists’ provocation thesis). Upon the Ottoman Bank takeover in Istanbul by the Armenian revolutionists on August 26, 1896,⁷⁷⁹ Miss Bush once asked: “How can we be patient with this latest folly of the Armenians?”⁷⁸⁰ It was only a few months earlier when Herbert M. Allen reported from Van: “Koords are getting bolder. On the other hand, the [Armenian] revolutionary element threatens the peace of the province more and more. I have gradually come to the conclusion that they are largely responsible for the present situation. The very fact they are here in this city and province is enough to stir up the Gov’t and Koords against the whole christian population while the imbecile things they do now and then simply to keep the flame alive. Their latest threat is to attack Koordish villages along the border and massacre men, women and children.”⁷⁸¹

Only a few months before the 1895 massacres, the missionaries in Harput had to deal with a provocative incident in their own school. During the graduation ceremonies it was the custom to read a piece in Turkish to show gratitude to the Sultan. But in June 1895, most of the senior students refused to do the job, probably because of the Sasun massacre in 1894 and the ever-growing tension. Eventually, Tenekejian wrote a mild piece and Kassabian agreed to read it, but others heard of this, he was threatened with death. Barnum consulted Boyajian and Hamparsum Effendi and decided to make the ceremony closed to the public in order to block “these rowdies.” The day of the ceremony arrived and when the Turkish paper was being read, in the presence of the Director of Culture and Schools (*maarif müdürü*), a few students in the back

⁷⁷⁹ For the occupation of the Ottoman Bank by Armenian revolutionaries, see Göçek, *Denial of Violence*, 136–143; Edhem Eldem, “26 Ağustos 1896 ‘Banka Vakası’ ve 1896 ‘Ermeni Olayları,’” *Tarih ve Toplum* 5 (2007): 113–46.

⁷⁸⁰ Letter from Miss Carrie E. Bush to Barton, Harpoot, Sept 4, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 696.

⁷⁸¹ Letter from Herbert M. Allen to Barton, Van, April 28, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 695.

rows started to sing an Armenian national song when the name of the Sultan was first uttered. A dozen students joined in, but it lasted only a few lines, then the leaders left the meeting room. Fortunately, Barnum conveyed, the Turks did not recognize what had happened. That night and the following day some of these Armenians attacked the house of the community leader, apparently because of his complicity with the government.⁷⁸²

Armenian notables, not only the religious clergy but also the rising middle classes, were not happy about the revolutionary idea, either. On December 24, 1895, 40 prominent Armenians of Peri town in the Çarsancak region prepared and sent a letter of gratitude to the Sultan for the fact that during the attacks of the tribes, government officials and soldiers had protected the town and the Armenians. Moreover, they stated, the Çarsancak community was completely free of “groundless ideas” of Armenian mischief.⁷⁸³ Every attempt at deception bears with it a counter-argument of undeceivability, a way of claiming strong agency. The Armenian middle classes, ‘the worldly businessmen’ as the missionaries used to call them (Part II), separated themselves both from the revolutionary groups and from the general public, and condemned the former for deceiving the latter. The Armenian businessmen’s stance is best represented by the words of Hagop Bogigian, who was born in Harput and had immigrated to the US in 1876 where he became a very successful and prominent tradesman:

This revolutionary idea was spread among the Armenians, particularly by papers printed in the Armenian tongue, published both in Europe and in this country [the US], and circulated secretly in Turkey. This proved to be suicidal to the nation. The Armenians depending upon the real or imaginary promises of Europe, contrary to the advice of their real and true friends, kept up their revolutionary propaganda, the headquarters of which was Boston, Massachusetts. ... This rebellious attitude was exhibited in Turkey by hot-headed Armenians who assassinated some of the leading Armenians in Constantinople and in the interior, who were not in sympathy with their movement. Even plans were made to

⁷⁸² Letter from H. N. Barnum to B[arton], Harpoot, June 28, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 696.

⁷⁸³ PMOA, Y.A.HUS. 344/141, 12 January 1896.

assassinate some of the American missionaries, in order to involve this country with Turkey. I can safely say that I know of no American missionary who ever encouraged these men. These revolutionists threatened many prominent Armenians in this country, and actually did assassinate some. The Armenians who really loved their Country were opposed to this movement...⁷⁸⁴

Bogigian was right; revolutionaries did assassinate some wealthy Armenians in Istanbul and in New York. In fact, two revolutionaries from Harput killed Mr. Tavşancıyan in 1907 in New York.⁷⁸⁵ Bogigian tells us that he also received hundreds of those anonymous letters which were used to threaten people who refused to pay large amounts of money to support the movement. He was warned by the police to always go armed, and the insurance company cancelled his policy, but he continued to give speeches criticizing the movement; nothing happened to him. The following scene from 1895 best illustrates Bogigian's interpretation of the insincerity of the deceivers, of hypocrisy as a necessary component of cross-dressing:

These massacres seemed to cause rejoicing to the revolutionary leaders in this country [US], but intense suffering to those who disapproved of their efforts to form an independent nation. I remember watching the bulletin board of a newspaper in Boston; I noticed four of those leaders who were in front of me, but did not see me. The bulletin was announcing the massacre in Diarbekir. These men seemed to be overjoyed at the occurrence, saying in Armenian, 'We caused the massacres in Diarbekir, too.' Arm in arm they marched into a saloon, to drink to their success.⁷⁸⁶

The deception thesis was morally very powerful since it not only blamed a certain party for doing something bad, but also blamed it for putting on a show for the purpose of deceiving others, for deflecting the truth not simply by lying, but by deluding. As we have seen so far, Armenians were accused of trickery by state officials, by the Assyrians, and by other Armenians; Turks were accused of trickery by the Armenians and by the missionaries. And, as we shall see

⁷⁸⁴ Hagop Bogigian, *In Quest of the Soul of Civilization* (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet & Shepperson, 1925), 241–42.

⁷⁸⁵ PMOA, Y.A.HUS. 514/47, 21 August 1907.

⁷⁸⁶ Bogigian, *In Quest of the Soul of Civilization*, 246.

now, missionaries also were accused of deceiving people by the officials and by the Armenians. The greatest difference between deception and provocation lies in the fact that the former aims to change the other's mind whereas the latter reinforces existing ideas. Thus, the inoculation or introduction of ideas into others' minds was a form of deluding the other, too. For example, on Monday a week after the massacres, 65 Armenian notables signed the following petition sent to the Sublime Porte:

Having come to Harput thirty-forty years ago, in their schools seemingly established for serving humanity, American missionaries caused the deviation of ideas and deeds of the Armenian child and that a situation was brought about by some outcasts, in which the 600-year sublime protection was cursed in ingratitude [*küfran-i nimet*]. Since their presence in our country will disturb the public wellbeing and security, and since in His Majesty's land every community has its own schools, and since their help is not needed even if new schools are required, we petition, please, that they be removed from here as immediately as possible.⁷⁸⁷

The idea that it was the missionaries who had been tempting the minds of Armenians was to be taken over by the officials, too. In one of his later reports, the acting governor Ali Rıza Pasha referred to this petition and claimed that the American missionaries had always been inculcating noxious ideas (*müfessidetkârâne telkînat*) in the Armenians, had made use of the Armenians' being light-brained (*ermenî sebükmeğazâtı*) in order to bring about trouble, and had poisoned their minds (*efkârını tesmîm*).⁷⁸⁸

Cross-dressing in the Literature

The narratives of deception in the primary sources have either been taken as evidence of Armenian provocation (by the Turkish nationalist accounts) or been simply ridiculed as fabrications (by the Armenian-friendly accounts). Numerous such examples can be found in the literature on the 1915 Genocide. The difference of this later context is that we have a limited

⁷⁸⁷ PMOA, Y.PRK.BŞK. 34/28, 18 November 1895.

⁷⁸⁸ PMOA, A.MKT.MHM. 657/45, 28 November – 2 December 1895.

number of first-hand testimonies of cross-dressing, too. For example, a survivor told during an oral history interview about the perpetrators that “They were all Turks, but they told us that they were Kurds. They dressed like Kurds, but they were Turks. We could see through this disguise because we knew that Kurds did not speak very fluent Turkish as did our captors.”⁷⁸⁹ In fact, cross-dressing by Ottomans was used to fake cross-dressing by Armenians: it was documented that Ottoman officers in Diyarbakir dressed the massacred Armenians’ dead bodies in Muslim costume and took pictures of them for propaganda purposes, i.e. to reveal their cross-dressing tradition and hypocrisy.⁷⁹⁰ Notwithstanding, most references to cross-dressing are found in reports or based on rumors, and they generally are dismissed by scholars as something unreal.

As for the context of the 1890s, only a few works touched on the issue of deceiving the other by pretending to be one of them. From the nationalist side, Kolbaşı’s study tells the story of the events that erupted upon anonymous pamphlets’ being posted in public places in Merzifon, Yozgat and Kayseri in 1892-93. The pamphlets, signed by Islamic organizations, called on the Muslim community to rise up against the Sultan. Local clandestine branches of revolutionary Armenian committees were indicted; many Armenians were tried in Ankara for planning and participating in this insidious deception.⁷⁹¹ In Erdoğan’s study on Van in 1895-96, examples of cross-dressing (Armenians dressing as Kurds) were given as clear proof of Armenian treachery and perfidy. On other occasions, the Armenian revolutionaries’ ability to hide among Armenian peasants (Armenians cross-dressing as Armenians) was also emphasized as instances of craftiness (the author could not help comparing this to the PKK’s hiding in Kurdish villages

⁷⁸⁹ Aris Kalpakgian, *Survivor of the Armenian Genocide: “From Hell to Heaven”* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), 6.

⁷⁹⁰ Raymond H. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 364.

⁷⁹¹ Ahmet Kolbaşı, *1892-1893 Ermeni Yafta Olayları (Merzifon-Yozgat-Kayseri)* (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2011).

today).⁷⁹² Halaçoğlu's work on Maraş and Zeytun also mentioned Armenians' cross-dressing as Circassians and Georgians as evidence of their treachery.⁷⁹³

The critics of Turkish nationalist accounts generally do not refer to Armenian cross-dressing cases simply because they share with the nationalists the idea that this would immediately shift the responsibility onto the shoulders of Armenians. In a rare occasion, Verheij talked about the mentions of dressed-up Armenians in an official report he analyzed in detail. He continued in a footnote that

Some time after the conflict, an army sergeant found a packet with 57 army epaulets, according to him, dropped accidentally on the street by Armenians, who supposedly wanted to dress up as soldiers [reference]. This subject of dressing up to fake identity does occasionally appear in the accounts of the massacre period. In a society characterized by deep divisions between different population groups, who each had their own typical garments, this was a productive way of manipulating evidence.⁷⁹⁴

In other words, these instances were deliberately put into the reports in order to “manipulate evidence” which only “supposedly” and “according to him” existed. Verheij concluded that by using these instances this report “wants to impress on us the idea that Armenians were the culprits in all these instances.” In sum, he treated cross-dressing cases as fabrications and as indices of something else (Muslim conspiracy).

From a contrary perspective, this chapter refuses to take the moments of deception in the narratives as fabrications of the narrators. Perhaps the most debatable legacy of the ‘critical turn’ in social sciences in the 1980s is the reflex we have developed to resist “mistak[ing] (our)

⁷⁹² Dilşen İnce Erdoğan, *Amerikan Misyonerlerinin Faaliyetleri ve Van Ermeni İsyancıları (1896)* (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2008), 271–376.

⁷⁹³ Ahmet Halaçoğlu, *Bir Ermeninin İtirafı (1895 Maraş ve Zeytun Olayları)* (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2007), 48–49.

⁷⁹⁴ Verheij, “Diyarbakir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895,” 122–123 (fn. 173).

representations for (other peoples') reality."⁷⁹⁵ In this Saidian reflex, scholars tend to take any scandalous or politically incorrect moments in the texts as the fabrications of power-holders, of narrow ideologies, and of westerners. However, I suggest that these moments were rather key elements in the Ottoman conceptualization of collective action. Moreover, rather than being a proof of "deep divisions" in the society (as Verheij claimed), the deception cases were an index of a shared life. One cannot deceive a distant other; one can deceive only those who are in proximity.

Deception: A Way of Provoking the Other in a Shared Life

The cases of cross-dressing and of inoculation of ideas point to a very important phenomenon that is generally dismissed in the studies on collective violence in the Ottoman world: all the actors were living a shared life. What else other than a turban could differentiate a Muslim scholar from an educated Armenian in a mixed society without any physical or even cultural marks to distinguish people?⁷⁹⁶ It was not uncommon to encounter Armenian-speaking Kurds or Kurdish-speaking Turks or English-speaking Armenians in the Ottoman East; and the market economy had exposed distinctions based on materiality to imitation and counterfeit. The identity of the speaking subject was the only safeguard against counterfeit words, or lies. If that identity could be stolen, or imitated, the masses could be deceived and ruled.

⁷⁹⁵ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cosmological Perspectivism in Amazonia and Elsewhere* (HAU Master Class Series, 2012), 62.

⁷⁹⁶ The dress codes that used to distinguish ethno-religious communities were lifted with the 1829 Regulation whereby Mahmud II replaced the old clothing system based on differentiation among various communities and social statuses with a new one based on homogenization of dress among all subjects and officials except a handful of top positions. The most notable change in the dress codes was the imposition of the new fez for all subjects and the restriction of classical headgear only to the highest civil and religious officials. The primary reason behind the regulation was announced by the sultan as he "publicly worried that the symbolic value of clothing had been undercut: widespread imitation of official costumes, he feared, deprived civil servants (*seyfiye*) and religious classes (*ilmiye*) of their grandeur." An important consequence of the law was that non-Muslims were no more to be easily differentiated from Muslims. Quataert, "Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829."

Take the following example from the Armenian press in 1891 about Kurds deceiving other Kurds. According to news published in *Hnchak*, a Kurdish chief in the Dersim area turned in his Armenian guest to the government on the grounds that he was a revolutionary. When this was heard by another Kurdish chief, he went to the former and said that he had violated their ancient customs of hospitality by betraying a guest. In response to this challenge, the local government sent two battalions of soldiers as support to the government-friendly chief. The other chief was informed about the dispatch, however, and made a plan: to meet with the soldiers and the Kurds on their way, he sent 200 of his men who would pretend to be men of another government-friendly chief and lead the soldiers seemingly to the target. Right after all enemies were pulled into a passage, the remaining Armenian-friendly Kurds sealed the passage from behind. They encircled the soldiers and the other Kurds, and attacked. The victims could barely escape, leaving 400-500 dead on the ground.⁷⁹⁷

These narratives point to a shared world in which the only way to rely on the others' words was to trust them. In such a world, social distances were so short that anyone could easily trespass the communal boundaries. Thus, counterintuitive as it sounds, suspicion and paranoia should be taken as evidences not of a polarized world, but in fact of a shared habitus in which social groups lived in close proximity. Right after the massacres in Harput, that some Kurdish chiefs were rewarded with money was brought to the table in a very different logic than the initial correspondence about monetary rewards mentioned at the end of the previous chapter. In an encrypted telegram from Istanbul to the commander-in-chief of the Ottoman East, a report from the Dersim *mutasarrıf* was conveyed. According to this report, some tribal chiefs in Dersim were speaking out about some of the Harput notables' having known beforehand about the

⁷⁹⁷ "Değegutyunner Türkiayits," *Hnchak*, no. 15 (23 November 1891): 7.

Kurds' future plunder, and saying that they had even sent them gifts after the events. It was also rumored [*tevâtiüren söylenmekte*] in Dersim that Major Mehmed Ağa of the gendarmerie dressed some of his soldiers as Kurds and got hold of some of the seized properties during the plunder. In this narrative, not only were the officers opportunists, but in fact the city notables were the biggest plotters. However, the official response of Istanbul about this scandalous issue added another, quite interesting layer: Since it was known that some of the groups in this region were *râfizî* (heretics/heterodox Muslims)⁷⁹⁸ and that they had relations with the Armenians,⁷⁹⁹ it was not improbable that the gifts might have been sent by the Armenians themselves.⁸⁰⁰

Here, Armenians shall be called 'conspirators' because they not only bribed Kurds (as Turk-the-plotter did) but they bribed them in order to hang the Muslims out to dry in the eyes of Europe. Contrary to Turk-the-plotter's barbarous but at least direct behavior (which aimed to cause harm to Armenians, and did), Armenian-the-conspirator victimized the Armenian nation by making Kurds harm Armenians just to attract international recognition. The conspirator's action did not aim to reach the end goal, but aimed to *create a situation* that would *bring about* the end goal. The plotter simply hid what he had done, without lying; the conspirator performed as a victim at center stage while actually planning the whole thing behind the scenes. As a result, the existence of a secret aim transformed an illegal plot into an immoral conspiracy, while the existence of a secret identity transformed a provocative act into a delusive act.

If these narrative forms are stripped of their content and their value judgments, I believe that we can examine the fundamental pillars of what I would like to call *the delusion thesis*, and

⁷⁹⁸ Although *Rafizi* was a Shiite sect, the term was used by the Ottoman rulers as a pejorative term for heretic or schismatic non-Sunni communities. Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 226, 262.

⁷⁹⁹ Non-Sunni Muslim communities, especially the Alevi-Kurdish population of Dersim, were represented by both the Ottoman state and foreign missionaries as showing ritualistic and cultural similarities to Christianity. For the best work on the topic, see Türkyılmaz, "Anxieties of Conversion."

⁸⁰⁰ PMOA, Y.PRK.BŞK. 44/26, 22 November 1895.

its differences from the provocation thesis. This is important because existing critiques of the provocation thesis treat it as a conspiracy theory, or simply as a lie. I rather suggest taking the provocation thesis seriously, not as a discursive tool of benign manipulation, but as a cultural theory of collective action, which is in fact shared by all of us today, and then I suggest comparing it to the delusion thesis, which was in fact shared by all of those living in the 1890s.

The provocation thesis is a theory of conducting the other's action. Its opening scene presupposes two full-fledged subjects who are ready to confront each other, and both parties are aware of the confrontational scene they are in. The theory also assumes that each party knows how to move the other, and each knows that the other knows this. So, there is no secret or misinformation. But—and here is the fascinating part—one *still* gets moved when the other does whatever he needed to do to move the former, even though this action was expected by both. In other words, he reacts even though he knows that his reaction was delineated by the act of the other.⁸⁰¹ This is in fact a familiar scene. In a masculine culture, say among street gangs, it is easy to start a fight simply by cursing someone. Or, to take a familiar example from popular culture, the provocation theory is best embodied by Marty McFly in *Back to the Future* (1985-90). In each film of the series, at one critical moment in the plot, the character overreacts when he is called “chicken”—even at the expense of missing the journey-in-time back home! The provoker knew that McFly would react to this one word; even more interestingly, McFly knew that the provoker knew this fact, but he still reacted. And the provocative word was not simply a pretext for an already-determined action, it was not an arbitrary discursive element; rather, it really had perlocutory power, which was already known to both parties.

⁸⁰¹ In his classic work, Žižek criticized the idea of ‘false consciousness’ by pointing out the fact that we do not do things because we are not aware of the reality. The real puzzle is that we do it *even though* we are aware of the reality. Hence, he cut off the analysis of *ideology* from lack of knowledge. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 32–33.

The delusion thesis is also a theory of conducting the other's action. Its opening scene presupposes two malleable subjects who live in a shared habitus. There is no mutual awareness of a confrontational situation; therefore, there is no mutually known sign to start a confrontation. Due to many possible reasons (like friendship or, simply, indifference), it is more difficult to make the other act in a way he does not want to, or not necessarily need to act. The movie *Inception* (2010) exemplifies this theory of conduct of action: Young Robert Fischer inherited the big family company upon his father's death, but his rivals wanted him to split the company. One possibility (in a science-fiction movie) was to enter his dreams, pretend to be his father, and advise Robert to split the company. But they knew that Robert was smart enough not to buy the provocation and to act against his own benefit (he already had his own security agents in his dream world). The plan had to be complicated enough to make him give his own decision instead of responding to his father's wish. Hence, the tricksters planned a three-level plan of delusion (dream-levels in the movie): he was made to believe (i) in the existence of an alternative will of his deceased father, (ii) that the father's right hand man was actually hiding it, and (iii) that, contrary to their tense relationship, his father actually loved him a lot and wanted him to be his own man (meaning, not necessarily the inheritor of a company). After he woke up, he decided to be his own man and split the company.

The delusion thesis relies on the agency of an ordinary person who cannot be moved simply by agitation (because he does not lack agency) but who of course can be deceived (because his agency is not as strong as a god's). In other words, he neither re-acts nor over-acts; he just acts. In contrast, the provocation thesis oscillates between lack-of-agency and super-strong agency. At the end of the series, Marty McFly finally pulls himself together and manages to resist a similar provocative statement; this was the moment that the audience celebrated his

becoming an adult. In the provocation thesis, the actors are either too weak and act like automatons, or too strong and refuse to buy into any provocation at all. Second, the process of provocation reinforces the ideologies, convictions, positions of each party, whereas in the process of delusion one party's ideas change. In other words, provocation is a way of cutting off the relationship, of ending the dialogue with the other, of increasing the already long distance in between, whereas delusion is a way of developing the dialogue, of staying in proximity with the other, of shaping the behaviors of the other— in the end, of conducting the other's conduct.

