Nation-Making and the Language of Colonialism:

Voices from Ottoman Van in Armenian Print Media and Handwritten Petitions

(1820s to 1870s)

by

Dzovinar Derderian

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Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Kathryn Babayan, co-chair
Professor Gottfried Hagen, co-chair
Professor Fatma Müge Göçek
Visiting Professor Gerard Libaridian
Professor Ronald Grigor Suny
Associate Professor Melanie Schulze Tanielian

Dzovinar Derderian

Dzovinar@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0000-0001-5605-4874

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To yaya

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List of Abbreviations

BNU: Bibliothèque Nubar

CGPR: Correspondance générale personnalités religieuses
(General communication of religious figures)

CP: Correspondence des provinces (Communication from the provinces)

CSSH: Comparative Studies in Society and History

EAC: Études arméniennes contemporaines

GAT: Grakanutyan yev arvesti t‘angaran (The Museum of Literature and Art)

GS: Garegin Sruandzteants‘

HH GAA: Hayastani Hanrapetut‘yan Gitut‘yunneri Azgayin Akademia

IJMES: International Journal of Middle East Studies

MM: Matenadaran

MS: Manuscript

PMOA: Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives

Glossary

Agha: A title used to refer to a landowning notable.

Amira: high-level Armenian bureaucrats and moneylenders (*sarrafs*)

Bey: The title of a local ruler and notable, a title higher than that of an *agha.*

Ishkhan: The word literally means prince, but refers to Armenian notables.

Tirats'u: Priest-to-be

K'ahanay: Priest

Vardapet: Celibate Priest

Yepiskopos: Bishop

Ark'yepiskopos: Archbishop

Mahtesi: Someone who has paid a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Takrir: A petition sent by the Armenian Patriarchate to the Sublime Porte on behalf of Armenian petitioners who had in turned sent a petition to the Patriarchate.

Transliteration, Translation and Dates

Throughout this dissertation I have followed the Armenian Library of Congress Romanization table in transliterating Armenian names and words. For names that have been extensively used in English, such as Khrimian, I have used the most commonly used version of the name. For Turkish words that appeared in Armenian texts with Armenian letters, I have often provided the equivalent contemporary Turkish version of the word. At times, I have given a direct transliteration from Armenian and also provided the contemporary Turkish word next to the transliterated version. Translations from Armenian, French and Ottoman/Turkish are mine, unless otherwise noted. As for the dates, most Armenian dates correspond to the Julian calendar. For simplicity's sake I have not converted the dates to the Gregorian calendar. Some Armenian documents utilized the Armenian calendrical year; I have only utilized the converted Gregorian version of those years. For all the Ottoman documents I have provided the dates based on the Gregorian calendar rather than the original Islamic (*hicri*) calendar that was used.

Note on Place Names

Throughout this dissertation I often provide the Armenian name of a village, town or city, followed by the contemporary Turkish name in parenthesis. Armenians in the nineteenth century used the name Constantinople or its abbreviated form Polis to refer to Istanbul. For this reason, I use Constantinople and Istanbul interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

Abstract

This dissertation integrates the eastern borderland region of Van into the history of Ottoman modernization in the nineteenth-century. Through a case study of Van, this dissertation traces processes of secularization and democratization in the context of Ottoman Armenian nation-making. In an in-depth study of Armenian print culture, I read newspapers, periodicals and books produced in Venice, Istanbul, the Russian Empire and Van in conjunction with handwritten petitions from Van Armenians directed to the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate and the Catholicosate of Ējmiatsin—the highest office of the Armenian Church located in the Russian Empire. Weaving together different modes of communication, this dissertation illustrates how Van and its inhabitants shaped Ottoman modernity. To decenter the role of the Ottoman state reforms launched in 1839, known as the Tanzimat, this dissertation begins instead with the 1820s. I examine Ottoman modernization through the spheres of technologies of communication, education, and discourses on love of nation and patria, as well as the politics of representation voiced by migrants from Van in Istanbul. I analyze how the language of colonialism in print media forged enduring categories of difference between the metropole and the Ottoman East as it simultaneously served to cultivate affective bonds among Armenians and their patria—Armenia.

Keywords: Armenians, colonialism, modernization, nation-making, Ottoman Empire, print, petitions, Van

Introduction

Nation-Making and Colonization: The Case of Ottoman Van

"If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose
their imagined community from certain "modular"
forms already made available to them by Europe and
the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?"

–Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*

With this rhetorical question anthropologist Partha Chatterjee launched his criticism of the groundbreaking work of Benedict Anderson on nation and nationalism, pushing back against the latter's proposition that the model of the nation-state was developed in the West and copied by the rest of the world.[1] Chatterjee sought to position the once-colonized as subjects of the history of nation-making and modernity, rather than mere recipients of the processes of modernization. Deploying Chatterjee's postcolonial critique, I argue that in the case of Ottoman Armenians, indigenous processes in the early nineteenth century allowed for the nation to become the predominant identifier of communal boundaries, though they were always in flux and contested. By studying Ottoman Armenians of Van—Vanets'is—within the framework of postcolonialism, I further argue that colonial modes of thought have shaped nineteenth-century discourses of nation-making, as well as historical writings on Ottoman Armenian modernity.

To demonstrate the linkages of nation-making and colonialization, this dissertation explores the mid-nineteenth century discourses of Armenian ecclesiastic and lay literati who discussed the Ottoman East—a region bordering the Russian Empire and Iran to the east, and the

[1] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* revised edition (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 81.

Black Sea to the north.[2] Their writings mark a historical moment when Armenian lay and ecclesiastic literati forged affective ties towards this region, as the ancestral lands of Armenians—"Armenia."[3] Between the 1840s and 1870s, elevating the affective value of these lands as the patria of Armenians, Armenian literati came to use print media to forge a language of differentiation that characterized the eastern provinces as inferior to Istanbul, and one that therefore required a "civilizing mission." The language of colonialism was deployed to mark difference and inferiority; the effect, however, was to cultivate and shape among Armenians patriotism for Ottoman Armenia.

The language of colonialism that distinguishes the metropole from the eastern provinces permeates the language of Ottoman and Armenian studies. It has shaped historical narratives particularly through persistent notions that modernity had to be brought to the provinces. The agency of inhabitants of the Ottoman East in translating and interpreting modernity, until recently, has remained outside the purview of Ottoman and Armenian historiographies. In this dissertation I focus on the borderland region of Van to highlight how Armenians of Van affected the processes of modernization. By modernization, I have in mind the three interlinked processes of secularization, of nation-making and democratization.

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[2] The region included the provinces of Sivas, Diyarbekir, Van, Erzurum, Kars, and Harput. The geographic term "The Ottoman East" was first used for the Armenian Studies International Graduate Workshop, with the title "Shared History, Shared Geography: The Ottoman East," organized at the Univeristy of Michigan, Ann Arbor (April 18-19, 2013). Also see Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi, eds. *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

[3] For the time-period discussed in this dissertation there can be no distinct boundaries delineated for Armenia. In this era the geographic term Armenia was broadly used to characterize the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire that had a significant Armenian population. The discourses on Armenia related to the Armenian communities in the eastern Ottoman provinces. The regions in the Russian Empire that overlap with the current Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh were not taken into consideration in discourses on Armenia. Therefore, throughout this dissertation I use Armenia to refer to the eastern region of the Ottoman Empire.

Secularization, Nation-Making and the Language of Colonialism

While "…the burgeoning field of secular studies…has over the past two decades, definitively challenged the conventional account of secularism as the separation between church and state, religion and law, ecclesiastical and political authority,"[4] the field of Ottoman Studies has yet to engage in a critical examination of the secular and the processes of secularization.[5] Recent works in Ottoman Studies continue to treat secularization as a top-down process, and perceive the secular in opposition to the religious.[6] Much of the discussion on secularism that pertains to the geographic area of Turkey relates to its post-1923 republican-era history rather than its imperial history. This trend in the literature parallels the ideological foundations upon which Turkey was established, which proclaim a rupture rather than any form of continuity with Ottoman times. This paradigm of rupture has until recently dominated Ottoman historiography.[7]

The understanding of secularism as the separation of the religious and the lay overlooks the more complex phenomenon of secularization as a process that "entails fundamental shifts in conceptions of self, time, space, ethics, and morality, as well as a reorganization of social, political and religious life."[8] The anthropologist Saba Mahmood distinguished between *political*

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[4] Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Uni. Press, 2016), 2.

[5] One of the foremost discussions of secularization in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey still remains the book of Niyazi Berkes first published in 1964. The book adheres to the theory of modernization and Westernization, and conceives of secularism largely along institutional and political lines. Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (London: Hurst and Company, 1998).

[6] For an example of such a treatment of secularism see Mehmet Bengü Uluengin, "Secularizing Anatolia Tick by Tick: Clock Towers in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic," *IJMES* 42.1 (Feb., 2010): 17-36. In a recent work, although Benjamin Fortna rightly criticized the extant scholarly view that Ottoman state schools in the Hamidian era were "secular," he argues against their secularity by emphasizing the dominance of Islam in the curriculum as well as the role of the *ulema* (Muslim religious scholars) in these schools. Benjamin C. Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman "Secular" Schools," *IJMES* 32 (2000): 369-393.

[7] Books that have considered continuities between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey include Fatma Müge Göçek, *Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians, 1789-2009* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Benjamin Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History,* 3rd ed. (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

[8] Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age,* 2-3.

secularism—which she defined as "the modern state's relationship to, and regulation of religion"[9] and *secularity*, which she referred to as "the shared set of background assumptions, attitudes and dispositions that imbue secular society and subjectivity."[10]

Secularism is an integral part of the period covered in this dissertation. With the promulgation of the reform program of the Tanzimat in 1839, the governing bodies of the Ottoman Armenian community were reorganized to differentiate between the religious and the political matters. This was done by creating committees that dealt with either political or religious matters. These committees were first attached to the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate and in the 1860s to the Armenian National Assembly, which was a general assembly of a majority of lay representatives and a minority of ecclesiastics formed under the auspices of the Patriarchate. This was the new institutional structure that was to govern the Ottoman Armenian millet, in other words, the community of Armenian belonging to the Armenian Apostolic Church. Although in practice the distinctions between what belonged to the religious realm and what did not were not always so distinct, the institutional reorganization points to the regulation of religion, which emanates from the view that not all matters are within the realm of religion. This view in itself is linked to the vision of secularity. In this new system, ecclesiastics no longer held a monopoly on institutional power when it came to governing the community. Rather, within the umbrella of the church institutions ecclesiastics together with laymen garnered positions of power and demanded legitimacy in governance.

While scholars of Ottoman Studies have often positioned the clergy and the *ulema* (Muslim religious scholars) in opposition to secularism, this dissertation instead considers the

[9] Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age,* 3.
[10] Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age,* 181.

secularity of ecclesiastics.[11] Both Armenian ecclesiastics and the Armenian Church participated in processes of secularization that shifted notions of legitimacy from God to the people. They participated to processes of secularization in the spheres of education and governance. Ecclesiastic literati composed narrative of the nation and the patria that followed a calendrical or linear time versus a sacred time, which as Anderson has argued was key to the formation of the nation. This different conception of time evokes the secularity of the clergymen engaged in formulating national narratives. Yet, religious and religious symbolism continued to remain in these narratives. In the narratives of these clergymen the people's agency was highlighted as a component of change in the world. People of knowledge and science, they argued, had an even stronger agency. Such discourses entail secularity as they no longer purely rely on God as the main agent of change, a perception that in turn transformed the way politics was to be conducted. As revealed through the handwritten petitions of Vanets'is, discussed in Chapter Four, historical actors began to perceive "the people," rather than God, as the source of legitimacy.

Changes in the perception of legitimacy transformed meanings and practices of the national community-in-the-making. I link Armenian nation-making with demands for popular representation—an aspect of secularization—and argue that without ideas of representative politics the nation could not have been formed as a political community. Political representation presupposes mechanisms of collective organization that I argue emerged with the appearance of print media and through the medium of public spaces like coffeehouses, *hans* (inns) and churches. As demands for popular representation began to be made in the name of "the people,"

[11] Perhaps an expection in Ottoman Studies is Alper Yalçınkaya, who by focusing on the different meanings and uses of sciences, unsettles the stark distinctions between what is religious and what is not. In particular, he focuses on the interlinks between morality and science in the discourses of Ottoman-Turkish Muslim literati. He demonstrates that in the late nineteenth century it is difficult to make a distinction between "two separate camps, one as pro-science and anti-religion/anti-tradition, and the other as anti-science and anti-religion/anti-tradition, and the other as anti-scienc and pro-religion/pro-tradition." (184) M. Alper Yalçınkaya, *Learned Patriots: Debating Science, State, and Society the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

the subjects of the nation were cast as the wellspring of legitimacy of power for authorities, in place of the divine.

I see nation as a cultural and political concept, which emerged alongside technological, social and political transformations that shaped notions of legitimacy, transferring power from God to the people. As such, processes of nationalization occurred in tandem with processes of secularization and democratization.[12] Benedict Anderson states that nation-ness and nationalism "are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy."[13] This dissertation draws on Anderson's proposition to tease out the historical processes that translated nation and patria into affective notions among Ottoman Armenians.

Scholars of Armenian Studies have treated nation and patria as concepts developed by Armenian literati (particularly in the metropolitan centers) that in turn served to develop national and political thought.[14] Such arguments limit the dynamic process of nation-making to the

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[12] As such I agree with Eric Hobsbawm's argument that "the democratization of politics, i.e. on the one hand the growing extension of the (male) franchise, on the other the creation of the modern, administrative, citizen-mobilizing and citizen influencing state, both placed the question of the 'nation', 'nationality' or other centre of loyalty, at the top of the political agenda." (83) Yet, rather than analyzing the political agenda of governments, here I analyze how the nation became a central unit of political discouse among Van Armenians, who did not necessarily occupy the top echelon of the ruling class. Unlike me, however, Hobsbawm's analyzes the turn towards the nation as a necessary means to cultivate loyalty by the state, and as a tool of governance. I diverge from this top-down view of explaining the emergence of the nation. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[13] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 4.

[14] Lisa Khachatourian, *Cultivating Nationhood in Imperial Russia: The Periodical Press and the Formation of a Modern Armenian Identity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009); Fatma Müge Göçek, "The Decline of the Ottoman Empire and the Emergence of Greek, Armenian, Turkish and Arab Nationalisms"; Gerard J. Libaridian, "Nation and Fatherland in Nineteenth-Century Armenian Political Thought" in *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 51-71; See particularly chapters 2 and 3 in Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenian Modern History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993). Nalbandian in her prominent book does not give much place for the making of the nation, but takes it as an a priori unit, which in the second half of the nineteenth century turned to revolutionary activities. Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1963).

national elite, and view nation and nationalism as full-fledged projects.[15] On the other hand, Ottoman scholarship has looked at social and cultural processes to explain the emergence of nation and nationalism, but these works largely focus on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in other words on the eve of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.[16] Thus within Ottoman Studies the longue durée processes of nation-making have seldom been taken into consideration.[17]

I examine the formation of the nation before nationalism—that is before the emergence of movements that fought in opposition to the empire with claims to national autonomy or liberation. In the Armenian case, violent acts against the Ottoman state in the name of the Armenian nation came to fore in the 1890s with the formation of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the Hnchak Party.[18] These parties were formed in Geneva and Tbilisi and undertook activities in or for Ottoman Armenia. Narratives about the Armenian revolutionary parties often undermine the sociocultural and political processes that had occurred in the Ottoman eastern provinces, where ideas of nation, the patria, popular representation and secularity were already in circulation.[19]

[15] In this sense my work speak with the conception of nation-making and nationalism of a recent work by Edin Hajdarpasic, *Whose Bosnia? Nationalism and Political Imagination in the Balkans, 1840-1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[16] Beth Baron focuses on women and gender to explain the sociocultural processes of nation-making in Egypt. Beth Baron, *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender and Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005); Gelvin's work on the early 20th century stands out as he considers popular and mass politics in the processes of nation-making and sees the process as a contestation rather than a linear development. James Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).

[17] An exception is Philip Khoury, who in his work provides a longue durée examination that focuses on the sociopolitical transformations particularly among the notables of Damascus to explain the coming about of Arab nationalism. Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[18] It should be noted, however, that later in 1908 the revolutionary parties cooperated with the Committee of Union and Progress government of the Ottoman Empire. For more see Dikran Mesrob Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology Under Ottoman Rule, 1908-1914* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2011).

[19] As Toygun Altıntaş succinctly notes, much of the literature on the Armenian Revolutionary parties focuses on "their ideological development and evolution, their connections with and participation in radical oppositional politics in the Russian Empire, and their organizational connections with other important actors of the turn of the

Such writings of history that sideline the processes of modernization in the Ottoman East, I argue, are intimately linked to the language of colonialism utilized by nineteenth-century Armenian literati. Armenian print media in the mid-nineteenth century rendered the Ottoman East the image of stagnancy, passivity and unruliness vis-à-vis the 'more civilized' capital of Constantinople. Literati—lay and ecclesiastic men and, on rare occasions, women—from both Istanbul and the provinces participated in the production of this language in newspapers, periodicals and books. Furthermore, in light of the absence of published materials from the Ottoman East, official documents published in Istanbul have shaped a discourse of modernization as a process that occurred in Istanbul and was then implemented in the east. For example, in 1863 the Armenian National Constitution was adopted and at the same time the Armenian National Assembly was established in the Ottoman capital under the umbrella of the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate and the Sublime Porte. Contemporary scholarship has reproduced the language of this print material and therefore also the perspective of the center with respect to the provinces. I deconstruct these paradigms throughout this dissertation by reading these texts as discursive representations and by bringing print sources into conversation with handwritten sources from Van. My reading of texts as representations of struggles that define the nation focuses on how different Armenian subjects formulated colonial categories that dominate both the archive and the historiography.

By using the terms colonial and colonialism I am less interested in comparing the Ottoman with other empires of the nineteenth century, and more concerned "with the politics of scholarship and knowledge" that fields of colonial and postcolonial studies have become

twentieth century." His own work pays closer attention to the local dynamics and activities of the revolutionaries in the Ottoman Empire. Toygun Altıntaş, The Placard Affairs and the Ankara Trial: The Hnchak Party and the Hamidian Regime in Central Anatolia, 1892-3," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 4.2 (November 2017), 310.

attentive to.[20] Traditionally scholars have not perceived Ottoman rule as colonial rule. Recent works however, have begun to examine Ottoman colonialism. Deringil, Makdisi and Kuehn have shown the colonial aspects of Ottoman rule in the nineteenth century, particularly by studying Ottoman official discourses and policies towards the east of the empire.[21] Colonial categories of difference and therefore the system of power within the Ottoman Empire, I argue, were reproduced with the participation of Armenians of different strata and of different regions of the empire.

My approach to colonialism and consideration of the role of Armenian historical actors in the making and maintenance of a colonial inequalities emanate from an understanding that power functions in a dispersed manner. Ottoman and Armenian historiographies on the modern period continue to conceive of power as vertical and coercive, as opposed to the Foucauldian notion of power as a constellation dispersed, in motion, productive and closely linked to a system of intersecting knowledge, bodies and institutions.[22] The will to govern, to obtain and to maintain power are but one component through which a system persists and transforms.[23] A whole set of

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[20] Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," *The Journal of American History* 88.3 (December 2001), 829-865.

[21] For an excellent article that explains the reasons for using the term "internal colonialism" for the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, with a particular emphasis on the Balkans and Eastern Anatolia see Ella Fratantuono, "Producing Ottomans: Internal Colonization and Social Engineering in Ottoman Imigrant Settlement," *Journal of Genocide Research* 21.1 (2019), 1-24. For other authors using the term colonialism to describe Ottoman rule particularly over the Arab provinces see Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen,* 1849-1919 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011); Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *American Historical Association* 107.3 (June 2002), 768-796. Selim Deringil, "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery'": The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *CSSH* 45.2 (April 2003): 311-342; Thomas Kühn, "Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism: Contesting Boundaries of Difference and Integration in Ottoman Yemen," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27.2 (2007): 315-331.

[22] Michel Foucault, *Qu'est ce que la critique? suivie de La Culture du Soi* (Paris: Vrien, 2015), 53. In the field of Middle Eastern Studies Timothy Mitchell's work presents an exception. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[23] In the past few years, Ottoman Studies has turned to analyze networks as a source of power. For example, Karen Barkey and Richard Antaramian consider horizontal power dynamics, yet they both continue to define such dynamics as ways to challenge, facilitate or increase state power. In both cases power is linked to human agency, consciousness and intention. Such an approach only considers the ways in which the state governed the empire or failed to do so. It also assumes clarity of aims and interests on the part of institutions and people of different strata that desired to become more powerful. See Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State"; Karen

social practices define normative behaviors and moral codes. The production of discourses, knowledge and embedded concepts of truth dynamically craft the self and signify power.[24] These techniques of power can be manipulated by the state, but the state does not have absolute control over all of the deployments of power.

Periodization

To shift the focus to the local processes in the Ottoman East against the current capital-centric and elite-centric narratives, I ask if the policies of state institutions in Istanbul (i.e., the Sublime Porte and the Armenian Patriarchate/National Assembly) regarding education and representative governance, as well as the cultivation of national(ist) emotions could have been a response to local social changes, rather than the other way around? I answer this question through the study of a variety of print and handwritten sources, in particular petitions, and a reading of the historical record that is cognizant of the problematic periodization the archives and the state impose. More significantly, in addition to incorporating different genres, my reading of the sources as "discursive representations" rather than as "data" allows me to unsettle the historical binaries that scholars have adopted vertically.

I begin my investigation of petitions written at moments of local contestation in Van from the 1820s, in order to examine sociocultural processes before the Ottoman state launched the set of reforms known as the Tanzimat. The Tanzimat era in Ottoman history is the period between 1839 and 1876, during which two Ottoman edicts were adopted, one in 1839 and the second in 1856, that launched a vast array of administrative, infrastructural, legal and educational reforms. In 1863 the Armenian National Constitution was adopted and the Armenian National Assembly

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Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[24] Foucault, *Qu'est ce que la critique?* (on truth) 35-39; (on knowing) 57, 85; (normative system) 122; (on the production of discourses) 127-128.

was established in Constantinople as part of the Tanzimat-era administrative reforms of the Ottoman Empire.[25] Both the Armenian Patriarchate and the Armenian National Assembly were practically branches of the Ottoman state, meaning they were not sovereign bodies within the empire.

Current Ottoman scholarship on the nineteenth century primarily begins with 1840 or later, and therefore demarcates transformations as occurring in response to the Tanzimat. Scholars have argued that changes in the language of "negotiation, contestation, and resistance" are reflected in provincial Ottoman petitions and court records as an effect of the Tanzimat.[26] Scholarship on nineteenth-century Ottoman history that primarily relies on petitions begins with the year 1840 or later, a fact that does not permit scholars to capture transformations that occurred before the Tanzimat. With such a periodization the Tanzimat and therefore Istanbul remain as the singular driving force behind modernization in the Ottoman provinces.[27] Such an approach perceives provincial actors as receptors and reactors instead of agents who partook in transformative processes and had a voice of their own. Focusing on the Tanzimat prevents us from detecting other processes that affected changes which were part of the Tanzimat but not

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[25] Antaramian has argued that the Constitution was integral to the Tanzimat reforms that also established the millet system. Richard Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State: Armenians and Ottoman State Power, 1844-1896," (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan 2014), 9.