Lastly, provocation is a direct action that does not need any mediation. In terms of classical mechanics, provocation is a way of applying force to the other object by contact (via words or deeds); it basically consists of pushing the other away, for good. So, provocation, again, oscillates between close contact and long distance. Delusion, however, needs to deal with an object that is at a short distance and is kept at a short distance. The deceiving party needs mediation to apply force on the other party, on the one hand, but he also needs to keep the other in proximity without pulling him too close or pushing too far, on the other. Deception, thus, needs a milieu in the sense of Newtonian physics:

In Newton's time, the problem mechanics had to solve was that of the action of distinct physical bodies at a distance. This was the fundamental problem of the physics of central forces. It was not an issue for Descartes, however. For him, there is but one mode of physical action, collision, in one possible physical situation, contact. This is why we can say that the notion of milieu has no place in Cartesian physics.⁸⁰²

The narratives of the 1895 Massacres have repeatedly told us stories of deception in which one party used techniques to create a situation that would make the other act seemingly according to his own deliberation. The techniques, like missionary education or fraudulent

⁸⁰² Georges Canguilhem, *Knowledge of Life* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 99. I was directed to this reference by Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 36.

advice or (most commonly) cross-dressing, served for the indirect inoculation of ideas (namely, for *inception* of ideas), which was also depicted as ‘poisoning’ since it did not reveal any trace of the murderer in a pre-forensic age. In fact, in the nineteenth century, along with arson, poisoning was frequently resorted to by common people, especially by women, in order to enact their claims for popular justice against oppressive husbands or landlords.⁸⁰³ Poisoning was a way of having a perfect alibi, since it created a situation that would affect the other only later in time. In consequence, the deception theory rejects the naked power of provocative acts in goading the other into action. The deceiver’s behavior is indirect; it manipulates the milieu, namely the social relations between the parties, in a way that permits the other to make his own decision (be his own man).

In the same year of 1895, what I call the delusion theory was articulated by French sociologist Gustave Le Bon in his most famous work, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*. Although it is remembered today for its (sometimes rather scandalous) social-psychological descriptions of crowds, like their incapacity for rational thinking or their extra-sentimental femininity, Le Bon’s essay offered a detailed analysis of the conduct of conduct, since his main interest was to find a way to govern the crowds and to tame their barbaric, aka revolutionary, potential. Of significance here is the similarity between his ideas and the ideas of the narrators of the 1895 Events in Harput. For Le Bon, too, the perlocutory power of words superseded their communicative meaning; it was for this reason that not the meanings of words, but their images would cling to the crowds (B. II, Ch. 2). By circulating certain images that had iconic resemblance to a certain idea (like, the Armenians’ uprising) one could speak to the “imagination” of the masses; hence, “to know the art of impressing the imagination of crowds is

⁸⁰³ Ebru Aykut, “Alternative Claims on Justice and Law: Rural Arson and Murder by Poison in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire” (PhD Dissertation, Bogazici University, 2011).

to know at the same time the art of governing them.”⁸⁰⁴ Moreover, in an age of ephemeral beliefs and ideologies (B. II, Ch. 4), Le Bon argued, the most effective way to govern crowds was by “implanting” fundamental ideas “in the minds of crowds” (B. I, Ch. 3). In consequence, even though he presented the crowds as irrational, barbarous, sentimental, and wild, Le Bon was aware that they could not be oriented as a herd of animals. They could not be made do something just by a seditious speech, namely, they could not be provoked; they needed to be patiently implanted.

In the 1890s, then, the theories of collective action for both a philosopher in France and community leaders in a city of the Ottoman eastern provinces point to two conclusions: first, that people were living a shared life with shared notions and cultural capital; and second, that it was *not normal* that they kill each other. In this theory of collective action, the masses owned enough agency to resist buying into simple provocation, to resist being provoked by the opponent’s incitements. They could only be moved by the words of the respected members of their own community, and those wise people would never react to provocation, either. Thus, the only way to move the masses for the desired aim—to victimize Armenian people in order to draw the attention and support of Europe—was to act like the respected members of the Muslim community and order the massacre of the Armenians.

I cannot exaggerate how different this reasoning is from the provocation thesis that charged Armenian revolutionaries with attacking Muslims in order to make them retaliate. The simple provocation thesis assumes that Muslims, especially the Kurdish masses, would behave like a herd of wild animals that does not know how to calibrate its behavior, but just reacts against danger as if in a total war. It is unfortunate that the critics of the provocation thesis have

⁸⁰⁴ Le Bon, *The Crowd*, 37.

allowed themselves to be preoccupied with determining just how provocative the Armenian behavior was, or to what extent Armenians knew the possible consequences, but they did not deconstruct this primitive image of the Kurdish masses, which did *not* exist back then. I boldly argue: the provocation thesis is wrong not only because it holds the victim responsible or because it misrepresents the motives; *it is wrong simply because it assumes that provocation was possible. It was not.*

A Detour to 2013: On Agency

Today, the concept of provocation means aiming to create a substantial disorder by creating a small disorder or by just creating fake news of a small disorder. One gunshot (or rumor about it) is enough to empty an entire shopping mall in great panic in countries where terrorism has become a part of national anxieties. But if the shooter just aims to kill some people, we will not call the incident a provocation; only if the aim of the shooter is to inflict widespread panic, do we call it provocation. However, since one cannot know the intentions of others, the whole practice of labeling an event provocation means projecting intentions based on the event itself. A paradox exists here, though: if we want to judge the event according to the intentions behind it, how can we get to the intentions through the event itself?

So far in this analysis the delusion thesis has seemed to be more complicated and more nuanced than the provocation thesis. And it actually is more complicated, when it comes to the sophistication of the deceiver's performance. However, the deception thesis does not have a strong public component simply because the deceived party is assumed to lack any public knowledge of what is happening to him (the "unwitting move" in Goffman). One good performance is enough for deception. In provocation, though, because there are no secrets, it is a more sophisticated game to calculate the other's actions and reactions (like in chess or

spycraft). Here, only the best performance wins. And it is difficult to theorize the winning move because the strategic interaction is based on guesses at the other's action, which should technically be impossible if both players are good enough. As Goffman articulated, parties can resort to "covering" moves, but there are always "uncovering" moves as well as "counter-uncovering" moves.⁸⁰⁵ This endless chain of deception attempts makes it impossible to reach the correct decision by calculating all possible plans of the other, because you know that the other is doing the same calculations. Then, how does this endless chain end— how do we finally interact? The paradox strikes back here, because we reach a decision based on our assumption of the other's plan even though we do not have access to the other's plans.

Webb Keane's analysis of sincerity points out the same paradox: We call persons sincere when we think that what they do/say conforms to what they think, even though, by definition, we can only know what they do/say and never what they think. As a solution, Keane suggests that in reaching our decisions we make use of publically circulating images of sincere behavior and we judge the other's act in terms of its iconic resemblance to that public image.⁸⁰⁶ In other words, what seems like mind-reading is in fact a (Geertzian) reading of cultural images. Of course, this reading can fail. For example, the shooter in the shopping mall may have only aimed to kill some people who annoyed him, nothing more. Or, more interestingly, the wrong reading of the event can be used to draw attention away from the real event. For example, when on December 6, 2013, two people were shot dead during the protests of townspeople against the vandalism at a guerilla cemetery in Geveç (Yüksekova / southeastern border of Turkey), not only the prime minister but also the imprisoned leader of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) called the event a

⁸⁰⁵ Erving Goffman, *Strategic Interaction* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969).

⁸⁰⁶ Webb Keane, "Sincerity, 'Modernity,' and the Protestants," *Cultural Anthropology* 17, no. 1 (February 1, 2002): 65–92.

provocation that aimed to impede the peace process (between PKK and the Turkish state), and both leaders called for tranquility.⁸⁰⁷ The label of ‘provocation’ here works as a moral statement when it calls for inaction: Don’t buy this provocation! Only the weak react like automatons!

But the perpetrators and the victims may think differently. Rather than taking the event as an in-itself-insignificant step on the way towards a bigger purpose, rather than accepting their agency being sacrificed to an iconic sign, they may hold on to the indexicality of the event, of what happened at that very moment. That is why it is generally irritating for the powerful when the families of the victims or even the perpetrator decide to speak out; they may challenge the icon itself. This is what happened in the Gezi Park Uprising in June 2013– arguably the most talkative uprising ever in Turkey. From its very beginning, the government and the conservative national media tried to ignore the protests by using the language of provocation. They said, for example, that it was the international interest lobby or some transnational companies who seduced the naïve middle classes of Istanbul into rising up to harm the government’s standing. In other words, there was an international conspiracy, and unfortunately some bad or credulous people had bought it. This discourse attracted immediate reaction from the participants of the Gezi Occupation. Among others, these people included students, college-educated white-collars and middle classes, who had unlimited access to social media and the global public, and who assumed very strong agency and equally strong disdain towards the government. The result was an unprecedented– arguably in the entire history of Turkey– boom of humor and art work in the

⁸⁰⁷ <http://www.yeniozgurpolitika.org/index.php?rupel=nivis&id=5045>;
http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/abdullah_ocalandan_yuksekoa_mesaji-1165018.

streets and in social media.⁸⁰⁸ In the park it was not uncommon to hear people asking “when did we become so funny?!”

Similar to 1895, in 2013 too, the discourse of evil international powers was complemented by the idea of evil local radicals seducing a larger group of conservatives. But this time there was no deception; it was said that the provocateurs were directly attacking social values. They were blamed for various immoral and offensive activities like drinking alcohol in a mosque or harassing women with headscarves. Nevertheless, the participants of the uprising did not react; they instead fought against the allegations by using factual evidence. Social media and the advantages of contemporary technology were used to refute the charges. In many cases, video recordings and pictures captured by cell phones were shared publicly, mostly on Twitter, to deny and ridicule the claims about protestors’ offensive behavior. In many cases, live streaming via smart phones was available even in the middle of a resistance at the barricades at midnight. The opponents entertained the same strategy, though; they publicly shared visual evidence to refute the claims that disproportional violence had occurred in Gezi Park. For example, they showed that some circulating images of injured people had been taken from the Tahrir Square uprising in Egypt. In sum, this was a defensive battle waged on behalf of agency (“you cannot deceive me”), and this battle brought about arguably the most challenging moment of the entire Gezi Uprising, the following moment when the protestors themselves used the provocation thesis:

⁸⁰⁸ There are two collections of essays on the Gezi Uprising published in English mostly by academics: ROAR Symposium’s “Reflections on the Gezi Uprising” (<http://roarmag.org/2014/01/roar-symposium-gezi-uprising-turkey/>) and *Cultural Anthropology* Hotspot “An Impromptu Uprising: Ethnographic Reflections on the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey” (<http://www.culanth.org/fieldsights/391-an-impromptu-uprising-ethnographic-reflections-on-the-gezi-park-protests-in-turkey>). Specifically for humor and art work, see Stephen Snyder, “Gezi Park and the Transformative Power of Art,” in the ROAR collection, and Seçil Dağtaş, “The Politics of Humor and Humor as Politics during Turkey’s Gezi Park Protests,” in the CA collection.

In the morning of June 11, Tuesday, the police forces attacked the barricades that had been surrounding Taksim Square and the adjacent Gezi Park for ten days. The police trespassed into the state-free zone, occupied the square and the other three sides of the park and pushed the protestors back into the park area. Subsequently in the afternoon, images and playbacks circulated in the news showing a group of 3-5 people battling against the armored water cannon by throwing molotov cocktails into the police vehicle in the middle of an emptied Taksim Square. They were retreating a few meters when the cannon delivered a stream as a hard jet against their shield, then they went back to resisting the vehicle. Immediate reaction appeared on Twitter; it was suggested that these protestors were in reality police officers or agents-provocateurs working for the government. Various evidence was shown: the puffiness in one guy's trouser pocket resembling the shape of a hidden gun, or the fact that the cannon did not push them all the way back, instead playing back-and-forth, or the way the resisting guy made hand gestures to the police vehicle meaning 'come, come.' However, the city governor announced in the evening the name of the arrested protestor and that he was a member of a revolutionary leftist organization (SDP). Eventually, many entries in the Sour Dictionary (a virtual community of 54,000 writers) ridiculed the protestors who at first officially denounced (on facebook, for example) the molotov-throwers but then turned the arrested person into a freedom fighter.

How can one decide whether or not he was a sincere revolutionary or a paid agent-provocateur other than looking into his identity and his past? What if he was an unknown person without any organizational affiliation? The great paradox of provocation lies in the fact that the same act can be interpreted in two opposite directions, as revolutionary or anti-revolutionary, depending only on the intentions of the actor, whereas those intentions are generally projected

from the act itself. This is not a historiographic paradox only; rather it is a vital one in real-time, because one has to decide whether or not to go, when news comes that the protestors are forcing the prime minister's residence in Besiktaş for a great victory, while other news says that the revolutionary violence in Besiktaş is a provocation to harm the primary Gezi Park cause by delegitimizing the movement. Provocation works like a magical tool that can turn a deed from heroism to trickster's play without even adding any information, without adding any hitherto unknown detail to the description of the event: it just shifts the paradigm. Moreover, it affects the acts of people; they can decide not to join in if they believe something is a provocation. We call it tactics or strategy when the people in charge decide to follow one of the ways available; we may judge the decisions later as correct or false strategy. However, a person in the crowd either decides to do something or not to do something; we do not call it a tactic when people stay home. Thus, the paradox of provocation may be seen as only one component in the map of decision-making for discourse analyzers; but for the joiners it is a *battle of agency*: how strong are you not to be provoked?

As shown in the cross-dressing cases, the outfit became an index of deceivers in the Massacres of 1895. In the Gezi Uprising of 2013, too, the outfit was turned into an index of—this time—provocateurs. In the days after the Tuesday assault, the police forces started a daily protestor-hunt in the streets around the Park during the daylight hours. As usual, the outfit, the look, the age and manners of pedestrians were determinant in their being stopped and interrogated by the officers (similar to the Hamburg Uprising of January 2014). However, there were more direct signs marking the protestors: for protection from daily pepper-gas exposure, goggles, surgical masks (few people had real gas masks), and helmets had become ordinary accessories for all people including those who were simply working in the area, even those who

were critical of the protests. Being caught with a mask in one's handbag might expose a person to serious legal action, but on the other hand, it was dangerous to be around during pepper-gas attacks without these tools, as a protestor or not. As a result, the government was criticized for taking as evidence of insubordination materials that were used for self-defense from police violence. The same sentiment appears in a letter written by the Bitlis missionary Knapp in December 1895: "Arrests of Armenians still continue. Several poor fellows have lately been imprisoned because they wore clothing resembling that of Krds [Kurds]. Not even the protection that clothing affords it seems is to be allowed the poor Armns [Armenians]!"⁸⁰⁹ Nevertheless, even quite similar attitudes about malignant outfits demonstrate the difference between the provocation and deception theses. Unlike 2013, people were arrested in 1895 for assuming *fake* IDs. In other words, in 1895, to pretend to be other than the enemy of the state was a crime whereas in 2013 to be the enemy was a crime.

On Responsibility

So far I have deconstructed the evaluation of deception narratives in the critical, anti-nationalist scholarship. I have argued that this literature mostly dismisses these narratives as lies of the powerful (the government) or as unimportant leitmotifs in the stories. Further, it tends to take these narratives as truly reflecting reality if they fit the expected framework, but refuses them as simple fabrications if they do not. For example, Turks crossdressing as Kurds could be real, but Armenians crossdressing as Kurds is impertinent slander. Instead, I have suggested taking these moments of deception in the narratives as a crucial junction in the theory of collective action from all parties' point of view. These moments provide an answer to the question '*how* to provoke the other?' However, the other side of the literature, namely the

⁸⁰⁹ Letter by Knapp to Chambers, Bitlis, December 25, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 694.

nationalist theories, is yet to be deconstructed. Do I not support the denialist theses of the nationalists by taking official narratives at face value? Do I not buy the same old provocation thesis by accepting the ‘Armenian trickery’ motive as truth? And does this not wash the government’s hands by shifting responsibility for the events onto the shoulders of the victims?

I believe not. I will not criticize the nationalist provocation thesis by trying to prove that there was no provocation. I want to pursue another line of argumentation—a legalistic one—by proposing the following: under the deception thesis, responsibility was not necessarily shouldered by the provoker/deceiver. I think that the completely different characteristics of deception and provocation theories of conduct also carry with them different stresses on whom to punish for these crimes. As explained in the previous chapter, the official telegrams of Ali Emiri before, during and right after the event pointed to one and only one cause for the disturbance: Armenian mischief. And the official circular of the central government, as quoted in the beginning of this chapter, was more direct and strict about the same conviction. Nevertheless, until the much later report of Zeki Pasha, in all official correspondence there was one and only one group that was to be stopped and suppressed: Kurds.

In fact, a year later, in September 1896, the Grand Vizier’s encrypted circular prepared upon the new wave of massacres had the same logic: The tumult was certainly caused by Armenian diabolism. Armenians were seeking to infuriate and enrage (*gayz ve gazaba getirerek*) the Muslims in order to make them massacre Armenians so that they could be seen as victims. However, the circular also stated boldly that “the most important thing to prevent is the participation of Muslim people and especially the tribes in the movement of disciplining that belongs to the government.”⁸¹⁰ In other words, the circular put forward the idea that the Muslims

⁸¹⁰ PMOA, DH.EO. 311/31, [17 September 1896].

should not fall for the attempted provocation and if they did, they should be stopped *even though* Armenians were the real instigators. It seems that another key difference between deception and provocation theses lies in the question of which party is to blame: the provoker/seducer/instigator or the actor/perpetrator/ author?

I surmise that provocation theory today tends to put the responsibility on the shoulders of the provoker. This also has serious legal support under the rubric of ‘extenuating circumstances.’ To give a recent example from Turkey, some cases of the rape and murder of women in 2014-15 have been discussed in the national press and social media through the language of provocation. In these cases, the courts considered the victim’s behavior—like wearing a miniskirt—as provocative and mitigated the sentence of the convicted murderer. Many people naturally raised their voices—mostly in social media—against these kinds of verdicts. However, very few challenged the idea that, once provoked, the weight of the crime is decreased. The critics almost exclusively focused on the unjust labeling of rightful human behavior (like wearing a miniskirt) as provocation. In other words, they focused on the misrepresentation of women’s motives or acts, just as most critics of the provocation thesis have done. But the idea that the provoker shoulders the responsibility for the event has not been challenged. The court and the critics of the court shared the assumption that responsibility is a function of provocation.

Provocation theory seems to be much more than a tool exploited by courts on behalf of rapists or by governments on behalf of murderers. It seems to be shared by much larger parts of today’s society. It is not only in the marijuana business that the seller is much guiltier (i.e. more responsible) than the buyer. In fact, do we not run the provocation argument when we ask for the ‘real’ authors of a political assassination or the ‘real’ actors behind a political scandal? For instance, ever since Armenian journalist and human rights activist Hrant Dink was murdered in

2007, we have kept demanding ‘the real murderers,’ although the assassin was immediately caught and imprisoned. I am certainly not criticizing the efforts to expose and punish persons who planned and gave orders for the assassination. I chose this counter-intuitive example to emphasize that provocation theory *as a theory of action* is far from being an unfamiliar or evil way of conceptualizing the world around us.

A contrary example will help to reveal how deeply established the provocation theory is for us. In 1999, Swedish authorities enacted a new law to fight against prostitution; it is known as the Kvinnofrid Law. It was a practical experiment, but I think it was also a philosophical experiment. Perhaps for the first time in modern times, the authorities decided to fight prostitution not by legalizing it or by criminalizing the offering of sexual services but by criminalizing the *purchase* of sexual services. In other words, a prostitute is allowed to offer his/her body freely in public domains (streets, internet, etc.) but no one is allowed to *buy* this freely offered service. There are debates and conflicting studies on whether or not this strategy has really reduced the volume of prostitution in Sweden, but the experiment is important in any case because it challenges our norms. Is it not scandalous and even unthinkable to ban buying a commodity that is sold in the market under perfectly legal terms? Can we even imagine an anti-drug campaign that proposes to legalize drug dealers but criminalize the drug addicts?

Deception theory could. I have argued that deception theory resisted considering Kurds as an easily provokable group and replaced the direct confrontation of provocation theory with an indirect way of changing the other’s mind, namely by deceiving. Now, I suggest that the second key distinctive characteristic of deception theory lies in the domain of responsibility: it holds responsible for the action not the provoking/deceiving party but the provoked/deceived party. This does not mean that the Ottoman government blamed Kurds more than it blamed

Armenians. Not at all. It is rather that there was a separation between the responsibility of acting (for Kurds) and the responsibility of creating disorder (for Armenians). In deception theory, it is shameful to be deceived; in provocation theory, it is an excuse. In his discussion of “inoculation” as a discursive tool to justify oppressive systems, Barthes was pointing out this difference between the older and newer forms of action theory: In the past, a few ‘bad apples’ in the police department, for example, were a shame for the department; but today, it has become an excuse that does not decrease but actually increases the legitimacy of the department.⁸¹¹ The general evil in the department can be transferred to the small group of ‘provokers’ and they can be taken as the only ones responsible. This is how provocation theory works.

Deception theory involves a strange combination: it decreases the agency of the actor (since he is deceived) but simultaneously gives him even more responsibility for the action. This combination is, I repeat, not a familiar one. Some of the scholars working on crowd behavior, like Le Bon, never intended to deal with the idea of responsibility simply because the collectives’ action was already assumed to be irrational. On the other hand, for scholars like E.P. Thompson and G. Rude, the crowd action was already assumed to be legitimate.⁸¹² In other words, scholars worked either on irrational and illegitimate collective action or on rational and legitimate collective action. Deception theory proposes another combination: rational and illegitimate.

Conclusion: On Distance in Deception

I began Part IV with Allen’s bewilderment upon the events on November 11, 1895, in Harput city, and I asked: governments always lie to their people, but would they deceive them?

⁸¹¹ See, Barthes, *Mythologies*, 40–42, 151–152.

⁸¹² George F. E. Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967); Edward Palmer Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present*, no. 50 (1971): 76–136.

In recent years, scholars have challenged the traditional view of lying that goes back to the ancient philosophers by rejecting one crucial component of the act of lying, namely the intention to deceive the other.⁸¹³ Mahon is one of the proponents of this divorce between hitherto inseparable concepts:

... as contrasted with the verb ‘deceive,’ which is a success or achievement verb like ‘persuade’ or ‘cure,’ the verb ‘lie’ is not a success or achievement verb. The speech act of lying is not a perlocutionary speech act. That is, whether or not an act of lying has occurred does not depend on whether a particular effect, such as a false belief, has been produced. A lie that is ‘seen through’ by its audience while it is being told to them, and hence, that does not deceive them, is still a lie. Properly speaking, therefore, lying is not a type of deceiving.⁸¹⁴

The best example is bald-faced lies, as discussed by Sorensen; they do not intend to change the mind of the other party.⁸¹⁵ And, as Taussig has shown, states are always involved with “public secrets” that are circulated as secrets without really concealing information.⁸¹⁶ Lies are effectively used by governments for legitimacy-building or for international lobbying even when all parties are aware of the act of lying. But deceiving is an entirely different tool. As Carson emphasized, “deception need not [even] involve making a false statement;” in fact, it does not need to involve making a statement at all. “Thus, many instances of deception do not constitute lying.”⁸¹⁷ Moreover, unlike lying, deceiving requires agency on the deceived side.⁸¹⁸ As I have mentioned, in a deception theory of collective action, the deceived party has a proper dose of agency— not too much or too little, as is the case with provocation theory. The Marty McFly example showed, too, that provocation works through public secrets, through direct opposition,

⁸¹³ Jennifer Lackey, “Lies and Deception: An Unhappy Divorce,” *Analysis* 73, no. 2 (2013): 236–48.

⁸¹⁴ James Edwin Mahon, “Two Definitions of Lying,” *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 22, no. 2 (2008): 211.

⁸¹⁵ Roy Sorensen, “Bald-Faced Lies! Lying without the Intent to Deceive,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (2007): 251–64.

⁸¹⁶ Michael T. Taussig, *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

⁸¹⁷ Thomas L. Carson, *Lying and Deception: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 46.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

through a battle of statements, whereas deception works through the conduct of another's conduct, through governing the other's behavior. Hence, the politics of deceiving, as Allen sensed with surprise, is a new mode of thinking about government politics; it entails governing citizens' behaviors, what is called 'governmentality' by Foucault.⁸¹⁹

This new theory of action can be contextualized. Appadurai put a special emphasis on "the language of imposter, the secret agent, and the counterfeit person" common in the narratives of the late-twentieth-century massacres. He explained the prevalence of this language as a result of "the distorted relationship between daily, face-to-face relations and the large-scale identities produced by modern nation-states and complicated by large-scale diasporas."⁸²⁰ Due to the local effects of globalization, it has become less easy to draw the lines of one's identity, which is now more a bundle of varied relationships—local, trans-regional and global. Consequently, in their daily exchanges with others, people are "animated by a perceived violation of the sense of knowing who the Other was and of rage about who they really turn out to be."⁸²¹ Appadurai finds in this sense of violation the explanation for extreme bodily violence (many forms of torture) observed in the recent interethnic wars.⁸²²

We do not have much evidence about people's perceptions in the 1890s in the Ottoman Empire, but it is unmistakably true that globalization hit the Ottoman East hard in the last quarter of the century. By 1895, thousands of villagers and townsmen had immigrated to the Americas to work and many had come back and connected the two worlds (some had acquired American citizenship, see Chapter 9). Americans had been living in the city for forty years, and many

⁸¹⁹ Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87–104.

⁸²⁰ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 154–155.

⁸²¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁸²² Arjun Appadurai, "Dead Certainty: Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization," *Public Culture* 10, no. 2 (1998): 225–47.

Armenians had already assumed English language and European dress. French missionaries and the French-speaking government elite in Mezre had an even longer history. And it was ordinary for the people of the region to work abroad temporarily or to have business connections in Tiflis or Aleppo or Beirut.

W. N. Chambers, who lived thirty years (1880s-1900s) in the Ottoman East, pointed out the effects of globalization on identities in Kurdistan as follows:

In that mountainous district called Koordistan by the Koords, and Haisdan or Armenia by the Armenians, the Koords and the Armenians are the principal two races indigenous to the country, which seem to have preserved nationality and ancient tradition. From of old the Armenians (as the weaker nation) have suffered persecution and yet they and the Koords live as neighbours in such a way as to preserve their respective racial traits, organizations and traditions. I would judge that when Europe took a more active stand in the vain attempt to 'protect the Christians of Turkey' and an autonomous Armenia was dreamed of, the marauding and plundering instincts of the Koords were aroused. 'Never an autonomous Armenia in Koordistan' was the exclamation of one Koord in my hearing. They became an instrument in the hands of the Turk to assist in carrying through those atrocities that have made the history of Armenia very tragic and very bloody and cruel. However, the Armenian would trust the Koord a great deal more than he would the Turk. In ordinary times he felt that the women were safer by far under a Koordish than under a Turkish roof.⁸²³

Two days after the massacres in Erzurum, on October 25, 1895, Chambers went to the Armenian cemetery where 400 bodies were being buried and faced a woman's rage against him: "God's curse on you Englese (Europeans), give us back our fathers! Give us back our husbands and brothers and sons! Give us back our homes and our properties!"⁸²⁴ Chambers agreed that European intervention stirred up the region irreversibly.

Moreover, Chambers also commented on the corrupt traits of the Armenian character (like, deceiving) and attributed it to Turkish oppression:

⁸²³ Chambers, *Yoljuluk*, 22–23.

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

Centuries of such life would inevitably develop characteristics that are in no sense commendable. The Armenian exhibits many traits that may characterise a race denied liberty and subjected to prolonged oppression. Lying, cheating and other forms of deception would become inevitable and to certain extent a loose moral color would give ground for the unfavourable judgments that are expressed.⁸²⁵

Similarly, a prominent Armenian businessman in America, M.H. Gulesian, made mention of the dishonest Armenian character and attributed it to Turkish influence in his 1897 article:

Having for many centuries been at the mercy of the rapacious Turkish officials, who have had a perfect right to extort all they could from the Armenians, no matter how unjustly, they have had to learn in self-defence [sic] to evade and deceive, or they could not have retained for themselves enough to live upon. Nearly every example that is set them by the Turkish officials is one of dishonesty and corruption, so the Armenians have had to meet Turkish rapacity with Armenian cunning. But if these traits have been observed in some cases, I claim that they are not in our blood, but in our bringing up. They have been cultivated for self-protection. Men who write thus blindly forget that there is nothing in Turkey to develop honesty or trust in one another. On the other hand, there is every reason why we should become corrupt and demoralize. [...] I venture to say that to-day, if you were to take the children of the wisest and best families of America and England, and put them in the places if the Armenians of Turkey, they will grow up the same.⁸²⁶

I take these quotations simply as testimonies about the prevalence of trickster character in observations from the late-nineteenth-century Ottoman world. As Appadurai pointed out, the intimate relations of the local were undoubtedly severed by the trans-regionalization of the eastern towns. In addition, money capitalism had spread throughout the region especially from the 1850s on, as seen in Chapter 3. In her inspiring analysis of Melville's *The Confidence-Man*, Ngai opens her discussion by asking "how does one go about creating a 'fake' feeling?"⁸²⁷ and investigates the "antebellum fiduciary system" based on "confidence" in America: "Is it not 'the greatest help and spur to commerce, that property can be so readily conveyed and so well secured by a *Compte en Banc*, that is, by only writing one man's name for another's in the bank-

⁸²⁵ Ibid., 67–68.

⁸²⁶ Kirakosyan, *The Armenian Massacres, 1894 - 1896*, 245.

⁸²⁷ Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, 38.

book?’”⁸²⁸ In a society where confidence had become a crucial asset in business (and other) relations, fake IDs would proliferate. The reader will remember that, in the 1850s, the Çötelizades adapted to the new system by registering four-year-olds as tax-farmers. The new world was one of contracts and signatures, rather than genealogical connections and rooted alliances; and all contracts and signatures could be faked. As Davis showed in her famous account of an imposter, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, it was almost impossible to “establish a person’s identity beyond doubt” in a world without photographs, portraits, and fingerprints.⁸²⁹

What Appadurai called “a perceived violation of the sense of knowing who the Other was” stemmed not only from outside forces like globalization and financial capitalism but also from new urbanization within the locality. The cities of the late nineteenth-century were not the towns of fifty years prior. As seen in Part II, Mezre was becoming a ‘city’ (not a town anymore) starting in the 1880s. A new, grid-style neighborhood was built; a modern municipality was formed. Strangers (tradesmen, foreigners, etc.) were not an anomaly anymore. Thanks to the rise of trade capitalism in the preceding four decades, urban wealth had become visible in the built environment (houses) and on persons (dress, jewelry), too. Fitzpatrick meticulously showed the connection between new urban society and the rise of imposters and con-men in Soviet Russia in the 1920s-30s. The impersonal relations in a city and the emergence of a new (non-aristocratic, bourgeois) elite were pregnant with the anxieties of knowing the other’s identity and the “shocking revelation that someone close and trusted was not what he or she seemed.”⁸³⁰ Hence,

⁸²⁸ Ibid., 57.

⁸²⁹ Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard University Press, 1983), 63.

⁸³⁰ Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Making a Self for the Times: Impersonation and Imposture in 20th-Century Russia,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2, no. 3 (2001): 479. Fitzpatrick also reminds us that serious political imposters and funny con-men characters were the product of the same context. Take for example the heroic story of Mıgırdıç, the leader of resistance in Urfa in 1915: Other than being the composer of the great defense of Urfa Armenians, he was legendary also for constantly deceiving the government. He once dressed up as a Turkish colonel, openly entered into a garrison with his men and took away all the ammunition with the help of real Turkish

in Harput, globalization overlapped with the city's peculiar urban history in the last quarter of the century. In November 1895, Kurdish rebels specifically targeted the indices of the new urban life; most notably, the missionaries expressed surprise at the attackers' smashing or taking off "even" the windows and doors.⁸³¹ One could not think of a better index of the new urban life than windows.

The prevalence of deception was also connected to the new urban life because the latter was "a way of life" consisting of short-distance relations. In his seminal essay on urbanism, Wirth laid stress on "the reserve, the indifference, and the blasé outlook which urbanites manifest in their relationships."⁸³² The urban way of relating to the other was face-to-face but impersonal; it was not intimate, nor completely distant, but something of both. "Reserve," as exemplified in the previous Part on missionaries, does not mean complete rejection; it means keeping the options at arm's length. Wirth and Simmel's thoughts on urban life still have grave importance because it is too common to consider distance as a negative attribute; instead, they wrote on the new potentialities of distanced relations. In his famous "The Metropolis and Mental Life," Simmel wrote:

What appears in the metropolitan style of life directly as dissociation is in reality only one of its elemental forms of socialization. This reserve with its overtone of hidden aversion appears in turn as the form or the cloak of a more general mental

soldiers. In another instance, soon after an armed battle between his guerillas and the army, when he was being sought throughout the region, he came to the inner city in disguise as if to make fun of the government forces. Ephraim K. Jernazian, *Judgment unto Truth: Witnessing the Armenian Genocide*, The Zoryan Institute Survivors' Memoirs / Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation 4 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 62.

⁸³¹ It was noted by the missionaries that Kurds, during the plunder, destroyed and/or took off the windows and doors. Letter from H. N. Barnum, Harpoot, January 14, 1896, ABCFM, Reel 696. In his letter about the events in Habusi, Browne pointed out that Kurds destroyed the houses and carried off all the timber, including "even" the windows and doors. Letter from John K. Browne to Leila [K. Brown], Harpoot, Jan 13, 1897, ABCFM, Reel 696. In her letter from Aintab, Dr. Caroline F. Hamilton also emphasized that Kurds took off "even" the doors and the windows. Kirakosyan, *The Armenian Massacres, 1894 - 1896*, 118–21.

⁸³² Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *The American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 1 (July 1938): 12.

phenomenon of the metropolis: it grants to the individual a kind and an amount of personal freedom which has no analogy whatsoever under other conditions.⁸³³

For Simmel, the character of “the stranger” in the city crystallized a new form of human relation in modern urban life. As he famously defined, the stranger was not the one “who comes today and goes tomorrow” but the one “who comes today and stays tomorrow.”⁸³⁴ He was not a completely different person; he is rather “an organic member of the group.” In fact, this urban character was so untraditional that Simmel himself concluded that “we do not know how to designate the peculiar unity of this position other than by saying that it is composed of certain measures of nearness and distance” (408). I have called this situation ‘short-distance relations’ throughout the dissertation.

In Simmel’s entire philosophy of social interaction, short-distance relations played a key role; and this is also true for his essays on lies and confidence. In fact, he defined confidence as a short-distance relation when he said that it is “intermediate between knowledge and ignorance about a man. The person who knows completely need not trust; while the person who knows nothing can, on no rational grounds, afford even confidence.”⁸³⁵ In modern life, confidence is crucial because “existence rests on a thousand premises which the single individual cannot trace and verify to their roots all, but must take on faith. Our modern life is based to a much larger extent than is usually realized upon the faith in the honesty of the other.”⁸³⁶ In this system based on confidence, “the lie, therefore, becomes something much more devastating.” As said before, Allen’s bewilderment did not result from the disappearance of confidence; it was not the lies of the Turkish government that surprised him. Nevertheless, Simmel’s ideas on the prevalence of

⁸³³ “The Metropolis and Mental Life” in Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, 416.

⁸³⁴ “The Stranger” in *Ibid.*, 402.

⁸³⁵ “Confidence under More or Less Complex Conditions” in *Ibid.*, 318.

⁸³⁶ “The Lie” in *Ibid.*, 313.

short-distance relations specifically in modern urban life and their effect on lie- and confidence-relations tell us about the fundamental setting for deceiving. Only in such a world could lying be furnished with the intention to deceive the others.

In conclusion, I theorize deception as a way of directing the behavior of others at short distance. In a very recent study, Bubandt and Willerslev propose the concept of empathy as an analytical category for understanding the other without scarifying one's own identity; as opposed to sympathy, in an empathic relation one keeps the distance or sometimes even reinforces it. From this point of view, they put a finger on the fact that "deception (...) requires some basic form of empathy or ability to imagine how others see and experience the world."⁸³⁷ The authors called this "the dark side of empathy" because empathic relations are an often-ignored condition for communal violence. In November 1895, too, Armenians, Kurds and Turks were living in short-distance relations in a modern, capitalist, urbanized environment. As Simmel said, "inner enemies" were only one form of "stranger" in this setting.⁸³⁸

This definition of stranger and enemy diverges from Schmitt's concept of an enemy who is "the other, the stranger, [...] existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible."⁸³⁹ In this chapter, I have challenged the idea that violence is a function of radical otherization. In international politics today, the enemy is Schmitt's enemy, one with whom you can start a war by provocation. In the time and space of the 1895 Massacres, violence was possible only by deception. The world was no longer composed of intimate and foreign, of neighbors and outsiders, of periphery and the center. It was something in the middle,

⁸³⁷ Bubandt and Willerslev, "The Dark Side of Empathy," 9.

⁸³⁸ "The stranger, like the poor and like sundry 'inner enemies,' is an element of the group itself. His position as a full-fledged member involves both being outside it and confronting it." In "The Stranger" in Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, 402–403.

⁸³⁹ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 27.

something not far anymore but not too close either, something in proximity. Deceiving was a way of dealing with proximity.

Part V: The End of Duality

Part V will tell how this tale of two cities came to end in the first half of the twentieth century. Harput and Mezre's demise paved the way for the emergence of one unified major city, Elazığ. Nationalism and the nation-state building process were the most dominant forces of the time. The first decades of the new century will be told through the lens of sectarian relations. Then, the 1930s will receive special attention as the formative period for the new city. In the second chapter, I will turn to the local narratives about the death of old Harput and focus on nostalgia. The Part ends in the 1960s, when Harput was turned into a touristic suburb of Elazığ.

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Chapter 12: The Making of a National Town: Elazığ

Harput does not exist anymore. It exists as a historic old town visited by tourists and nostalgia-seekers but not as a living place. Certain parts of the old town have literally vanished. For instance, the Christian neighborhood at the eastern side of the city— perhaps a site of massacres in 1895— simply disappeared off the face of the earth; no material ruin survived, there is only nature. In other parts, one can visit historic mosques, the second-century Assyrian church, Harput Castle, and some renovated nineteenth-century houses. After filling up on deep history, one might end up in one of the nice kebab restaurants, which constitute the real function of Harput for many in the lowertown today. For the youth, going to Harput also means driving up the hill in the evening, finding a spot with a nice view of the plains, and having a few beers out of sight of the deeply conservative city of Elazığ. In Harput, everybody is an old-fashioned stranger who comes today and leaves in a few hours. It is a break from normal life.

My research for this dissertation started as a project on the disappearance of Harput and the emergence of Elazığ. In my story, a cosmopolitan, Ottoman city was going to vanish and a nationalist, Turkish city was going to replace it. I was going to begin with the early life of Harput, continue with its heyday, and end up with its dying simultaneously with the birth of Elazığ. Then I discovered Mezre. Mezre was not simply the old name of Elazığ for me; in fact, Mezre belonged to a different world, to a different mindset. And Mezre was far from having replaced Harput. This was true not only because the two lived together for a century as a dual-city, but also because it was Mezre that prepared the stage for the golden age of Harput. Notwithstanding the monuments of deep history in Harput today, the city that is really

remembered is the cultural capital—Harput—of the nineteenth century. In other words, Mezre *preceded* Harput. Thus, my story began with Mezre.

The second half of the nineteenth century was the golden age for both parts of the dual city. Mezre turned into a real suburban town and even obtained a fancy name from the Sultan: Mamuretülaziz (or, shortly, Elaziz). In the following decades, the town struggled for and acquired urban functions, like the perfectly grid-style neighborhoods or new municipalities. It also continued to host the Governor (*vali*) and all the state elite, along with Harput's rich. Mezre was the quintessential crystallization of provincial elite modernism. On the other hand, Harput did not cease to accommodate the majority of the dual city's population until the 1920s or 30s. The best schools, most of civil society, the traditional gathering places, the American mission complex, the prestigious mosques and churches, and many business places continued to work in the uppertown. As seen in Part II, it was not even free of new urban transformation attempts in the 1880s. In the 1890s, Harput was the city where Ottoman Armenian provincial literature was born and which rebellious Kurds designated as their main target.⁸⁴⁰ In sum, Mezre and Harput rose together by cultivating and improving each other.

In the first half of the twentieth century, they were going to die together, too. Even though Mezre seems to be just the old name of Elazığ, I maintain that the social space called Mezre in this study died with Harput. And, as we will see in the next chapter, the people of Elazığ developed nostalgia towards both Harput and Mezre. The present chapter, thus, will tell

⁸⁴⁰ Harput was the main target during the 1895 Massacres; Mezre was spared perhaps thanks to the presence of the government offices and forces. We do not have much information about the details of what happened in Mezre during the events, but Barnum wrote: "Mezereh escaped. Perhaps there has been plunder there. Tuesday the Koords assembled before Mezereh and the soldiers really attacked them. Several were killed and they also came to renew the attack on the city [Harput] and some were killed here. It is said that a telegraph was received from Constantinople to resist them. Up to that point the soldiers protected the Koords and even directed them where to go, some of them joining in plunder, before the eyes of their officers." Letter from H. N. Barnum to Rev. J. K. Brown, Harpoot, November 13, 1895, ABCFM, Reel 696.

the story of the disappearance of the dual town as the new Elazığ emerged as a unified major provincial city. I will focus on the 1930s, when Elazığ developed (mainly by government initiative) but I will also touch upon the milestones of the earlier decades of the new century in a fairly fast-moving way. It is not only because the period of the 1910s-20s contains significant events, most notably the Armenian Genocide (1915) and World War I, that deserve separate comprehensive studies. I rather *chose* to set up my tent in the nineteenth century in order to unravel the relatively familiar storyline of the latter period, namely that of nationalism.

Armenian-Muslim Relations in Elaziz

The 1894-96 Massacres did not radically sever the relationship between Armenians and Turks in Harput and Mezre. It was perhaps taken as something extraordinary rather than norm. In the following decade, the more oppressive Abdulhamid's government became, the more the oppositional movements among Armenians and Turks converged. The 1908 Revolution was a turning point for both. Right after the constitutional revolutions in Russia (1905) and Iran (1905-7), the Young Turks movement in the Ottoman Empire succeeded in achieving, in 1908, the restoration of the Ottoman constitution of 1876, the re-opening of the parliament, and the creation of a multi-party, liberal political system. The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) acquired the majority of seats in the parliament and expeditiously turned into the leading political power of Turkey, to the extent that the founding cadres of the Republic (1920-23) were to be from CUP circles. But, before the CUP reinforced its domination in politics and began to act single-handedly (around 1913), the political sphere in the empire was unprecedentedly liberal, passionate, lively and hopeful. The year of 1908 witnessed the most optimistic relationships ever among different communities in the country. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF -

Tashnagtsutyun), for example, had a coalition with the CUP, and their leaders were on the same side, culturally and politically, against the old regime of Abdülhamid II.⁸⁴¹

In Harput/Mezre, too, the revolution created an enthusiastic political climate for all liberal inhabitants. The day of celebrations was unforgettable. The streets were full with thousands of people who came from the surrounding towns and villages to the city to celebrate the new and still unclear concept of ‘freedom.’ At every corner of Mezre, speeches were made, military bands played, and processions took place. İshak Sunguroğlu, the native writer of Harput, recalled many decades later the atmosphere of euphoria and ebullience in the 1908 celebrations. In the uppertown, too, he was invited to a reception in a big khan organized mostly by Armenian merchants, who were as excited as the Turks about the new era of freedom. Even a group of Dersim Kurds came to Mezre to join the celebrations. They were armed and marched as an organized military troop.⁸⁴² Henry H. Riggs, another observer of the events, was even suspicious about this symbolic procession:

... Kurds were invited to come to Harput and make a demonstration of their loyalty to the new government by surrendering to the proper authorities the arms which they no longer needed in their laudable struggle for liberty. A little show was gotten up along this line, mostly comedy, and very limited in its scope, and the arms surrendered were the ancient flintlocks, not the modern weapons that had taken such heavy toll of the Turkish soldiery.⁸⁴³

For the Armenian community in Harput/Mezre, however, Sunguroğlu’s depiction did not diverge from reality. The revolution was received with great excitement among most Armenian intellectuals. They published opinion pieces very supportive of the new regime in press,

⁸⁴¹ Ohannes Kılıçdağı, “Ottoman Armenians in the Second Constitutional Period: Expectations and Reservations,” 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, 2015). For the shared political ideologies and habitus of CUP-ARF alliance right before 1915, see Türkyılmaz, “Rethinking Genocide.”