[26] Cengiz Kırlı, "Tyranny Illustrated: From Petition to Rebellion in Ottoman Vranje," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 53 (Nov. 2015), 32; Masayuki Ueno, "'For the Fatherland and the State': Armenians Negotiate the Tanzimat Reforms," *IJMES* 45 (2013): 93-109; Anna Vakali, "Nationalism, Justice and Taxation in an Ottoman Urban Context during the Tanzimat: The Gazino-Club in Manastır," *Turkish Historical Review* 7 (2016): 194-223; Gülhan Balsoy, *The Politics of Reproduction in Ottoman Society, 1838-1900* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013); Millen V. Petrov, "Everyday Forms of Compliance: Subaltern Commentaries on Ottoman Reform, 1864-1868," *CSSH* 46.4 (Oct., 2004): 730-759; Nilay Özök-Gündoğan, "The Making of the Modern Ottoman State in the Kurdish Periphery: The Politics of Land and Taxation, 1840-1870," (PhD diss., Binghamton University SUNY, 2011).

[27] Özok-Gündoğan, "The Making of the Modern Ottoman State in the Kurdish Periphery"; Evthymios Papataxiarchis, "Reconfiguring the Ottoman Political Imagination: Petitioning and Print Culture in the Early Tanzimat," in *Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Ottoman Empire,* ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos, (Rethymno, Greece: Crete University Press, 2012), 191-227; Yuval Ben-Bassat, "Bedouin Petitions from Late Ottoman Palestine: Evaluating the Effects of Sedentarization," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 58 (2015)), 135-162; Yuval Ben-Bassat, "Mass petitions as a way to evaluate 'public opinion' in the late nineteenth-century Ottoman empire? The Case of Internal Strife among Gaza's Elite," *Turkish Historical Review* 4 (2013), 135-152.

necessary a result of it. As such, scholars hone on solely the vertical relationship "between the government and its subjects,"[28] the Ottoman state remains the main source of power.[29] In this dissertation, I extend the chronology back to the time before the Tanzimat to show the longue durée of nation-making that was accompanied by the adoption of a new vocabulary and new demands on the part of petitioners.

By shifting the conventional periodization, I trace processes of modernization that occurred independent of the Tanzimat reforms. I end my study in the early 1870s, rather than ending it with the beginning of Abdulhamid II's rule in 1876 and the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878. These two events are usually seen as a turning point in relations between the Ottoman state and Armenians, as well as in Muslim-Armenian relations. Instead, I note that tensions began to rise in Van in the early 1870s, when Van also witnessed the beginnings of the formation of radical Armenian organizations. Such a periodization aims to invite attention to local processes to explain deterioration of relations among Muslims and Armenians as well as the coming about of revolutionary parties.[30]

I conclude my study in 1872 when a secret organization was formed in the city of Van called "Unity for Salvation" (*Miut'iwn i P'rkut'iwn*). Inhabitants of five different villages from the region of Van wrote a letter to this organization asking for membership and swearing that

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[28] This is a phrase from Ueno Masayuki's article. Although meaning to challenge the top-down approach, he emphasizes the "perception, adaptation and response" to the Tanzimat reforms by Ottoman Armenians. "'For the Fatherland and the State'," 93-94.

[29] It must me noted that scholars who have conducted provincial histories of the Ottoman Empire and focused on periods beyond the nineteenth century have pointed out the agency of provinces and thus decentered the Ottoman state. See for example, Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley: University of California, 1995); Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540-1834* (Cambridge, UK: Cambrdige University Press, 1997). More recent works that have de-centered the state by centering the periphery include Melanie S. Tanielian, *The Charity of War: Famine, Humanitarian Aid, and World War I in the Middle East* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018).

[30] Some scholars have already begun to work in this direction. Zozan Pehlivan in her dissertation examins environmental factors that contributed to the deterioration of relations between different ethno-religious communities in Diyarbekir. Zozan Pehlivan, "Beyond "The Desert and the Sown": Peasants, Pastoralists, and Climate Crises in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1840-1890" (PhD diss., Queen's University, 2016), 217.

they were ready to do anything to save themselves "from the terrible conditions and unbearable yoke."[31] These men from the region of Van wrote that they were willing to do anything to find a solution collectively, whether by becoming Russian citizens, migrating or even sacrificing their lives. I see the creation of "Unity for Salvation" as a moment of radicalization in the process of nation-making, whereby certain Armenians in Van no longer saw any possibility of improving their condition within the framework of and in cooperation with the empire. Rather, as they put it, they were ready to sacrifice their lives for the salvation of the "nation". I read the formation of the "Unity for Salvation" organization as a shifting point in the conception of the nation among Armenians of Van. The demands of these laymen to take hold of their future and their fate confirm the secularity of their visions and acts.

Sources and Methodology

By reading print and handwritten texts against the grain, this dissertation demonstrates how nineteenth-century discourses overshadowed local agency in the Ottoman East and how the archives, through their materiality, affect, institutional histories and organization have highlighted certain narratives and marginalized others. I begin with an analysis of the archives as institutions that encompass nation-making projects and, at the same time, are enmeshed within the registers of colonial power. The grand narrative of these archives in turn frame the existing historiography. In this dissertation, I bring together sources from different archives (i.e., the Matenadaran, the Nubar Library, the Literature and Art Museum (GAT) and the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives), organize them geographically, chronologically and thematically, and bring them into alignment with one another and with published sources from the nineteenth century. My critical reorganization creates a new archive and my analysis a different narrative.

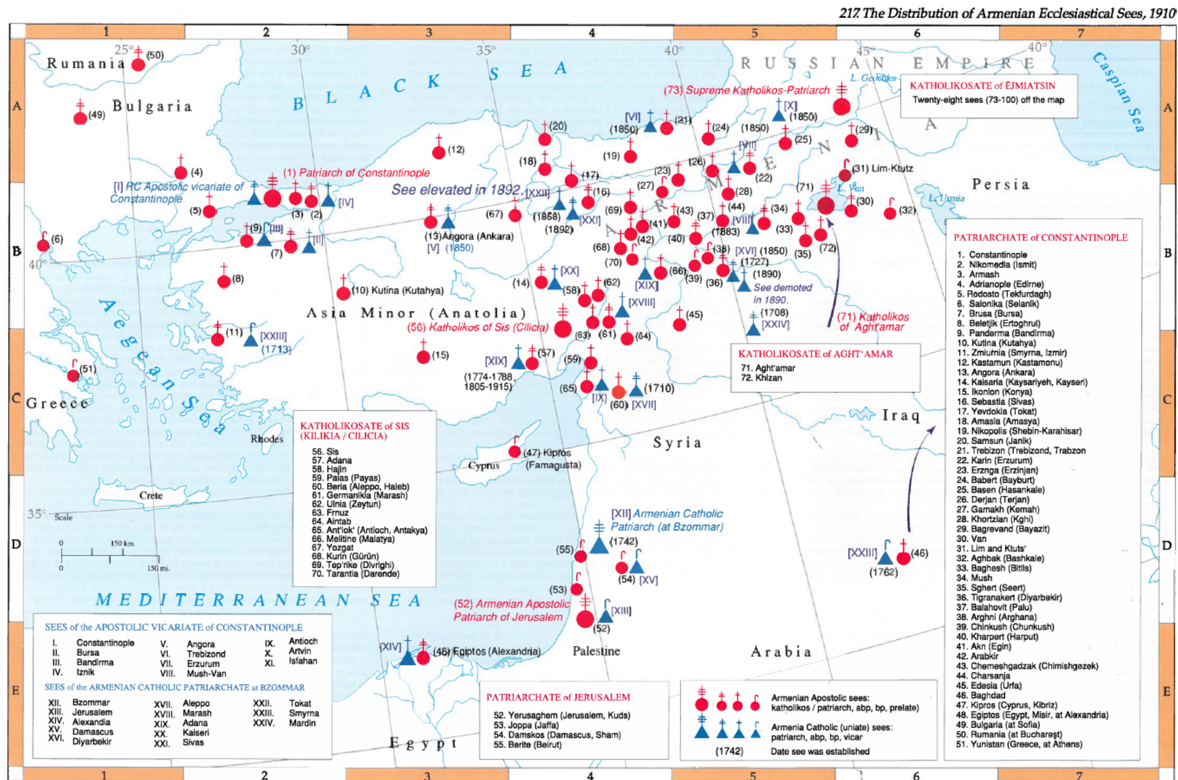
[31] GAT, GS, Section VI, Doc. 34, (April 26, 1872). Also see Doc. 33 (March 3, 1872); Doc. 32 (May 19, 1872).

As a historian tracing change in sets of social practices I reveal transformations in power relations. Handwritten petitions, print books, booklets, newspapers and periodicals increased in number and circulation in the nineteenth century. These media provided means of communication that involved not only a wider network of Armenians, but also Armenians of different socioeconomic backgrounds. The new technology of print empowered Armenian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, but at the same time invited greater interference, both from the Armenian Patriarchate and the Ottoman Porte, in the political matters of the provinces. With the printing press, cities like Istanbul, Venice, and Izmir became centers of knowledge production, while monasteries, largely concentrated in the eastern provinces of the empire lost their dominance as producers of texts, knowledge and education. (See Map 1)

Through my analysis of four Vanets‘i ecclesiastics I will show how print media concomitantly marginalized the voices of those who did not have such access to technologies of print as was the case with the bishops Yeremia Tevkants‘ and Hakob T‘ōp‘uzean. Print media provided a way to centralize particular actors as subjects of historical processes while marginalizing the voices of those who did not have print at their disposal. Thus, among the main questions that this dissertation engages with is one that was eloquently formulated by Roger Chartier: “How did increased circulation of printed matter transform forms of sociability, permit new modes of thought, and change people’s relationship with power?”[32]

[32] Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries,* trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 3.

Figure 1: Map of Armenian Ecclesiastic Sees



Source: Robert H. Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).

To further complicate Chartier's analysis of the effect of print media, I argue that the circulation of print and people enabled Van Armenians to engage in the act of printing petitions, which enhanced their participation in sociopolitical processes both on the local and imperial level, even as the uneven exchange between Constantinople and the provinces became increasingly lopsided. Print expanded the spread of information and increased the number of people engaged in public conversations; it also provided a medium through which Vanets'is could voice marginalized discourses.

At the same time, print media also produced discourses that marked differences and expanded the inequalities between Constantinople and the eastern provinces. Newspapers and periodicals, or novels that spoke of Armenia emphasized the abjection of its inhabitants, whether

because of their ignorance and or lack of emotions or due to conditions of the provinces that rendered the inhabitants of Armenia helpless. Literati argued that the emotions of love of nation, love of patria, love of study, and love of religion were necessary for the education of an ideal civilized person—a type that had still to be cultivated in Armenia. The literati in print media presented "Armenia" as the patria of Armenians and cultivated feelings towards it among the reading public. The topics of education, of proper emotions and of the *pandukhts* (migrants and travelers), I argue, shaped the notion of "Armenia" both discursively and in practice. The discursive representation of Armenia and its illiterate masses forged a sense of community and nation, yet at the same time such discourse carved distinct differences between "advanced" Istanbul and the "backward" Armenia. Both Ottoman and Armenian historiographies have reproduced such categories and paradigms, which undergirded the colonial relations between Istanbul and the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and continue to do so now in Turkey.

I turn to handwritten petitions from Van to hear the voices of resistance and negotiation from provincial Armenians and bring them into the center of historical processes. In order not to narrate a homogeneous picture of the Ottoman East, I hear multiple voices emerging from Van. In my reading of these petitions I pay close attention to the language with which petitioners represented themselves vis-à-vis their community and their addressees, to understand the roles and responsibilities that the petitioners ascribed to their governing bodies and figures, as well as to themselves within their community. Studying the "fictional" aspects of petitions and print media will allow us entrance into the many ways in which relations of power were transformed in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. By "fictional" I have in mind the panegyrics that petitioners used to describe their addressees, the adjectives they used to represent themselves and other members of their community, the ways in which they crafted their narratives to highlight

the urgency of their needs or to prove their innocence in a given matter, to emphasize their servitude and in some cases to highlight their agency.[33]

I pay particular attention to the meanings of words deployed by Vanets'i Armenians to articulate their understanding of community, of relations of power, of their self in relation to community and God. Studying the ways Vanets'is talked about education, love, nation, patria, and pandukhts, I show how they participated in the epistemic transformations of these concepts that were occurring in the long nineteenth century. Print media and handwritten petitions provided the means for the production of new discourses and of new ways of knowing and contesting the truth. Petitioners from Van, I argue, transformed manners of self-representation and demanded a particular role of the sovereign, who was to be accountable to his subjects.[34] This transformation points to processes of secularization, nation-making and democratization.

I have studied more than two hundred petitions that date from the 1820s to the 1870s. By definition a petition is a letter asking for help from an authority, which already established an unequal relationship between petitioner and addressee. The addressee of a petition was always in a position of authority vis-à-vis the petitioner, which is the primary characteristic of the genre. Some of the petitions I have examined were addressed to the Catholicosate of Ējmiatsin in the Russian Empire, which is the highest office of the Armenian Church and is relatively close to Van. Yet the majority of the petitions I consulted were addressed to the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, which in the second half of the nineteenth century was establishing its role as the central institution governing the Ottoman Armenian community and mediating relations between the Ottoman central state and the Armenian community. The petitioners generally addressed the

[33] Here I borrow from Natalie Zemon Davis' notion of the "fictional." She writes, "By "fictional" I do not mean their feigned elements, but rather, using the other and broader sense of the rood word *fingere*, their forming, shaping, and molding elements: the crafting of a narrative." *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 3.
[34] I will show this in Chapter Four.

Armenian Patriarch, and later also the members of the Armenian National Assembly in Constantinople, formed in 1863. Some of the petitions are individual petitions, but particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century more and more collective petitions appear in my archive. I link the increase in petitions both to the increase in newspapers and periodicals and to the formation of representative bodies in Istanbul.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate was undergoing reforms to form a representative system of governance that would provide for greater representation of laymen in the Patriarchate's governing bodies that would include the National Assembly as well as a number of councils.[35] Initially lay and ecclesiastic councils as well as a Supreme Council were established. Until the 1860s, Armenians in the provinces had no formal representation within the institutional bodies of the Constantinople Patriarchate. In the early 1860s, with the adoption of the Armenian National Constitution, a National Assembly was formed, which according to the 1863 Constitution consisted of 140 members, with only 40 lay representatives from the provinces. Another 80 were from Constantinople, and 20 were ecclesiastic representatives.[36] Only one-third of the lay members of the National Assembly were representatives of the provinces, which did not reflect the distribution of the population between Istanbul and the provinces, as there were more Armenians in the provinces than in Istanbul.[37] Struggles over fair representation thus ensued. In 1869 a revised version of the Constitution was proposed to the National Assembly. Patriarch Khrimian from Van, who is one of the protagonists of this dissertation, fought to pass the new Constitution, which limited the number of

[35] It must be noted that the institution of an assembly was in the making since the early eighteenth century. For more information, see Aylin Koçunyan, *Negotiating the Ottoman Constitution, 1839-1876* (Paris, Luvain and Briston, CT: Peeters, 2018), 107.
[36] *Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn Hayots',* Article 57 (Constantinople, 1863).
[37] While much of the existing population statistics are from the late nineteenth century, and there is a significant discrepancy among different statistical sources, we can confidently say that the collective number of Armenians living outside of Istanbul was much higher than the number of Armenians living in Istanbul. This, in itself, provides a systemic example of unequal treatment within the Ottoman Empire.

representative to 100, of whom only half would be from Constantinople, and half from the provinces.[38] The National Assembly, however, never ratified this version of the Constitution.[39] Instead, petitions continued to serve as a vital means by which Vanets'is expressed their voice to the representative bodies in Constantinople.

The petitions I have examined deal with financial, family and property matters of individuals, specifically regarding marriage, inheritance and theft. The complaints within this selection of petitions dealt with internal Armenian communal matters. Some of the petitions, particularly in the later 1860s, referred to Kurdish and Muslim oppressions of Armenians.[40] Many dealt with local ecclesiastic conflicts, with accusations of criminality made against both Armenian ecclesiastics and notables. The petitioners therefore ranged from villagers and labor migrants to high-ranking notables and ecclesiastics from the rural and urban areas of Van.

The writing of petitions, official documents and even personal letters was mediated by scribes. In Istanbul scribes were to be found in *hans* (inns). For example, a newspaper announced that a scribe could be found in room number 3 of the *Mets Nor Khan* (the Big New Han), and that he was willing to write petitions and other types of texts in Ottoman.[41] Armenians of the Ottoman Empire who petitioned to various institutions of authority including the Sublime Porte, the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate, the Armenian Catholicosate of Ējmiatsin, and other local prelacies and monasteries certainly made use of these scribes. This of course raises the question of how much petitions expressed the language of the petitioners, rather than that of the scribes.

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[38] *Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn. Orinak Verak'neal Sahmanadrut'ean,* Article 40 (Kostandnupōlis, 1869).
[39] For more on the struggles of Khrimian and his efforts to reform the Constitution to give greater voice to the provinces see Kostandyan, *Mkrtich' Khrimian*, 161-163.
[40] This description of my archival collection should not, however, be taken as an argument that the majority of petitions sent to the Patriarchate were of this nature. Rather the selection of petitions that I have found in the period between the 1820s and 1880s is as such.
[41] *Pegasean T'ṙch'nik*, issue 33 (April 31, 1865), 264.

I argue that, despite the mediation of the scribe, the petitioners, too, engaged in the production of petitions. Armenian petitioning in the nineteenth century was not as systematized as petitioning the Ottoman state, which means that the Armenian petitions are less formulaic than the Ottoman ones and provide a greater variation in narration. At times, it is only on the back of a petition that the clerk in the Patriarchate, in his summary of the document, would classify it as a petition (*khndragir*), or as a grievance letter (*boghok'agir*), or simply as a letter (*gir*).[42] Some petitions, however, would use the designation of petition (*aghers*, *aghersagir*) within the text of the letter that they were writing.[43] These words, however, were not mentioned in a systematic manner and the different designations do not correspond to different types of petitions; rather, they are different terms used to identify the same type of letters that were addressed to a higher authority and had a specific request. The variations in categorizing the document—or the lack of any categorization—demonstrates that there was not a strict system of petitioning the Armenian Patriarchate, unlike the petitions submitted to the Ottoman state. Ottoman petitions usually emphasized the category of the document as an *arz-u hal* (meaning a petition) towards the beginning of the text. Most of the Ottoman petitions from Van starting in the 1840s had a formulaic phrase at the center-top of the petition that said: "For the services of writing a petition 30 *paras* were paid."[44] In other cases, somewhere on the first line of the petition the word *arz-u hal* (meaning petition) would appear.[45] Furthermore, Ottoman petitions in the mid-nineteenth century more often than not were written on the same type and size of paper, unlike the Armenian petitions, which were written on papers of different colors, sizes and textures. The

[42] BNU.CP23/1.070 (January 18, 1866); BNU.CP23/1.052 (January 22, 1871); BNU.CP23/1.047 (May 4, 1871).
[43] For example, BNU.CP23/1.060 (March 16, 1868).
[44] For example, see PMOA, A_}MKT, 120.67 (April 14, 1848); PMOA, A.MKT, 120.67, PMOA, A.DVN, 37.70 (April 23, 1848); PMOA, A.DVN, 41.43 (Nov. 27, 1848); PMOA, A.DVN, 51.35 (Oct. 17, 1849); PMOA, A.DVN 56.95 (December 15, 1859); PMOA, A.DVN 57.39 (January 3, 1850); PMOA, MVL, 569/22 (March 28, 1858).
[45] For examples see PMOA, MVL, 123/51 (Nov. 4, 1852); PMOA, A_}MKT, 3/24 (August 5, 1842).

lack of standardization in Armenian petitions, as opposed to Ottoman ones, speaks to the variety of petitions in my collection, indicating that there were various circuits through which petitions would be composed and submitted to the Patriarchate. This is particularly evident in the petitions that were written in the local colloquial languages and without a standardized spelling system.[46] Such variety in the language and form of petitions speaks to the inclusions of a multiplicity of voices from Van, not just those of the scribes.

Contemporaries of the nineteenth century too questioned whether a petition expressed the "true" voice of Vanets'is. The "authenticity" of a petition would often be challenged by pointing to the lack of signatures or forged signatures or to the fact that seals had been stolen and misused for the particular petition.[47] For example, on October 24, 1866, a clerk at the Patriarchate received a petition dated October 17, 1866. On the back of the petition he noted that this was a collective petition (*hanragrut'iwn*) submitted on behalf of Aght'amarts'is—natives of Aght'amar, an island in Lake Van—"without any signatures."[48] Because of the lack of signatures, the only subsequent step the Patriarchate took was to mark "to keep" on the reverse side of the petition. The note not only shows that the petition was then archived, but it also suggests that there may have been other petitions that were marked "to throw out," and which therefore do not survive—they have been erased from the archive. This note reveals how a petition without signatures and seals had little value for the Patriarchate and the mechanisms through which the Patriarchate measured "truth". In contrast, the greater the number of signatures and seals, the more strength the petition would carry. After the 1860s, what were

[46] For examples see MM.KD.79.258a (1833) petition sent from Astor Tēr Davt'ean from Van to Cardapet Georg in Yerevan. It is very likely that the petitioner wrote the petition asking for money himself, to judge by the handwriting and the poor spelling. It is likely, however, that the Vardapet was his brother, which is why they may have skipped going to a professional scribe. However, the letter still reads as a petition because it begins with panegyrics and includes a request for money.
[47] Tevkants', *Chanaparhordut'yun,* 190. Also cited by Richard Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State: Armenians and Ottoman State Power, 1844-1896," (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan 2014), 93.
[48] BNU.CP1/12.052 (Oct. 17, 1866/Oct. 24, 1866).

deemed reliable petitions that complained about or praised a local ecclesiastic leader often went through multiple readings. Summaries of petitions were read out in the Armenian National Assembly. Based on the political importance of petitions, the deputies would demand that certain petitions be fully read in the Assembly.[49] Not all petitions, however, would make it to the National Assembly; some would be discussed in the sub-committees of the National Assembly, such as the Religious Assembly, the Judicial Assembly or the Civil/Political Assembly.[50] Still, the fact that petitions, which did not go through multiple readings also appear in my archive demonstrates that my collection of petitions include voices that may have been sidelined by the Constantinople Patriarchate.

A close examination of the signatures on the petitions demonstrates that most petitioners came in physical contact with the petition. If they did not engage in the dictation themselves, they very likely heard the text of the petition read out. A signature—and better yet a seal—was required to affirm the connection between the petitioner and the petition. A seal would often bear the abbreviated form of the petitioner's name—sometimes in Arabic letters, but most of the time in Armenian letters. The signatures of collective petitions appeared below the seals of each individual petitioner. Those who did not have a seal used a dark round mark instead. Sometimes, a few of the names would have been signed by the same hand, and the rest in different handwriting, indicating that some signed their own names while others did not.[51] Even the thickness of the ink of the signatures would vary, revealing that different pens had been used to sign under the same petition. Some of the signatures reveal that the petitioners did not know how to write beyond signing their names, as their handwriting was really poor and almost illegible. Names appearing in signatures were not always spelled in a standardized form, and at times the

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[49] *Atenagrut'iunk' azgayin zhoghovoy*, Session 9 (Oct. 25, 1870), 128.
[50] *Atenagrut'iunk' azgayin zhoghovoy*, Session 9 (Oct. 25, 1870), 131.
[51] For example, see BNU.CP23/1.076 (January 15, 1865).

spelling of a name in a signature and on the seal would not match. These signing features point to the petitioners' different levels of literacy. That most petitioners signed their own name, however, indicates their intimate and embodied performance of political expression, as subjects of collective petitioning, while simultaneously an enactment of subordination to the higher authority addressed in the petition.