⁸⁴² İshak Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında*, vol. 4 (İstanbul: Elazığ Kültür ve Tanıtma Vakfı Yayınları, 1968), 327–332.

⁸⁴³ Henry H. Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harput, 1915-17* (Gomidas Institute, 1997), 110.

especially in *Yeprad* [Euphrates], an Armenian bi-weekly published by the Euphrates College's Armenian members in 1909-13. Vahé Tachjian recently uncovered Hovhannes Bujicianian and Donabed Lulejian's memoirs and writings and showed that these two Armenian intellectuals of Harput embraced the promises of the revolution and worked for the implementation of the reforms.⁸⁴⁴ Collaborations materialized in institutions, too. As part of the bourgeoning of civic societies all over the empire after 1908, Armenians and Turks collectively formed societies in Mezre, for example the Society for National Support for the Ottoman Navy.⁸⁴⁵ The Armenian community did not hesitate to organize public events related to Armenian history. On December 18, 1910, upon the death of Catholicos Matthew II Izmirlian (1845-1910), an "unprecedentedly grandiose" memorial service was held at Surp Karabet Church in Harput; all members of the Armenian societies and political parties attended.⁸⁴⁶ In October 1913, the 1500th anniversary of the Armenian alphabet was celebrated with a grand procession of students. As they walked past the municipal building and the governor's office, they sang songs in Armenian, and at the Turkish Sultaniye School they shouted out, 'Long live the Sultan, long live St. Sahag and St. Mesrob.'⁸⁴⁷

The optimism was so high that even upon the 1909 massacres in Adana Prof. Nahigian could write in *Yeprad* that "being Ottoman more than Armenian is our promise."⁸⁴⁸ Similarly, upon the abolition of the military service exemption tax for non-Muslims in 1909, liberal Armenian intellectuals of Harput gave lectures and published articles about the importance of

⁸⁴⁴ Vahé Tachjian, "Building the 'Model Ottoman Citizen': Life and Death in the Region of Harput-Mamüretülaziz (1908-1915)" (Paper, CUNY, New York, January 21, 2015). I am grateful to Vahé Tachjian for sharing the written version of this presentation with me.

⁸⁴⁵ Ohannes Kılıçdağı, "The Bourgeois Transformation and Ottomanism among Anatolian Armenians after the 1908 Revolution" (MA Thesis, Bogazici University, 2005), 68.

⁸⁴⁶ *Yeprad*, no. 23-24, 31 December 1910.

⁸⁴⁷ Tachjian, "Building the 'Model Ottoman Citizen.'"

⁸⁴⁸ Quoted in Kılıçdağı, "The Bourgeois Transformation and Ottomanism among Anatolian Armenians after the 1908 Revolution," 72.

serving the Ottoman fatherland.⁸⁴⁹ In September 1910, the first group of Armenian soldiers, 95 people from Mezre and its vicinity, set out for Istanbul; the patriotic farewell ceremony was attended by a huge crowd of families as well as the military band.⁸⁵⁰ In January 1911, the first mixed conscription call took place; two-third of the recruits were Armenians.⁸⁵¹ The close relations between the Armenian and Turkish communities, even at the dawn of 1915, were described in the following words by Henry H. Riggs, who lived in Harput for two decades and served as the president of Euphrates College in 1903-10:

As a matter of fact, so far as local conditions in Harpoot were concerned, the Armenian atrocities of 1915 had no historical setting. In other periods of massacre, all too frequent in Turkish history, there have been certain conditions that have presaged the coming storm. Not only were all these conditions lacking in 1915, but the relationship of the Armenian to his Moslem neighbor was more friendly and sympathetic than ever before. (...)

As for the feelings of the Moslem population, I saw no evidence whatever during the early months of 1915 that they suspected or feared their Armenian neighbors. There was no animosity nor religious fanaticism evident, and when the storm finally broke, we, who were living in the midst of it realized, clearly, as we remarked frequently in our conversation at the time, that this was no popular outbreak.⁸⁵²

During these optimistic years, the American missionaries had cordial relations with government officials, too. When Annie Tracy Riggs Hospital was opened in a brand new building in Mezre in 1910, for example, it was a Friday and all the officials as well as Muslim religious leaders were present; the latter were even asked to offer prayer. The opening ceremony continued with speeches and music by the college's band; at last, the Governor himself read the

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid., 74–80. *Yeprad*, no. 10, 15 March 1910.

⁸⁵⁰ *Yeprad*, no. 17, 1 September 1910.

⁸⁵¹ *Yeprad* 2, no. 1, 15 January 1911.

⁸⁵² Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harpoot, 1915-17*, 45–46.

official decree.⁸⁵³ The relations between Americans and the Turkish officials had always been good in general; the difference in 1908 was their increasing publicness and visibility. July 4th could be celebrated in 1912 at the American consulate building in Mezre with “a grand display of fireworks,” for instance.⁸⁵⁴

Needless to say, the eruption of World War I struck a severe blow against the optimistic atmosphere in the empire. War mobilization in the eastern provinces was naturally met by all citizens with great despair. When he travelled around the towns of Mamuretülaziz in January 1915, Riggs concluded that all families, Muslims and Armenians alike, with the exception of well-off Turkish families who could evade conscription one way or another, were in misery.⁸⁵⁵ For the conscripted soldiers, too, the conditions were unbearable; for example, Kurds brought to Harput were housed in the buildings of Euphrates College that had been forcefully seized; the living conditions were appalling.⁸⁵⁶ All young villagers were trying to find ways to escape; to intimidate the deserters, Mary Jacobsen took note in her diary, two of them were hanged in the marketplace in Harput in April 1915. Later in the same month, a group of deserters was shot in Mezre, 3 Armenians and 4 Kurds; on May 19, 2 Kurds and 2 Armenians were hanged, again, in the main square.⁸⁵⁷

May 1915 was also the beginning of a series of events of extreme violence against Armenians (deportations, mass killings, torture, forced conversion, abduction of children and

⁸⁵³ Tacy Atkinson, “*The German, the Turk and the Devil Made a Triple Alliance*” - *Harput Diaries, 1908-1917* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute, 2000), 7–9. The hospital was mostly funded by the Armenian community in Harput and in the US, see *Yeprad*, no. 19, 15 October 1910.

⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸⁵⁵ Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harput, 1915-17*, 4–18.

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 34–37.

⁸⁵⁷ Maria Jacobsen, *Diaries of a Danish Missionary: Harput, 1907-1919*, ed. Ara Sarafian, trans. Kristen Vind (Princeton, NJ: Taderon Press, 2001), 59–64.

women, etc.) in 1915-16, the totality of which we call today the Armenian Genocide.⁸⁵⁸ Several scholars have recently put emphasis on the abruptness of the Genocide (rather than its being an expected event).⁸⁵⁹ In Mamuretülaziz, too, on May 1, a Saturday, the arrests of Armenian notables started quite suddenly. Professors at Euphrates College and other Armenian intellectuals were the first victims of imprisonment and torture. In the first week of May, extensive house searches and arrests took place under the pretext of prosecuting clandestine revolutionary activities and seeking out hidden arms. By the end of the month, dozens of prominent figures were imprisoned and later killed. On June 6, with the news that some buried bombs had been found, the second wave of arrests began, this time as a total assault against the entire Armenian community of Harput and Mezre. In the following days, both parts of the twin city were surrounded by soldiers and all Armenian houses were searched one-by-one, whereupon men and older boys were taken to the prisons in Mezre. Throughout June, thousands of Armenian men were taken out of the prisons in convoys at night, brought to places out of sight, and liquidated. Finally, on July 2, the third wave started with the deportation of women, children and the remaining old men. Mezre's *Derviş*, *Nail Bey* and *Çarşı* neighborhoods were first emptied of Armenians, then *Karaçöl*, *İcadiye* and *Ambar* neighborhoods were subjected to deportation. All notable families of Mezre were placed in these convoys, including the Fabrikatorians.⁸⁶⁰

⁸⁵⁸ The literature on the Armenian Genocide is huge and fortunately growing with new works. I content myself by referring to three recent, comprehensive work only: Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*; Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark, eds., *A Question of Genocide : Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

⁸⁵⁹ Most notably, Türkyılmaz, "Rethinking Genocide"; Suny, "Writing Genocide: The Fate of the Ottoman Armenians."

⁸⁶⁰ Harput/Mezre is perhaps the best documented region of the Armenian genocide; further details of the events are immense but left out the scope of this dissertation. The information here is compiled from Kevorkian's invaluable work and the first-hand memoirs/diaries published in English. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*; Atkinson, "*The German, the Turk and the Devil Made a Triple Alliance*" - *Harput Diaries, 1908-1917*; Jacobsen, *Diaries of a Danish Missionary*; Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harput, 1915-17*.

Mezre also had a regional role in the deportations. As Riggs pointed out, “several of the main roads over which the deportation was going on converged at Harpoot. Exiles from the regions of Erzroum, Trebizond, Baibourt and Erzingian, and from Kughi, Palou, Peri, Chemishgezek, Egin and Arabkir, all passed through or near Harpoot.”⁸⁶¹ Thousands of deportees started coming in caravans on July 2 to the city; they were kept in two designated places right outside of the city of Mezre. Caravans coming from the north were to be concentrated in Mezre and sent away to the southern deserts. As reported by Consul Davis and the missionaries, the death camp in Mezre was a place of wretchedness. People in rags, mostly women, were begging for bread; Turks visited the camp only to get girls as slaves/wives; many died in the camp of sickness or hunger and were buried in mass graves next to the camp; those who did not die were made to journey to the south and replaced by newcomers from the north. Many who left Mezre in the summer of 1915 were killed on the way, either by soldiers or by bandits. Later in September and October, Consul Davis and Dr. Atkinson made secret trips to the Lake Gölcük area and found things even worse than they had heard: more than ten thousand bodies were piled in small valleys, all naked.⁸⁶²

Towards the end of the deportations, the twin city began receiving refugees from all over the province. They were displaced from the villages but somehow managed to escape the convoys. Thus, Harput and Mezre’s streets were filled with poor Armenian peasants. Many refugees settled in the houses left by the deported Armenians of the city.⁸⁶³ Nevertheless, as Riggs pointed out, “the problem of housing these exiles was a very serious one. As soon as the Armenians had left Harpoot, their houses were stripped of everything moveable and very soon

⁸⁶¹ Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harpoot, 1915-17*, 146.

⁸⁶² See Part IV Section 7 in Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*; Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harpoot, 1915-17*, 146–149.

⁸⁶³ Ruth A. Parmelee, *A Pioneer in the Euphrates Valley* (New Jersey: Gomidas Institute, 2002), 13.

stripped also of all door and windows.”⁸⁶⁴ Mardiros Chijian remembered that, in Peri town of Harput province, Armenian boys like him were used by government officials to pillage the abandoned Armenian houses; they were made to carry all household items to the church building. The officials confiscated the goods they liked and left the rest to be auctioned by the local government.⁸⁶⁵ Ketchian’s memoir—a rare account of post-genocide life in Hüseyin/Mezre—also tells extensively about the strategies of hiding in the abandoned Armenian houses that had not been taken by Turks.⁸⁶⁶

The deportations and mass killings of Armenians did not continue in Harput-Mezre after the fall of 1915 (although scattered massacres did not cease until later in the war). The remaining Armenians came out of their hiding places and began living a miserable life, since they generally had lost all their business and property. Many orphans were taken care of by the Near East Relief workers (see below), by missionaries and by government orphanages. And many others, especially girls, had been abducted by Muslim families.⁸⁶⁷ Consul Davis related that some Muslim families of Harput used to come to the deportee camp next to Mezre with doctors in order to pick the healthiest and prettiest girls.⁸⁶⁸ After the deportations ended, it became state policy to distribute the remaining Armenians to Muslim villages and marry the young women

⁸⁶⁴ Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harput, 1915-17*, 157.

⁸⁶⁵ Mardiros Chitjian, *A Hair's Breadth from Death: The Memoirs of Hampartzoum Mardiros Chitjian* (London: Taderon Press, 2003), 102–103.

⁸⁶⁶ Bertha Nakshian Ketchian, *In the Shadow of the Fortress - The Genocide Remembered*, ed. Sonia I. Ketchian (Cambridge, Mass.: Zorian Institute, 1988).

⁸⁶⁷ Keith David Watenpaugh, “‘Are There Any Children for Sale?': Genocide and the Transfer of Armenian Children (1915–1922),” *Journal of Human Rights* 12, no. 3 (2013): 283–95.

⁸⁶⁸ Ara Sarafian, “The Absorption of Armenian Women and Children into Muslim Households as a Structural Component of the Armenian Genocide,” in *In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 209–21.

and widows off to Muslim men. Similarly, the government encouraged Muslim families to adopt Armenian orphans.⁸⁶⁹

It is also known that during the deportations many Armenians took refuge in the Dersim region to benefit from the semi-autonomous and generally anti-government politics of the Kurdish federations. They were indeed protected. The Kurds' problem was with the war and with the state authorities. In 1916, the news that Dersim's Kurds were approaching the towns in the Harput province spread panic among the Turkish inhabitants. It was said that "the *Gavours* (infidels) [Armenians] were among them. They are burning and looting everything on the way."⁸⁷⁰ Not unlike what happened in 1895, Dersim Kurds marched towards the city of Harput, plundering and burning many villages along the way, but this time the target was not the Armenians but the Turks. Due to the war with Russia, Dersim was in a devastated condition; Kurdish women and children had already filled the streets of Harput begging for bread. Moreover, the official army was making military interventions in the region in order to secure loyalty. On top of that, it was known by the authorities that thousands of Armenians had found shelter in Dersim and survived thanks to the Kurds. In other words, in 1916, the rebellious Kurds were a serious threat only to the Turks. When they came close to Harput, the soldiers who had been sent to stop them fled back to the city shouting, "Kurds are coming!" They (Kurds) could be stopped only when a considerable amount of military force was sent by the commander of the city.⁸⁷¹

⁸⁶⁹ Fuat Dündar, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question (1878-1918)* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 110–112. For an eye-opening discussion of treatment of abducted women and their Muslim-fathered children by the Armenian authorities, see Lerna Ekmekcioglu, "A Climate for Abduction, a Climate for Redemption: The Politics of Inclusion during and after the Armenian Genocide," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 3 (July 2013): 522–53.

⁸⁷⁰ Chitjian, *A Hair's Breadth from Death: The Memoirs of Hampartzoum Mardiros Chitjian*, 119–123.

⁸⁷¹ Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harpoot, 1915-17*, 178–182.

The local history of Harput after 1915-16 is less known in the current stage of the scholarly literature. Regarding the relations among Armenians, Muslims and Americans, one particular institution needs attention: Near East Relief (NER). The story of the Relief was, as James L. Barton stated, “a narrative of American philanthropy.”⁸⁷² In response to the mass atrocities in spring and summer of 1915, committees to raise funds for relief purposes in Syria, Palestine and Ottoman Armenia were founded in the United States. In the following years, these committees were united under the roof of NER and turned into a decades-long philanthropic initiative officially supported by the US government. Harput had a peculiar place in NER’s story. James Barton (1855-1936), who was the principle architect and the first chairman of NER, began his career as a missionary in Harput the year he graduated from Hartford Theological Seminary in 1885. In a short time he became a respected member of the community and in 1892 he was elected president of Euphrates College. But he left for Boston to become foreign secretary of the Board and served the people of Near East from there until he died. Another ‘Harput graduate’ at the center of relief work was Henry Riggs’ son, Ernest W. Riggs, who was the president of Euphrates College before the war. He became the director of education of the entire NER project.⁸⁷³

As a result, Harput became an important center of NER work in Ottoman Armenia. Some of the American missionaries who had to leave in 1917 when the US entered the war came back to Harput, this time as NER workers. Henry Riggs and Ruth Parmelee were among them; they returned to Harput in 1919. The coming of victorious Americans was met with respect and hospitality, since Americans were not considered colonialists like the British, French or Greeks. “The party was met everywhere with the fullest expressions of oriental courtesy and hospitality.

⁸⁷² James L. Barton, *Story of Near East Relief (1915-1930)* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 11.

⁸⁷³ *Ibid.*, 230.

At Kharput the governor came a full day's journey in order to extend personal and official welcome, and to escort the party with honor to the city."⁸⁷⁴ Chitjian vividly remembered the coming of the relief work buses to Harput:

On one clear dark evening, sixteen American buses drove slowly into Kharput, down the main road, Pahpooryoly, which was a dirt road not meant to accommodate motorized vehicles. The caravan of buses rolled in two lanes, one bus after the other, all were equally spaced from each other. The bus lights formed an impressive stream of lights in the clear evening sky, a novel sight thrilling for us to witness. Simultaneously the shrill of the sirens—jeeve, jeeve, jeeve—blasted into the cool air. What a spectacle! Suddenly the buses all stopped together in a strategic location. The whole city lit up!⁸⁷⁵

The following days, Turks were in a panic, Chitjian writes; they were asking mercy from Armenians because they were afraid of the Americans. Nevertheless, the American presence was not for retributive justice, instead they initiated the Near Eastern Relief work by converting some big, abandoned Armenian houses into orphanages. Henry Riggs came to be the head of the relief work, taking over also the German orphanage. Moreover, the buses were used to transfer some of the surviving Armenians to Istanbul for fifty dollars, which was to be secured from their relatives living in the US.

In the meantime, however, upon the defeat in the war, the empire was irreversibly collapsing. Except for the peaceful Russian borders (thanks to the communist revolution), all sides of the empire were subject to occupation and international negotiations. As a reaction, a national resistance movement was born in Anatolia against the weakened government in Istanbul and against the imperialist powers. This movement led by the educated military and political elite of the imperial bureaucracy was to wage an anti-imperialist war in 1919-22 and form the new national assembly in Ankara (1920), where the Republic of Turkey was declared in 1923. In

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid., 115.

⁸⁷⁵ Chitjian, *A Hair's Breadth from Death: The Memoirs of Hampartzoum Mardiros Chitjian*, 188.

this context of national awakening, in the summer of 1920, NER workers began feeling a hostile and unfriendly attitude towards themselves on the part of government officials. Their letters were censored; their travel was restricted. The orphanages were ordered to be turned over to the government. Finally, the relief workers were ordered to leave the country. The Riggs family had to leave first, at the end of 1920; Ruth Parmelee was deported in the spring of 1922. The official reason was their being agents of communication between Armenians in Turkey and the US. A few months later, NER directors decided to re-locate orphanages to the seacoast towns with easier transportation facilities. Harput Mission Station was thereupon closed for good. The hospital and the college buildings were abandoned.⁸⁷⁶ It was the end of American presence in Harput/Mezre.

Early Nation and Its Discontents, 1920s

In the early 1920s, the new national movement gained power and visibility in the localities. However, the notables of Harput/Mezre did not always collaborate with the local representatives of this movement (as generally assumed by textbook histories). *Satvet-i Milliye* (Power of the Nation) in Elaziz was the official paper of the Association of Defense of National Rights (in short: ‘the Association’), the anti-imperialist national-defense organization which was going to be the kernel of the Republican People’s Party and the new nation-state. On the pages of *Satvet-i Milliye* in 1922-23, the reader recurrently encounters criticism of the local elite. The municipality, for example, was targeted by anonymous letters from citizens for not doing any of its jobs, especially those related to urban sanitation and beauty. Contrary to the claims of *Mamuretülaziz* paper, it was claimed, the streets and sidewalks were being built by the

⁸⁷⁶ Parmelee, *A Pioneer in the Euphrates Valley*, 59–66.

government, not by the municipality.⁸⁷⁷ The duality and antagonism between the local government and the local elite was clearly delineated. The notables and the rich were criticized for not financially supporting the government's orphanage, for instance; the governors were trying to serve their people but "the greedy capitalists," the "brazen" and "self-seeking ones" of the city were undermining the governors' efforts.⁸⁷⁸

Not for nothing did the orphanages appear as a site of struggle for the proponents of the new national movement. In good anti-imperialist fashion, they aimed to take the welfare institutions from the hands of foreigners. They invited the notables to make sacrifices for the sake of national dignity, among which was looking after the nation's children. Not surprisingly, another of *Satvet-i Milliye's* targets was the NER workers in Harput, who were labeled as spies because they published articles in the international press about the miserable condition of minorities in Turkey.⁸⁷⁹ Beth Baron's most recent work suggests that, in Egypt of the 1920s, the struggle over orphans against the missionaries played a crucial role in the formation of alternative national welfare networks, most notably the Muslim Brotherhood.⁸⁸⁰ In Elaziz, too, a similar struggle served to generate the ideological base of the new regime's nationalism. The battle to serve the new nation aimed to eliminate those who had used to exploit the naïve citizens, namely to eliminate the foreigners and the self-interested internal enemies. Besides selfish rich people and Americans, notable Armenians were of course on the list of targets, too.