As such, petitions provide a reliable source through which to study the political and social imaginaries of Vanets'is. We have, nonetheless, to be aware of the pitfalls of petitions in terms of what they reveal and what they hide. Petitioners at times reproached the authorities they addressed, but they often represented themselves in ways that would meet the expectations of the authority. While we know through other genres, such as memoirs and periodicals, that Kurds and Armenians interacted and cooperated with one another in Van, such a narrative rarely appears in petitions, because petitioners were conscious that the Patriarchate did not approve of interactions with Kurds. Petitioners also knew that they needed to exaggerate their local troubles in order to make their appeals sound more urgent. Thus petitions, like any other genre, do not provide us with a complete picture of local events and social dynamics in Van in the mid-nineteenth century. Yet petitions do tell us something about the way petitioners perceived authority.[52] In the case of Vanets'i petitioners the authorities included the Armenian Patriarchate, the National Assembly, the Ējmiatsin Catholicosate and at times the Sublime Porte. Moreover, petitions allow us to trace the changing ways in which petitioners imagined their community, and how they perceived themselves within the nation-in-the-making.

Besides crafting petitions in ways that would please and convince authorities to help we also have to be cognizant of the fact that petitioning was not free of risks, and was not always

[52] I am drawing upon Lex Heerma van Voss's "Introduction" to her volume *Petitions in Social History,* ed. Lex Heerma van Voss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.

easily accessible to everyone. The Ottoman postal system did not always provide the most reliable and trusted service. On one occasion, after the great fire in the market of Van in 1876, Tevkants‘ persistently wrote complaints and petitions to the Patriarchate, which he records as copies in his memoir. Tevkants‘ claimed that the regional governor ordered him not to send complaints to the Patriarchate, an order that he stubbornly rejected and wrote into his memoir. Upon his refusal to comply with the governor's order, the governor commanded that "the postal official not accept our letters, or to grab our letters and take them to him [the governor]. Learning about this we undertook other options to transmit our reports to the Patriarchate without their being lost."[53] If the Ottoman authorities in Van inhibited the petitions of the prelate of Van, we can be certain that they put up such barriers to the petitions of other inhabitants of Van, as well. The limitations I have listed regarding petitions demonstrate that petitions as a genre cannot be used alone to understand what was happening in the provinces, but have to be considered in conjunction with other genres, such as print media, memoirs and reports. At the same time, petitions provide a unique source that bring to us the voices of a diverse group of Vanets‘is and allow us to examine transformations of their social and political imaginaries.

Why Van?

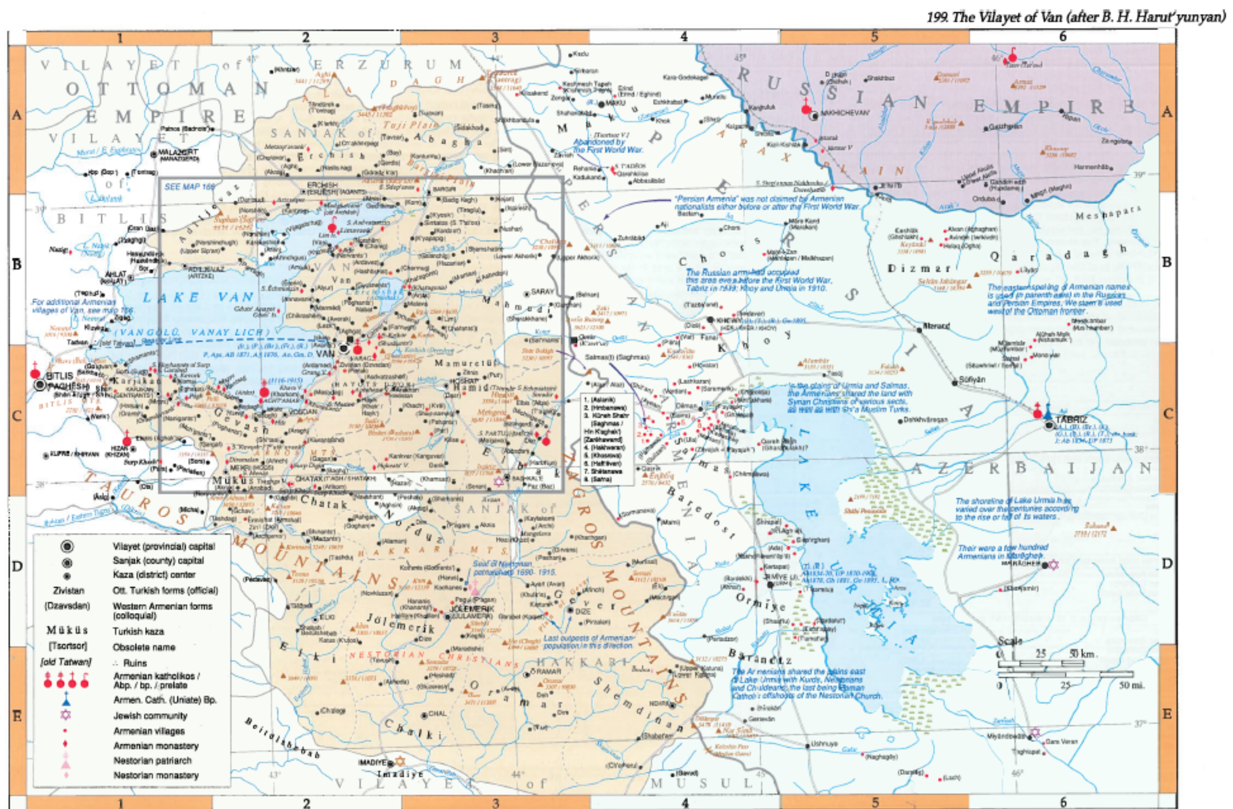
My investigation of the region of Van encompasses the Armenian diocese of Van. The districts of the diocese were located on the eastern border of the Ottoman Empire and modern-day Turkey, to the north, south and east of Lake Van. In the nineteenth century, this region was

[53] MM.MS.4182, 131b. Tevkants‘'s circumvention of the local Ottoman authorities speaks to the latter's highly tense relations with the Armenian ecclesiastic leadership in Van in the late 1870s. Yet that Tevkants‘ insisted on writing to the Patriarchate meant that he still had some hope that matters could be resolved through the help of the Sublime Porte, that justice could be reached in Istanbul. Interestingly enough, however, although the Patriarchate archive in the Nubar Library in Paris includes a file on Tevkants‘, none of the dozen letters relate to the fire in Van.

at the crossroads between Iran, and the Russian and Ottoman empires.[54](See Map 2) Compared to the other provinces of the Ottoman East, Van is exceptional in a number of ways. First, by the mid-nineteenth century, in many towns and villages east and south of Lake Van, as well as in the city of Van, Armenians constituted a majority in relation to the (largely Kurdish) Muslim population. According to statistics gathered by Armenian ecclesiastics in 1858, in the region of Van there were about 75,000 Armenian inhabitants.[55] In 1877, the number had reached close to 125,000.[56] Although numbers fluctuate significantly depending on the source of the statistics, we can ascertain that within two decades the Armenian population in the region doubled. It must also be noted that the rural population of the region of Van was much higher than the urban population.

[54] The particular districts (*kazas*) considered are Ablak (Başkale), Khosap (Güzelsu), Vostan (Gevaş), Mahmudiye, P‘ergri (Muradiye), Archesh (Erciş), and Artske (Adilcevaz).
[55] "Statistics based on published tables, 1858," GAT, GS, Section I, Doc. 63. See Table 1.
[56] "Statistics of Vaspurkan according to the Prelacy of Van, 1877," GAT, GS, Section I, Doc. 63. See Table 2.

Figure 2: Map of the Province of Van



Source: Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*, v.

Table 1: Van Statistics, 1858

District	Armenian villages	Churches	Monasteries	Households	Number of people (Armenian)
Van city and Aygestank‘		12		2,528	13,752
Armenian-inhabited Villages surrounding Van	77	64	10	2,531	16,722
Berkri gawaṙ (Muradiye)	6	4	1	211	870
Archesh (Erciş)	24	16	4	253	2755
Artskē (Adilcevaz)	17	16	1	331	2452
Akhlat‘ (Ahlat)	12	11	1	290	2,167
Karchkan (Çavuşlar)	9	9	4	183	1,501
Mokk‘ (Bahçesaray)	52	44	5	837	5,730
Hizan	44	28	4	740	5,100
Karkaṙ (Daldere)	20	20	2	326	2,318
Ṙshtunik‘	22	22	7	599	4,182
Vostan (Gevaş) and Hayots‘ Dzor (Güzelsu)	35	28	6	671	4,287
Shatakh (Çatak)	43	36	4	661	4,312
Nōrtuz (Topyıldız)	11	10	1	196	1,617
Marmtan (Mahmutlar)	4	2	0	020	0150
Sparkert	29	18	3	397	2,749
Kits‘an	10	9	2	209	1,798
Mamṙtank‘	16	16	2	229	1,744
Total	431	365	57	11, 212	74, 206

Source: GAT, GS, Section I, Doc 63.

Table 2: Prelacy of Van Statistics, 1877

District (Gawaṙ)	Villages	Churches	Monasteries	Schools	Armenians	Assyrians	Kurds	Turks	Jews
City of Van and Aygestan		12		9	22,460			8,450	
Surrounding villages	118	65	13	10	27,165			5,086	
Berkri	9	9	1		2,098			230	
Archēsh	42	24	4		10,567			2,904	
Artskē	26	16	3	2	10,615				
Moks	66	44	3		7,307		2,795		
Hizan	44	24	4		6,686		974		
Sparkert	41	16	3		3,568		1,270		
Shatakh	79	36	3		6,618		3,591		
Nōrtuz	36	10	1		2,867	447	1,380		
Ṙshtunikʻ	38	22	8	1	5,844		2,356		
Karakaṙ	23	19	1		3,191		523		
Kitsʻan	17	5	1		944		1,078		
Vostan	38	27	6		8,066		2,356		
Karchkanb	29	22	5		5,182		1,093		
Golamērk	51	1			440	76,879	4,339		
Aghbak	81	19	1		7,159	1447	8,608		311
Kēvēṙ	81	2			1,465	7995	6,459		32
Khōshap	48	17			1,966		3886		
Gōtʻur	18	1			1,634		2,114		
Total	885				125,295	86,321	42,280	16,670	343

Source: GAT, GS, Section I, Doc 63.

In contrast to Harput, Diyarbekir and much of Erzurum, Van's geographical location increased its autonomy from state control. Occupying the borderlands, Kurds and Armenians from Van ran away to Iran or the Russian Empire to escape the law of the Ottoman state. For example, a certain Tahrir Agha in Van had killed a state official and escaped to Iran. In August 1856 *Masis,* the most prominent Armenian newspaper in the Ottoman Empire, reported that Tahrir Agha had returned to Van and had been arrested.[57] Some also left the region to escape the abuse of local power-holders. In a petition to the Ottoman state a certain Haydar Agha, in conjunction with a number of notables (*beys*) of different tribal conglomerates (*ashirets*), recounted that in the late 1820s they had escaped to Iran because of the attacks of Mahmud Khan, a famed Kurdish tribal chief, who had fought against the Ottoman state.[58] But now in 1840 the petitioners were asking for the permission and protection of the Ottoman state to return to the surroundings of Van and settle there again.[59] This petition demonstrates how being an inhabitant of the borderland gave them the ability to negotiate with various political powers and find protection by crossing back and forth to Iran.[60] During the period examined here between the 1820s and 1870s Van appears less often in the Ottoman state archives than, for example, Harput (Kharberd) and Sivas (Sebastia) do. For this reason, there are no nineteenth-century local histories of Van based on the Ottoman archives, as there are of Harput, Diyarbekir and Erzurum.[61]

[57] *Masis*, issue 236, (Aug. 8, 1856).
[58] For more on Mahmud Khan see Sabri Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), *59, 69-79.*
[59] PMOA, C.DH.95/4727 (March 4, 1840).
[60] For more on the porousness of the Ottoman-Iranian borderland see Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands.*
[61] The relative lack of archival material may be the reason why Van has remained outside of the radar of Ottoman historiography, while some local studies exist on other eastern provinces such as Erzurum, Harput and Diyarbakir. For example, within the local manuscripts and edited volumes that have emerged in the past five years on the eastern region, Van is absent. See Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij, eds, *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir,* 1870-1915 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012); Nilay Özök-Gündoğan, "The Making of the Modern Ottoman State in the Kurdish Periphery: The Politics of Land and Taxation, 1840-1870" (PhD diss., Binghamton University SUNY,

Besides the central state, other organizations that have been considered as modernizers of the Ottoman provinces also had little influence in Van. The Protestant and Catholic missionaries—to whom scholars have often attributed the role of transmitters of education and "Western ideas" like nationalism, to Ottoman Armenian communities[62]—were unsuccessful in establishing a center in Van until 1872. The late establishment of the missionaries had to do with the fact that they did not feel that the Ottoman state had enough of a presence in the region to protect them, and that there was strong resistance by the local Armenians against missionaries.[63] Indeed, in 1892 the number of Protestants and Catholics in the region were still small. A French geographer Vital Cuinet (1833-1896) counted 708 Catholics and 290 Protestants among the 64,000 Apostolic Armenians in the region of Van.[64] The petitions from the region of Van that I have analyzed rarely referred to Protestants or Catholics, whereas petitions from Mush and Erzurum more frequently addressed the 'threat' that the Apostolic Armenian community faced from Protestants and Catholics.[65] This relative isolation of Van from state or charitable institutions allows me to link the processes of modernization to indigenous processes and to argue that local forces had more autonomy from external influences, thus giving weight to Vanets'is in this transition phase of imperial politics.

2011) (which is based on Palu, a district of Diyarbekir); Owen Miller, "Sasun 1894: Mountains, Missionaries and Massacres at the End of the Ottoman Empire" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2015); Yaşar Tolga Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin: The Social and Economic History of a Multi-Ethnic Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century" (PhD Diss., University of Chicago, 2016); Ali Sipahi, "At Arm's Length: Historical Ethnography of Proximity in Harput" (PhD Diss., University of Michigan, 2015).

[62] Ayşe Tekdal Fildis, "The American Board's Vision of Protestant Anatolia and Fostering Armenian Nationalism (1810-90)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 48.5 (Sept. 2012): 735-747; Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement,* 31-34.

[63] See for example *The Missionary Herald Tribute,* vol. 75 (June 1879), 222.

[64] Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie géographie administrative*: *statistique descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie-Mineure,* Tome Deuxième (Paris: Ernest Lerous, 1892), 690. Indeed here we can see that his count of Armenians was significantly lower than the statistics collected by Armenians.

[65] For examples from Karin/Erzurum see BNU.CP12/1, 051 (March 4, 1850); BNU.CP12/1, 001 (Nov. 8, 1854). For examples from Mush and Baghesh/Bitlis see BNU.CP15/15, 017 (Jan. 10, 1849); BNU.CP15/15, 006 (Feb. 16, 1860).

In the early nineteenth century Van was also not closely controlled by the Constantinople Patriarchate, as Van clergymen turned to the Ējmiatsin Catholicosate regarding financial matters.[66] Ējmiatsin, in the Russian Empire, was the seat of the highest office in the Armenian Church—the catholicosate. To acquire financial resources clergymen in Van often crossed the porous imperial borderlands. Some Armenians who lived in the Russian Empire were bound to ecclesiastic centers located in the Ottoman Empire. An 1832 communiqué between the Catholicosate of Ējmiatsin in the Russian Empire and Abbot Gabriel of the Lim Monastery of Lake Van shows that the clergy from the region of Van collected taxes from Nakhijevan and Goghat‘, which were under the Catholicosate's and the Russian Empire's jurisdiction.[67] Similarly, Mkrtich‘ Khrimian and Hakob T‘ōp‘uzean, clergymen from Van, raised money in Tbilisi and Ējmiatsin in the mid-1800s, which speak of the financial ties that Vanets‘is had with the Russian Empire.

Communication was also much slower with Istanbul than with Ējmiatsin. In the 1860s, it would take quite some time for the bureaucracy headed by the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate to process a petition. Although not in a consistent manner, some of the petitions I have consulted include a date on the reverse side of the petition, indicating either the petition's date of arrival or the date when it was processed in the Patriarchate. Most petitions that have such temporal information took a little bit more than two months, sometimes three months, for the Patriarchate to process.[68] Some petitions contain a note that mentions when a response to the petition was sent out. One petition took more than three months from the time of composition to

[66] MM.KD.78.165 (Nov. 17, 1833); MM.KD.96.67 (June 10, 1838).
[67] MM.KD.74.249a. (Dec. 12, 1832).
[68] See BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.018 (Oct. 27, 1863); BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.016 (Oct. 27, 1863/Dec. 31, 1863); BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.019 (Oct.27, 1863/Dec. 31,1863); BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.-22 (Dec. 8, 1863/Feb. 18, 1864); BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.026 (Dec. 24, 1863/Feb. 18, 1864); BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.28 (Dec. 24, 1864/Feb. 18, 1864)); BNU.CGPR.81.43 (Feb. 16, 1864/Apr. 9, 1864); BNU.CP23/1.075 (March 1, 1865/May 27, 1865). This collection of documents also shows that multiple petitions were often sent out on the same day from Van.

the sending of a reply.[69] In other words, in the 1860s and 1870s petitioners of Van could wait up to five months to receive a reply. The petitions sent to Ējmiatsin did not provide dates of reception. However, since the distance between Ējmiatsin and Van was only a few days, as opposed to three weeks when going to Istanbul, we can assume that petitions from Van would reach Ējmiatsin more quickly. Such a temporal consideration in communications can explain the practical reasons why Van in the early nineteenth century would maintain closer ties with Ējmiatsin than with Constantinople. As the Constantinople Patriarchate centralized, however, Vanets'is petitioned Istanbul more than to Ējmiatsin. While in my collection of petitions the number of petitions sent to Istanbul increased exponentially over time, the same did not happen with petitions sent to Ējmiatsin.

Van's relative autonomy also emanated from its diverse and rich economy. In the region of Van, rich Armenian families had large lands from which they profited.[70] Besides trade and artisanship, Van artisans were also occupied with agriculture and husbandry.[71] During the Crimean War between 1854 and 1856 the Armenian community in Van provided the Ottoman army with grain.[72] Van was one of the major exporters of grain in the mid-nineteenth century, exporting not just to other Ottoman provinces but also to Europe in the 1860s.[73] In the city there was a vibrant community of artisans and merchants.[74] In the early nineteenth century, the ninety gold craftsmen of Van worked in about seventy artisan shops, each of which had four to five apprentices. Conflicts among these artisans were resolved by the *Sheikh ustası*, who was elected by the local notable Muslims. Each guild (*esnaf*), artisan had a head leader (*esnaf başı*), such as

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[69] BNU.CP23/1.046 (May 4, 1871/July 13, 1871/Aug. 11, 1871).
[70] Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots'ial-tntesakan,* 92.
[71] Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots'ial-tntesakan,* 313.
[72] PMOA, MKT.UM, 189/15 (April 4, 1855).
[73] Pehlivan, "Beyond "The Desert and the Sown," 80.
[74] Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots'ial-tntesakan,* 180-181.

the head-tailor (*terzi başı*), head hairdresser (*berber başı*), head doctor (*hekim başı*), head cook (*aşcı başı*), head blacksmith (*nalband başı*), head furrier (*kürkcu başı*), jeweler (*kuyumcu* başı).[75] This list represents an image of the different professions that existed in Van. Ghazaryan, a Soviet-era scholar of "Western Armenian" history, writes that Awetis Pirzalemean was one of the famous merchants of Van who exported shawls, gold bracelets, fruits and vegetables to Istanbul, to Tabriz in Iran, to Tbilisi, and to other parts of the Russian Empire. He would import fabrics, metals, and weapons.[76] Van also benefited from a rich fishing industry, the products of which were also exported.[77] The diversity of traded commodities and the different destinations of export connected Van with a wide variety of places. The dynamic economy of Van enhanced the power and autonomy of local notables.

In Armenian national narratives Van is the center of Armenian civilization, where multiple Armenian kingdoms had existed in the first millennium CE. Van stands as the locale of the mythological figure Hayk, cast as the ancestor of Armenians. Van was the place that materialized the legendary tales of the chronicler Movses Khorenats'i, whose work *Patmut'iwn Hayots'* (History of Armenians) had gained prominence in the nineteenth century. From ancient times the region had been named "Vaspurakan," a designation appropriated by its Armenian inhabitants, who identified themselves as Vaspurakants'is. Even today, in Armenian popular culture Van is celebrated as the city, where Armenians showed the strongest resistance during the Hamidian massacres and the genocide of 1915, and where they established a provincial

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[75] Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots'ial-tntesakan,* 294-295.
[76] Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots'ial-tntesakan,* 214.
[77] Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots'ial-tntesakan,* 217.

government shortly after the 1915 uprising.[78] Van has a special status in the Armenian imaginary.

Even if Van was a periphery in terms of its distance and relative autonomy from the central seat of the Ottoman Empire, this should not suggest that Van was isolated from the rest of the empire and that Vanets'is did not have agency in the broader sociocultural and political transformations of the empire. That the state did not have a heavy presence in this borderland region did not take away from Van's generative and innovative force that had reverberations across the empire. The circulation of handwritten petitions, print media, the historical meaning given to Van in Armenian narratives as well as the circulation of merchants, students and migrants made Van into a central node of the Ottoman Empire. As we will see in Chapter Five, while the Patriarchate—as an extension of the Ottoman state—was centralizing its power in Van, pandukhts from Van in Istanbul acted as intermediaries, who asserted voices from Van in the Ottoman capital.

It is this context of Van's dynamic economy and circulation that explains why some of the most active and prominent Armenian ecclesiastics of the second half of the nineteenth century emerged from Van. They included Bishops Hakob T'ōp'uzean, Mkrtich' Khrimian, Yeremia Tevkants' and Garegin Sruandzteants', all born and raised in Van. They produced abundant writings. Khrimian and Sruandzteants' published the periodical *Artsui Vaspurakan* (*Eagle of Vaspurakan,* 1855-1864, 1872)—which led me to Van. *Artsui Vaspurakan* was the first Armenian periodical published in the eastern provinces, and in 1858 it was most likely the first periodical published in this region in any language.

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[78] For more see Yektan Türkyilmaz, "Rethinking Genocide: Violence and Victimhood in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1915," (PhD Diss., Duke University, 2012), 275-283.

In addition to being authors, these clergymen were also reformers. Sruandzteants‘, Khrimian, and Tevkants‘ did not limit their reform work only to Van, but worked throughout the empire. Their reform project, in line with the Tanzimat, involved the centralization of the power of the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate, an extension of the Ottoman state, over Armenian ecclesiastic centers and communities throughout the Ottoman Empire.[79] The fact that Van produced a proportionately higher number of pro-state reformers, who also produced a significant body of literature contributing to the Armenian social imaginary of nation and patria, justifies my focus on the region of Van as a critical area of research to understand the context and source of nation-making as well as colonization: two seemingly contradictory processes.

Mkrtich‘ Khrimian (1820-1907), one of the best-known figures of nineteenth-century Armenian history, if not the most famous Armenian person of the century, was born in the city of Van in 1820 to a family of merchants and artisans.[80] He was largely homeschooled by his uncle. He later held different ecclesiastic positions in Van and Mush, was elected the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople (1869-1873), and eventually became the Catholicos of Ējmiatsin (1893-1907). Khrimian's student, Garegin Sruandzteants‘ (1840-1892), was also born in Van to a well-to-do family. In the late 1850s and early 1860s he studied at the seminary of the Varag Monastery (Yedikilise now in Bakraçlı) located on a mountain southeast of the city of Van. A third figure, Yeremia Tevkants‘ Tēr Sargseants‘ (1829-1885),[81] was also born in Van to a rich landowning family that also had a tailoring shop. Tevkants‘ had attended school in Van in his

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[79] This argument is made by Antaramian in his dissertation "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 3-4. He also discusses the reform work of these three ecclesiastics throughout his dissertation.

[80] Ēmma Kostandyan, *Mkrtich‘ Khrimian. Hasarakakan-k‘aghak‘akan gortsuneutyunĕ* (Yerevan: HH GAA Patmut‘ean institute, 2000), 43; Hayk Achemean, *Hayots‘ Hayrik* (Tawriz: Atrpatakani Hayots‘ Temakan Tparan, 1929), 88-89.

[81] Yeremia was his ecclesiastic name. Hovhannēs was his baptismal name, but he claimed that at home they called him Karapet, as Hovhannēs was the name of his deceased uncle, and it caused his grandmother a lot of pain to call him Hovhannēs. (MM.MS.4184, 55a)

youth.[82] When Tevkants‘ turned eighteen he decided to become a celibate priest (vardapet) and to this end he retreated to the Lim Monastery (on an island in Lake Van) to continue his education and rise up the ecclesiastic ladder under the mentorship of Bishop T‘ōp‘uzean.[83] Afterwards, between 1857 and 1858 Tevkants‘ stayed at the Varag Monastery, where Mkrtich‘ Khrimian had established a press and expanded the local seminary.[84] Tevkants‘ later traveled to Ējmiatsin, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Zmiwrna (Izmir), and Karin (Erzurum) among other places. He served as a prelate in Baghēsh (Bitlis, 1859-1863), Kharberd (Harput, 1867-1869?) and as an interim Prelate in Van (1876-1880). Tevkants‘'s mentor Hakob T‘ōp‘uzean (1800-1870) had received his early education in Van, and in 1816 had gone to study in Constantinople with a bishop. Eventually he went to study in the Jerusalem Seminary. Between 1829 and 1833 he worked as a teacher at the St. Karapet seminary in Mush, a region southeast of Van.[85]

My dissertation follows these four individuals from Van, all of whom became bishops, but through rather different paths. They were born and educated in Van, and lived there until their late teens and early twenties. They were ardent supporters of a modern vision of progress that they hoped to implement in their imagined patria—what they called Armenia—in the eastern Ottoman provinces. In their vision of progress, they aimed to advance education, inculcate love of nation and patria and love of study, as well as love of law, which they hoped would enhance the Ottoman rule of law. Subsequently they held different positions throughout the empire and traveled both in the Ottoman and Russian empires.

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[82] MM.MS.4184, 71b-72a. T‘ōp‘uzean date of birth was provided by Tevkants‘. MM.MS.4180, 43a. He was the brother of a jeweler and was initially being trained as a jeweler until he traveled to Constantinople and continued his education there. MM.MS. 4180, 44a.
[83] MM.MS.4184, 30a, 206a. (The celibacy of a priest is significant in the Armenian Church, as it indicates that he is on a track that would allow him to reach the higher ranks of bishops and archbishops and even to become Patriarch or Catholicos).
[84] MM.MS.4180, 32a-36b.
[85] Poghosyan, *Vapspurakani Patmut‘iwnits‘,* 294.

As such, they contributed to the centralization of Ottoman state power in the provinces.[86] Up until the mid-nineteenth century, rather than the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the local ruling class, Kurds and Armenians had appointed the abbots of monasteries and even the Catholicos of Aght‘amar, located on an island in Lake Van.[87] In the 1840s, however, the Constantinople Patriarchate began to involve itself directly in local appointments, including those of abbots in the Van region, as well as in the selection of the prelate of Van and Catholicos of Aght‘amar. At the same time, the Ottoman state led a war against the local Kurdish emirates in order to weaken the latter's power and strengthen Ottoman rule in the region.[88]

As institutional reforms were occurring in Constantinople, starting in the 1840s, the Patriarchate actively engaged in the selection of prelates in the provinces, to facilitate empire-wide rule.[89] The following decades saw multiple conflicts emerge, most notoriously in regards to the appointments in Aght‘amar and the prelacy of Van. In 1844, the prelate of Van, Bishop Mkrtich‘ wrote to the Catholicosate to inform them that the Patriarchate and *amiras* in Constantinople had appointed a Bishop Khach‘atur to become the next Catholicos of Aght‘amar, and that he had come to Van with an Ottoman *berat*-a patent of appointment. The *amiras* consisted of an influential group of Armenians made up of high-level bureaucrats and *sarrafs*, moneylenders.[90] But the local governor (*kaymakam*), along with Mahmud Khan—whom Bishop Mkrtich‘ described as the local oppressor—opposed the appointment of the new Catholicos.

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[86] This argument is also made by Richard Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State: Armenians and Ottoman State Power, 1844-1896."
[87] Hayk Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots‘ial-tntesakan yev k'aghak'akan kats‘utyunĕ, 1800-1870t‘t‘* (Yerevan: HSS GA 1967), 57.
[88] For more on these wars see Martin Van Bruinessen, *The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1992), 175-182
[89] For more on the efforts of the Constantinople Patriarchate to centralize its power empire-wide see Richard Antaramian's dissertation "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State."
[90] For more on the amira class see Gerard Jirair Libaridian, "The Ideology of Armenian Liberation: The development of Armenian political thought before the revolutionary movement (1639-1885)," (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1987), 96-102.

Reportedly, as Bishop Mkrtich‘ was about to confirm Bishop Khach‘atur as the Catholicos of Aght‘amar, two hundred Armenians and Kurds rose against him with swords, thus stopping the appointment of Khach‘atur.[91] The correspondence not only informs us of the conflicts over ecclesiastic appointments, but also shows that Kurds and Armenians were invested in having a say in who the next local ecclesiastic leader would be.

Between the 1840s and 1870s, Van Armenians challenged the appointment or election of almost every Aght‘amar Catholicos and Prelate of Van. The struggles surrounding these positions were not merely between Constantinople and Van, but also among Vanets‘is, who took conflicting positions in regards to the Prelate of Van or the Catholicos of Aght‘amar. The collective engagement of Armenian laymen of different strata in communal matters became most apparent when it came to the election and ratification of ecclesiastic leaders. These conflicts are at the core of many of the demands of Vanets‘is that appear in print media and in the petitions that I analyze throughout this dissertation. Struggles over the seats of the Van prelacy or the Aght‘amar Catholicosate provide a lens through which to explore how rural and urban Vanets‘is voiced their will against the institutional backdrop of representative politics.

In the 1850s, national assemblies were already set up in Van to elect members who in turn elected the Prelate of Van and Catholicos in Aght‘amar. The Armenian National Constitution of 1863 formalized the process of the election of assembly members and prelates. According to the Constitution, to have the right to vote an Ottoman Armenian had to pay at least 75 ghurush per year as an Armenian national tax.[92] The local assemblies of the Armenian community were to elect a prelate, whose election was then to be ratified by the Constantinople

[91] MM.KD.111.480a (May 31, 1844).
[92] *Azgayin Sahmanadrut‘iwn Hayots‘,* Article 65 (Constantinople, 1863).

Patriarchate and approved by the Sublime Porte.[93] Thus the Patriarchate had a heavy hand in the appointment and election of the Prelate in Van, as it had the last say in confirming the prelate's position.

Prelates, catholicoses and also abbots of monasteries were among the local authorities with whom notables wanted to maintain close relations. These officials therefore wanted to have a say in who was appointed as Prelate of Van or Catholicos of Aght'amar. Conflicts surrounding prelacies had much to do with local power struggles between Armenian artisans and notables.[94] Competing networks struggled to appoint their own candidates based on who they thought would protect their own local economic and political interests, as well as who had the skills to navigate local power dynamics.

Appointments of the Van Prelate and the Catholicos of Aght'amar were contentious matters because the ecclesiastics in these positions had significant administrative power, especially beginning with the enactment of the Tanzimat reforms. A prelate served as the official representative of the local Armenian community both to the local Ottoman authority as well as to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. [95] The role of the prelate of a region was to head the local Armenian assembly, made up of forty laymen and ten ecclesiastics. He would also be the person present at meetings of the local mixed Ottoman assemblies.

A prelate had the power to judge Armenian court cases. His judicial authority extended to the writing of petitions on behalf of a local subject or of local collective petitioners. A petition with the signature of the prelate had greater weight than one by a local person. Such were the

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[93] *Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn Hayots',* Article 97 (Constantinople, 1863).

[94] Ottoman historian Tolga Yaşar Cora shows this through a case study of the prelacy of Erzurum, Yaşar Tolga Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin: The Social and Economic History of a Multi-Ethnic Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century" (PhD Diss., University of Chicago, 2016), 394. Richard Antaramian also in his dissertation discusses the role of prelates and abbots within the Ottoman political system as well as for different powerholders in Van. See Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 6-7, 19-20, 34-35, 63-64, 122-126.

[95] For more details on the role of the prelacy based on the 1863 Armenian Constitution see Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin," 344-345.

powers of the prelacy that if a person other than the prelate would petition from Van, often the Patriarchate would write to the prelate asking him for clarification on the matter. Prelates through their assemblies and councils oversaw the maintenance and income of the properties of the Armenian community, the millet (defined by the Armenian Apostolic Church), taxes and inheritance among Apostolic Armenians, and the establishment and maintenance of schools. Abbots of monasteries too had similar rights, although based on the Armenian Constitutional changes their power were diminishing.

Particularly after the centralizing efforts of the Constantinople Patriarchate, which aimed to concentrate power in the hands of prelates, the new regulations of the church insisted that marriages could only be valid with the permission of the prelate or his representative. Having the power to permit a marriage was not just an administrative task. The petitions I have consulted demonstrate that some prelates refused to allow a marriage on the grounds of difference of age and of previous marriages of either of the spouses. In such cases families whose children were to be married often turned to other monasteries to validate their marriage, thus creating conflicts among the different ecclesiastic centers. If two families each wanted to take the daughter of a particular family as a bride, it would have been the role of the prelate to mediate the conflict, which could in turn play a role into local socioeconomic dynamics as it would determine alliances and conflicts between particular notable families, as well as the transfer of wealth from one family to another.[96]

The prelacy of Van, the Catholicosate of Aght'amar, and the monasteries of Van all had considerable properties and lands, which were often lent out to local notables. These institutions usually oversaw the management and finances of local schools, as well, and were responsible for

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[96] For an example of how the prelate's role in validating marriages played into the local socio-economic power dynamics see Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin," 389-393.

the collection of the "national tax". In sum, the seats of the prelate of Van, the abbots and the catholicos were political positions.

Roadmap of the Dissertation

This dissertation engages two connected phenomena in and about the Ottoman East. On the one hand, I examine the participation of Armenians from the province of Van in the redefinition of communal ties and the reconfiguration of relations of power. On the other hand, I bring to light the historiographical erasure of these very voices from Van. To understand this conundrum my dissertation studies the conjunction of the local, the imperial and the global processes of circulation of people and knowledge that shed light on historical transformations, as well as writings of history that have marginalized voices from the eastern Ottoman provinces. I argue that between the 1820s and 1870s, with the circulation of people, petitions and print, Van Armenians took part in the redefinition of communal ties and of their legitimate place in local, imperial and trans-imperial politics. I define kinship ties as symbolically shaped "within an entire system of meanings about the world."[97] Throughout this dissertation I pay close attention to the deployment of kinship ties, through the shifting concepts of love, nation, patria and pandukhts, in order to understand transformations in systems of meanings.

This dissertation engages the fields of archives, technologies and spaces of communication (i.e. print media and handwritten petitions), of migration, of emotions and affect, and of education to capture the transformation in systems of meaning that reconfigured communal ties and relations of power. This historical moment witnessed the production and redefinition of practices, sentiments and concepts such as love, nation, patria, pandukhts and

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[97] Carol Delaney, *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Pres, 1991), 14.

education through which relations of power were signified. The same sites that enabled Van Armenians to assert their voices, also produced discourses that represented the eastern province as stagnant, passive and unruly, in contradiction to the "civilized" Constantinople. While Vanets'is were able to utilize print media to articulate their voices, the same media simultaneously represented Armenia, and therefore also Van, as in need of help, in need of education and in need of people who could come from Istanbul to educate them and cultivate the "right" emotions among the local Armenians of the eastern provinces.

The five chapters of this dissertation narrate the circulation of people and texts, and the cultivation of affect and emotions that tied and connected distant geographies of the Ottoman Empire. I trace the ways empire-making and Armenian nation-making involved more than notables, statesmen and state and ecclesiastic institutions, like the Sublime Porte, the Armenian patriarchates, catholicosates and prelacies. Instead, I bring into focus the language both metaphorical and literal voiced by a multitude of historical actors as they came to redefine and reconfigure communal affiliation and relations of power. While the processes of the expansion of education, of nation-making, secularization and democratization can all be tied to the Tanzimat, this dissertation argues that these transformations began in conjunction with or even before the launching of the Tanzimat.

The first chapter, "Archives and Their Journeys," maps out both my journeys through Ottoman and Armenian archives and the history of the archives I have consulted. Tracing my encounters with the archives and the assembling of the archives themselves, this chapter unpacks the affect, the histories, the politics and the organization of state and national archives. I analyze how the archives, both in their structure and content, have reproduced nineteenth-century categories, hierarchies and discourses in current scholarship. Such a reading of the archives

allows a historiographical interpretation that considers Ann Stoler's archival analysis of "how history's exclusions are secured and made."[98] This methodological question is the central thread that weaves this dissertation together.

The second chapter, "Transforming Modes of Communication," explores the journeys of the archival materials before they were collected and institutionalized. The circulation of print books, newspapers, periodicals and handwritten petitions foregrounds the role of Van inhabitants as producers and contributors rather than just receivers and consumers of ideas and policies. The very exchange of print material, I argue, forged new and enhanced ties among Armenians across a vast geographical space, across socioeconomic and confessional lines. The appearance of newspapers and periodicals in the mid-nineteenth century transformed the role of handwritten petitions, as they became subjects of public debate. The demands that Van Armenians made in their handwritten petitions reverberated beyond their communication with the Constantinople Patriarchate into the public medium of the newspapers. Petitions were now not just a medium to extend a plea to a higher authority, but a means to express the voice of Vanets'is. The petition we can say metaphorically turned into a voting ballot. At the same time, circulation of print served to provide a sense of unequal exchange between Constantinople and the provinces. While print expanded the dissemination of information and increased the number of people engaged in public discourse, it also provided a platform to popularize the names of certain key individuals versus others, highlighting particular discourses and marginalizing others.

The third chapter, "Competing for Sites of Power" explores how education came to be perceived as vital in every sphere of life (from health to economics, morality, piety and governance) in the Ottoman Empire. I show in the chapter that beginning in the 1820s, before the

[98] Ann Laura Stoler in *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and the Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 45.

Tanzimat, efforts to expand education existed in Van. Establishing one's role as a patron of education and schools provided both social and financial capital, thus producing a physical and discursive site for Vanets'is to assert their position within their ethno-confessional community. Print media and handwritten petitions provided spaces through which lay and ecclesiastic Vanets'is affirmed their dedication and love for education. At the same time Vanets'is defamed their competitors or enemies by claiming that they acted against the expansion of education. Laments of lay and ecclesiastic literati from Van and elsewhere in print media spoke of the state of ignorance in Armenia, and in turn asked for help from Armenians elsewhere to finance and educate Armenians in the eastern provinces. In such a discourse, clergymen like Khrimian and Sruandzteants' minimized the very educational processes that they themselves had benefited from and contributed to in Van.

Turning to the semantics of love the fourth chapter, "Reconfiguring Nation and Patria," argues that between the 1820s and 1870s, the language of love in petitions turned from love of God to love of nation (*azg*) and patria (*hayrenik'*), thus secularizing and nationalizing communal ties. This language too, like education, became a site through which Vanets'is asserted their voices within their national community and shaped their community. Petitioners negotiated paternalistic notions of love, replacing them with a more shared and egalitarian fraternal language of love. This transformation in the conceptualization of love, I argue points to processes that acted to secularize notions of legitimacy. While petitioners were engaged in reconfiguring love, ecclesiastic literati such as Khrimian and Sruandzteants' continued to assert paternalistic notions of love, thus reconfirming the hierarchies between the Ottoman capital and the eastern provinces. In print media love of nation and patria were spoken of through the language of colonialism as emotions that had to be cultivated in the provinces.

Chapter Five, “Representing the Voices of the ‘People’,” focuses on pandukhts from Van in Constantinople. The word “pandukht” referred to people who were away from their patria, in our case from Van. Pandukhts from Van included merchants, clergymen, students and most of all in the mid-nineteenth century, labor migrants. In this chapter, I argue that the living spaces where pandukhts lived and congregated—particularly *hans* (inns), the coffee shops, and churches—together with the legal status of pandukhts in Istanbul, provided them opportunities to forge enhanced regional ties. Furthermore, their proximity to representative institutions of governance in Istanbul such as the Armenian Patriarchate and later the National Assembly, as well as the Sublime Porte, allowed pandukhts to represent the voice of Van in Istanbul starting in the 1850s. Not only the pandukhts of Van, but also Armenian inhabitants still in Van referred to pandukhts as representatives of their voice and mentioned the pandukhts in their petitions to put further pressure on the Patriarchate. The voices of the pandukhts became a site of power and their very physical presence in the Ottoman capital in large numbers represented a lever of negotiation. Still, just like print media, education, and the language of love of nation and patria, pandukhts, too, while being a site of empowerment for Vanets‘is also served as figural representatives of the patria and its inhabitants, and were represented as indigent and stagnant, and simultaneously as a place of longing and nostalgia. Rather than people with a political voice, pandukhts in print media were spoken of as penniless labor migrants, who suffered from deteriorating health and hunger, and were in a constant state of melancholy and longing for their patria. Through this discourse Armenia itself was represented as a place of rural simplicity, and therefore voiceless and apolitical.

Chapter One

Archives and their Journeys: Affect, Nation-Making and Organization

To write a history about the nineteenth-century Ottoman eastern borderland region of Van, I begin with the present and move back in time, to peel off the layers that have framed present narratives of the past. Through a reflection on my journeys in different archives I explore how my experiences and subjectivity have shaped my research. Examining the history of the collections and organization of fragments of a past helps us understand how national archives (i.e., Armenian and Turkish/Ottoman) formulate or reflect their respective historiographies as well as the political power of each nation state. As such this chapter delves into the aspects of collecting, assembling, organizing and erasing that enter the production of history and the story this dissertation tells.

In order to unpack the categories of power (ethno-confessional, geographical and gendered differences) in Ottoman and Armenian studies, in this chapter I turn to examine the affect, trajectories and organizations of the archives. In other words, I lay out what the archives I worked in were subtly telling me, the researcher, before I began my process of selecting and reading the materials institutional archives stored. Such an approach helps identify how the archive as an institution frames and crafts narratives through discursive and visual representations, which enact and enhance particular relations of power and historical paradigms. Throughout my dissertation I utilize a similar approach to reading the nineteenth-century texts the archives contained, and to understanding how dominant representations and narratives that circulated between the 1820s and 1870s imposed and negotiated Ottoman Armenian communal

and imperial hierarchies. I ask why and how particular sets of narratives were foregrounded in nineteenth-century sources, and later by historians, while others were marginalized.

Following Ann Stoler's approach, I examine the organization, trajectories and affect of the archives I have utilized to understand the politics of the archives that reinforce the role and power of Istanbul rather than the provinces. This helps me answer two central questions of this dissertation: how and why Istanbul-oriented narratives gained the upper hand over provincial narratives in historiography, and how power dynamics were reinforced between Istanbul and Van.

In the past two decades, scholars of postcolonial studies have paid much attention to the form of the colonial archive and its peculiarities. The critique of the archive as a fact-producing entity paralleled and engaged with the literature that unsettled positivist approaches in the discipline of history. One of the earliest critics of this approach, historian Natalie Davis, argued that by paying attention to the "real facts" of the documents, we lose sight of the "fictional" aspects of the archive that tell much about the "forming, shaping, and molding elements: the crafting of a narrative."[99] Following Foucault, rather than perceiving knowledge as a means to understand the past, historians began to look at the knowledge the archive produced as a way of hiding certain aspects of the past and therefore enhancing a particular system of power. By questioning the production of objectivity through facts, historians turned to new methods of reading sources, paying close attention to the framing and the strategies of representation in their sources.

[99] Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 3.

Historians in Ottoman and Armenian studies continue to use archives as a source from which they can extract information, as opposed to a subject of study.[100] Such a treatment of archival texts obstructs our understanding of the politics behind the production of knowledge that reproduces existing taxonomies and forms of power. As Stoler has argued, the extractive approach to the archive "leaves unaddressed how often colonial categories reappear in the analytic vocabulary of historians" and prevents historians from analyzing such categories "as transient, provisional objects of historical inquiry."[101] Instead, reading the archives not as a source of information but as a subject in inquiry, focusing on the archive's "politics of knowledge" help to unravel "how history's seclusions are secured and made."[102] Yet, in Ottoman Studies, especially in the historiography on the modern period, scholars still revere the archive. The heavy reliance on Ottoman archives has, indeed, pushed scholars to cede to the state a dominant place in Ottoman historiography.

In the past decade, historians have turned to Greek, Armenian, and other ethno-national archives or rather to take up a term used by a recent *American Historical Review,* "archives of decolonization."[103] Historians have turned to non-Ottoman/Turkish-language sources to challenge both the Ottoman state's and the Turkish nation-state's vantage point on Ottoman history. Such approaches have aimed to challenge Muslim-centric Ottoman narratives and to destabilize homogeneous and nationalistic perceptions of ethnic identities, and have inserted narratives into Ottoman history that challenge the Turkish national conception of the Ottoman

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[100] Terms used by Ann Laura Stoler in *Along the Archival Grain*, 44, 47. A recent exception in Ottoman Studies is Heather L. Ferguson's latest book *The Proper Order of Things: Language, Power, and Law in Ottoman Administrative Discourse* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018).
[101] Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 50.
[102] Ibid 45.
[103] "AHR Roundtable: The Archives of Decolonization," *American Historical Review* 120. 3 (June 2015): 844-950.

Empire.[104] While some have turned towards the east of the empire, the Ottoman state and Istanbul continue to remain the central unit through which and with which ethno-confessional groups, more specifically their male elites, negotiated their position in the empire, regardless of the archives and sources used by historians. While studies have been conducted on the connections between Armenian notables and Muslim notables and statesmen,[105] as well as connections between Armenian clergymen and the Ottoman state, we still know very little about the lives of the lower strata of the population in the provinces.[106] In this sense, turning away from Ottoman state archives alone does not help decenter the state.

Questions have not been raised concerning how the archives and contemporary politics shape paradigms in modern Ottoman history.[107] In Middle East Studies, the focus on challenging Western politics of domination, as opposed to local regional politics, perpetuates the centrality of the West. Ayda Erbal, however, has reflected on the persistent racism and genocide denial in Turkey that for decades kept the topic of the Armenian genocide, Armenians and Kurds, outside

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[104] Examples of such works include, but certainly are not limited to Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011); Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardic Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State"; Murat Cankara, "Armeno-Turkish Writing and the Question of Hybridity," in *An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion,* eds. Kathryn Babayan and Michael Pifer (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 173-193. Also see articles by David Low, Alyson Wharton-Durgaryan, Gizem Tongo and Vazken Khatchig Davidian in the issue "Towards Inclusive Art Histories: Ottoman Armenian Voices Speak Back," *EAC* 6 (2015).

[105] Tolga Cora for example, in his dissertation, has focused on the interaction of Armenian notables and Muslim statesmen. Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin."