⁸⁷⁷ *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 3, 17 April 1922; no. 9, 24 April 1922, in Açıkseç and Çakmak, *Satvet-i Milliye Gazetesi*, 1–4.

⁸⁷⁸ *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 9, 24 April 1922, in *Ibid.*, 3–4. The paper's anti-imperialist and anti-bourgeois sentiments made it possible that "Comrade Lenin" and "Comrade Chicherin's" pictures were on its pages. *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 15, 12 June 1922; no. 16, 19 June 1922, in *Ibid.*, 10–12.

⁸⁷⁹ *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 14, 5 June 1922; no. 16, 19 June 1922; no. 17, 17 July 1922, in Açıkseç and Çakmak, *Satvet-i Milliye Gazetesi*, 7–8, 11–14.

⁸⁸⁰ Beth Baron, *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014).

For example, a very well-known, long-serving pharmacist, Mardiros Efendi, was openly accused of selling medicine at double the price of pharmacist Arif Hikmet Bey.⁸⁸¹

In general, the nationalization of welfare work was the primary public policy of the Association. The American Hospital (in Mezre), for instance, had already been used for wounded soldiers since the start of the war, and in the new era it was to become a national hospital. The building and all the hospital's equipment was donated to the national health service. Moreover, the buildings of German missionaries in Mezre were to host the national orphanage. During World War I, local governments forced the missionaries to bring all facilities into service of the state, but the personnel remained largely composed of Americans and Armenians. In the 1920s the extermination of Armenians, the expulsion of foreigners, and the emphasis on nationalization (and Turkification) made the new government seek new staff, mostly in vain. Thus, lack of personnel was the hospital's biggest problem. "Unfortunately there is no nurse from our nation," the paper confessed.⁸⁸²

The native local elite were reluctant to join the new nationalist movement but they seem to have been forced to cooperate. For example, dynastic families were openly invited to donate to the welfare institutions in the nationalist paper—almost a public threat. As a result, the Ottoman Red Crescent's local office received substantial donations from the Beyzade, Boloşzade, Sungurzade and Şedelezade families, from the mayor, and naturally from deputy Çötelizade Muhiddin Bey.⁸⁸³ In August 1922, some of these families were already members of the Association. Its seven-member Elaziz Branch consisted of the mayor Halil Bey as well as of dynastic family members like Çötelizade Halid Bey, Şedelezade Fehmi Bey, Munzurzade Ali

⁸⁸¹ *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 18, 24 July 1922, in Açıkse and Çakmak, *Satvet-i Milliye Gazetesi*, 15.

⁸⁸² *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 27, 2 October 1922, in *Ibid.*, 28.

⁸⁸³ *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 23, 4 September 1922; no. 27, 2 October 1922, in *Ibid.*, 23, 28.

Efendi, and Pulutlu Halil Bey. But the chair and the vice-chair were not from the city's notable families. The chair, Kaya Sebati Bey, was leader of a Kurdish tribe. He took an active role in organizing militia for national defense during the war and was one of those who were tried in the court-martial for crimes against Armenians during the deportations.⁸⁸⁴

In sum, in the early 1920s, the new nationalist movement certainly did not have the monopoly of power in the locality, but it was gradually earning it thanks to its nation-wide military mobilization and legitimacy based on the anti-imperialist war. The local power struggle could easily be discerned in polemics with *Mamuretülaziz* published in the pages of *Satvet-i Milliye*. The former (which represented the old, Ottoman government) did not easily concede *Satvet-i Milliye*'s criticisms. Once the latter's chief-editor was sentenced to three months of imprisonment and 15,000 *kurus* of indemnity for publishing news criticizing the municipality. Another time, the paper was prosecuted for misleading news about high crime rates in the city.⁸⁸⁵ Nevertheless, in June 1923, in the elections for the new regime's parliament in Ankara, the Association managed to fill all of Elaziz's seats (five in total) with its own candidates. Before the elections, the Association (now more correctly the People's Party) had campaigned extensively in the towns around Elaziz. And *Satvet-i Milliye* had invited all electors to vote for their candidates: a general, a chief of police, two local bureaucrats, and Çötelizade Muhiddin Bey.⁸⁸⁶ All five went to the parliament that was to declare Turkey a republic in October 1923. The proponents of the new regime were gradually coming to dominate local politics.

Little more than a year later, the new regime in Ankara was seriously challenged by an armed uprising of Sunni Kurdish federations from the northeast of the Mamuretülaziz region. It

⁸⁸⁴ *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 22, 28 August 1922, in *Ibid.*, 20.

⁸⁸⁵ *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 16, 19 June 1922; no. 29, 16 October 1922, in *Ibid.*, 12, 30.

⁸⁸⁶ *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 37, 18 June 1923, no. 38, 24 June 1923 in *Ibid.*, 35–37.

would prove a trial for local nationalists in Elaziz. In the first months of 1925, the rebellion erupted from towns in Harput and Diyarbekir provinces under the leadership of Sheikh Said from Palu. The rebels' declared aim was to rescue the Islamic state from annihilation (under the attacks of the new regime of Atatürk's republic). On the other hand, the judges of the national tribunals created upon the suppression of the rebellion insisted that Sheikh Said and his associates had wanted to create an independent Kurdistan in the region. The defendants never admitted this accusation, even though they openly stated their wish to bring back *sharia* (the Islamic law/state).⁸⁸⁷

The Sheikh Said Rebellion has contradictory meanings and memories for Elaziz. The truth is that the city of Elaziz (Mezre) fell after six hours of light armed conflict, and the Ottoman forces, as well as the governor, escaped to Malatya.⁸⁸⁸ Thus, it is not surprising that Elaziz was pilloried in the press as incapable or, even worse, collaborative. Even decades later, in 1957, *Yeni Harput* responded to these apparently unforgotten rumors and laid the blame at the feet of the governor only, trying to rescue the people of Elaziz from the contempt of historians.⁸⁸⁹ Nevertheless, it is a fact that Sheikh Şerif, Harput Commander of the rebellious forces, entered the city without much resistance. He met with the former deputy of Dersim, Hasan Hayri Bey, in Hüseyinik. They came to Mezre together and Sheikh Şerif gave a speech in front of the Governor's House assuring the audience that no harm would come to any citizens.⁸⁹⁰ In his later interrogation at the "East Independence Tribunal" (instituted in the form of revolutionary tribunals) in Diyarbekir, Sheikh Şerif said that he knew only one person in Elaziz beforehand:

⁸⁸⁷ For the trials, see Mahmut Akyürekli, *Şark İstiklâl Mahkemesi, 1925-1927* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2013).

⁸⁸⁸ Tuğba Yıldırım, ed., *Kürt Sorunu ve Devlet - Tedip ve Tenkil Politikaları (1925-1947)*, Necmeddin Sahir Sılan Arşivi 3 (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2011), 39.

⁸⁸⁹ *Yeni Harput*, 27 April 1957.

⁸⁹⁰ Felat Özsoy and Tahsin Eriş, *Öncesi ve Sonrasında 1925 Kürt Direnişi* (İstanbul: Pêri Yayınları, 2007), 158–59.

Çötelizade Halit Bey. When the city was taken, they met and went to the Governor's House in Halit Bey's car. The notables of the city were called to the government house and had a meeting with Sheikh Şerif, who wanted to appoint a new governor. First, it was offered to Çötelizade Asım Bey but he refused the post; then, Beyzade Mehmed Nuri Efendi, the mufti, was chosen as the new governor.⁸⁹¹

In the following days, however, chaos and disorder dominated Mezre/Harput's daily life. After Sheikh Şerif's army left the city to chase the Ottoman army, those who were freed from the prison and those who arrived in the city from the villages began looting and plundering in the city. As a reaction, many notables who had at first been neutral turned against the rebellion and gave support to the resistance forces. A militia was formed under the coalition of officers and nationalist youth. Two days later, Elaziz was taken back from the Kurds. The same Beyzade Mehmed Nuri Efendi was appointed governor by the new regime at the recommendation of the militia commanders; he had apparently collaborated with them in their struggle against the occupation.⁸⁹²

The rebellion in the region was suppressed by the Turkish army. Revolutionary tribunals were immediately installed in Diyarbakir and hundreds of rebels were hanged in public. The tribunals were then moved to Elaziz. The number of convicts was so high that the abandoned Armenian Church in Mezre was turned into a prison, and Kurds were stacked there.⁸⁹³ In the meantime, the rebellion was used by the new regime as a pretext to put pressure on the press and the opposing political parties. New laws were enacted, with the effect that many journalists and

⁸⁹¹ Ahmet Süreyya Örgüven, *Şeyh Sait İsyanı ve Şark İstiklâl Mahkemesi* (İstanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2002), 231–242. Beyzade Mehmed Nuri Efendi was one of three deputies of Elaziz in the parliament of 1908 and one of two representatives of Elaziz in the Sivas Congress in September 1919. Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında*, 1958, 1:185, 220.

⁸⁹² M. Şerif Fırat, *Doğu İlleri ve Varto Tarihi* (İstanbul: Şaka Matbaası, 1948), 164–65; Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında*, 1958, 1:228–231.

⁸⁹³ Akyürekli, *Şark İstiklâl Mahkemesi, 1925-1927*, 34, 112.

politicians were accused of committing crimes against the state. As a result, many journalists were tried in the same exceptional tribunals in Elaziz. They were faced with capital punishment but, unlike the Kurdish rebels, they were allowed to socialize with their intellectual associates, namely with the judges and local notables. Some stayed in the mansion donated by Çarsancaklı Ahmed Bey, whose servility to the courts was interpreted as an effort to be pardoned for his hospitality towards the rebellious commander Sheikh Şerif.⁸⁹⁴

The Sheikh Said Rebellion is a milestone for Elaziz because it served as a proof of the barbarism and backwardness of the traditional power-holders (Kurdish sheikhs and collaborating local notables) vis-à-vis the patriotism and active agency of nationalist cadres. A government official who was in Elaziz during the rebellion observed this potential in the new movement. He proposed to institutionalize it by founding public organization networks in Turkish cities adjacent to Kurdish regions. These cities were to be “Fortresses of Turkish Culture” amidst and at the border of Kurdistan. He suggested that Erzurum in the north, Gaziantep in the south and Elaziz in the middle were the most suitable places for such a project.⁸⁹⁵ The project was actualized—spontaneously, if not by design. In the following decade, Elaziz was in fact turned into a quintessential national city. The nationalist armed struggle in 1919-22 and the subsequent defeat of Kurdish resistance to the new regime paved the way for the golden age of the nation-state building in the 1930s. At first, Elaziz was not in any sense a stronghold of the new forces, but it was made so over the course of the 1920s. All social and political domains had already been rid of Armenians. Now it was time to tame the semi-autonomous Kurdish federations.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid., 109–112.

⁸⁹⁵ “Hülâsa: Kürtlere Dair – 7 Mayıs 1926,” in Yıldırım, *Kürt Sorunu ve Devlet - Tedip ve Tenkil Politikaları (1925-1947)*, 66.

Elaziz was to play a central role, once again, during these attempts at internal colonization in the 1930s.

Modernizing and Ideologizing the Urban Space, 1930s

The decade of the 1930s had an extraordinary aura in the history of Turkey. Having defeated its military and ideological enemies over the course of the 1920s, the new Republic turned the 30s into a theater of national rituals. Along the same lines as its European neighbors, like Italy, Germany and the USSR, corporatist and authoritarian policies in Turkey aimed at— and partially achieved— a huge public mobilization in education, industrial production, agriculture, civil organizations, youth clubs, and cultural institutions. Turkey truly became an imagined community thanks to language reforms (i.e. Turkification), mass national media, national celebrations and anniversaries, and the parliamentary system (albeit with a single party). In this decade, all Anatolian towns went through a process of modernization and ideologization of urban space. All city centers were designed in the same way, with a new square, an Ataturk boulevard, a People's House building, and later with an Ataturk monument. Ankara as the new capital city was of course the embodiment of nationalist city-building; it became a model for the others. And Elaziz was to be one of its best disciples.

The governor of Elaziz, Tefik Sırrı Gür (1892-1959), was no less than an embodiment of the Republican characteristics. Born in Istanbul to a high-ranking bureaucrat family, Gür acquired an elite education and received his first government post at the age of 20. He served in the imperial army during the war and joined the National Liberation Movement right after the defeat. In the 1920s, as an ambitious official of the new regime, he occupied various important posts until he was appointed as the Governor of İçel in 1931. In the following nineteen years, Gür served as a governor in four provinces— including Elaziz— and undertook an immense

number of development projects. He was known as an authoritative governor; he rarely followed the rules when he wanted to realize his projects. Therefore, with the emergence of multi-party democracy (1945-50), many complaints were filed about his ways of accomplishing business deals. In the end, when the single-party regime officially ended with the electoral victory of the Democrat Party in 1950, this representative of the old (Republican) regime was forcibly retired.⁸⁹⁶

Tevfik Sırrı Gür was the governor of Elaziz from 1933 to 1937. In accordance with his entire career as a developmentalist governor, he intervened in the built environment of the city in an unprecedented way in which culture was expressed, first and foremost in a material form.⁸⁹⁷ His signature building was the People's House (1935)– a quintessential Republican place for cultural and educational activities (Figure 12-1).⁸⁹⁸ The House hosted scientific meetings (for example, linguistic conferences aiming to Turkify the village names) as well as concerts and exhibitions. With its new music hall and billiard hall, it represented the Europeanized elite culture of the founders of the Republic. Its monthly periodical *Altan* published articles of national-cultural indoctrination, i.e. from the non-existence of Kurdish identity and language to the non-Armenian history of the region. The loudspeakers in the city used to broadcast daily news, music and conferences from the House to the urban public sphere.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁶ <http://www.yumuktepe.com/vali-tevfik-sirri-gur-av-sinasi-develi>.

⁸⁹⁷ For the classic work on the symbolic and material nationalization of urban spaces in the 1930s, see Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*.

⁸⁹⁸ Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "The People's Houses and the Cult of the Peasant in Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (October 1998): 67–91.

⁸⁹⁹ For a general overview of what was accomplished in the year of 1935, see *Altan* 2, no. 13, February 1936.

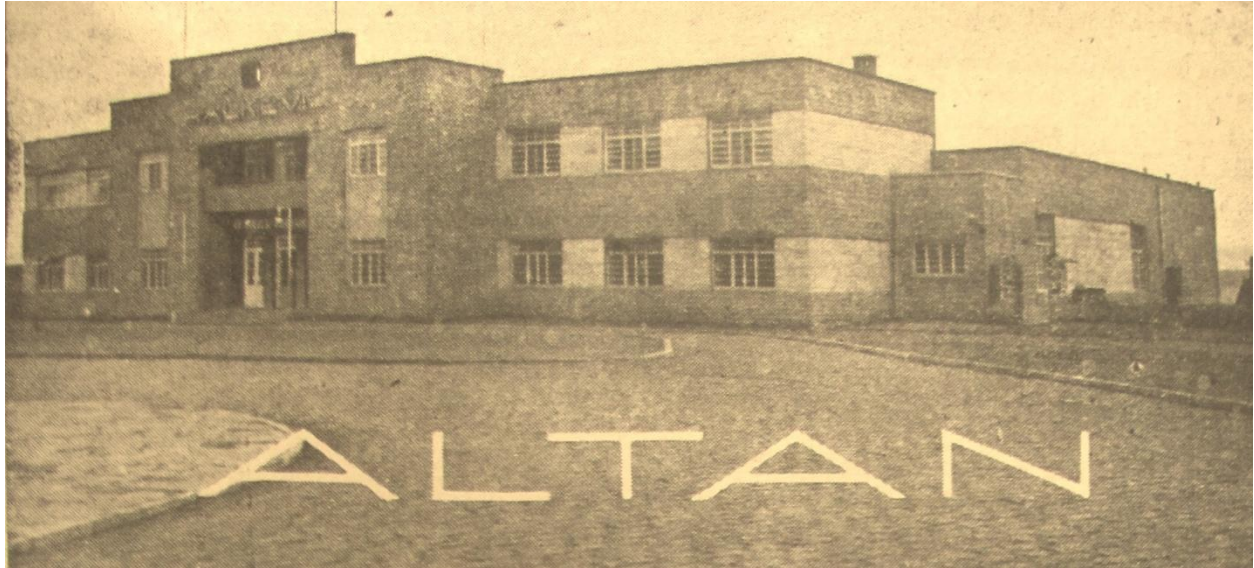


Figure 12-1: People's House in Elaziz, 1937.⁹⁰⁰

It is true that another People's House was opened in Harput in 1936⁹⁰¹ but the uppertown never attracted any real attention from the government. Tevfik Sırrı Gür was determined to create a modern town and the old Harput had no place in this project whatsoever. Even today one can discern in the walls of the People's House building (today, Teachers' House) marble gravestones carried from the cemeteries of the uppertown.⁹⁰² Oral history interviews conducted by local historian Mustafa Balaban in the 1990s revealed that in Gür's time inhabitants of Harput were encouraged to dismantle their houses in the uppertown and to use the material to build new apartments in the modern city on the plain. Two workers Balaban interviewed stated that they

⁹⁰⁰ *Altan* 3, no. 27, June 1937.

⁹⁰¹ *Altan* 2, no. 14, March 1936. An Atatürk monument was erected in Harput, too. *Turan*, 26 August 1935.

⁹⁰² Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında*, 1958, 1:7, 233. In a 1953 article, the founder and chief-columnist of *Uluova*, Muhsin Parlar, named Gür as one of the most contributing governors of Elazığ; however, in a footnote, he added "Note: But Tevfik Gür's disrespect towards gravestones has not been forgotten." *Uluova*, 14 April 1953. Additionally, in his later post in Mersin (1943-47), Gür used the stones and marbles of a Greek church in the construction of the People's House of Mersin. <http://www.yumuktepe.com/vali-tevfik-sirri-gur-av-sinasi-develi>. In an oral history interview conducted by Sargon Donabed on Assyrian life in Harput, Kasper Safer said "All the headstones, which were once remembrances of ancestors long dead, chiseled upon by generations of bishops, are all gone, stolen by thieves and eventually used for other purposes by the Turkish government." Sargon Donabed, *Remnants of Heroes – The Assyrian Experience: The Continuity of the Assyrian Heritage from Kharput to New England* (Chicago: Assyrian Academic Society Press, 2003), 29.

made their living carrying stones from Harput to Mezre in those years, but after the rush ended they were ostracized by many people for contributing to the destruction of the old town.⁹⁰³

While Harput was taken down stone by stone, the local government continued to undertake public works projects in and around Mezre. The Provincial Council's duties were not very different from those in the Tanzimat period; the local gazette *Turan* was full of proclamations about purchases by tender for construction projects, auctions of properties in dispute, and investigations of land plots without title deeds.⁹⁰⁴ Besides People's House, a big hospital, a stadium, a gym, a movie theater and a high school were built; confiscations were underway in order to widen İstasyon Street; the main Atatürk and İnönü Streets were paved with cobblestone (*parke*); the Republican Square was created; and children's playgrounds and primary schools were established.⁹⁰⁵ At the same time, in addition to 18 villages where they were already settled, two counties of the province were designated as settlement zones for Muslim refugees from Romania; accordingly, housing complexes were being built by the local government.⁹⁰⁶

The great increase in public works in Elaziz was advertised on the pages of *Altan* (the gazette of the People's House) as the beginning of a new age. The old days of Mezre were already turning into a nostalgic past: "Once upon a time, Elâziz was really like a paradise," the gazette proclaimed. This "pretty farm," home for candid and rich people, was surrounded with kilometers-long vineyards and gardens. But in time all this natural beauty, forests and springs,

⁹⁰³ Oral History Interview with Mustafa Balaban, 1 June 2012.

⁹⁰⁴ These included the auctioning of the abandoned properties of Armenians. For example, see *Turan*, 2 February 1935; 23 February 1935; 14 March 1935; 28 June 1937.

⁹⁰⁵ *Turan*, 9 January 1936; 16 January 1936; 13 November 1936; "Cumhuriyet Devrinde Elazığda Başarılan İşler," *Altan* 3, no. 43, October 1938.

⁹⁰⁶ For the news about the refugees, see *Turan*, 14 August 1935; 8 October 1935; 2 December 1935; 10 June 1936; 1 July 1936; 20 July 1936; 3 August 1936; *Altan* 2, no. 13, February 1936. The designated two counties were Kovancılar and Sivrice.

had been despoiled and lost. Moreover, the remittances from America had ceased to come due to the global economic depression. As a result, Elaziz could never seem to recover from the years-long wars. Today, however, was the day. Elaziz was again made regional military headquarters (see below), and the province was bestowed an able governor, Tevfik Sırrı Gür. Consequently, millions of lira had been allocated and huge construction projects initiated.⁹⁰⁷

Governor Gür heavily relied on the monetary contributions of the urban notables in accomplishing his projects; hence, as had already been mentioned, he was infamous among many in the city. The conflict rose to such a pitch that one day Gür published an open letter addressing the “intellectuals” (*münevver*) of the city. He was furious about their loquaciousness and inertia concerning urban affairs; they only criticized but never even tried to do a thing, he wrote. It seems that the reluctance of the local notables of Elaziz to actively take part in nation-building via city-building in the 1920s was continuing into the 1930s, too. Of more interest for us is the way Gür advertised the new life of Elaziz:

Dear Intellectual Friend,

It is not known in the western provinces—and I learned it here as you did—that people of the eastern provinces likened this gifted part of the country to Paris because of the quintuplet building built by five foreign brothers out of poplar and mud-brick on the road that connects Elaziz in 18-20 days to commercial and cultural centers. Even the Provincial Yearbook of 1907 registered these five houses out of poplar and mud-brick as representative of gothic art, as a revolutionary event in building structure. (...)