[106] There has been more work done on the shared histories of the different ethnic and religious groups in the early twentieth century with a predominant focus on Istanbul. Some original works have emerged in recent years on the shared history of the different ethnic and religious groups of the early-twentieth century Ottoman Empire. Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press), 2014; Murat Yildiz, "'What is a Beautiful Boy?' Late Ottoman 'Sportsman' Photographs and New Notions of Male Corporeal Beauty," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 8 (2015): 192-214. Nora Lessersohn, "'Provincial Cosmopolitanism' in Late Ottoman Anatolia: An Armenian Shoemaker's Memoire," *CSSH* 57.2 (2015): 528-556.

[107] The exception is the focus on West to East political dynamics. With Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) a shift took place in Middle East Studies whereby scholars began to critically approach modernity as measured by Western standards as well as the centrality of the West's role in modern Middle Eastern History. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003). For a great analysis of how Western politics has shaped Middle East Studies see Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

of the purview of Ottoman Studies in the U.S. academy.[108] By contrast, in the field of Armenian Studies, the 1915 Armenian genocide has overshadowed the study of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Particularly in Ottoman-Armenian history, one concern that has served to reinforce the centrality of the state has been the push by scholars, politicians and activists alike to have the Turkish state recognize its or its predecessor's responsibility in the perpetration of the Armenian genocide. Although the study of the genocide intends to critique the Ottoman/Turkish state, in this endeavor, it centers and further elevates the role of the state in historical processes. Furthermore, the need to affirm that the Armenian genocide occurred has pushed the field of Armenian Studies to use nineteenth-century history to explain why the genocide happened, almost suggesting that the genocide was bound to happen.

The Turkish state's denial of the Armenian genocide has led scholars to criticize the Turkish state for having partially or fully closed archives, for hiding information, for having destroyed facts.[109] Such a position, justified as it is, contains an underlying assumption that fully open and primordial archives will reveal the truth, as though the hiding of information depends merely on a physical unlocking, rather than on the logic that shape the organization of archives as well as the way scholars use them. In addition, such a perception elevates the archival sources to a guardian of truth in opposition to other forms of historical evidence, such as newspapers, memoirs and diaries.[110] Discussions about the openness of the Ottoman/Turkish archives

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[108] Ayda Erbal, "One Hundred Years of Denial: The Armenian Genocide," *IJMES* 47 (2015): 784-790.
[109] This view is popular among scholars, but for some concrete examples of such discussions see Oktay Özel, "Hükümetin 1915 bildirisi vesilesiyle: Arşivlerimiz gerçekten açık mı?" *Radikal,* May 7, 2014 http://www.radikal.com.tr/yorum/hukumetin_1915_bildirisi_vesilesiylearsivlerimiz_gercekten_acik_mi-1190637 (accessed March 21, 2019); Passim, "Arşivler Meselemiz : Siyaset Kurumunun Tarihçiyle Tehlikeli Dansı ve Meşruiyet Kaybı," *Toplumsal Tarih* 217 (Jan. 2012): 24-33; Nilay Vardar, "Açık Arşivler Sorunlu, Genelkurmay Arşivi Fiilen Kapalı," (April 28, 2014) http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/155294-acik-arsivler-sorunlu-genelkurmay-arsivi-fiilen-kapali (accessed March 21, 2019).
[110] For a critique of the reluctance among historians to use testimonies of the victims of the genocide see Boris Adjemian and Raymond Kévorkian, "Témoignages de rescapés et connaissance du genocide de 1915-1916," *EAC* 5

perpetuate a *discursive field* whereby the power of the state of Turkey is reified, as the state in this case becomes the holder of keys to the gates of truth. The lack of similar public criticism among scholars over the state of Armenian archives—except in the case of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) archives—disregards the limitations scholars face in Armenian archives in and outside of Armenia. Public discourse among scholars regarding archives in Armenia parallels a distance and practiced caution of academics in Armenian Studies in the West toward the Armenian state as opposed to the state of Turkey.

Such a condition unintentionally elevates the role of the Turkish state and reifies the authority it holds over historical narratives and, specifically, over the history of an Armenian past. To avoid critiquing the non-colonial nation-state's politics, while criticizing the colonial state, signifies and reinforces a vertical approach to power, and ignores the complex web of power dynamics within the Ottoman Empire. It sidesteps the question of how power relations in the nation-state or among the colonized peoples contribute to the colonial system of power. In the context of the nineteenth-century, it prevents scholars from asking how Arabs, Kurds, Armenians and other non-colonial groups of the Ottoman Empire were implicated in imperial and colonial power dynamics: a question that I pose in this dissertation with a focus on Ottoman Armenians.

To answer this question, I read the archives as institutional entities to understand what the archives were subtly telling me before I began the chore of reading the documents and manuscripts they stored. In my readings of the archives, I explore how the archive's affective power through its setting, materiality, technologies, and architecture intersected with my subjectivity and shaped my archival work; my selection of archival material and the questions I

(2015): 79-111. Also see Marc Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion,* trans. Gil Anidjar (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

posed. I then turn to the trajectories of each archive to trace the purpose of their formation, as well as the logic that has shaped them. To decipher the logic of the archives, I turn to the histories of the making of the Nubar Library, the Matenadaran and the Ottoman Archives. The logic of the collection and the preservation of the archives in these institutions surface through an examination of the lives of individuals who played a role in the organization of the archives and the historical moments in which the archives were formed. Finally, I reflect on how the historians' relations with the archive resonate with the nation-state politics that fashion questions historians ask and overlook, thus reproducing the dominant narratives the archives intended to provide and silencing those they marginalized.

Materiality and Affect in the Archives

Every archive has its own character and every researcher a unique personal story that guides her inquiry and interrogation of the archive. My three main archival experiences (at the Nubar Library, the Matenadaran and the Ottoman Archives) were very different from one another. The paramount archive of my research was the Nubar Library in Paris. Getting off at the Passy metro stop in one of the richest neighborhoods of Paris and, five minutes later, entering the small library in a four-story building brings about an *affect* of ruptured time. As I go up to the second floor through the red-carpeted circular staircase, the old black iron elevator, an antique object to my eye, grabs my curiosity. I ring the loud doorbell of the apartment turned into an archive, either the director or his assistant open the door, greeting me with the customary French two kisses on the cheek.

The first time I went to the Nubar Library to conduct research, I first sat down with the director in his office and discussed my research interests. He showed me the library's small catalog, partially in print and partially handwritten. At the time, the director and also the main

curator of the archive was Raymond Kévorkian, a well-known historian in Armenian Studies. After fifteen minutes of conversation we went out to the hallway to fetch some files of documents that the director thought would interest me. As we moved through the apartment-archive, the creaking sound of the hardwood floor, the presence of old books and hand-written papers discolored and torn, gave me a sense of entering "into direct contact with a past reality."[111] That no digital catalog or a website of this library existed, either for the library's books, newspapers or archival material, awarded the place with a sense of the archaic.[112]

The initial set of documents that Kévorkian suggested to me were in print and consisted of reports on illegal tax and property exactions from Armenians in the eastern provinces. These documents did not particularly entice me. Only after a few visits and a long reflection of the catalog did I discover my treasure. The files of communications sent from the provinces to Istanbul dating from the 1840s to 1914 took my attention because they represented a rare type of source: they were produced in the provinces. Once I found the codes of the files and gave them to the director's assistant, I waited in the reading room, browsing through the books that covered the walls. When the file I had asked for arrived, I opened it carefully and was shocked at the disheveled condition of the papers inside. Holding the set of old papers in a room covered with books wall-to-wall, floor to ceiling, thrilled me more than I could have imagined. As I held the letters, their texture, rather than their content, captured my attention and took me through a two-week frenzy of photographing these relics. That I could take pictures for free allowed me to do so without any discretion. The letters were my first discovery of sources that were produced in the Ottoman eastern provinces. I realized that digitizing this collection was an urgent matter as

[111] Jo Tollebeek, "'Turn'd to Dust and Tears': Revisiting the Archive," *History and Theory* 43.2 (May 2004), 237-248.

[112] I first went to the Nubar Library to conduct research in 2011. In 2016 the library launched a new and comprehensive website. http://www.bnulibrary.org/index.php/fr/

these papers were in decay. They were stored in the worst condition in one of the library's rooms.[113] Due to the lack of space, they are kept in the lavatory! Their traces were relegated to the margins of the apartment-archive, just as the authors of the letters had been sidelined in the nineteenth century as provincial members of the Ottoman Empire, no wonder they were absent as subjects in historiographical narratives.

I was still a novice in deciphering the difficult handwriting of the scribes. What dazzled me was the different sizes of the paper (some extend up to a meter), the thinness or thickness of the paper, their colors (blue, pink and yellow), the seals at the bottom of the letters, the appearance of some Arabic letters and the few typed documents from the later years. The creases on the papers indicated that someone had folded them by hand at some point, probably to pass as an envelope for the letter that was to be sent. Merely reflecting on their materiality, I imagined the ways in which letters were composed, sent and transported more than a century and a half ago.

The material quality of the letters suggested that some incredible and crucial information might be buried in them. In other words, at first, the aesthetics of the letters made a great impression on me, more than what was actually in their text.[114] I later reflected on my experience, which pushed me to think about the affect the materiality of the archival object and their settings can have on an individual, depending on the ways we are trained to receive information, a reception that is influenced by the existing forms of technology. This in turn helped shape the frame of my second chapter, which discusses modes of communication in the nineteenth century.

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[113] Since then, starting in 2016 the library has started digitizing this set of documents and making them available online.

[114] Just as Barthes has argued that the aesthetics of a photo stand out first even if we are looking for the photo's meaning. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), 36.

At the beginning of my research, the materiality of the sources, the oldness of the paper, the forms of the letters and their scent housed in an archaic and erudite setting effected my understanding of these letters as a source of truth and an authentic product of the nineteenth-century Ottoman provincial world in which Armenians lived. As Davis Miller points out, "The less we are aware of them [the objects that make up the frame], the more powerfully they can determine our expectations, by setting the scene and ensuring appropriate behavior without being open to challenge. They determine what takes place to the extent that we are unconscious of their capacity to do so."[115] The affect of the archive had left me unaware of the logic of the Nubar Library archives and its influence on my attitude toward these letters until I sat down to write about my archival experience months later.

While the Nubar Library mostly provided ease and comfort, my experiences in the archives of Turkey and Armenia were different. In Yerevan, Armenia the main archive I worked in was the Matenadaran, which is both a museum of ancient manuscripts and an archive. One has to write a request (*dimum*) to the director of the institute, at the time Hrach'ya Tamrazyan, to be allowed into the archive section of the building and the reading room. Researchers are required to write a similar request every time they ask for archival documents and manuscripts. The very act of writing a request felt disempowering. I often wanted to sarcastically add at the end of the letter "your humble servant" as was written at the end of nineteenth-century petitions. The process of writing by hand compelled me to reflect on how the petitioners that I study felt and what they thought in writing of their petitions. This rendered the tedious act of asking for permission rewarding. How would the experiences of the historical actors I examined resemble or differ from mine? How would the affective disposition that petition-writing put me in differ

[115] Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 50.

from that of my historical subjects? In other words, I tried to embody the experiences of nineteenth-century Ottoman subjects in my interaction with the modern archive.

The bureaucratic steps and countless regulations slow down access to archival documents, but the anticipation grants them an increased sense of worth. The administrator who handed out archival materials, logged each document I was allowed to see in a large notebook. I had to provide a signature on each line of entry as I acquired and returned each document. All the record-keeping was registered on paper. The physicality and visibility of the record-keeping made the Foucauldian panopticon come to life. The archive appeared to be an institution that allowed the state to supervise the movement of bodies, even the trail of curiosity of one's researching mind.

In the Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives, the same bureaucratic processes take place digitally, often rather automatically, which sped up the work, but also obscured the trail my research left behind. Digital supervision is invisible and untouchable. The relative impalpability of control and ease of access to the Ottoman archives as opposed to the Matenadaran leave the impression that the former is more open, more welcoming and more democratic than the latter. In reality, however, the Foucauldian panopticon in the Ottoman archive is less noticed, which makes it even more powerful. Cameras monitor researchers in every room, one's entry to the archive is recorded in the archive's system digitally. If a researcher entry to the archive is not logged into the system, the researcher will not have access to the archive's computers, which is required to request documents rather quickly through a few clicks.

In contrast, there was much waiting and anticipation in the Matenadaran, yet waiting also gave me time to think. Because of the limits placed on viewing the documents and the high cost of digitization, I had to be more selective in what I would acquire from the Matenadaran as

opposed to the Nubar Library. This meant that while at the archive, I read and transcribed much of what I was able to access. The archive in this case was not only where I conducted research, but also where I started to formulate my historical narrative. My initial selection of documents in the Matenadaran was directed by the genre of documents I had found in the Nubar Library: petitions. At the same time, the accessibility of materials influenced, if not determined, my selection. There were nineteenth-century manuscripts from Van that I would have liked to view, but because of the length of those sources I had to plan a much longer research trip and leave those manuscripts as the last source that I read and took notes on. The sequence of when I read which archival material shaped the vantage point from which I interpreted the past. The memoir of Bishop Yeremia Tevkants‘ (1828-1885) of Van, which is in manuscript form and also includes copies of his letters, provided a broader context and dominated the early draft narratives of my dissertation. Only later did I turn back to the petitions, newspaper articles, books and other documents of the era to speak to or challenge and question Tevkants‘’s narration.

The Matenadaran, which simultaneously serves as a research institute, a museum, and an archive holds the largest and oldest collection of Armenian, along with Persian, Hebrew, Arabic and Ottoman manuscripts. The building presides over a hilltop in central Yerevan, at the peak of one of the city's busiest avenues. As I climb up the hill, on one of the last brick streets of Yerevan, the ascending road and the grand edifice force me to bow my head. Soon the cacophony of traffic and people dissipates, and the Matenadaran projects an impression of a place separate from the hustle and bustle of the city below. As I walk toward the right-hand side of the building and open the doors, the Matenadaran's grandeur is imposing and demands humility.

The Matenadaran is officially the Mesrop Mashtots‘ Manuscript Museum named after the fifth-century historical figure known as the creator of the Armenian alphabet. Mashtots‘'s grandiose statue stands at the center of the Matenadaran facing the avenue also named after him. His disciple Koryun kneels at his side looking up to him. Mesrop Mashtots‘ represents a defining symbol of the Armenian nation, about whom children in Armenian schools learn early on. Above him we see the statues of six Armenian historical figures from the pre-medieval and medieval eras. Among these figures is Movses Khorenats‘i: the earliest chronicler of Armenian history. Those motivated to argue that Armenians have existed as a nation in the modern sense from antiquity often turn to his work as evidence. The archive's framing through its art and architecture reflects a dominant trend in Armenian historiography: it renders the nation sacred and timeless. The treatment of Armenians as a homogenous group, of national identity as a constant, of the insularity and linearity of Armenian history through space and time, persists in contemporary scholarship relating to Armenians.

The statues of male figures in front of the building celebrate a patriarchal culture, which has produced a historiography written and driven by a male elite: the guardians of truth, knowledge and power. All the halls in the Matenadaran are named after men. The symbolic architecture of this national museum manifests itself in the interior structures of power, not only in the organization of space, but in the gendered divisions of labor, with men who occupy almost every important position and with handshakes that only occur between men. The male policemen at the entrance of the Matenadaran arbitrarily check the researcher's entrance permission, often with a rude tone to project a sense of authority. In contrast, the women at the coat check stand out for their welcoming attitude. Such moments of ordinary affect infantilize, minimize and marginalize the female researchers, who constitute a majority in the reading room. The gendered

divisions within the institution of the archive serve as a constant reminder of the gendered inequalities in Armenian society and produce the desire to find the rare documents signed by women or relating to women.

Similar gendered dynamics structure the hermeneutics of Armenian historiography. Scholarly works have produced narratives of individual men and have presented elite Armenian men along with the Ottoman state as the main agents of history. Scholarship on Armenians fails to critically analyze how men in power, whether ecclesiastic or temporal, themselves shape and constitute hierarchies throughout history. While critical of the Ottoman state power, they do not question how the very male elite characters discussed contributed to the Ottoman state's system of power.[116] More recent works focusing on twentieth-century history have focused on bringing out the agency and voices of Armenian women.[117] Others have focused on institutional policies and treatment of women.[118] While such works point out to the inequalities between men and women they do not show how gender as a category of difference mediates not just relations of power between men and women, but within society at large. In Chapter Four of this dissertation, following Joan Scott's approach and focusing on the gendering of love, I look at how gendered notions of love constitute a system of power.[119]

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[116] Two recent dissertations provide a shift from this approach. See Cora's "Transforming Erzurum/Karin" and Antaramian's "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State."
[117] See for example, Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-genocide Turkey* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016); Yasar Tolga Cora, "Female Labor, Merchant Capital and Resilient Manufacturing: Rethinking Ottoman Armenian Communities through Labor and Business," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 61 (2018): 361-395; Elyse Semerdjian, "Armenian Women, Legal Bargaining and Gendered Politics of Conversion in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Aleppo," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 12.1 (March 2016): 2-28.
[118] See for example, Tachjian, Vahé. "Gender, nationalism, exclusion: the reintegration process of female survivors of the Armenian genocide," *Nations and Nationalism* 15.1 (2009): 60-80; Lerna Ekmekcioglu, "A Climate for Abduction, a Climate for Redemption: The Politics of Inclusion during and after the Armenian Genocide," *CSSH* 55.3 (2013): 522-553.
[119] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91.5 (Dec., 1986): 1053-1075.

If the Matenadaran celebrates the Armenian nation, the Ottoman Archive elevates the Turkish state. Between 2012 and 2013 the Ottoman Archive moved from its old location, which was also behind the gate and among the buildings of the historical Sublime Porte, in one of the most touristic and historical regions of Istanbul. In front of the gate leading to the archive two guards used to stand with automatic weapons. I only visited this archive a few times, however, and conducted the main portion of my research in the new building of the Ottoman Archive.

When I arrived at the Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives a weight fell upon me. In its new location of Kağıthane (literally meaning "house of paper"), the building of the archival complex sits on an avenue, busy with car traffic. I spot very few people on the sidewalk. Only lone researchers walk back and forth from the bus stop to the archive. Across the street from the archive there is a park, which like its surroundings has few pedestrians that walk through. Uncannily, unlike most Istanbul neighborhoods this one lacks stores, cafes, restaurants—and people, which makes me feel isolated from the city.

Male and female guards stand at the security checkpoint permitting entrance to the archive. Bags have to be checked through a scanner. I show my ID card, which has an image of the Turkish flag and my photograph on it, still looking like an anomaly to me. Yet, I have to hang the card around my neck all the time while at the archive. After the security check I go through the yard and enter the main building of the archive. Another guard scans my ID card and records my entry in the archive's computer system and gives me a locker key. I store away my personal items. Every time I show my ID to a guard or an administrator in the archive, I do so with the thought that through my name they will learn my Armenian identity!

Typical for Turkey, a family of cats has already made the yard of the archive its home. As I enter the building, I immediately find myself in a large, empty and rather dark space, which

makes me feel miniscule. Later I am told by my peers who are citizens of the Republic of Turkey that the archival institution is trying to save money by keeping the lights off. At the entrance, there are revolving metal turnstiles, like those found at metro entrances, but they seem completely useless in the archive. Fellow students of Ottoman history later tell me that these turnstiles are probably just another corruption scheme to enrich the cronies of the state authorities. The inefficiencies and injustices of the government of Turkey become the occasion for a discussion criticizing the Turkish state. Even through its deficiencies the Turkish state becomes a central point of discussion, the central point of concern, therefore again re-imposes the centrality of its power.

Yet, despite the inefficiencies, this newly built postmodern edifice, with its large empty spaces, reminds me of Turkey's imperial past and echoes the power the Turkish state intends to project. It contrasts with the Nubar Library's apartment, where every corner is put to use for storage purposes. Unlike the Nubar Library and the Matenadaran, in the reading room of the Ottoman archives, books are not visible and the walls are void of any art. It is a clinical space reminiscent of highly standardized modern bureaucracies. There is nothing magical about the building itself nor its location in the cityscape.

Both the Turkish and Armenian states supervise their respective archives. In the Matenadaran, this became clear when I came face to face with an agent from the Secret Services. He had come to pay a visit to the Director of the Matenadaran, appointed by the government. The encounter was a reminder of how the state in Armenia has jurisdiction over the writing of history and reprimands those who deviate from narratives deemed to be beneficial for the interests of the nation-state. In addition to state officials, on both the Ottoman archives and the Matenadaran the pro-national and pro-state language of the curators and administrative personnel

marginalize researchers who are critical of nationalist narratives and of the ruling administrations of each country.

Not only did I have to reframe the topic of my research for each archive's culture and politics, but I also had to navigate around my identity as an Armenian, as a woman, and as a student from the United States in each individual archive. Yet, while in Matenadaran I was constantly reminded of my gender, in the Ottoman archive I was constantly reminded of my Armenian identity. In the Ottoman archive, a room located on the first floor housed collections of books, mostly in Turkish and some in English. The most visible books—or at least the ones that grabbed my attention—pertained to the history of Armenians. This room was reserved for registration and payments for digital copies of archival material. While waiting for transactions to take place, I picked up one of the books and began to read the introduction, which asserted that Armenians in the Ottoman Empire lived happily together and got along with Muslims until the end of the nineteenth century, when they were manipulated by the Europeans and fell for the incitements of colonialists; Armenians were traitors! These books included collections of documents meant to support the aforementioned argument, which is a typical Turkish nationalist representation of Ottoman Armenian history.

When I accessed the archive's catalog through the computers of the reading room, a number of themes popped out on the main page directing the researcher to relevant documents. At least five of the ten themes related to Armenians. "Armenian" was clearly the marked ethnicity in the archive.[120] Anybody remotely familiar with the official narratives of the Turkish

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[120] Here is the list of themes I encountered on the catalog's main page at the Ottoman Archives:
1. Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920) Ankara 1995.
2. Azerbeycan Belgelerinde Ermeni Sorunu (The Armenian Question in documents of Azerbaijan)
3. Belgelerle Arşivcilik Tarihimiz (Osmanlı Dönemi) (Our history of archivism through documents (the Ottoman Period))
4. Belgelerde Mustafa Kemal (Mustafa Kemal in the documents)
5. Belgelerde Osmanlı-Türkistan İlişkileri (Ottoman-Turkistan relations in documents)

state concerning Armenians would immediately understand that themes such as “Documents on the Massacres committed by the Armenians,” “Armenian Committees” (referring to Armenian revolutionary parties formed in the 1890s), “the Armenian problem in documents of Azerbaijan,” and “Chronology of the Armenian Issue” will undoubtedly include a collection of documents that intended to shed a negative light on Armenians as the enemy of the Turkish people and the state. The mere titles suggest that Turkey’s official historiography casts the Armenian as an “issue” or a “problem;” Armenians are cast as traitors and oppressors in the Ottoman Archives. However, while I worked in the Ottoman Archives in the summer of 2014, among a few public-relations pieces, the main page of the website ran an article entitled, “We are waiting for Armenians [to come] to the archive” (*Ermenileri Arşive Bekliyoruz*). While such an article conveyed the intention to welcome Armenian researchers to the archive, to me it sounded ironic and disingenuous given the way Armenians were represented in the displayed books and themes delineated on the archive’s digital catalog. The visible materials related to my childhood narratives of Turkish hatred toward Armenians. As a student of Armenian background I wanted to overcome the insular ethno-confessional boundaries (and I thought that I had already overcome such boundaries!). The archival performance of history, however, re-imposed those boundaries on me.