[Namely,] the area called Five Brothers...

This five mud-brick rubbish was not alone in creating this fabricated fame. Movements brought about by nine colleges that were commissioned to ruin your national conscience and to kill your national soul as well as firm connections that were formed with foreign countries to your detriment have contributed to this fame that works against your national wealth, national history and national feelings.

⁹⁰⁷ “Elâzizin Taliine Yeni Bir Güneş Doğdu,” *Altan* 2, no. 15, April 1936.

Times have changed.

You began to breathe the exhilarating air of your independent country, and you continued to rescue your place from foreigners while you always prepare to live better. And, with the Culture Neighborhood you founded in the Five Brothers area, you also managed to efface this name that used to remind us of the foreigners.⁹⁰⁸

The reader will remember the quintuple building complex erected by the five sons of Krikor Garabet İpekciyan, also known as the Fabrikatoryan Brothers (Ch. 5); and, by “nine colleges” Gür referred to the gorgeous building complex of the Harput missionaries (Euphrates College). Although it is not unexpected in 1930s’ nationalism, it is still striking that he called “foreign” not only Americans but also native Armenians. The disappearance of the Armenians from the city was normalized (at least in the official discourse) to the extent that the governor could easily dismiss the Brothers as foreigners. Moreover, Gür’s contempt towards moral decadence was expressed through a battle of buildings. The classic-style college buildings and brothers’ houses were faced down by the modern-style (futuristic) People’s House and other buildings of Gür’s. The Fabrikatoryan Brothers’ houses were inhabited by government officials; their area was named Culture Neighborhood (*Kültür Mahallesi*) and symbolized the Republican culture war against the degenerate Ottomans. The street in front of the houses even hosted national celebrations (possibly on the tenth anniversary of the Republic in 1933) (Figure 12-2).

⁹⁰⁸ Tefik Sırrı Gür, “Bana Ne Deme, ve Darılma!” *Altan* 2, no. 23, February 1937.



Figure 12-2: National celebrations in front of Five Brothers' Houses in Elaziz, 1930s.⁹⁰⁹

The accomplishments in Elaziz were not, of course, fabricated. If we turn Walter Benjamin's famous statement upside down, we can emphasize that there is no document of barbarism which is not at the same time a document of civilization.⁹¹⁰ In the 1930s, Elazığ truly became a candidate for being the Paris of Eastern Turkey. Writer Aka Gündüz could not help being surprised when he visited Elaziz in 1937. Its clean streets and impressive public buildings, especially the People's House, attracted his attention. As he wrote in an Istanbul paper:

Elaziz is not like Malatya. Malatya is like a conservative girl who is jealous of even her own beauty. She is covered head to toe with green, refraining from showing even the tip of her nose. Elaziz, [on the other hand], is in the mood of lively and vampish brides who want to show off their beauty. With her flowery dress you can even see her chaste décolleté.⁹¹¹

⁹⁰⁹ <http://www.elaziz.net>.

⁹¹⁰ The original statement is: "there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism." Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 256.

⁹¹¹ Aka Gündüz, "Bir Halk Yardım Ederse Bir Vali Ne Yapabilir?" *Altan* 3, no. 29, August 1937.



Figure 12-3: Elaziz's main street, 1940s.⁹¹²

The modernization of Elaziz in the 1930s was not limited to its built environment and cultural institutions; the city was turned into a “Turkish fortress” in military terms, too. The military operation in Dersim in 1937 and the subsequent massacres and compulsory displacements from 1938 on is the most comprehensive and violent intervention by the central government in Kurdistan’s history (until the 1980s). The colonization attempts that had started in the 1830s during Reşid Pasha’s rule in Harput and Diyarbekir provinces (Ch. 2) culminated in 1937-38 with the first total war against the Kurdish tribal confederations in Dersim. The details of this horrific event were little known until recently; only in the 2000s did scholars and oral historians with great effort unearth the scope of the massacres by publishing memoirs and secret official reports. Even though a thorough analysis of the event is beyond the limits of this project, one aspect of Operation Dersim makes it crucial to the story of Mezre: the operation was planned and commanded in Elaziz.

⁹¹² <http://www.elaziz.net>.

Interestingly, the 1930s was a mirror-image of the 1830s for Mezre. A hundred years later, Mezre/Elaziz was once again promoted to be the military outpost of the central government at the invisible border between state and non-state, between Anatolia and Kurdistan. Once again the Dersim region was set to be assimilated into the central state –this time of a republic not an empire. And, as we will see shortly, once again a supra-province was created here and entrusted to a commander-general with extraordinary powers. Mezre, thus, was re-privileged by the central government as the unique place to govern the outer reaches of sovereignty.

Operation Dersim, 1938-39

All official reports on Dersim produced from the 1880s on agreed that Dersim had never in its entire history been taken under state control. This region was also different from the rest of Kurdistan, where alliances and selective empowerment of some tribes in the Tanzimat era had created complicated relationships between the state and the tribes. Dersim, on the other hand, managed to remain as autonomous as possible. Even when Hamidiye Cavalries were established out of selected tribes in the 1890s, Dersim confederations were not seen as trustworthy enough to be included in the project.⁹¹³ Between the 1880s and 1930s, apart from constant low-level conflict, at least eleven extensive military operations were launched against Dersim, but each was repelled by the coordinated defense of the tribal federations. In many cases, like in 1909, arrested leaders were pardoned to avoid further rebellions.⁹¹⁴ Throughout these decades, more than two dozen detailed official reports were produced on this mysterious place based on local

⁹¹³ *Dersim Raporu* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınevi, 2010), 159–66.

⁹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 167–194.

research and first-hand experience; some of the reports are also rich in ethnographic details about rituals, domestic economy, and even sexual behaviors.⁹¹⁵

Over decades, in every interaction between the center and Dersim, the local government in Elaziz had a primary role—either as a reluctant intermediary or as the protagonist, depending on the context. One of the official reports on the region was written up in 1890 by an ex-governor of Mamuretülaziz, who called Dersim “acne in the heart of Anatolia.” “If Anatolia is thought of as a human body,” he continued, “Dersim region would be an old abscess in its lungs.”⁹¹⁶ Nevertheless, the importance of Elaziz as a material place (rather than a power node only) increased when hit-and-run military interventions were gradually accompanied by actual colonization in the 1930s. Finally, radical solutions that had been recurrently expressed in the earlier reports were carried out: confiscation of arms, settlement of tribesmen, and road construction. For example, in 1928-30, 198 households from Dersim were settled in the villages of the Elaziz plain.⁹¹⁷

With a series of laws enacted after 1925 (upon the Sheikh Said Rebellion), the Ottoman East was gradually taken under state-of-exception rule. The most important step was the establishment of the First General Inspectorate in 1927 in all of southeastern Anatolia (including Elaziz) with Diyarbakır being its capital city. This institution was not different than the military-administrative supra-provinces of the Tanzimat era (see the *müşirlik* or marshal-areas of 1838 in Chapter 2); the military-governor of the Inspectorate was yet again furnished with extraordinary authority over military as well as legal and administrative matters. With the exception of a

⁹¹⁵ *Dersim Raporu*; Cihangir Gündoğdu and Vural Genç, *Dersim’de Osmanlı Siyaseti: İzâle-i Vahşet, Tashîh-i İtikâd ve Tasfiye-i Ezhân, 1880-1913* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2013); Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu İskân, Telgraflar, Dilekçeler, Mektuplar, Fotoğraflar* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2009).

⁹¹⁶ Gündoğdu and Genç, *Dersim’de Osmanlı Siyaseti*, 75.

⁹¹⁷ *Dersim Raporu*, 70–73. 38 of them went back, though, due to conflicts with local Turkish landlords who did not want to give up their monopoly over ‘abandoned properties’ given to the new settlers. Most of the abandoned properties, of course, belonged to deported or killed Armenian families.

Second Inspectorate that was formed in Thrace, all four Inspectorates were placed in the Ottoman East: the Third was for the northeastern part and the Forth was specifically for Dersim.⁹¹⁸

The first news about the formation of the Forth Inspectorate in Dersim came in October 1935. The most important detail for this study was that Elaziz was taken out of the First Inspectorate and made the headquarters of the Forth.⁹¹⁹ On January 2nd, 1936, Commander-General Abdullah Alpdoğan arrived in Elaziz as the Inspector of the supra-province as well as the Governor of the newly created Tunçeli province (Tunçeli was the new, invented name for the infamous Dersim).⁹²⁰ Governor Gür, the mayor and a huge crowd of people welcomed him at the train station.⁹²¹ In his entire seven-year term, until June 1943, General Alpdoğan lived in Elaziz, not in Dersim/Tunçeli; the latter was governed by keeping it at arm's length from the former.

In his first months, the Inspector met with local governors in the region and created his Tunçeli Council (in Elaziz, of course). The preparatory steps of state-making began with road construction between Elaziz and Dersim.⁹²² In April 1936, General Alpdoğan toured the region to supervise the paving.⁹²³ In March some bandits surrendered and in May the new court in Tunçeli concluded 150 cases in a very short time,⁹²⁴ but more commonly Dersim was represented in the papers by procurement notices. Towards the end of 1936, the Tunçeli Public Works Office

⁹¹⁸ Cemil Koçak, *Umumi Müfettişlikler (1927-1952)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003).

⁹¹⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 21 October 1935; *Turan*, 23 October 1935.

⁹²⁰ 'Tunç-eli' meant the country of bronze. Supposedly, Turks who came from the Central Asia to Dersim processed copper and stannum to produce bronze. "Tunçeli," *Altan* 2, no. 15, Nisan 1936. Also see, Ömer Kemal Açar, "Tuncelinin Türklüğü Orta Asyanın ve Anadolunun Türklüğü Kadar Eskidir," *Altan* 3, no. 29, August 1937. For a later article on the Turkishness of the name Dersim, see Halil İhsan Olsal, "Tunceli Bölgesine Verilen Dersim İsminin Menşei Hakkında Tarihi Bir Araştırma," *Elazığ*, 29 March – 6 April 1954.

⁹²¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 3 and 4 February 1936; *Turan*, 6 February 1936.

⁹²² Of course, Governor Gür also dealt with road construction on the way to Dersim before the Inspector's coming. For example, for the opening of a bridge on Munzur River, see *Turan*, 14 September 1935.

⁹²³ *Cumhuriyet*, 22 February 1936; 4 March 1936; 14 April 1936; *Turan*, 1 April 1936.

⁹²⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 23 March 1936; 28 May 1936.

became the most active agency seen in the notices on future military garrisons and road pavement. They were followed by tender notices for police stations, government houses, construction materials, and officers' housing in different parts of the same region. Almost every issue of the local Elaziz papers included such notices until the end of the year.⁹²⁵ Both literally and metaphorically, the way to Dersim was being paved for the 1937 Operation.

The visit of the Minister of Interior in March 1937 perhaps meant more than was announced, especially because the next news about Elaziz in the national press in June was entitled "The Lowdown on the Tunceli Rebellion."⁹²⁶ From excerpts of the letters of a journalist, we learn that some people from Dersim were hanged in the streets of Elaziz in May, that the leaders of Dersim officially requested the cessation of garrison and bridge construction in the region, that they raided an outpost and set a bridge on fire, and that pilot Sabiha Gökçen (the adopted daughter of president Atatürk) was bombarding the leaders' villages. In other words, the Turkish army launched a comprehensive military operation against the entire Dersim region in June-July 1937. Prime Minister İsmet İnönü also came to Elaziz—to the headquarters of Operation Dersim—to visit the war zone.⁹²⁷ At the end of July, the resistance was largely broken, and the army was progressing to capture the leaders. Simultaneously, garrisons and outposts were being constructed at every corner of Dersim.⁹²⁸ Hence, the periodical of the People's House in Elaziz declared that Dersim had "become history." This hitherto unvisited, unknown

⁹²⁵ See for example, *Turan*, 17 July 1936; 20 July 1936; 23 July 1936; 11 August 1936; 13 August 1936; 15 August 1936; 17 August 1936; continued until the winter. Also see *Cumhuriyet*, 12 August 1936; 17 August 1936. The local paper *Turan* did not give much information besides these notices about what happened in Dersim. With the coming spring, similar notices appeared again: *Turan*, 19 March 1937; 22 March 1937; 25 March 1937. The ads of summer months reflected more acute needs of the soldiers rather than construction needs, reflecting the real war conditions. Finally, in fall 1937, many notices about auctioning the oak of the Dersim region appear in the papers, signifying the successful invasion of the region; see for example, *Turan*, 18 August 1937; 3 November 1937.

⁹²⁶ See, respectively, *Cumhuriyet*, 27 March 1936; "Tunceli İsyanının İçyüzü," 16 June 1936.

⁹²⁷ *Turan*, 20 June 1937; *Cumhuriyet*, 21 and 22 June 1937. For İnönü's visit, also see "Şereflenmiş Elâziz," *Altan* 3, no. 27, June 1937.

⁹²⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 July 1937; 21 July 1937; 24 July 1937; 16 August 1937.

stronghold of backwardness was today replaced by Tunceli, where nice citizens of the Turkish Republic were to live.⁹²⁹

The most famous leader of Dersim and of the resistance, Seyyit Rıza, finally surrendered and was brought to Elaziz in mid-September.⁹³⁰ Tribunals held in Elaziz lasted two months; 58 rebels were put on trial. During the first months of the trials, before Seyyit Rıza surrendered, the prisoners were treated as respected enemy leaders. Perhaps to impress them with the city's modernity, the famous tribal leaders were invited to visit the People's House in Elaziz.⁹³¹ In the end, seven leaders—including Seyyit Rıza—were sentenced to death. They were hanged in Buğday Square on November 15 before dawn.⁹³² Only two days after the executions, on November 17th, Atatürk came to Elaziz (for the first and last time). The entire city center was decorated for the ceremony; thousands welcomed him at the train station. He stayed only one night in Elaziz; in the meantime, he joined the opening of a bridge on the way to Dersim and officially changed the name of Elaziz to Elazığ—supposedly its forgotten, original form. It was announced that the name of the city came from 'el' meaning land and 'azığ' meaning food, so

⁹²⁹ "Kapanan ve Açılan Tarih Sayfaları," *Altan* 3, no. 27, Haziran 1937.

⁹³⁰ Aygün's work emphasizes that Seyyit Rıza voluntarily surrendered in order to end the armed conflict. Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Hacı Hıdır Ataç'ın Defteri* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2012), 15–16, 150. Reliable information about the relationship between the government and Seyyit Rıza is not sufficient. Nevertheless, some details reveal that they were not always distant enemies. A secret military report from around 1933, for example, accused Seyyit Rıza for betraying the government to which his forces were to help during an expedition. It was also stated that the Minister of Interior met with Seyyit Rıza in person during his visit to Dersim in 1931. The Minister warned the government that Seyyit Rıza's influence was increasing the region. *Dersim Raporu*. When he was captured, it was reported that he wanted to see Atatürk, that he never rebelled against the Republic, and that other tribes were responsible for what happened. After his first questioning in Elaziz, he said to the waiting crowd "I am a Turk, I never revolted against the Turkish nation." He also insisted on being called Rıza Bey rather than Seyyit Rıza, and on wearing his hat rather than a turban. *Cumhuriyet*, 16, 18, 21 September 1937. Perhaps, similar to Bedirhan Bey's case in the 1840s, the greatest rebel was the closest—not the distant-enemy of the government.

⁹³¹ According to an Istanbul-based paper, the chiefs were shocked when they saw mirrors. Yalçın Doğan, *Savrulanlar* (İstanbul: Kırmızı Kedi Yayınevi, 2012), 196.

⁹³² Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu İskân*, 93–95. For news about Seyyit Rıza in Elaziz, including his trial, see *Cumhuriyet*, 16, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25 September 1937; 3, 6, 13, 16, 19, 23, 28 October 1937; 2 and 11 November 1937. The local paper *Turan* was very tight-lipped about Seyyit Rıza; as an example of rare coverage, see *Turan*, 13 October 1937.

Elazığ stood for ‘fertile land.’⁹³³ In other words, Mezre’s invented name Mamuret-ül-Aziz (1867) was replaced by another invented name, which ironically took as its main base the abbreviated version of the former (El-Aziz). The second time was farce.

The second phase of Operation Dersim in 1938 was composed of massacres and deportations. As early as the day Atatürk visited Elaziz, the phrase “‘internal colonization” (*dahilî kolonization*) was put into words in a secret meeting at the train station among Atatürk, his core group from the government, and Commander-General Abdullah Alpdoğan. According to the plan, the inhabitants of these mountainous areas were to be settled in better places where more economic opportunities existed.⁹³⁴ In 1938, Elaziz was not only the command center but also the distribution point for the displaced inhabitants. 5,000 people from Dersim were deported to the west of Turkey through Elaziz train station.⁹³⁵ An ordinary telegram on what happened solely on August 16 and 17 stated, for example, that in one place 170 people were destroyed and their villages were burnt, and in another place 69 people were destroyed and 381 were sent to Elaziz for distribution to the west.⁹³⁶ All oral history accounts mention that during their temporary stay in the city women were made to cut their hair and men’s heads were shaved. They were brought to public baths; their cloths were washed or they were given new clothes and blankets for the journey to the west.⁹³⁷ The new Elazığ was going to be the gate to the modern world.

⁹³³ *Cumhuriyet*, 18 and November 1937; *Turan*, 18 and 22 November 1937; *Altan* 3, no. 32, December 1937.

⁹³⁴ The replica of the original archival document in Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Hacı Hıdır Ataç’ın Defteri*, 171.

⁹³⁵ Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu İskân*, 99.

⁹³⁶ Prime Ministry Republican Archive (PMRA), 30.10/111.151.?, published in Serap Yeşiltuna, *Devletin Dersim Arşivi* (İstanbul: İleri Yayınları, 2012), 809.

⁹³⁷ Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Hacı Hıdır Ataç’ın Defteri*, 73; Özgür Fındık, *Kara Vagon: Dersim-Kırım ve Sürgün* (İstanbul: Fam Yayınları, 2012), 97, 109, 184; Bülent Bilmez, Gülay Kayacan, and Şükrü Aslan, *Belleklerdeki Dersim ’38: Kuşaklararası Sözlü Tarih Projesi Alan Araştırması Raporu* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2011), 87, 91–93; Nezahat Gündoğan and Kazım Gündoğan, *Dersim’in Kayıp Kızları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 62, 78, 335–36, 344.

Elazığ was formed as an icon of modernity in the 1930s supposedly in the middle of darkness. Governor Gür and Commander-General Alpdoğan were two able figures who left their signature on the history of the city. Similar to Reşid and Hafız Pashas of the 1830s, they raised Mezre to a national level by turning it into the most important military outpost and one of the fastest-developing cities in Anatolia. New Elazığ also brought nation-wide fame to two women. One was Sabiha Gökçen, the first woman pilot of Turkey. She was active in the bombardment of Dersim and became a national heroine. The other was Sıdıka Avar, the legendary teacher who served in Elazığ as a selfless soldier of enlightenment. She taught at the Elazığ Girls' Institute in 1939-42 and directed the institute from 1943 to 1954 until she fell into disfavor, much like Gür, under Democrat Party's rule.

In the aftermath of Operation Dersim, Sıdıka Avar basically turned the girls' institute into a colonial laboratory where the primitive and savage children of Dersim were transformed into modern citizens of the new nation. In her memoirs, she tells us how she courageously travelled in the mountainous areas— accompanied by gendarmes, of course- to collect girls from Kurdish villages. Most families resisted, she admitted, but many gradually understood the benefits of the institute for their daughters. In order to demonstrate to bureaucrats what she was achieving in this faraway city in the east, she used to take pictures of the girls when they first came to the institute, and then take their pictures after some time had passed, with new clothing and hair in plaits (Figure 12-4).⁹³⁸ As expected, the forced recruitment of the girls by the police was not necessarily accepted by the families or by the girls. Oral history registers reveal that, in order to

⁹³⁸ Sıdıka Avar, *Dağ Çiçeklerim (Anılar)*, 4th ed. (Ankara: Öğretmen Dünyası Yayınları, 2004).

evade being taken to the Elazığ Girls' Institute, girls either hid in the surrounding caves and forests during the day or they were quickly married off.⁹³⁹



Figure 12-4: The student #976 named Fodul at Elazığ Girls' Institute.⁹⁴⁰

In conclusion, the 1930s exemplifies the nationalization of space in Harput-Mezre, a process which started in the early 1920s. Both twins of the dual city died, whereupon Elazığ emerged as a national city. The uppertown was literally abandoned in the 1930s. Even though the details of the move are unclear, it is certain that the attempt to create a modern city for the new nation-state was effective. The lowertown as we know it also disappeared in the same decades. As I put forward in Part II, Mezre's existence was *relative*; its social space needs to be understood in relation to Harput's. First as its suburb, then as its modern twin, Mezre always preserved its short-distance relation to Harput. In Republican times, Mezre lost its relational

⁹³⁹ Bilmez, Kayacan, and Aslan, *Belleklerdeki Dersim '38: Kuşaklararası Sözlü Tarih Projesi Alan Araştırması Raporu*, 112–3.