As an Armenian I could not help but feel singled out in the Ottoman Archives, when in the building or in interactions with the administrative personnel. Despite all of my sentiments of discomfort, to this day the archive’s staff has been friendly, polite and helpful. Nonetheless, all the symbolic violence around me in the archive, the stories my grandmother had told me about

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6. Bosna Hersek İle İlgili Arşiv Belgeleri (Archive documents about Bosnia-Herzegovina)
7. Dünden Bugüne Başbakanlık (The Prime Ministry from Yesterday to Today)
8. Ermeniler Tarafından Yapılan Katliam Belgeleri (Documents on the Massacres committed by Armenians)
9. Ermeni Komiteleri (Armenian Committees)
10. Ermeni Meselesi Kronolojisi (The Chronology of the Armenian Issue)

her and her parents' experiences in Turkey overtook my ethical endeavor as a historian and my expectations of the stored in the Ottoman Archives. Lies rather than truth is what I first expected to come out of the Ottoman Archives.

Unlike the Nubar Library, in the Ottoman Archives each document had its own folder, to protect it from damage. Clearly, a curator had examined each document and given it a date and number that was then registered on the folder. The careful curation of these Ottoman documents, are visible, they are in fact so tangent that the selection process is materialized in the object of the file. I wondered whether Armenian-language petitions had been deselected, when I came across Greek petitions. Were they destroyed? Or did they never exist? That is the doubt the Ottoman archive constructed. The very first time I went to the Ottoman Archives, as a first-year graduate student, I did not know what I would be working on, but I was guided by my assumptions and knowledge of Ottoman Armenian history. I ordered a few documents following my instincts and came across an Armenian newspaper article translated into French by the Ottoman Foreign Ministry. Handwritten translation and a copy of the print newspaper appeared in the same folder. The translation was rather interpretive; despite the fact that the newspaper hardly mentioned Russia, the entire aim of the French translation was to prove the collaboration of Armenians with the Russians, to present Armenians as a fifth column in the Ottoman Empire.[121] And voilà! There was the proof that by fabricating fake information the Turks intentionally tried to harm the Armenians, even decades before the genocide.

My intention here is not to question or prove that the Ottoman state lied, or misrepresented reality, but rather to question the utility of working in the archive based on one's instincts and based on where the archive leads the researcher. While as a student of history I wanted to challenge the centrality of the state and its institutional structure as the main agent of

[121] PMOA, HR.SYS, 61-8-4-13, 328/2 (Sept. 21, 1891).

change historically, the dominance of the state verbally and visually in the archive overpowered me, it angered me, once again the state was at the center. While I wanted to blur national boundaries, I fell into the trap of reinforcing them. What intellectual discovery can occur, if researchers end up only reaffirming hegemonic world-views that they embody? Even though I had the best intentions in mind, without questioning my own subjectivity and assumptions, as well as the politics of the archive, I did feel trapped in reaffirmation of my perceptions.

Had I just followed the narrative the archive laid out plainly, without questioning my position I would have reproduced the historical narratives and essentializations of my habitus. In other words, reflecting on one's dispositions is part and parcel of a historian's labor of discovering and understanding the past. I became aware of my inclinations about the past, as opposed to the ones shaped by my present.[122] Once after I reorganized the documents that had become part of my digital archive, after I transliterated and translated them, reread them over and over again trying to understand them through different contexts and frames; I had to revisit the archive and its catalog, and question my subjectivity.

In the past decade, the Ottoman Archives has reduced 'official' barriers of access for researchers. Technically all adults have the legal right to receive access to them. In contrast, in the Matenadaran one's personal connections, academic position, views and ethnic background influence the decision to allow or deny access to archival material there. The fear of being denied access exists in both archives. And in both institutions I was refused documents because allegedly "they were damaged" or "were being repaired." Whether in Turkey and in Armenia any scholar willing to challenge national historiographies encounters the cultural and political exigencies attached to each national narrative. Ideally historians will challenge the norm, but economic, political and social factors will inevitably limit scholars' ability to do so.

[122] Arlette Farge, *Le goût de l'archive* (n.p.: Éditions du Seuil, 1989), 27.

In the Nubar Library, I worked in a space where the books on display—mostly books about the Armenian genocide or Armenians—did not offend my ethnic identity, where the curators were close or distant acquaintances, where I had been given unconditional open access to the letters, and where I was hearing the languages that I grew up with (French and Western Armenian). Such factors all created a positive, non-critical and trustful *affective state* toward this archive. As overwhelming and humbling as the multitude of books, archival materials, and the feeling of the archaic were, my sense of familiarity and belonging was empowering. The sense of comfort perhaps also had to do with the small size of this archive and the fact that it is not attached to a state, like the Ottoman Archives and the Matenadaran.

My experiences in these three archives, the very materiality and affect of each archive guided the selections I made in the archives, and the research questions I formulated. Reflecting on my experiences in the archive helped me delineate the historiographical paradigms that the archive imposed on me. My reflections show that to challenge the categories that have become entrenched in Ottoman historiography and among historians of the Ottoman Empire requires more than a careful analysis of archival documents. Rather, the affective world we inhabit as researchers also requires careful consideration.

My research experiences in the Matenadaran, the Ottoman Archives and the Nubar Library speak to "[t]he place-specific learning that historical research in a pre-digital world required," a learning that dissipates as our research methods and practices become increasingly digital.[123] The archival experiences of holding a decaying piece of paper in hand and of being forced to read through volumes of catalogs are increasingly becoming extinct practices as most archives begin to turn to digital catalogs and make only digital copies of documents available to

[123] Lara Putnam, "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast," *American Historical Review* (April 2016): 377. Putnam convincingly and eloquently critiques the consequences of the digital turn that has produced the transnational turn in research in the discipline of history.

researchers. Not spending extended periods of time in each archive would also not have given me enough time to grasp the politics and the social inequalities within each archive and country, that shape research and academic writing. Such experiences are why Lara Putnam insists on the benefits of spending long periods of time in local archives, despite the possibility of acquiring digital copies of our sources.[124]

My experience in the Matenadaran shaped my research in the Ottoman Archives, and vice versa, as I returned multiple times to each. The discussions I had with peers and professors in the United States, Turkey, France and Armenia effected my reading and inquiry. What I looked for in each archive was influenced by what secondary sources I had read in between. Once I discovered that the letters in the Nubar Library were actually petitions, I began reading about petitions as a genre in Ottoman and European archives. I explored the genre of petitions in the Ottoman archives and in the Matenadaran. I have now collected more than a thousand petitions from all regions of the eastern provinces in general.

The published works of Yeremia Tevkants‘, Garegin Sruandzteants‘ and Mkrtich‘ Khrimian—three Van Armenian clergymen—were available at my home library in Michigan (some digitally, others in print). Two periodicals *Artsui Vaspurakan and Artsuik Tarōnoy* that I consulted in the National Library of Armenia in Yerevan, drew my focus to the province of Van. As I returned to the Nubar Library, I began collecting files of individuals who were connected to Van. Subsequently, both in the Matenadaran and the Literature and Art Museum (GAT) archive in Yerevan, I ordered and read the documents of individuals from Van, as much of the archival collections are organized according to historical figures.

Conducting historical research is neither a linear nor an objective process. My historical method entailed the continuous revisiting of the archival sources from different vantage points, I

[124] Putnam, “The Transnational and the Text-Searchable,” 397.

constantly reflected anew my own subject position. The question I kept asking myself was why I made particular selections in the archive and drew from the archival text.

Nation-Making and Archives

The Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives in Istanbul and the collection of the Ējmiatsin Catholicosate (*Katoghikosakan Divan*) in the Matenadaran are both organized not by localities but around the central institutions of the Sublime Porte and of the Ējmiatsin Catholicosate (the highest office of the Armenian Church), respectively. Despite their centeredness these archives contain "traces of the provincial localities."[125] When one aims to study a province, the organization of these archives appears anarchic. The only archive that I have come across organized by localities was the Constantinople Patriarchate Archive found in the Nubar Library in Paris. This archive, however, despite its unique organization, also prioritizes the Ottoman state and Istanbul, as it contains mainly letters directed to the Armenian Patriarchate, and its periodization follows that of the Ottoman state. Still, such archival organization facilitated the writing of a local history and directed me to reorganize the subsequent archives I consulted according to places.

As I set out to conduct my research, I aimed to destabilize the hegemonic categories of center and periphery, the rigid distinctions between Kurds and Armenians and I hoped to hear the silenced voices of the eastern provinces that have remained absent from historical narratives. I thought that by combining Ottoman and Armenian archives and by focusing on untapped documents produced in the provinces, I would be able to challenge these boundaries. Yet my sources and the archives themselves seemed to divert my research to the very same hegemonic

[125] Marc Aymes, *Provincial History of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2013), 10-14. Aymes lays out the complexities, but also the possibilities that the central Ottoman archives present for writing a provincial history. The issues he raises are equally applicable to the Ējmiatsin Catholicosate archive, with the only major difference being that the Matenadaran catalog lacks an index.

categories that I hoped to challenge. In light of this conundrum, I came to ask why and how my archives imposed the very categories and paradigms that I had set out to challenge. This is a question that I keep returning to throughout my dissertation.

How did the archive's form and logic influence my selections? To answer this last question, in this section I lay out the reasons, the individuals, institutions and registers of thought that were part of the process of making each archive. Although the Ottoman Archives, the Nubar Library and the Matenadaran store materials that date back many centuries if not a millennium, they only recently became an archive in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I trace these processes of archive-making as processes that shaped narratives of each nation-state.

In the case of Turkey, the history of the formation of the Ottoman archives goes back to the mid-nineteenth century, and was undertaken with the leadership of Vezir Mustafa Reşid Pasha (1800-1858). "By 1861, there was a special Records Office of the Sublime Porte (*Bab-ı Âli Evrak Odası*), its mission being to supervise the flow of documentation between the Porte and the other offices in Istanbul and to keep records that would make it possible to recover documents when needed."[126] Thus the organization of the Ottoman archive first and foremost meant to facilitate the management of the expanding Ottoman bureaucracy. Since the late 1860s, each ministry started to build their own archives within their respective buildings. During World War I, a decision was made within the state to unify the vizierate, Internal Ministry, Foreign Ministry, and State Council's (*Şura-i Devlet*) archives.[127] Because of the war, however, this project was not immediately undertaken, and in 1915 much of the archives of the Sublime Porte, in particular 208 trunks of documents, was transported to Konya, and were returned to Istanbul a

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[126] Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reforms in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 172.
[127] Atillâ Çetin, "Osmanlı Arşivciliğine Toplu Bir Bakış," *Türk Kütüpahneciler Derneği Bülteni* 33.2 (1984): 59. Also see *Başbakanlık Osmnalı Arşivi Rehberi* (İstanbul: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 2010), XXIX.

year later.[128] Later, however, these archives were centralized in the location of the old Sublime Porte, which were then moved to the location in Kağıthane in the 2010s. This brief history of the Ottoman Archives tells us that the making of the archive was for the administrative purposes of the central state, and therefore was made to reflect and in a way make the Ottoman modern state.

The story of the Nubar archive is also linked to the formation of the Republic of Armenia. In the 1910s, the Armenian Catholicos Gevorg V of Ējmiatsin (r. 1911-1930) appointed Poghos Nubar Pasha (1851-1930) to lead a delegation that would present the plight of Ottoman Armenians to European powers, in the hope that the latter would enforce reforms beneficial to Ottoman Armenians.[129] After WWI, despite the establishment of an independent Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) in the Caucasus, Nubar Pasha continued to negotiate with European powers as head of the Armenian National Delegation. But this time he aimed to secure territory for the creation of an Armenian nation-state.[130] Yet, at the same time, the Republic of Armenia had formed a delegation that would negotiate compensation for the losses that Armenians had endured during the 1915 massacres and deportations. This led to a conflict between the two delegations that produced competing narratives. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) as the leader of the newly independent republic aimed to be the sole representative of Armenians, and accused Nubar Pasha and his delegation of negotiating with Western powers without taking into consideration the opinion of Ottoman Armenians. Zawēn Tēr Yeghiayean (1868-1947), Patriarch of Constantinople (r. 1914-1916; 1919-1922), who was close to Nubar Pasha, supported the narrative in favor of the latter and championed Nubar Pasha's legitimacy as representative of the Armenians, defending his ardent work for the

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[128] Ibid 61.
[129] Roderic Davison, "The Armenian Crisis, 1912-1914," *The American Historical Review* 53.3 (April 1948): 490.
[130] Zawēn Ark'episkopos, *Patriark'akan Hushers: Vaweragirner yew vkayut'iwnner* (Gahirē: Tp. Nor Astgh, 1947), 327.

Armenian nation against accusations that he was undermining the work of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.[131]

With the support of Patriarch Zawēn, in 1919, an administrative unit called the Information Bureau (*Teghekatu Diwan*) was formed in the lay administrative wing attached to the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate. Its purpose was to maintain correspondence with foreign embassies, as well as to collect information that would benefit the Armenian nation.[132] According to its regulations this administrative body was responsible for collecting "all kinds of new and old statistics relating to Armenia and the Armenian Cause…information on national or individual 'mobile or immobile' property" and details about the deportations and massacres, among other things.[133] The Information Bureau was headed by historian Arshak Alpōyachean (1879-1962) and placed under the direct authority of the Armenian Civil/Political Council of the Armenian Patriarchate. The Armenian Civil/Political Council was one of the governing bodies formed by the Armenian National Constitution of Ottoman Armenians in the 1860s.

Pōghos Nubar Pasha founded the Nubar Library in 1928.[134] According to Raymond Kévorkian, historian and curator of the Nubar Library, in 1922, as Mustafa Kemal's victory over Istanbul was eminent, Patriarch Zawēn sent twenty-two trunk loads of these documents to the Prelate Grigoris Balak'ean (1875-1933) in Manchester, England.[135] In 1927, Balak'ean moved to Marseille, France, and took the documents with him. Balak'ean's memoir indicates that he had a rather low opinion of Patriarch Zawēn, since he represented the Patriarch as a person who lacked

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[131] Zawēn, *Patriark'akan Hushers,* 29, 382.
[132] Zawēn, *Patriark'akan Hushers,* 302.
[133] Zawēn, *Patriark'akan Hushers,* 304-305.
[134] Poghos Nubar was the son of a former prime minister of Egypt—Nubar Nubarian (1825-1899; r. 1884-1888). Nubar Pasha. *Encyclopedia Britanica.* http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/421481/Nubar-Pasha (Accessed October 15, 2013).
[135] It is questionable how directly Patriarch Zawēn was involved in the transfer of the 22 trunks as he states in his memoirs that upon visiting Jerusalem he was amazed to see the abundance of the documentation that had been preserved there. (Zawēn, *Patriark'akan Hushers,* 303).

courage and who used his position only to save himself.[136] By 1938 when the retired Patriarch Zawēn had moved to his birthplace of Baghdad and wanted to consult these documents to write his memoir, the Patriarch of Jerusalem T'orgom Gushakean (r. 1931-1939) arranged for the transfer of part of the documents to the Patriarchate in Jerusalem. The rest were sent to the Nubar Library in Paris.[137]

Multiple motives were at play in the making of the Nubar Library archives' collection, primarily the preservation of an Armenian past for the future survival of the Armenian nation and the contestation of the stolen properties of Armenians. Firstly, the archive was designed to fulfill the Information Bureau's aim of providing documentation for future plans of punishment and reparations for the losses Armenians had suffered in the Ottoman Empire, both during the Armenian genocide and before it. Secondly, the archive would allow for an assessment of the roles of such figures as Nubar Pasha, Patriarch Zawēn and the Armenian National Delegation as a whole during and immediately after the Armenian genocide. Patriarch Zawēn had ruled during the darkest moments of his constituents' history. As his memoir relates, he needed to explain the different steps he took to tend to the needs of Armenian refugees and orphans, and to justify his escape from Istanbul in 1922.

Even though the Nubar archive stores rich material from the nineteenth century, most scholars who have consulted the Nubar Library have written about the genocide and its immediate aftermath, with some focusing on the above-mentioned personalities and

[136] Grigoris Balakian. *Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide,* 1915-1918, trans. Peter Balakian (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 327.
[137] Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 4. Alpōyachean in his biography of Patriarch T'orgom Gushakean reveals the latter's close relations with Nubar Pasha, as well as his difficult relations with Grigoris Balakian, who had established the prelacy in Marseille with the help of a political party (*kusakts'akan ozhandakuteamb)*, presumably the ARF, and in opposition to the prelacy in Paris. Arshak Alpōyachean. *T'orgom Patriark' Gushakean* (Cairo: Tp. Sevan, 1940), 286-287, 506, 520.

institutions.[138] Most scholars working in the Nubar Library tend to consult the rich collection of books, newspapers and periodicals. Other works based on sources stored in the Nubar Library have redirected their attention to social and cultural processes.[139] They all tend to focus on processes of nation-making, as does my own dissertation. This is not surprising, since the archive participated in the nation-making process.

The archives in the Matenadaran have also travelled through various paths. In order to protect the manuscripts housed in Ējmiatsin during World War I, they were transported to Moscow to be housed in the local Armenian church. When in 1921 the Soviets took power in Armenia, one of their initial goals was to redistribute and nationalize archives throughout the Soviet Union. As a result, they organized the return of the Armenian archival materials from Moscow to Yerevan.[140] Between 1915 and 1918, 1,730 manuscripts were transported from the monasteries of the Ottoman eastern provinces of Mush and Van to Ējmiatsin, of which over 1,300 belonged to the region of Van.[141] According to folk narratives, survivors of the genocide carried these manuscripts with them as they escaped to the Russian Empire. At the same time a project was undertaken between 1922 and 1938 to collect all Armenian manuscripts outside the borders of the Soviet Republic of Armenia and transport them to the republic.[142] The collection of such manuscripts remained an ongoing project for the Matenadaran. The Matenadaran went through a centralization project in the 1960s when the archives of the Catholicosate in Ējmiatsin,

138 Raymond Kévorkian's *The Armenian Genocide* (2011) uses largely the Andonian Fond.

139 Boris Adjemian and Taline Suciyan, "Making Space and Community through Memory: Orphans and Armenian Jerusalem in the Nubar Library's Photographic Archive," *EAC* 9 (2017): 75-113; Vahé Tachjian, "Gender, nationalism, exclusion: the reintegration process of female survivors of the Armenian genocide," *Nations and Nationalism* 15.1 (2009): 60-80. Tachjian relies on the National Delegation Fond of the Nubar Library archive and the theme of his article revolves around the reconstruction of the Armenian nation and Armenian survival after the genocide.

140 A.H. Adamyan, "Matenadarani arkhivayin fonderě," *Banber Hayastani arkhivneri* 50.2 *(*1973): 43-52.

141 Levon Khach'ikyan and A. Mnatsakanyan, eds, *Ts'uts'ak dzeṙagrats' Mashtots'i anvan Matenadarani,* Vol. 1, (Yerevan: Haykakan SS Gitutyunneri Akademiayi Hratarakch'utyun, 1965), 95-96.

142 Levon Khach'ikyan, "Haykakan SSR Ministrneri sovetin aṙěnter gita-hetazotakan institut 'Matenadaraně'," *Patmabanasirakan handes* 2-3 (1959): 377.

housed at a thirty-minute drive from Yerevan, were brought to the capital of Soviet Armenia. A process of collecting Armenian manuscripts from various churches and manuscripts from Iran and the wider Caucasus to the archive in Ējmiatsin had already begun in the early twentieth century before the Armenian genocide.[143] The redistribution of archives based on ethno-national boundaries marks the nation-centric historiographies that have dominated Ottoman history.

The redistribution of archives based on ethno-national boundaries mark the nation-centric historiographies that have dominated Ottoman history. In other words, historians have tended to write insular narratives of the history of Greeks, Armenians, Kurds, Turks, Jews and Arabs who resided in the Ottoman Empire. Slowly the field has turned away from treating the Ottoman Empire as a Muslim Turkish empire to also considering the histories of the various ethno-confessional groups as part and parcel of Ottoman history. However, it has proven to be rather difficult to write the inter-ethnic and inter-confessional social histories of the Ottoman provinces in the nineteenth century that extend beyond conflict and violence among different groups.

Organization of the Archives

The forms of the archives in many ways reflect the histories of their making. By form of the archive, I mean how the files and fonds of the archives are organized in their respective catalogs, the categories that are used to describe the different fonds of the catalogs, and the terminologies used in the language describing the content of documents.

The historiography on Ottoman Armenians written from the perspective of metropolitan cities such as Venice, Istanbul, and Tbilisi in Georgia, directed my choice of what to look for in

[143] Levon Khach‘ikyan and A. Mnatsakanyan, eds. *Ts‘utsak dzeragrats‘ Mashtots‘i anvan Matenadarani,* 63-87. In addition to Armenian manuscripts a smaller number of manuscripts in other languages were also collected.

the Nubar Library. At the time, I thought that sources produced in the Ottoman provinces which had a high concentration of Armenians (i.e., Van, Erzurum, Diyarbekir, Mush or Bitlis) would bring me closer to the social reality of those provinces in the past; they would reveal the perspective of Armenians in the Ottoman provinces, as I de-centered the Ottoman state and the political elite of Istanbul Armenians. I hoped that these untapped alternative letters and petitions would challenge the ethno-centric and Istanbul-centric narratives that have dominated Armenian and Ottoman historical narratives of the nineteenth century. However, to my surprise, while these letters revealed some aspects of the ordinary lives of the residents in the provinces, they did not immediately offer a different perspective, nor did they decenter Istanbul. For example, Kurds always appeared as the unruly and barbaric people in these documents. The documents did not immediately reveal the agency and local dynamics, rather they highlighted the victimhood and helplessness of Vanets'is, and positioned the authorities in Istanbul as the center of power. My assumption that the letters would provide a perspective from the Ottoman province and as such reorient the Ottoman state and the Armenian communal elite in Istanbul was misguided.[144]

I came across critical letters for my research through a listing entitled in French and Armenian "Archives Patr. de Constantinople: Correspondance des provinces" (Archive of the Constantinople Patriarchate: Correspondence from the provinces). The folders, in the catalog were organized based on localities—ranging from provinces to small towns and islands—in alphabetical order. The place names, however, in addition to locales in the Ottoman Empire, also included letters from Armenian communities all over the world. In the files themselves, the documents were randomly numbered, with no chronological order. Unlike what I was to find in other archives, the catalog in Nubar did not provide summaries of each document. These letters, dating from 1840 to 1914, marked the beginning of the Tanzimat reform period of the Ottoman

[144] I became more aware of the act of fashioning after reading Natalie Zemon Davis' *Fiction in the Archives*.

Empire; they end one year before the Armenian genocide began. Thus, the Ottoman state had already inscribed the periodization of the archive of letters in the Nubar Library.

I could only challenge this state-centered organization once I conducted more research in the Matenadaran, and read through published sources and unpublished memoirs. That is when I was able to move my research back to the 1820s and 1830s. In no other archive did I find again an organization of the archive based on geographical location, which, however, gave a peculiar direction to my research. An exception is the Matenadaran's catalog of manuscripts, the index of which provides the geographic origin of each manuscript. This indexing of the manuscripts emanates from the fact that these manuscripts derive from local collections linked to monasteries, and manuscripts unlike petitions and letters were not directed to a central institution like the Ējmiatsin Catholicosate or the Ottoman state. The geographic organization also speaks to the role of Armenian archives in their goal of preserving the cultural production and histories of Armenian communities in what is now eastern Turkey, where Armenians no longer exist and where traces of an Armenian past have systematically been subjected to a policy of erasure.