⁹⁴⁰ Naim Arnas Elazığ City Museum Collection.

characteristics and turned into a unified city, Elaziğ. War-making in Dersim went hand-in-hand with city-making in the new city. Extremely influential figures (by national standards) in the political, military and cultural domains met in this city and transformed it into an exemplary national province in the 1930s and 40s.

It is therefore utterly a fabrication to suggest that Harput's decline began with the formation of Mezre in the early nineteenth century. As neat as it sounds, that the cosmopolitan old town was segregated and left to gradual ruination by the new colonial town is simply untrue. Until the 1920s, Harput not only did not decline, but in fact developed into a cultural center for the region. Both Harput and Mezre lived their golden age *at the same time* in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nor did Harput's history end in 1915. Scholars too easily tend to match the annihilation of the Armenian population to the loss of Harput, perhaps because Harput is nostalgically identified with multi-cultural Ottoman toleration. The overwhelming Armenian majority in Mezre is often forgotten. Both in nationalist and in critical accounts, the possibility of dual existence of Harput and Mezre in proximity is left out of the picture.

Chapter 13: Nostalgia for the Dual City

Harput had no place in the nationalization project of provincial towns in Turkey. For Tevfik Sırrı Gür, it was Mezre to be populated and modernized; for Abdullah Alpdoğan, it was Dersim to be de-populated and modernized; for Sıdıka Avar, it was the cultural relationship between Mezre and Dersim to be strengthened and, again, modernized. Unlike the 1830s, the central state was present today in the periphery not only for war-making but also to transform the entire life of the provinces. It was the age of centralization, and no powerful government agent would tolerate duality in the city. It was meaningless to have political and cultural centers separate since culture was entirely politicized. The choice was made in favor of Mezre; Harput was going to fade into oblivion, to be remembered in the 1950s. In the meantime, however, the ambitious state project stopped in Elazığ, too. In the 1940s, the government withdrew the extraordinary supply of services from this supposedly special city. Elazığ turned into an ordinary province of the homogenous republic. The people of Elazığ must have felt disposable. As a result, they developed nostalgia towards Harput, Mezre, and even Elazığ of the 30s, once they had lost them all.

Abandonment, 1940s

The material destruction of Harput began during the term of Tevfik Sırrı Gür. As a meaningful coincidence, a few days after his appointment order was published, on January 13th, 1933, a fire erupted in the business district of the old town and flames consumed a hundred shops in the market. The fire was certainly going to accelerate the uppertown's abandonment, although it was reported that people of Harput had already begun moving to Mezre in the last couple of

years.⁹⁴¹ By 1936, the population had dropped to 5,000 (700 households); many buildings were either destroyed or ruined due to neglect. It is true that the local government opened first a new municipality building and then a People's House in Harput;⁹⁴² however, the uppertown was to completely disappear from the press in the next decade. An op-ed entitled "Save Harput" published in local *Turan* in 1943 sounds like one last attempt to draw attention to the town:

Today, we need to get hold of those who destroy their houses in Harput in order to use the timber, those who used the inscribed stones of the castle in the foundation of their future houses, and shout at them: They don't belong to you, they belong to civilization!⁹⁴³

Nevertheless, the annihilation of Harput continued. In 1948, during his cross-Anatolia tour, journalist Metin Toker visited Harput and Elazığ, too. His essay "A City Shrunk from 8000 to 52 Households" captured the extent of the dissolution in Harput:

We were told that Elazığ is a spendthrift city and advised to look upon the poor deceased whose inheritance was being spent. The deceased is Harput.

When we saw Harput, we could swear that the city before us had just survived an earthquake. All houses were in ruinous condition. Wrecks, stone piles and debris were all over the place. Streets had disappeared, roads had vanished. It is not easy for an 8,000-household city to shrink into 52 households. Harput has moved to Elazığ where the city was founded. Besides, many [new] buildings' stones were taken out from the houses of Harput. I haven't seen the ruins of Pompeii, but I suspect that there, too, blows this terrifying, horripilating silence that rules in Harput. The city—if one can still call this place a city—lay in dead tranquility. We found ourselves unintentionally tiptoeing. People were timid and withdrawn. Kids looked at you like some weird creature.⁹⁴⁴

Harput was abandoned, ruined and destroyed in the 1930s and 40s. In the meantime, however, Elazığ did *not* develop unceasingly towards a bright future, either. In fact, much like what happened a hundred years ago, the heroic years of urban development proved fleeting,

⁹⁴¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 14 and 21 January 1933.

⁹⁴² *Cumhuriyet*, 22 August 1934; 6 August 1936; 9 September 1936.

⁹⁴³ *Turan*, 16 December 1943.

⁹⁴⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 18 June 1948.

coinciding with the years of war-making in the provinces. The state elite of the 1930s undertook a far more comprehensive transformation than those in the 1830s did, but after all, when war-making ended, even the new Elazığ fell from grace with the central government. After Operation Dersim, the city was left once again to local dynamics. With the additional help of general poverty and war-like conditions in the 1940s, no discernible progress was registered in the urban history of Elazığ after the late 1930s.

In an article published in the very first week of *Elazığ*, a new local gazette, in April 1950, the author accuses the city of being in “complete lethargy;” there was all talk but no action.⁹⁴⁵ In another article entitled “Imagined City,” the critic describes his dream city by enumerating what Elazığ was not: the streets are liberally strewn with green spaces; a university was opened; movie theaters show neither tawdry Arab movies nor snobbish American ones, and the audience does not whistle at kissing scenes; in theaters, the viewers do not demand belly-shows; coffeehouses are empty but the libraries full; and many factories are functioning.⁹⁴⁶ On the pages of *Elazığ*, columnists complained about several issues of urban life, like the beggars all over the city center, gambling going hand-in-hand with prostitution, smuggled meat sold in the streets, unqualified drivers and the lack of a sewage system and public toilets.⁹⁴⁷ As a response, the mayor once

⁹⁴⁵ A. Şevket Bohça, “Elâzığ Dâvâsı,” *Elazığ*, 13 April 1950.

⁹⁴⁶ Burhan Gürdoğan, “Hayal Şehir,” *Elazığ*, 11 July 1950. For similar critiques about the theater audience, see “Tiyatro,” *Elazığ*, 11 October 1952.

⁹⁴⁷ *Elazığ*, 14 May 1950; 3 June 1950; 4-7 July 1950; 4 October 1950; 15 November 1950; 20 November 1950; 8 January 1951; 1 March 1951; 2 April 1951; 7 November 1951; 15 July 1952; 11 August 1952; 21 October 1952; *Uluova*, 1 July 1953; Suphi Öge, “Memleketime Dönüş,” *Elazığ*, 10 July 1953; *Uluova*, 15 July 1953; Suphi Öge, “Hikmetinden Sual Olunmaz,” *Elazığ*, 3 August 1953; *Uluova*, 15 September 1953; Suphi Öge, “Elazığ Sokakları,” *Elazığ*, 16 November 1953; *Uluova* 15 Temmuz 1954; 15 October 1954; 26 April 1955; *Yeni Harput*, 20 August 1955; 18 December 1955; 31 January 1957; 5 February 1957; Ş. L. Akgün, “Bu Şehir,” 13 June 1957; Ş. L. Akgün, “Ezeli Derdimiz,” 16 July 1957.

published an article and invited the inhabitants to collaborate with the municipality in keeping the city clean.⁹⁴⁸

All of Turkey was urbanized at an unprecedented pace in 1945-55 and similar elite complaints about the newcomers to the urban centers were very common in all cities' papers, especially in Istanbul. However, Elazığ's experience had one additional aspect: Most of the newcomers to this city were from Kurdish areas. When a journalist asked some beggars in the streets where they were from, they named places like Hozat, Mazgirt, Palu, Varto, and Muş, all predominantly Kurdish towns. To his question about when they came to Elazığ, one responded "right after the operation," namely Operation Dersim.⁹⁴⁹ After the Operation, thousands of people from Dersim were deported to western provinces, but in the following years, Elazığ became one of the primary destinations for unforced immigration. Today's Fevziçakmak and Yıldızbağları neighborhoods are still populated by Alawis from Dersim. Some of the deportees in the west also returned to Elazığ after the prohibition was lifted around 1949.⁹⁵⁰

In other words, Elazığ's urbanization experience was doubly annoying for the urban notables: peasants filled the urban space and they were Kurds. The image of civilized Elazığ, so-called Paris of the East, was in danger of losing its elite, urban character. In an article called "The Spiritual Development of the City," the columnist invited his readers to cultivate the right attitudes for an urban life.⁹⁵¹ In "Who're These Men," another journalist depicts the newcomer drivers in the city as yellow and dirty-faced, bearded, swearing, spitting on the floor, and smoking.⁹⁵² In the 1930s, modern Elazığ defined itself vis-à-vis backward Dersim; these

⁹⁴⁸ *Elazığ*, 27 December 1950.

⁹⁴⁹ Halil İhsan Olsal, "Dilencilerle Hasbihal," *Elazığ*, 4-7 July 1950.

⁹⁵⁰ Hıdır Şahin's life-story published in Fındık, *Kara Vagon: Dersim-Kırım ve Sürgün*, 93-101.

⁹⁵¹ Orhan Senemoğlu, "Şehrin Manevi Kalkınması," *Elazığ*, 8 July 1952.

⁹⁵² Dr. Mutemir Yazıcı, "Kim Bu Adamlar," *Elazığ*, 7 October 1952.

stereotypes justified the operation in the first place. In the 1940s, however, the ‘success’ of the operation had turned the region upside down and triggered immigration to the promising, new, nearby city. For the locals, it was these uncultured newcomers who caused the city to lose its modern character.

The abandonment by the state in the 1940s was different from the abandonment a hundred years ago in terms of its effects. This time, the promises were so highly embellished with Republican idealism that being cast aside was a real frustration. It was as if the nationalist project had deceived the local notables: the outsiders came with great promises, made the inhabitants abandon Harput, created a national city in a few years, gained support for the Dersim Operation, and spread the idea that Elazığ was the Paris of the East, but then in the 1940s they left. The people of Elazığ were abandoned, left with neither Harput, nor Mezre.

Nostalgia, 1950s

As a result, the 1950s turned into a decade of nostalgia for the golden days of the past. An ideal image of Harput appeared on the stage as something to mourn for. In “Rueful City,” a columnist described Elazığ as a place which “entered on the inheritance of historic Harput but never lived even a moment of the latter’s golden age.” He compared the legendary handicrafts and manufacture of Harput to the jobless masses killing time in coffeehouses in Elazığ.⁹⁵³ In “Unforgotten, Unforgettable Harput,” another writer lamented the ruined Harput that “could not find a helping hand during its suffering years in misery.”⁹⁵⁴ Many intellectuals agreed that Elazığ could not take Harput’s place, especially in cultural matters.⁹⁵⁵ As a result, articles about the

⁹⁵³ M. Yaşar Büyükağaoğlu, “Dertli Şehir,” *Elazığ*, 6 June 1950. Also see, Büyük Ağaoğlu, “Dertli Şehir,” *Uluova*, 21 and 22 June 1955.

⁹⁵⁴ Ziya Çarsancaklı, “Unutulmamış Unutulmayacak Harput,” *Elazığ*, 22 September 1950.

⁹⁵⁵ Orhan Senemoğlu, “Elazığ’ın En Şöhretli Şeyi,” *Elazığ*, 17 July 1952. For a romantic article on Harput’s madrasas, see Dr. Mutemir Yazıcı, “Harput Medreseleri ve Vazife Aşkın Şaheser Bir Numunesi,” *Elazığ*, 27

history of Harput and Mamuretülaziz began appearing in press.⁹⁵⁶ The name of the old city was associated with innocence and sophisticated culture.⁹⁵⁷ In 1955, a new paper entitled *New Harput* entered publication with the aim of reviving Harput.⁹⁵⁸ In the following years, trees were planted on the sides of the road to Harput, the foundations of the new municipality building were laid, a touristic restaurant and a museum were opened, the Society for Developing and Beautifying Harput was founded, and historic monuments were renovated.⁹⁵⁹ Harput was turned into a recreational area for the people of Elazığ.⁹⁶⁰ While Mezre had developed as a suburb of Harput a century ago, now Harput was turning into a suburb of Elazığ.

Of course, some sarcastic articles on the pages of *Elazığ* also meant to criticize the previous RPP (Republican People's Party, the founding party of the Republic) government. The representatives of the Democrat Party (DP), who came to power in 1950, like MP Ömer Faruk Saraç, put the blame on RPP for the recent miserable conditions in Elazığ. Saraç wrote that because of RPP's politics Elazığ could not follow Harput's progressive path and turned into a ruin (*harabe*), but thanks to the new DP government the city was now developing faster than ever.⁹⁶¹ When in 1956 the first sugar refinery was opened with the president and the prime

February 1953. İshak Sunguroğlu, the author of four-volume *On the Way to Harput*, also complained about ugliness in Elazığ in comparison to Harput, "Elazığ'a Yakından Bir Bakış," *Yeni Harput*, 22 June 1955. Also see, "Elazığ'ın Kültürel Kalkınması," *Yeni Harput*, 21 and 22 September 1955; 7 October 1955.

⁹⁵⁶ Apart from other cited articles, see Suphi Öge, "Elazığ'ın Tarihçesine Kısa Bir Bakış," *Elazığ*, 30 November and 1 December 1953; İshak Hakkı Subaşı, "Elâzığ'ı Tanıyalım ve Tanıtalım," *Yeni Harput*, 14-19 June 1955; Hayri Uçaroğlu, "Yabancı Gözüyle Elâzığ Harput," *Yeni Harput*, 23 and 25 June 1955; "Harput Tarihine Bir Bakış," *Yeni Harput*, a feuilleton starting on 18 August 1955; "Kültür Şehri Elazığ," *Elazığ-Harput Sesi*, 23 January 1958; Faiz Demiroğlu, "Geçmişte Harput," *Elazığ-Harput Sesi*, 8 March – 14 April 1958; Y. Büyükağaoğlu, "Dünkü Elazığ," *Elazığ-Harput Sesi*, 27 March 1958.

⁹⁵⁷ For an epic-like article on the garbage man of the Harput street, see Dr. Mutemir Yazıcı, "İçinin Işığı Sönmemiş Adam," *Elazığ*, 16 August 1954.

⁹⁵⁸ See, for example, the editorial by Dursun Çolakoğlu, "Harput İhya Edilmeli," *Yeni Harput*, 23 June 1955.

⁹⁵⁹ *Yeni Harput*, 12-18 September 1956; 3 and 6 March 1957; 4 April 1957; 3 August 1957; 19 November 1957. *Elazığ – Harput Sesi*, 21 January 1958; 2 May 1958; 31 May 1958; 2 July 1958.

⁹⁶⁰ *Elazığ-Harput Sesi*, 14 and 29 July 1958; 5, 13, 15, 18 and 19 August 1958.

⁹⁶¹ Ömer Sanaç, "Harput Eyaleti ve Mamuretülâziz Vilayeti," *Elazığ*, 27 April 1953; Ömer Sanaç, "Elâzığ'ın Son Yıllardaki Hali," *Elazığ*, 30 April 1953; Ömer Sanaç, "D.P. İktidarı Zamanında Elâzığ," *Elazığ*, 2-8 May 1953. In

minister attending the ceremony, the future Elazığ was imagined as a city of factories (Figure 13-1).⁹⁶²



Figure 13-1: Special issue of *Yeni Harput* on future Elazığ as a factory town.⁹⁶³

The new regime’s developmentalism and critique of the recent past made its proponents re-visit the transregional and cosmopolitan history of Harput, too. In October 1954, when a committee of experts composed of government officials and American professors came to Elazığ for an inspection connected with a possible future university, *Elazığ* was issued with a colored English-Turkish headline “Welcome – Hoşgeldiniz” and reminded its readers that three quarters

these articles, Sanaç extensively advertises the new developments in the city, like the new factories, banks, construction works, hospitals, schools, etc. See also, Dursun Çolakoğlu, “Elazığ Nasıl Kalkınır,” *Elazığ*, 23-30 January 1954; “Gelişen Elazığ,” *Elazığ-Harput Sesi*, 29 March – 2 April 1958.

⁹⁶² *Yeni Harput*, 1 October 1956.

⁹⁶³ On the right: “Tomorrow’s Elazığ will be Developed and Prosperous.” *Yeni Harput*, 1 October 1956.

of a century before, too, another group of American professors had selected Harput after visiting all cities in the East and founded an American College here. The picture of Wheeler's bust standing in the front yard of the American Hospital was published; the Barnums and the Riggs were memorialized with great respect.⁹⁶⁴ Ironically, this missionary history that had been erased by Elazığ was shown as evidence of Elazığ's superiority in modern educational matters.⁹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, after years of hopeful waiting in the city, Erzurum was selected in the final decision to host the new university of the east.⁹⁶⁶

When old Harput and its relation with America were remembered in these early years of the 1950s, emigrants from Harput living in the US also appeared in public culture, almost out of the blue. In 1950, the x-ray machine sent by the Harput diaspora made a stir in Elazığ; it fostered gratitude towards fellow townsmen living in the richest country in the world, and it also revealed, once again, the backwardness of Elazığ (it took months to find an expert who could use the machine).⁹⁶⁷ In 1951, \$3,400 was donated to the tuberculosis dispensary in Elazığ by the same diaspora community (mostly in Massachusetts, and in Detroit and Chicago).⁹⁶⁸ In 1954, \$669 was sent to the homeland to renovate the roofs of two mosques in Perçenç; 38 of the donors

⁹⁶⁴ "Welcome – Hoşgeldiniz, Atatürk Üniversitesi Heyeti Şehrimizde," and Dr. Mutemir Yazıcı, "Hoşgeldiniz Amerikalı Misafirlerimiz," *Elazığ*, 7 October 1954. In other articles, too, the American and French colleges were remembered positively as an index of cultured nature of Harput people, see İshak Hakkı Subaşı, "Elâzığ'da Kültür Aşkı," *Yeni Harput*, 18 June 1955.

⁹⁶⁵ Two days later, Wheeler's picture was on the front cover with a caption saying "Dr. Crosby Howard Wheeler, who appreciated thirst for science among the people of Elazığ." *Elazığ*, 9 October 1954. For a similar article, see "Kalkınan Elazığ," *Elazığ*, 14 September 1955; "Kültür Şehri Elazığ," *Elazığ-Harput Sesi*, 23 January 1958.

⁹⁶⁶ For the political polemic among two local newspapers about the reasons of losing the opportunity for the university, see *Elazığ*, 16 March 1955; 22 March 1955; 23 March 1955; 29 March 1955; 1 April 1955; 11 April 1955.

⁹⁶⁷ *Elazığ*, "Röntgen Masalı," 30 April 1950; Fethi Ülkü, "Amerikadaki Hemşehrilerimize Elazığ'dan Selam," 28 May 1950; 2 June 1950; 27 September 1950; 2 January 1952; 6 April 1953. The story of the x-ray machine was told in 1955 on the pages of *Yeni Harput* by excerpts from letters of Harput diaspora in the US. "People from Harput in Foreign Lands," *Yeni Harput*, 23 September – 2 October 1955.

⁹⁶⁸ İhsan Tipigil, "Amerika'daki Hemşehrilere Teşekkür," *Elazığ*, 24 November 1951.

were from Worcester, 11 from Providence, and 5 from Buffalo.⁹⁶⁹ Another \$200 was sent by 37 fellow men to the people of Hoh (perhaps Hoği) village to repair the mosque.⁹⁷⁰ In 1956, \$2,000 was sent to the dispensary from Worcester, again.⁹⁷¹ In 1958, a migrant in the US, whose name was “Vart Haan,” applied to the local government to build a hospital in the city.⁹⁷²

The new relationship between Elazığ and its diaspora did not consist of one-way gifts only. Separated relatives began communicating with each other. For instance, on December 31st, 1954, Elazığ’s telephone company provided long-distance calls for all townsmen to help them contact with their acquaintances in the US for New Year’s Eve.⁹⁷³ In November, it was heard that an American agent had come to Istanbul to find the heir of a deceased migrant who had bequeathed \$20 million; the heir was found in Elazığ.⁹⁷⁴ Some managed to visit their homeland before dying, though. Hüseyin Temmuz and Halil Osman, for example, were among those who came to their hometown after 45 years of separation.⁹⁷⁵ In 1961, millionaire Aslan Serimyan (an Armenian name), 55 years old, originally from Harput, came to Istanbul from California and announced that he was looking for a wife around 35 years old, 5’ 7” tall, slim and good-looking. In a few days, 15 women applied, but Serimyan was not satisfied by the applicants.⁹⁷⁶

At the same time, as part of the post-1945 Americanization, nation-wide interest emerged towards the people living in the US. In *Hürriyet*, a series of interviews with the Muslim diaspora was published under the title of “Turks in America” in 1948.⁹⁷⁷ Nuri Ahmed Yardımcı, one of the

⁹⁶⁹ *Elazığ*, 28 and 29 July 1954; 3 November 1954.

⁹⁷⁰ *Uluova*, 26 March 1954.

⁹⁷¹ *Yeni Harput*, 14 September 1956.

⁹⁷² *Elazığ-Harput Sesi*, 11 March 1958.

⁹⁷³ *Uluova*, 30 December 1954.

⁹⁷⁴ *Uluova*, 13 and 16 November 1954.

⁹⁷⁵ *Milliyet*, 21 June 1952; *Cumhuriyet*, 21 July 1955.

⁹⁷⁶ *Milliyet*, 12 and 15 June 1961.