While some of the documents produced by the Patriarchate and the various committees of the Armenian National Assembly speak to the theme of the plight of the Armenian people, the letters that provincial Armenians sent to Constantinople, preserved in the Information Bureau and the Nubar Library, hardly fit into these motives. The folder on Van generally related to Armenian communal matters. It included brief reports (*teghekagrut'iwn*), affidavits (*vkayagir*), and proclamations (*haytararut'iwn*). The great majority of archived documents were petitions. An analysis of the vantage points of the Patriarchate, as well as the person who headed the Information Bureau, Arshak Alpōyachean, can explain part of the logic of this archive. Before his appointment as the head of the Information Bureau Alpōyachean had written in various

Armenian periodicals and newspapers. Between 1900 and 1915 he had penned a series of articles titled “Vanishing Personalities” in the newspaper *Biwzandion* published in Istanbul. He wrote about Armenian intellectuals and other famous personalities.[145] In 1918, in a forward to a biography he wrote about Grigor Zohrap (1861-1915)—an Armenian intellectual and Ottoman parliamentarian, who had been murdered during the genocide—he emphasized the importance of such personalities as leaders of the nation, as people who “built the edifices of civilization for their nations.”[146] He insisted that to reveal the lives of such individuals would demonstrate the value of the nation to which they belonged and raise the spirit of the masses. This line of thinking explains the classification of letters sent to the Patriarchate by personalities, who are in turn divided into lay and ecclesiastical classifications. Such a distinction between the clergy and lay personalities is yet another marker of the binary approach with which the secular and religious have been approached in both Ottoman and Armenian studies.

Alpōyachean perceived the nineteenth century to be a revolutionary era that had pushed people towards social, economic and political struggles. In his words, the era had encouraged people to complain against inequalities between lord and slave, among nations and between the sexes.[147] In one of his writings from 1940, Alpōyachean was critical of the Armenian elite of Constantinople, by whose efforts in the second half of the 1800s “the complaint of Armenians was being formulated and the Armenian Question was being created, against the will of the people and without the consciousness of those who were really being exploited—the Armenians of Armenia.”[148] Without pinpointing specific individuals or organizations, he suggested that such

[145] Arshak Alpōyachean, *Grigor Zohrap* (Turkey: s.n., 1919), 5. Also see Arshak Alpōyachean, *T‘orgom Patriark’ Gushakean* (Gahirē: Tp. Sevan, 1940).
[146] Alpōyachean, *Grigor Zohrap,* 5.
[147] Arshak Alpoyajean, *Usumnasirut‘iwn Srbuhi Tiwsabi* (Venetik: S. Ghazar, 1901), 7-8. His writings on Srbuhi T‘iwsab and her work were first published in the periodical *Bazmavēp.*
[148] Here Armenia refers to the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

efforts created enemies among the neighbors and rulers of Armenians.[149] These lines express Alpōyachean's awareness that the elite of the nation had produced narratives without the contribution of the majority of Armenians who lived in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

The letters from the provinces could have been Alpōyachean's attempt to preserve and uncover such voices. This reveals Alpoyachean's view that these complaints were more "authentic" because they had originated in the provinces. Such a disposition was not different from mine as I started to explore the Nubar archive. I had entered the archive with the idea that voices from the eastern Ottoman provinces were absent from the historiography of the Ottoman Empire. The form of the archive both shaped and confirmed my assumptions regarding the "authenticity" of views of Armenians in the Ottoman provinces. Yet, there was no such perspective, nor can there be, as the provinces are not homogeneous. The agency of provincial actors only surfaced as I read between the lines of the petitions and compared the petitions synchronically and diachronically. They emerged as I consulted other genres of sources and other archives.

In the 1930s, Alpōyachean was able to obtain copies of materials from the Nubar Library with the help of Aram Andonian (1875-1952) the curator of the library between 1928 and 1952, and later Haik Berberian (1887-1978). He knew precisely what he was looking for, as he remembered that Patriarch Zawēn had a specific set of documents transferred to the Information Bureau.[150] He wrote multiple volumes on different Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire and around the world. In an ethnographic memory book of the Kutina (now Kütahya) Armenians, Alpōyachean used a few letters sent from Kütahya to the Patriarchate, often

[149] Alpōyachean, *T'orgom Patriark'*, 60-61.
[150] Arshak Alpōyachean, *Hushamatean kutinahayeru* (Beirut: Tp. Tonikean, 1961), 5-6.

providing a full transcription of each letter. The communities he wrote about were outside of the territory of historic Armenia. As Alpōyachean explained in his forward to a book he wrote on the history of Armenian migration, one way to understand why so many people had left historic Armenia was to trace the histories of the Diasporan communities.[151] Writing the history of the Armenian communities outside of Armenia, he aimed to discover why over the centuries the number of Armenians living in historic Armenia had diminished. His question was grounded in the ideological currents of his time, both in the Ottoman Empire and in Europe, whereby the proportionality of ethnic groups to one another in a given territory was to determine which nation-state would gain sovereignty over their land.[152] Diminution of an ethnic group in their native land was perceived as the weakening of that nation. Therefore, the frame of Alpōyachean's book was shaped by the anxieties of the nineteenth century that I will discuss in Chapter Five of this dissertation, when many Armenians from the eastern provinces were migrating to the west, to Istanbul, Izmir, Aleppo and later to the Americas.

Providing local ethnographic information had become a trend among Armenians in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, an inclination that may have partly served the Patriarchate's need to implement reforms from one diocese to another. Thus, when the Patriarchate sent clergymen such as Vardapet Pōghos Nat'anean (1856-1886), a native of Van, to collect information on the provinces, the reports submitted were organized based on geographic localities.[153] Garegin Sruandzteants' collected and published one of the richest ethnography of the eastern provinces in the 1870s and 1880s. Mkrtich' Khrimian, the future Patriarch of

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[151] Introduction to Arshak Alpōyachean, *Patmut'iwn hay gaghtakanut'ean: hayeri ts'rumě ashkharhi zanazan maser* (Gahirē: Tp. Sahak Mesrop, 1941).
[152] For more on the ideology of governance and ethnic population percentiles see Fuat Dündar's *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question (1878-1918)* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010); H.R. Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics – A review of the ethnographic cartography of Macedonia* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1951).
[153] Pōghos Nat'anean, *Artosr Hayastani kam teghekagir Paluay, Kharberdu, Ch'arsanjaki, Chapagh Juri yew Erznkayu: haweluats ěst khndranats' azgasirats' Khizan gavaṙ* (Constantinople, n.p. 1878).

Constantinople (1869-1873) represented Armenia not as a whole, but an Armenia in pieces.[154] Thus, writing national histories and ethnographies based on locales and distinguished individuals—and hence organizing archives in such a way—was common to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for contemporary purposes of creating a demographics of dispossessed Armenians. This structure has persisted in Armenian historiography.[155] Of course this ethnographic data was also collected to delineate that which constituted Armenian heritage, Armenian tradition and history, as a way to mark the heritage belonging to Armenians.

Unlike the Nubar Library the petitions that I consulted in the Matenadaran were organized chronologically along with other types of documents sent to the Ējmiatsin Catholicosate or sent out from the Ējmiatsin beginning with the eighteenth century. This early chronology allowed me to begin my examination of petitions in the 1820s, and unsettle the Ottoman periodization that marked the Constantinople Patriarchate's archives in the Nubar Library. The Ējmiatsin archive at Matendaran does not have an indexing system. Manuscripts and archives serve as the main classifications of the Matenadaran. While the manuscript division consists of book-sized handwritten materials, the archive division includes official documents, letters and reports. Unlike the catalog of the archive division, the catalog of the manuscripts does have an indexing system, which makes it easier to pin down manuscripts produced in Van. The archive portion, similar to the Nubar Library, has a segment of its holdings organized based on historical personalities, yet the division between lay and religious does not exist. This system of organization, again, explains the historical narratives that focus on particular historical figures.

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[154] In his monthly journal *Artsui Vaspurakan,* to acquaint and bond Armenians around the world to their ancestral lands, Khrimian presented Armenian in pieces. *Artsui Vaspurakan* (1855-1864, 1872) the publication of which started in Üsküdar and continued at the Varag Monastery in the region of Van.

[155] For example, see Richard Hovannisian's edited volumes that include *Armenian Karin/Erzerum,* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2003); *Armenian Baghesh/Bitlis and Taron/Mush,* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2001); *Armenian Van/Vaspurakan,* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2000).

Although like Matenadaran the Ottoman Archives house documents that stretch back centuries, in this case six centuries to the beginning of the Ottoman rule, the organization of the Ottoman Archives forces particular periodizations on the researcher in ways that the Matenadaran archive does not. Furthermore, the Ottoman Archives houses documents up till the Republican period. Their periodization marks the stark rupture between the Ottoman and Republican eras in historiography. Much of the organization of the nineteenth-century documents is based on the administrative units of the state; therefore, its form can tell us about the administrative aspects of the state and its function. Ottoman petitions (*arz-u hal*) of the Tanzimat era, starting from the 1840s, appear in the Office of the Imperial Divan fond,[156] which is cataloged only up to 1860. However, petitions can also be found in the Secretary of the Grand Vizier Correspondence[157] and the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances[158] collections, among others. This organization and periodization of the archives partially explains why most nineteenth-century Ottoman historical scholarship that focuses on petitions begins with the 1840s or later.

For the purposes of my research, however, the entries of each document in the catalog are more crucial than the actual form of the archive since, with the digital catalog, the entries are what guide the researcher. Until the 1840s, there were Kurdish semi-autonomous authorities (*hükümetler*) in the region of Van. At the end of the 1840s, Van was made part of the administrative district of Kurdistan (1848-1850) then of Hakkari (1850-55). Between 1867 and 1876 it was part of the province of Erzurum. This administrative organization most likely has made it difficult to access documents from and about Van and points as to why studies that rely

[156] A.DVN/*Sadaret Divan-ı Humayun Kalemi.*
[157] A.MKT/*Sadaret Mektub-i Kalem-i Belgeleri.*
[158] MVL/*Meclis-i vâlâ-i ahkâm-ı adliye.* The Supreme Council was created in 1839 and was responsible for preparing and implementing laws. Roderic H. Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923: The Impact of the West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 99.

on Ottoman archives have not focused on Van, but rather on Harput, Diyarbekir, and Erzurum. But also if a petition comes from a particular village in the region of Van, the name of the village rather than Van would likely appear in the catalog, which complicates the process of pinning down petitions from the region. Usually the entry for a petition includes a place name, an individual's name, and the issue that was being requested. Both in the documents and in the catalogs the ethnic identity of the petitioner was most of the time left unmentioned. For example, an Armenian woman named Deruhi, who identified herself as a Christian (*nasrani*), petitioned on behalf of her husband Avetis, whom she identified as a *dhimmi* (indicating the protected ones, that included Jews and Christians).[159] In the catalog entry only the names of the petitioner and her husband appear, and they are identified as being from Van (*Vanlı*). It is only through the names of the petitioners that we can identify them as Armenians. But because of the categories of the petitions and the catalogs, and because of the form of the archive it is difficult to bring out such individual voices in the histories of Ottoman Armenians. Rather, it is easier to identify Armenians as a community, as "*Ermeni millet-i*," "*Ermeni reayası*," "*Ermeni ahali*," referring to petitions submitted by the Armenian community/people or documents regarding Armenians. This is because a search under the entry "*Ermeni arz-u hal*" (Armenian petition), mostly brings up petitions written by the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul, and at times by the Jerusalem Patriarchate. In other words, the archive encapsulates Armenian voices and experiences as a singular monolith, primarily as connected to the Armenian Church.

Therefore, to avoid representing Armenians as the state saw them, a collective represented by the Armenian Constantinople Patriarchate, and to avoid equating the Patriarchate

[159] PMOA, MVL, 143/64 (Sept. 20, 1853). In another case a certain Ovannes in his petition to the Sublime Porte complained against Sharan, Kaspar, Vartan, Agop, Artin and Melkon, whom he identified as *dhimmis* from Van, about a property and debt matter. Ovannes did not provide any information about his own identity. PMOA, A.DVN, 57/39 (Jan. 3, 1850).

with Ottoman Armenians we need to first determine the instances where the category of "Armenian" (along with other categories) appears in the archive. Moreover, to write histories about Armenians while de-centering Istanbul, one needs to look beyond the Ottoman state's definition and naming of Armenians. We need to question, why during the era of the Tanzimat the term *dhimmi* (non-Muslims) was used in some cases, Armenian in others; Kurd in some and Muslim in others.[160] This would allow researchers to bring out the heterogeneities among Armenians rather than presenting them as a homogeneous group. It will push, as Stoler suggests to treat such colonial categories as topics of historical inquiry, rather than as fixed taxonomies.

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By treating the archives as a subject of study, I was able to question the subjectivities with which I approached my sources. By pointing out the multiple ways the archives impose categories on research, I hope to show that sources that are categorized as belonging to a particular ethno-national archive on their own do not give voice to the marginalized and do not challenge the hegemony of the state or the dominance of the metropole vis-à-vis the provinces. On the contrary, I showed how archives of opposing political projects reinstitute similar categories of difference. In the rest of this dissertation, I will show how even in print materials the colonial relationship was further enforced between Istanbul and the provinces, through particular categorizations and discourses.

[160] It will require a separate study to understand how petitioners or scribes chose to include or exclude both the identity of the petitioner and those they petitioned against, or in support of, and how changes in these identifications occurred over time.

Chapter Two

Transforming Modes of Communication: Kinship and Sites of Power (1820s-1870s)

This chapter explores the journeys of the material sources that I consult before they were stored away in archives. In other words, I explore the circulation of print books, newspapers and periodicals as well as handwritten petitions—an aspect of nineteenth-century Ottoman-Armenian history that has not been studied before. The links between handwritten petitions and print media capture the moment of transformation of the Armenian nation and the Ottoman state. I focus on the increase in the circulation of print and examine how it affected the circulation of handwritten petitions. I treat these sources not simply as transmitters of knowledge and information, but also as material objects of exchange which transformed forms of sociability and communication in the process of nation-making. By sociability I have in mind the ways in which people interacted with one another and the range of people who connected with each other both locally in Van, and across a large geographic expanse that crossed imperial boundaries. New and old public spaces such as the market, coffee shops and libraries facilitated the circulation of print materials.

Printing presses had begun to emerge in the Ottoman Empire in the late fifteenth century.[161] But it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century, with the promulgation of the Tanzimat, that the Ottoman Empire saw a burgeoning of print periodicals and newspapers. Print media—along with the acceleration of transport that resulted from the steamship and an improving postal system—intensified communication among Armenians of the Ottoman Empire across a vast geographic space, and across confessional and socioeconomic lines, thus reconfiguring kinship ties and relations of power. I argue that while print provided greater opportunities for Armenians of the province to make their voice heard in Istanbul and elsewhere,

[161] Ami Ayalon, *The Arabic Print Revolution: Cultural Production and Mass Readership* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 2.

the printing press along with the representative government system in formation also enhanced the inequality of power between the western coast of the empire and the eastern provinces.

Print provided a means for the voices of a diverse group of Armenians to appear in writing and to become available to a wide-ranging audience. Between the 1850s and 1870s one can find in newspapers and periodicals writings by laymen and ecclesiastics alike, men from Istanbul and the provinces, and or even abroad. Occasionally one can also find a letter or a poem authored by a woman, or a letter or petition of a labor migrant written in the particular dialect of the province from which he came, or in a hybrid language of Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian. This hybridity of language also reveals itself in Armeno-Turkish—Turkish written in Armenian script. Some books and newspapers were entirely in Armeno-Turkish, and many of the Armenian language newspapers and periodicals I have consulted published some texts in Armeno-Turkish. This was particularly the case when newspapers published an official announcement or decree of the Ottoman state, or a letter that was written to the newspaper's editor in Armeno-Turkish. Printing was largely centered in Istanbul and Izmir, and thus undermined the power of monasteries in the provinces as the centers of knowledge production in a vanishing past.

While I focus on print, I do not intend to suggest à la Elizabeth Eisenstein that print was the main agent of transformation.[162] Rather, in the mid-nineteenth century print became a powerful tool through which processes related to the reconfiguration of kinship ties and relations of power intensified. Print itself did not immediately introduce these transformations. Rather, it is the genres of texts produced, the types of print (i.e., books, newspapers, periodicals) and their interaction with older modes of communication, such as petitions, that contributed to a change in relations of power and kinship ties. At the same time, the institutional transformations occurring

[162] See Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe,* Vol. 1 and 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

in the Ottoman Empire within the context of the Tanzimat, which introduced systems of representative governance changed and increased the use and importance of print. With the new government system, a wider range of voices had to be considered in politics. In this chapter I argue that newspapers and handwritten petitions became integral parts in the formation of a representative governance system. For this reason, we see a significant boost in both handwritten petitions as well as newspapers and periodicals. Self-representation no longer had to be expressed in the realm of the local, or to the authority addressed in a petition, but as authors' names appeared in newspapers they had to craft their words and themselves in ways that would appeal the broad audience of Armenians in far-flung places.

The existing historiography on print in the Ottoman Empire predominantly provides an overview of the origins and development of printing within the frames of Westernization and modernization.[163] Recently, the field of Ottoman-Arab studies, in particular, has offered some innovative interpretations on print technology. Historian Kathryn Schwartz has focused on the economy of printing.[164] The recent pioneering work of Ami Ayalon discusses the ways in which print was produced, disseminated and consumed in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire.[165] Much of the existing scholarship on Ottoman print focuses on cities that had printing presses such as Cairo, Beirut, and Istanbul, or the networks between these cities.[166]

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[163] For a recent example see Jonathan Haddad, "People Before Print: Gens de lettres, the Ottoman Printing Press, and the Search for Turkish Literature," *Mediterranean Studies* 25.2 (2017): 189-228. Also see Orlin Sabev, "Waiting for Godot: The Formation of Ottoman Print Culture," in *Historical Aspects of Print and Publishing in Languages of the Middle East*, ed. Geoffrey Roper (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 101-120. For a historiographical review and critique on Ottoman printing see Kathryn A. Schwartz, "Did Ottoman Sultans Ban Print?" *Book History* 20 (2017): 1-39.
[164] Kathryn A. Schwartz, "The Political Economy of Private Printing in Cairo as Told from a Commissioning Deal Turned Sour, 1871," *IJMES* 49 (2017): 25-45.
[165] Ayalon, *The Arabic Print Revolution.* The earliest printing presses belonged to Jews, then to Greeks and Armenians. Ibid, 2.
[166] Kathryn A. Schwartz focuses on Cairo in "The Political Economy of Private Printing in Cairo"; Jonathan Haddad focuses on Istanbul in "People Before Print."

In this chapter, instead, I look at printing from the vantage point of Van, a place with limited access to the printing press throughout the nineteenth century. Although for short intervals a printer functioned at the Monastery of Varag, on a mountain overlooking the city of Van, Vanets'is primarily had access to print published in the Western shores of the empire, as well as in Venice and the Russian Empire. To weave this narrative of print circulation, I rely on fragments of information collected from a variety of published sources, from newspapers to periodicals, and from memoirs to fiction. Alongside print I draw on handwritten petitions and letters, not only for clues about the consumption of print, but to show how print and manuscripts were in dialogue with one another at this transitional junction in the history of Van's political consciousness. The story of print and handwritten petitions is integral to Vanets'i self-representation. The nineteenth century saw a proliferation print dissemination and consumption in the Ottoman Armenian community and Van Armenians actively engaged in this history of print.

Print Circulation and Kinship Ties

Newspapers and periodicals expanded the role of print as they made a variety of voices accessible in writing. Between 1794 and 1894, close to 100 Armenian and Armeno-Turkish periodicals were produced in the Ottoman Empire.[167] This excludes more than 70 Armenian periodicals that were published outside of the Ottoman Empire, some of which Ottoman Armenians had access to. Beginning in the 1840s the Armenian-language and the Armeno-Turkish press in the Ottoman Empire experienced exponential growth in newspaper and

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[167] Garegin Jiwani Lewoneants', *Hayots' parberakan mamulě. patmakan tesut'iwn skzbits' minch'ew mer orerě* (1794-1894) (Alexandrapol: Abraham M Malkhasean, 1895), D and ZhB.

periodical production.[168] The boom in the publication of newspapers and periodicals followed that of the book.

Already by the mid-sixteenth century a small number of Armenian books had begun to be published in Constantinople.[169] In addition, Ottoman Armenians had extensive access to publications from Europe. Since the early 1730s peddlers had transported books from Venice and sold them in Izmir.[170] In letters between Abbot Mkhit‘ar of the Armenian Catholic order in Venice and Andreas, an Armenian merchant in Izmir, it becomes clear that Armenian residents of Izmir in the 1740s were asking for dictionaries (*baṙgirk‘*) that had not yet been published.[171] As historian Sebouh Aslanian’s work demonstrates, the demand of the market, which included Armenians of Istanbul and India, influenced what the Catholic Armenian Mkhit‘arist Order in Venice published.[172] Aslanian writes that by the mid-eighteenth century the Mkhit‘arists

> “had established an elaborate and informal network of missionaries and book peddlers that stretched from Venice and the Ottoman Empire to India. […] The networks of these mobile missionaries and book peddlers connected early modern Armenian communities across three empires (Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal) to each other and to Venice and to the Mkhit‘arist publishing enterprise there.”[173]

The supply and demand economy of print allowed Armenians in the Ottoman Empire to develop their ties with Armenians outside of the empire. Moreover, these circuits of knowledge circulation tied communities together at a moment when global national ties were still in formation.

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[168] Lewoneants‘, *Hayots‘ Parberakan Mamulě,* 37-42.
[169] T‘ēodik, *Tip u taṙ: girin tsagman ew mijazgayin u haykakan tpagrut‘ean vray dzguats aknark mě* (Kostandnupōlis: Hratarakut‘iwn ew tpagrut‘iwn Vahramay ew Hrach‘ēi Tēr-nersēsean, 1912), 53.
[170] H. Sahak Chemchemean, *Mkhit‘ar Abbahōr hratarakch‘akan aṙak‘elut‘iwně* (Venetik: Hayagitakan Matenashar “Bazmavēp,” 1980), 290.
[171] Chemchemean, *Mkhit‘ar Abbahōr*, 292.
[172] Sebouh David Aslanian, “Reader Response and the Circulation of Mkhit‘arist Books Across the Armenian Communities of the Early Modern Indian Ocean,” *Journal of the Society of Armenian Studies* 22 (2013): 31-70.
[173] Aslanian, “Reader Response and the Circulation of Mkhit’arist Books,” 45.

Van was a central node in the circulation of print materials. We have evidence of books reaching Van as early as the early nineteenth century. In the 1830s and 1840s, books published by the Mkhit‘arists were circulating in Van. According to the biographer of Mkrtich‘ Khrimian, Hayk Achemean (1898-1965), Khrimian's uncle had homeschooled him in Van in the 1830s. Learning how to use the Mkhit‘arist's Armenian dictionary (*Haykazean Baṙaran*) and Mik‘ael Ch‘amcheants‘'s (1738-1823) grammar was part of his education.[174] He was exposed to religious texts through the writings of tenth-century author Grigor Narekats‘i as well as books of Psalms books that were available in print. Khrimian in his youth also studied Armenian geography from Ghukas Inchichean's (1758-1833) book.[175] In the absence of a formal education, these were the books through which Khrimian acquired such a deep knowledge of the classical Armenian language, of Armenian history and geography.[176]

In 1852, Vardapet T‘ōp‘uzean, who served as the abbot of the Lim Monastery on an island in Lake Van,[177] wrote a letter to *mütevelli* Gaspar agha, the manager of a pious foundation, about the thirty books of psalms he had sent. Abbot T‘ōp‘uzean further reminded Gaspar agha of his promise to send him dictionaries, which they had not received but were still waiting for.[178] A month later, congregation members of the Lim and Ktuts‘ monasteries wrote to Gaspar agha informing him that they had received the eight-volume dictionary.[179]

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[174] Hayk Achemean, *Hayots‘ Hayrik,* (T‘awriz: Atrpatakani Hayots‘ T‘emakan Tparan, 1929), 118. This refers to the book of Mik‘ayēl Ch‘amch‘eants‘ who was a celibate priest of the Mkhit‘arist order. The book was entitled *K‘erakanut‘iwn Haykazean Lezui.* The book was first published in 1779 in Venice, but republications occurred in 1801, 1805, 1816, 1831, 1833, 1843, 1859 in Venice; 1826 and 1830 in Kolkata; 1833 and 1859 in Shushi; 1859 in Moscow; 1826 in Tbilisi.