⁹⁷⁷ These articles were re-printed in Rıfat N. Bali, *Anadolu’dan Yeni Dünya’ya: Amerika’ya İlk Göç Eden Türklerin Yaşam Öyküleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004).

interviewees, had a success story with a beginning in Elaziz, where he left his wife and their newborn when leaving for America (around 1903). He claimed to be Detroit's first Ottoman Sunni immigrant. He began working in barbershop owned by an Ottoman Greek; he was good at it and later worked in the navy as a chief barber. He saved all of his earnings, not even going to the cinema once. In the end, in 1921, he set up a transportation company in Detroit, and then he entered the real estate business. In the 1930s, he was already well off and sent \$500 to his wife and child to bring them to Detroit. When they met at the station, the glitter of Nuri Ahmed's car impressed his family at once. The big house, heating system, hot water, radio, refrigerator, another car in the garage, and all the other luxuries of modern domestic life mesmerized his wife and flattered Nuri Ahmed's pride. He founded the Turkish Orphan's Association's Detroit branch in 1936 and later organized the donation campaign for the x-ray machine sent to Elazığ. After World War II, too, the association was involved in many public projects in his hometown. The Yardımcı family paid a visit to Elazığ in 1963; two years later, Nuri Ahmed Yardımcı passed away.⁹⁷⁸

Yardımcı's life is a classic example of the success story of an immigrant who made it. In fact, many Muslim migrants in the US either came back in the 1920s or stayed but could not really achieve anything. Another series of interviews was published in *Milliyet* in 1958 with the title, "Those who went to America but did not come back." Out of five essays, the last three were about recent immigrants: a taxi driver in New York, a businessman, and a surgeon— all had gone to the US in the early 1950s. The first two essays, however, were about the early immigrants and in both cases the interviewees were from Harput: "40 People from Harput in Boston" and

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.; Barbara Bilg , "Voluntary Associations in the Old Turkish Community of Metropolitan Detroit," in *Muslim Communities in North America*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane I. Smith (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 381–405.

“Elazığ Restaurant in America.” The first two essays were gloomy narratives of surviving in a foreign country, whereas the last three were success stories.⁹⁷⁹ Upon the appearance of these interviews in the papers, hundreds of letters were mailed by the readers to their relatives in the US.⁹⁸⁰

It was also possible to find people who had returned from North America to their native land.⁹⁸¹ For instance, when Nermin Erdentuğ conducted village ethnography in two villages of Elazığ in the early 1950s, she met in one village around 20 people who had lived in the US. She wrote critically that they still remembered how to speak English but were completely assimilated back to primitive peasant culture, without having any effect on the locality.⁹⁸² As another example, a journalist who travelled around Çemişgezek (in the Dersim region) in 1956 met Uncle Asım when he visited Elazığ. He was born in 1893 in a village of Elaziz. At the age of 18, he convinced his father to let him set out for the US to join his cousin. “In those days,” he said, “it was very fashionable to go to America.” Asım worked in the factories in Massachusetts, first, and then at the Studebaker and Cadillac automobile factories in Detroit. For a while, he worked as a motorbike acrobat and travelled to fairs around the country. He made quite good money but when he fell in love with a girl named Bird in Kansas, Ohio, they spent all of his savings in two months. He worked again in factories for a while, later he opened a restaurant and ran it for a year. In the late 1920s he decided to come back to his homeland, partly because he had not heard anything from his family since the Sheik Said Rebellion and he was worried.⁹⁸³

⁹⁷⁹ *Milliyet*, 26-30 January 1958.

⁹⁸⁰ *Milliyet*, 10 March 1958.

⁹⁸¹ In 1928, when Melville Chater was walking in the streets of Harput someone addressed him in English “Hullo, Johnny! Where you coming?” Chater learned soon that the person had worked as a shoemaker in Brockton, Mass., and he added “There are hundreds like him in Anatolian towns.” Chater, “The Kizilbash Clans of Kurdistan,” 485.

⁹⁸² Nermin Erdentuğ, *A Study on the Social Structure of a Turkish Village* (Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası, 1959).

⁹⁸³ Ümit Deniz, “İşte Çemişgezek,” 3 January 1956.

In the 1950s the new interest and nostalgia towards old Harput and the people of old Harput (those in the US were the living remnants of the old town) gave birth to two semi-ethnographic works. İshak Sunguroğlu (1888-1977) was born in Harput, received his education in Elaziz and became a bureaucrat and teacher. In 1922, he moved to Istanbul to go into business and he lived there until the end of his life. In 1944, he somehow came across an issue of *Turan* and read an article by one of his old acquaintances about the ruinous condition of Harput. He was shocked to hear that his hometown was dying out. Thus, he decided to write about the old days of Harput, its ancient history, its culture, its faces, its buildings, its music, its cuisine, namely about everything related to Harput; in other words, he tried to salvage a vanishing town and its culture from oblivion and annihilation. In 1948, he visited Harput and Elazığ; in later years, too, he talked to many people as well as did research in the archives. He wrote in the local papers to raise awareness about the dangerous situation in Harput and called for attention from local government.⁹⁸⁴ Finally, in 1958, he published the first volume of *On the Way to Harput*.⁹⁸⁵ In the next two decades, he published another three volumes and was working on the fifth when he died in 1977. This work is arguably the most comprehensive study ever made of an Anatolian town.

In the same month as Sunguroğlu's articles appeared in the papers, in July 1955, playwright and journalist Cevad Fehmi Başkut (1905-71) visited Elazığ in order to collect information for his new play.⁹⁸⁶ What other place could he choose for a satire on our missing authentic values and the harms of mimicking the west? In November, his play was staged and

⁹⁸⁴ İshak Sunguroğlu, "Harput'u Nasıl Buldum," *Yeni Harput*, 17, 19 and 21 July 1955.

⁹⁸⁵ See the preface and the introduction in Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında*, 1958. For celebratory tributes to the first volume of *On the Way to Harput*, see Orhan Senemoğlu, "Harput Yollarında," *Elazığ-Harput Sesi*, 4 July 1958. Selahaddin Aydınalp, "Harput Yollarında," *Elazığ-Harput Sesi*, 12 July 1958.

⁹⁸⁶ *Yeni Harput*, 21 July 1955.

gave a lot of joy and laughter to the audience of Istanbul; its title was *An American in Harput*.⁹⁸⁷

A satirical play on the Americanization of the 1950s, it is the story of Abraham Maderus, now a millionaire, who had immigrated to America with his father when he was a child. After forty years, he comes back to Turkey to find his brother and mother they had left during their journey to the US. Upon his arrival in Istanbul, news spreads rapidly in the city and fake relatives flattering the millionaire and “America” spring up around Mr. Maderus. Extravagant displays of adulation for the American way of life constituted the main body of the play, criticizing the apishness of Westernized intellectuals. In the end of the play, the real brother is found in a village near Harput, and he turns down both the wealth and the American brother with a tirade on fidelity and correctness: where was he during the devastation of life in Harput? Where was Maderus when he and their mother needed help to survive?⁹⁸⁸

Developmentalism, 1960s

In 1955-56, the performance was received very positively. Ankara’s and İzmir’s Municipal Theaters staged the play, too. In 1958, the new theater company of Adana raised the curtain on the same play. In 1963, a private company staged the story again in İstanbul and İzmir; they received valuable comments. In 1965 and 1969, different groups interpreted the same text; in 1966, Kadıköy High school students were in the newspapers due to their successful performance of *An American in Harput*.⁹⁸⁹ On the other hand, this nostalgic turn to Harput in the late 1950s and early 1960s was not confined to literature. Harput really attracted the attention of intellectuals and local government. On the pages of *Cumhuriyet* we read in May 1964 that

⁹⁸⁷ *Milliyet*, 12 October 1955; *Cumhuriyet*, 27 November 1955.

⁹⁸⁸ Cevat Fehmi Başkut, *Harput’ta Bir Amerikalı* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1955).

⁹⁸⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 20 September 1956; 27 April 1960; 14 February 1962; *Milliyet*, 15 March 1956, 29 September 1958; 21 January 1963; 2 and 31 March 1963; 21 April 1963; 12 May 1965; 7 February 1966; 9 May 1966; 6 January 1969.

Başkut's play had successfully raised awareness about decaying Harput and as a result important measures were being taken to turn the old town into a touristic district. The Elazığ-Harput road was paved; camping places and a motel were opened in Harput. The paper expected that many Americans would visit the old town the coming summer.⁹⁹⁰

Behind the new developments in Harput was an important figure in Elazığ's political history. Nurettin Ardiçoğlu (1913-1982), a native of Harput, studied law in Istanbul and became an influential politician in the 1950s. In the constituent assembly formed in the wake of the first coup d'état of Turkey (1960), Ardiçoğlu took part as a member of the constitutional commission.⁹⁹¹ And, in the first elections in 1961, he was elected Member of Parliament from Elazığ.⁹⁹² He was in the parliament until 1969 but his signature accomplishments took place during his short but effective tenure as the Minister of Tourism in 1963. In fact, Ardiçoğlu was the person who laid the foundations of modern tourism in Turkey. "I will open the doors of the country to tourists," he once proclaimed. The private sector was to be subsidized in order to encourage investment in tourist facilities. The entire mentality about tourism had to change, too, according to Ardiçoğlu. Abuse of and misdeeds towards the tourists were going to be punished more harshly; the people of the country were invited to show respect and hospitality to the foreigners.⁹⁹³ It was not a coincidence that in the same months sociologist Nermin Abadan published an article about the changing nature of tourism in the world: with the emergence of welfare states, aristocratic forms of travel had given way to mass tourism by the middle classes.⁹⁹⁴ It was in this context that Harput was renovated.

⁹⁹⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 19 May 1964.

⁹⁹¹ *Milliyet*, 10 January 1961.

⁹⁹² *Milliyet*, 17 October 1961.

⁹⁹³ *Milliyet*, 29 July 1963.

⁹⁹⁴ *Milliyet*, 30 July 1963.

What Ardiçoğlu did in Harput is still debated. As his book *History of Harput* (1964) testifies, he was interested in the deep history of the town; his book does not cover even the nineteenth century. During his tenure, Harput's historical remains were maintained, mosques renovated, and streets paved. Harput was really revived as a historic district with tourist facilities, especially for weekend trips by the people of Elazığ. On the other hand, it was in his time, too, that Harput's ruined Armenian neighborhoods were leveled by bulldozers.⁹⁹⁵ His disinterest in recent history seems to have made him protect only some old mosques and turn the remaining, abandoned space into a tabula rasa to be filled with restaurants and other facilities. It is important to emphasize that most Armenian- and American-built buildings had actually survived the deeply nationalist period of the 1930s and 40s, and were torn down in the 1960s-70s. The College buildings, for instance: Ruth A. Parmelee, whose memoir on Harput's war years was referred to above, visited Elazığ with two associates in 1956. They "passed a large heap of rubble, the ruins of the Euphrates College buildings" and drove to the Garden, namely the summer resort of the missionaries. She found out that the new Turkish owner of the house had treated the graves of the Americans very well; her mother's gravestone was still intact.⁹⁹⁶ (I visited the same house in 2010. The owners kindly let us into the large backyard where we found the headstones, a little damaged and displaced but still discernible. Figure 13-2)

⁹⁹⁵ Şükrü Kacar, who served as the director of Public Education Department in Elazığ in 1962-68 and as the mayor of Elazığ in 1968-73, confirmed that at that time Ardiçoğlu destroyed many buildings in order to beautify Harput. Oral History Interview with Şükrü Kacar, 1 June 2012. There is not much written evidence about the destructions in Harput. The information about Ardiçoğlu in the Ministry of Tourism's web page mentions that he used to go to Harput personally to work in company of workers among dozers and diggers. <http://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/tokat/KimlerleUnlu/nurettin-ardicoglu>. In a critical review published in an online paper, he is implicated for bringing dozers to Harput and for having destroyed many neighborhoods and churches, without leaving any building except mosques and tombs. <http://www.elazighaber.com/cozum-bulunuyor-harput-kurtarilacak-h1301.htm>.

⁹⁹⁶ Parmelee, *A Pioneer in the Euphrates Valley*, 33, 67.



Figure 13-2: The headstones of Emma Barnum Riggs (1864-1917) and Julia Farr Parmelee (1840-1916) in the garden of the summer resort of the American missionaries.⁹⁹⁷

Similarly, the Fabrikatoryan Brothers' gorgeous house complex in Mezre was still intact in the 1950s. In 1955, for example, the building was hosting the employees of the Directorate of State Hydraulic Works.⁹⁹⁸ In other words, contrary to expectations, all these buildings inherited from Armenians and Americans were not demolished by the nationalist regime in the 1930s; they were rather replaced by new buildings as part of the developmentalism of the 1960s and 70s. In the same decade, the one- and two-storey houses of Mezre's main street also began to be turned into concrete apartment buildings. Thanks to the huge Keban Dam project in the region, the people of the drowned villages poured down into Elazığ and invested the expropriation money in

⁹⁹⁷ Photos were taken by me. 5 August 2010.

⁹⁹⁸ *Elazığ*, 21 July 1955.

the flourishing construction business. All single houses with gardens and pools gradually gave way to buildings, creating Elazığ's contemporary built environment.⁹⁹⁹

Conclusion: The End of the Tale of Two Cities

Today's Elazığ took its shape between the 1930s and 60s. People still complain about Kurds coming from the periphery or about the lack of investment by the government. The city is still known as a fortress of nationalism. There is still this never-ending feeling of 'nothing changes' peculiar to provincial towns. Its ugly built environment, too, originates in the apartmentalization in the 60s-70s. No characteristic of Elazığ today can remind one of the Ottoman times of either Harput or Mezre. The first half of the twentieth century, and most particularly the 1930s, made a rupture in the story of the city. Harput and Mezre have gone missing, leaving traces only in old documents and songs. This disappearance can be attributed to modernization and to the formation of the nation-state. Perhaps most cities in Anatolia have similar stories of loss and nostalgia. Most have a history of nationalism full of violence, too. But few had such deep ebbs and flows, promises and frustrations.

Urban histories almost exclusively write the history of flows, not ebbs. We read of happenings, comings, developments, destructions, but rarely do we read about inertia, abandonment, or waiting. Mezre of the 1830s and Elazığ of the 1930s were periods of governmental flow. They changed the course of history in the town, raised it to imperial and national levels of awareness, and brought money, strangers, and promises from outside. However, they were temporary. In both periods, the ebbs began again very soon; the state withdrew from the provinces when it had done its immediate job. Thus, Mezre of the 1840s and

⁹⁹⁹ Oral History Interview with Kainat Bey and Hünkar Uslu, 30 May 2012. Also, Oral History Interview with Şükrü Kacar, 1 June 2012.

Elazığ of the 1940s were in periods of initial abandonment, and the remaining decades were periods of indifference from the central state's point of view. The periodization in this dissertation reflects the dominance of ebbs in history. In the early stages, my plan was to start the dissertation with Reşid Pasha's coming in the 1830s and finish it with Tevfik Sırrı Gür's Elazığ of the 1930s. The narrative of the artificial-colonial town (as I called it then) was to be neatly surrounded by two marked events. But, instead of peaks, voids overtook the narrative. My story started almost with a lacuna in the late 1700s, and ended with another in the 1960s.

Notwithstanding the importance of nationalism and modernization, the story here is far from a narrative of the replacement of cosmopolitan Harput by nationalist Elazığ. To the extent that it is correct, this is a familiar trope and hardly unique to Harput. What is original (and possibly unique) in its story is the end of the dual city experience. Theoretically, there is not much significance to the disappearance of Harput or of Mezre. Towns always disappear, move, or decline. But, as seen in Part II, the dual existence of two relatively distinct social formations in a short-distance spatial and social setting needs attention. The ways of knowing and talking about Elazığ's past that are prevalent in the region and in the historiography have no room for this special experience of keeping the other at arm's length. People remember old Harput *and* old Mezre, but what they actually remember is Harput in proximity to Mezre and Mezre in proximity to Harput. What was *alternative* in the past was not a cosmopolitan culture, or the existence of Armenians, or the spread of gardens; it was the socio-spatial universe of duality that made the existence of most of the remembered characteristics possible.

Conclusion

The small hamlet of the 1830s has turned today into the center of a middle-size province with a population of 570,000 people. All of the nearby ‘villages’ of the Harput Province are now ‘neighborhoods’ of the city of Elazığ. As we have seen in the maps from 1896 and 2015 (at the end of Part II), the street layout of its downtown has not changed much, but everything else has. Elazığ, as it was shaped in the 1930s, seems to have almost nothing in common with Harput and Mezre. This is especially true regarding the past cosmopolitanism of the dual town. Today’s Elazığ has a special reputation for fostering Turkish nationalism and for breeding people who have intimate connections with the so-called shadow state. Only a handful of Assyrian and Armenian families still live here. And it is not likely that any traveler would choose to stop by this city, let alone a British explorer or an American missionary.

It is no wonder that its past continues to haunt Elazığ today. In 2003, for example, a newspaper article read “Gakkoş Cowboys Seek Their Relatives” in its title, which brought together a term that specifically refers to the natives of Harput/ Elazığ (*gakkoş*) with another term that symbolizes America in global popular culture (cowboy). The article was about a university-based research project that aimed to build connections between second/third generation immigrants in the US and their relatives in Elazığ.¹⁰⁰⁰ When it is too necessary, Armenians are remembered, too. For instance, in April 2015, when the hundredth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was commemorated worldwide (on April 24), nationalist historians in Elazığ organized a symposium to refute the genocide theses.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Yeni Şafak*, 2 February 2003.

The most persistent ghost from the past is of course Harput. At every opportunity, a journalist or one of Elazığ's representatives in the parliament or the candidates for municipal elections bring up the subject of Harput's future. A workshop organized in August 2014 was one such occasion; the participants discussed the ways in which Harput can attract domestic and international tourism. The locals have been regretting for years that Harput had turned into a 'city of cemeteries,' by which they do not only figuratively mean Harput's dying, and literally mean Harput's having nothing but old cemeteries. They also refer to a living (maybe, rising) practice in Elazığ: many still bury their deceased in Harput. Thus, every article on what we have to do with Harput ends with the same wish: we should retrieve Harput from becoming a city of cemeteries.

Nevertheless, Elazığ's connection to its past may not be only through these lost characteristics of Harput and Mezre, may not be only through ghosts. In 2012, a novel entitled *The Ghost in Harput* was published. Written by a politically critical author, this historical novel is a brave attempt to tell the story of the Armenian deportations in Harput. It is framed as a naïve love story between a Kurdish boy and an Armenian girl in 1915. Metin Aktaş, the author, is a native of Dersim, where his family had to leave in 1994 upon burning down of their village by the Turkish army (a tragically frequent practice during the war between the army and the forces of Kurdistan Workers Party known as PKK). The family moved to Elazığ. In one of my fieldtrips, I met with Aktaş and had a chance to ask him about his experience of living in Elazığ as a politically critical person from Dersim. I implied that it should have been easier and happier to live in Diyarbakır, the so-called capital of Turkish Kurdistan, than in Elazığ. But, to a great surprise to me, he disagreed. He said that notwithstanding its highly conservative culture, there is

much more toleration (*tahammül*) towards different lifestyles in Elazığ compared to Diyarbakır (note that he did not use the word ‘tolerance’).

In my other conversations with the locals of Elazığ, too, some people brought up the idea that, unlike its neighbors, Elazığ has a character of strong individualism. We need further ethnographic research in order to unfold this character, but I wonder if the idea of short-distance relations can help us to understand it. Maybe, we can find a connection between Elazığ’s past and present not through what Harput was famous for, but through Mezre’s attitude to stay in proximity, in certain distance. Maybe, we can try to remember not the past cosmopolitanisms but a certain form of parochialism that neither excludes nor embraces the other, but keeps the other at arm’s length.

The most important challenge I have encountered in my study of Elazığ was the urgency to dismantle existing narratives and to create new ones. In Part I and II, the latter was more crucial because there was no ready-made narrative on place-making to rely on, let alone to challenge. Unlike most urban histories of the Ottoman world, I preferred to focus not solely on power relations or urban development but also on the place-making strategies of the people in the Harput region. Scattered information about the earlier decades of Mezre and about the neighboring towns was processed together with the documents about Mezre’s later life in order to reveal the hitherto unknown suburbanization pattern in the region. As a way of expressing social distinction by spatial separation, suburbanization became the first case of my study on social and spatial distance.

The challenge in writing Part III and IV was rather to disrupt the existing narratives. Even though the literature on the local history of the missionary enterprise and of the 1895 Massacres is still in its early stages, both events dictate strong theoretical framing from the beginning. In

both cases, I examined the events strictly from the local's point of view, sometimes even at the expense of leaving the curious reader in the dark. The disrespectful missionaries and the cross-dressed Armenian figure in the massacre narratives had something in common: their relation with the 'other' was from a limited distance. For different reasons and aims, both had established—what I call—short-distance relations with the other, and both had to develop strategies to change the other's mind. Their strategies were quite different, almost opposite. Missionaries were too direct; they had authoritative and pedagogical assignments for the natives. Cross-dresser, however, was a trickster; he changes the other's mind by deceiving him. But, at the end of the day, both claimed to be close enough to the other to understand and change him, but also distant enough from the other to claim their independent agency.

This dissertation aims to make a contribution to the Ottoman studies in two ways. First, until recently, the literature on the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire was seriously underdeveloped. The part of the empire where Harput-Mezre lay was a black hole in the conventional literature. Today, however, there is growing interest in the Ottoman East and I wish that my dissertation will help this field develop further. Second, the history of Orientalism, colonialism, and other forms of otherization in the Ottoman world has been documented by scholars in the last decade. I hope that my ideas on short-distance relations will raise awareness about different forms of otherization in social life. As a distinctive form of social relation, keeping at arm's length needs particular motives, strategies and justifications. Socio-spatial history of a region that was always kept at arm's length—the Ottoman East—can be a point of departure for a new body of scholarship.

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