[175] Achemean, *Hayots‘ Hayrik, 126-127.* Ghukas Vardapet Inchichean, *Hnakhosut‘iwn Ashkharhagrakan Hayastaneats‘ Ashkharhi,* Vol. 1 (Venetik: Surb Ghazar, 1835).

[176] His writings from the 1840s on demonstrate this in-depth knowledge of language, history and geography.

[177] He served as an abbot from 1847 until his death in 1870.

[178] BNU.CP23/1.024. (Aug. 8, 1852).

[179] BNU.CP23/1.023 (October 1852).

By mid-century the variety of books and the places they came from had multiplied. Along with the books available to Khrimian, books available at the Lim Monastery in the 1850s included the fifth-century chronicler Yeghishē's history[180] and another grammar book published in Shushi—an Armenian town in the Caucasus, currently in Nagorno Karabagh.[181] In Shushi, a printing press had been established by missionaries in the late 1820s which published the New and Old Testaments in vernacular Armenian, in addition to a small dictionary.[182] That books also arrived from Shushi indicates that Van ecclesiastics had access to publications from the West as well as from the East. Books on Armenian history, such as Ch'amch'eants''s *History of the Armenians* (1784-86) and geography, such as Inchichean's book, were the vehicles through which national conceptions of ancestral history and national conceptions of territory emerged.

Books on geography and national history, the contents of which later circulated in newspapers, periodicals and textbooks, transformed the readers' imagination of their ancestors, their sense of kinship and their collective memory. Consider Bishop Tevkants''s memoir, which provides a genealogical history of his family, revealing knowledge about his ancestors that had been transmitted orally for generations. He claimed that he decided to write his family history as part of Armenian national history.[183] The canonical linear histories now required the inclusion of family histories within the broad spectrum of national history. Print encouraged a degree of standardization, breaking from earlier narratives based on local genealogies and the transmission of oral traditions. And although occasionally books on Ottoman history were published in

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[180] MM.MS 4180, 12b, 13a, 18a. This book mainly covers the history of the battle of St. Vardan between Armenians and Persians in the fourth century. The earliest publications of the book came out under different titles in 1764 in Constantinople, in 1787 St. Petersburg, in 1816 in Kolkata. The book continued to be published throughout the century.

[181] MM.MS 4180, 11b.

[182] T'ēodik, *Tip u taṙ,* 184. Among the books published in Shushi were Hovsēp' Vardapet Arts'akhts'woy, *Hamaṙōt baṙgirk': i grabaṙē hashkharhabaṙn, i pēts hambakts'*, [Brief dictionary: from classical to vernacular, for the use of the novice] (Shushi, 1830); Ch'amch'eants', Mik'ayel, *Kerakanut'iwn haykazean lezui,* (Shushi, 1833); Nersisean Pōghos Gharataghts'i, *Hamaṙōtut'iwn hayakakn k'erakanut'ean* (Shushi, 1829).

[183] MM.MS.4184, 2a. «առ ի յիշատակ տոհմակցաց իմաց և իբրև մասնակի յուշարան Հայասեռ զարմից»

Armenian, they did not seem to catch on beyond an announcement or two in newspapers.[184] Tevkants‘ chose to situate his family history in the frame of national history and not of Ottoman history, which shows that he imagined kinship through national ties, not imperial ties.

Beyond history and geography books, novel types of compilations included grammars and dictionaries. The proliferation of grammar books and the demand for dictionaries were common phenomena of early print, as in the cases of French, English and German language publications.[185] The demand for books on grammar and dictionaries points to an increasing number of engaged readers and writers, for whom dictionaries were a necessary tool to read texts the semantics of which were not fully comprehensible to them. These texts connected a growing literate global Armenian public.

One of the earliest Armenian-language dictionaries published in Venice in the 1830s also provided definitions in Turkish written in the Armenian script, along with the Armenian definition of the word.[186] This is because the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire were often either Turkish-speakers or used many Turkish words in their everyday language. This explains the proliferation of newspapers and books published in Turkish in Armenian script, otherwise known as Armeno-Turkish.[187] In addition to the widespread use of Armeno-Turkish, the Armenian

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[184] For examples see Gabriēl Ayvazovsk‘i, *Patmut‘iwn Ōsmaneants‘ petut‘ean* (Venetik: I Surb Ghazar, 1841). Another book on Ottoman history was commissioned by the Ottoman ambassador in Paris, see *Hatĕntir patmut‘iwnk‘ varuts‘ Ōsmanean t‘agaworats‘ ew vēzirats‘* (Venetik: Sb. Ghazar, 1848).
[185] Lucien Febre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800,* trans. David Gerard, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton (London: Humanities Press, 1976), 323-330.
[186] Hayr Gabriel Awetik‘ean, Hayr Khach‘atur Siwrmelean and Hayr Mkrtich‘ Avgerean, *Nor baṙgirk‘ Haykazean lezui* (Venetik: Sb. Ghazar, 1837); Hayr Mkrtich‘ Awgerean and Hayr Grigor Chelalean, *Aṙdzeṙn baṙaran Haykazean lezui* (Venetik: Sb. Ghazar, 1865).
[187] For more on Armeno-Turkish see Murat Cankara, “Armeno-Turkish Writing and the Question of Hybridity” in *An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion,* edited by Kathryn Babayan and Michael Pifer (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 173-193.

language of print media provided a medium for the standardization of vernacular Armenian—what Anderson has called the "national print-language."[188]

Increasingly, in Van, secular texts written in the vernacular emerged. Along with the dictionaries and grammar books, the Lim congregation also received copies of the periodical *Bazmavēp* (Polyhistory), published in Venice starting in 1843. It was one of the main periodicals of the era.[189] Although *Bazmavēp* was a publication of the Catholic Mkhit'arist congregation it was a lay periodical. *Bazmavēp* often published literary and ethical works, as well as translations from foreign texts. The periodical thus represents one of the first publications that brought lay literature to the region of Van. I call these texts secular because they included topics that covered the natural science, agriculture, geography as well as morality pieces that did not rely on scripture. Although *Bazmavēp* was not a newspaper, it periodically provided some news from different parts of the world that gave a sense of calendrical (linear) rather than a sacral sense of time that is tied to secularity. The circulation of *Bazmavēp* serves as an example of how publications forged ties among different confessional groups. Not only did the Armenian clergy and lay members of the Apostolic confession exchange print material produced by the Catholic Mkhit'arists, but Apostolic Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, such as Khrimian, contributed their writings to *Bazmavēp*.[190] Despite their doctrinal and political differences, print mediated novel social bonds between laymen and ecclesiastics across a vast geography and also locally. Newspaper issues did not become outdated overnight since, apart from the news articles, newspapers like *Masis* published didactic articles that Foucault would see as nurturing "la culture du soi"—the culture of the self—as they were written to cultivate the right emotions (i.e.

[188] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 67.
[189] T'ōp'uzean in his petition to Gaspar Agha asked for two issues of Bazmavēp. Later the congregants from Lim and Ktuts' thanked Gaspar Agha for sending them three issues of the periodical. BNU.CP23/1.024 (August 8, 1852); BNU.CP23/1.023 (October 1852).
[190] *Bazmavēp,* issue 20 (October 15, 1849), 308-310.

love of nation, love of patria, love of education), to inculcate morals of the family and ways of raising children, and to maintain a healthy social body. Print media, therefore, transformed the medium through which a person could acquire knowledge and cultivate appropriate emotions as the subject of a new patria.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, books and periodicals were a household object for some families in Van. These in turn came to shape the childhood memories of some Vanets'is. Consider, for example, the case of Hambardzum Yeramean, who was born in 1857 in the city of Van, and later became a teacher. In his memoirs, he wrote that in school, in the 1860s, he read religious texts like the Psalm Books, church songs, Narekats'i's writings, and *The Acts of the Apostles* (*Gortsk' aṙak'elots'*) from the New Testament, as well as grammar books of classical Armenian. In their home, Yeramean also remembered that they had the print version of Narekats'i's work, the Bible and other religious and historical books.[191] Until the age of eleven, his father would show him pictures that appeared in the Bible and the geographical maps that appeared in Inchichean's book in addition to various scenes of city life in Constantinople.[192] During the long winter nights, his family would sit around the stove and his brothers and parents would talk about the daily "national and religious celebrations or events, and they would read the Bible, Narekats'i's works and newspapers or lay (*ashkharhik*) books."[193] Yeramean's representation of domestic life indicates that literature in print provided a different form of family practice at home. Rather than orally reciting stories or poems, people now read a newspaper or a book out loud. Books, therefore, began to mediate the relations between father

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[191] Yeramean, *Hushardzan,* 37.
[192] Yeramean, *Hushardzan,* 39. Yeremean was very likely speaking of these abridged two-volume version of Inchichean. In the copy I have obtained, however, no maps or pictures of Armenia exist. The language of the abridged version was closer to vernacular, as opposed to the heavy reliance on classical Armenian used in the three-volume version.
[193] Yeramean, *Hushardzan,* 42.

and son as well as between the literate man in a home and the rest of the family. The authority of the possessor of knowledge lay in the book, whereas previously authority belonged to the orator who would tell his or her memories.

New genres of writing and new types of content in print gave readers the opportunity to reimagine their communities across socioeconomic lines. In Constantinople, until the 1820s and 1830s, published books largely covered religious topics.[194] After the 1820s, however, translations of European literary works began to be published, and the variety of genres in print began to expand.[195] Alongside the translation of mostly French popular novels, Armeno-Turkish and Armenian novels appeared in the mid-nineteenth century.[196] As Etienne Charriere writes, the emergence of the popular novel

> "set in motion new and complex mechanisms of identification for its diverse audiences. One of the defining characteristics of the French popular novel of the nineteenth century was that, more than any other regime of fiction before it, it was populated by characters belonging at once to the lowest and highest strata of society—and to virtually any echelon in between."[197]

This meant that the novel allowed readers to become familiar and perhaps even sympathize with people of different socioeconomic and confessional backgrounds. In other words, novels like *Akabi Hikayesi* (The Story of Akabi, 1851), and later novels by the Armenian-Iranian author Raffi, provided a means for readers to reimagine their communities and kinship ties beyond socioeconomic strata, confessional and gendered lines.

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[194] T'ēodik, *Tip u tar̊*, 71.

[195] For an overview of Armenian and Armeno-Turkish translations of European works in the nineteenth century see Etienne E. Charriere, " 'We Must Ourselves Write About Ourselves': The Trans-Communal Rise of the Novel in the Late Ottoman Empire," (PhD diss., University of Michigan 2016), 91-94; Also see James Etmekjian, *The French Influence of the Western Armenian Renaissance, 1843-1915* (New York: Twayne, 1964), 273-282 cited by Charriere.

[196] In the Ottoman Empire, the first novel produced was *Agapi Hik'eayēsi* (1851). For a detailed discussion of the novel see Murat Cankara, "Reading Akabi, (Re-)Writing History: On the Questions of Currency and Interpretation of Armeno-Turkish Fiction," in *Cultural Encounters in the Turkish-Speaking Communities of the Late Ottoman Empire,* ed. Evangelia Balta (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 2014), 53-75. Also see Chapter 3 in Ayse Neveser Koker, "Gendering East and West: Transnational Politics of Belonging in the Ottoman Empire and France, 1718-1905," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2017).

[197] Charriere, "'We Must Ourselves Write About Ourselves'," 118.

Although in the first half of the nineteenth century many of the available publications in Van were copies of old texts, some of them were reproduced in the vernacular Armenian. Religious commentaries from the medieval period, such as Narekats'i's writings, early medieval chronicler Movses Khorenats'i's and Yeghishe's works on history, along with the Bible remained among the most popular books throughout the nineteenth century and were continuously published in Venice, Jerusalem, Constantinople and St. Petersburg. The transitions of old texts into print made "available to a very large clientele texts that formerly had circulated only in the narrow world of wealth and letters,"[198] which, in the case of Armenian in the eastern Ottoman provinces, meant mostly literate ecclesiastics in monasteries. Regardless of their content, these books provided a new avenue through which Armenians from Europe to India would be connected with each other irrespective of their confessional loyalties; they became attached with each other through the exchange of the printed books and periodicals. These exchanges print materials let Armenians of Van know of communities throughout the empire and beyond. At the same time, they began to share a set knowledge about the history of Armenians and geography of Armenia. Simultaneous to the publication of books on Armenian history and geography, Armenian periodicals covering lay matters began to expose Van Armenians to new writings and ideas.

By the mid-nineteenth century the technology of transport in the Ottoman Empire had accelerated channels of distribution for print material. In the 1830s, the Ottomans established and began to develop their postal service.[199] "[S]everal foreign postal systems were granted concessions to operate" in mid-century. "French, Austrian, Russian, Italian, and German" services competed "with the Ottoman system and with each other" to develop more efficient

[198] Chartier, *The Order of Books*, 8.
[199] Nesimi Yazıcı, "Tanzimat'ta Haberleşme ve Kara Taşımacılığı," *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* 3 (1992), 335.

postal systems of communication.[200] Editors of newspapers and periodicals used the postal service of the empire, as the principle newspapers had formal distribution channels connecting the major towns of the empire.

In different provinces newspapers and periodicals often had agents from whom people could obtain newspapers. Agents' names appeared on the last page of a newspaper, which indicates where a particular newspaper was distributed.[201] In 1862, to subscribe to the most prominent Armenian newspaper *Masis,* published in Constantinople, Van Armenians would need to contact Mkrtich' Tēr Adomean, who was the main representative of the newspaper in the region and also a teacher at the school of Varag.[202]

In 1853, the annual subscription fee of *Masis* was 100 ghurush in the Ottoman capital and 120 elsewhere.[203] The annual cost of the biweekly *Artsuik Tarōnoy* (Little Eagle of Taron), published in Mush in 1864, was 18 ghurush.[204] Ottoman historian Yaşar Tolga Cora notes that the average annual household income in Erzurum in the 1840s was 271.7 ghurush.[205] That *Masis* would have cost half of a family's income, demonstrates that most households could not afford newspapers. Rather than buying newspapers, information was spread through the communal sharing of newspapers and public readings.

Subscribing to a newspaper or buying a newspaper from a designated person or place was not the only way to access newspapers, periodicals and books. Ecclesiastics and laymen within the eastern provinces borrowed and exchanged periodicals, newspapers and books. Ecclesiastic officials and rich laymen had their own "bearer of letters" (*graber*), who, besides letters,

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[200] Ayalon, *The Arabic Print Revolution*, 100.
[201] Similar agents also existed in the Ottoman Arab world. See Ayalon, *The Arabic Print,* 130.
[202] *Masis,* issue 544 (July 14, 1862).
[203] *Masis,* issue 1-50 (Jan. 7, 1853).
[204] *Artsuik Tarōnoy,* issue 37 (March 1, 1865).
[205] Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin," 145.

transported money, newspapers and books. Take for example the case of Tevkants' who, while a prelate in Kharberd (Harput) in the 1860s, communicated with Sargis Efendi Aghabekean in Ch'arsanjak (Akpazar), a town in north-eastern Kharberd. In one of his letters to Tevkants', Sargis Efendi mentioned that he had received the letters and newspapers and in turn was sending back money. He asked Tevkants' to send the most recent issues of *Masis*, which he promised he would return upon reading them.[206] When newspapers reached the eastern provinces they continued to circulate within the provinces.

Books, too, followed similar patterns of circulation. Take, for example, an instance from 1866, when a certain Awetis of Van wrote from St. Karapet of Mush to Garegin Sruandzteants' in Van thanking him for sending him three books.[207] Clearly, Armenians around the empire—and beyond—became connected with each other by reading the same content in print publications; the very sharing of books and periodicals was a new medium of creating social bonds.

Besides the circulation of print among individuals, new public spaces for reading emerged, forging spaces of sociability where print information was discussed and interpreted. In 1858 *Artsui Vaspurakan* reported that a library (*gratun*) in the city of Van served as both a library and bookstore. People could either buy books there, or they could freely go and read a book for two to three hours at a time. The library was open to anyone and everyone.[208] In the village of Narek (Yemişlik)[209]—we find out from a letter sent to the newspaper *Masis*—there was a small library, with books and newspapers that served students of the local school.[210] In

[206] MM.MS.3721, 135a-b. Copy of letter dated August 11, 1867.
[207] Aghaneants', *Diwan Hayots' Patmut'ean,* 66. Letter dated Nov. 16, 1866.
[208] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 8 (1858), 214.
[209] This village is located on the southeastern shore of Lake Van.
[210] *Masis,* issue 347 (Sept. 18, 1858).

1865, “The Khoren Society of Pontos (Trabzon)”[211] had opened a reading room (*ĕnterts‘aran*) that already had 45 members.[212] The founders of the newly established society announced in the periodical *Artsuik Tarōnoy* that they had decided to send twenty newspapers each month to Mush—a region to the west of Lake Van—for free. Such philanthropic acts were intended to inspire Armenians in Mush to open their own reading room.[213] In another issue dating from 1865, *Artsuik Tarōnoy* announced that a few studious teenagers from Van had formed a society called “Obtaining Education” (*Usumnashah*): their mission was to buy and resell books from people. This society had a place where they would gather and discuss what they needed to do, but also work on school subjects and transmit their knowledge to each other.[214] These reading rooms and libraries may have served a limited number of people, but their appearance in the middle of the nineteenth century indicates an important shift in the economy of print. There was an increased demand for reading and a growing number of readers.

The patronage of associations for education and enlightenment was not limited to one’s local community, but had as its vision the broader Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire. Such consciousness materialized as associations provided new ways of forging ties among geographically dispersed ethnic kin in the second half of the nineteenth century. Clearly, there was a sense that Armenians of different locales had to help one another. Indeed, the announcements of such initiatives in the media always received praise. With the emergence of print, Armenian laymen and ecclesiastics began sharing reading materials across vast distances, shaping new kinship ties through a readership of shared printed texts.

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[211] Trabzon was a Black Sea port town in the northeast of the Ottoman Empire.
[212] The name “Khorenean” used in the name of the society, referred to Movses Khorenats‘i, one of the earliest chroniclers of an Armenian genealogical history that Armenians of the nineteenth century considered to be a fifth century authors. Pontos is a Greek toponym for the region of Trabzon, which indicates a deep sense of the Byzantine past of these lands among contemporaries.
[213] *Artsuik Tarōnoy,* issue 34 (January 15, 1865).
[214] *Artsuik Tarōnoy,* issue 43 (June 1, 1865).

We may ask: what percentage of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire was able to read and write in the mid-nineteenth century? Statistics on literacy rates in the nineteenth century are a contested subject among Ottoman historians.[215] Most agree, however, that literacy rates were on the rise.[216] These changes have to be understood in the context of expanding education and the simplification of writing that "affected most of the major languages of the empire…at the level of presentation (punctuation), syntax (shorter phrases and vocabulary)."[217] Van, as will be discussed in the next chapter, experienced a significant expansion of education.

Literacy is a complicated phenomenon. A French historian of the Ottoman Empire, François Georgeon, notes that not knowing the alphabet at this time did not exclude one completely from the reading and writing world, as one could have access to these spheres through mediators.[218] Reading was often a collective process. Those, who knew how to read, such as the imam, local teachers, and Armenian ecclesiastics, would read newspapers out loud. Reading a newspaper collectively occurred in the home, and in the new spaces of reading rooms. It also took place in coffeehouses and the marketplace.[219] As Ayalon writes about Arabic print culture:

> "More than just transmitting content and messages, group reading … allowed listeners to ascertain that the text and its practical significance were fully understood, something that was not always obvious in individual reading; and it facilitated the exchange of thoughts and sharing of sentiments about the read material with other members of the crowd."[220]

Listeners were not passive actors in the process of transmission of knowledge.

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[215] François Georgeon, "Lire et écrire à la fin de l'Empire ottoman : quelques remarques introductives," *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 75-76 (1995): 171-172.
[216] Benjamin Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 21.
[217] Georgeon, "Lire et écrire," 171.
[218] Ibid.
[219] For more on reading in public and the public spaces of reading in the Ottoman Empire see Chapter 7 in Ami Ayalon, *The Arabic Print Revolution.*
[220] Ayalon, *The Arabic Print Revolution,* 187.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, coffeehouses had become a vital place of interaction and conversation among men. Coffeehouses existed not just in the city of Van but in villages as well. In 1855, a letter sent from Van to *Masis* in Istanbul mentioned of a coffee-house in Van where a letter was read out loud by a messenger.[221] In another case in 1879, for example, a Protestant missionary reported that the villagers of Avants‘ (İskele) had told the pasha of Van that they did not want missionaries "to preach in their streets and coffee-shop…"[222] By the late 1870s and early 1880s many coffeehouses had opened, to the point that Tevkants‘ complained that not only did men of all ages go to these places to drink, but they also gambled. According to Bishop Tevkants‘ coffeehouses were bad examples for society.[223] Perhaps because of such negative attitudes towards the coffeehouses, these places of sociability rarely appear in my sources. Yet, we know from studies on coffeehouses in Istanbul that they were "the most important site[s] of public sociability." "Coffeehouses were the primary place where people gathered to talk and exchange news, information, and opinion."[224] In the mid-nineteenth century, the culture of coffeehouses flourished. Coffeehouses transformed into public reading rooms known as "*kıraathane*"–literally a "house of reading"—which also served as cafés in the 1860s.[225] The latest issues of newspapers could be found in the *kıraathane*.[226] Coffeehouses in Van must have also served a similar function.

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[221] *Masis,* issue 186 (August 25, 1855) cited in Yaşar Tolga Cora, "Localizing Missionary Activities: Encounters Between Tondrakians, Protestants and Apostolic Armenians in Khnus in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Society, Identities and Politics,* ed. Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 110.

[222] *The Missionary Herald Tribute,* Vol. 75 (1879), 222.

[223] MM.MS.4184, 202a.

[224] Cengiz Kırlı, "Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," in *Public Islam and the Common Good,* ed. Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006), 76.

[225] Georgeon, "Lire et écrire à la fin de l'Empire ottoman," (178).

[226] Fortna, *Learning to Read*, 162.

In addition to coffeehouses, by the second half of the nineteenth century, wine-houses and *gazinos* existed in Van.[227] *Gazinos,* similar to coffeehouses were places where people could get together drink coffee and read newspapers and books.[228] A reference to a wine-house appears in a letter that Prelate Ignatios wrote to the Constantinople Patriarchate in 1863. He mentioned that "a good-looking child of the Armenian community (azg)" who was escaping harassment by an Arab servant of the *başkatib* (head clerk) Osman effendi, tried to hide in the wine-house (*ginetun*).[229] The tavern-keeper of the winery was identified as Mahtesi Abraham—an Armenian. The complaints of Prelate Ignatios demonstrates that such spaces could simultaneously serve as both private and public spaces, in that one could go to socialize with other members of the community, to share news and newspapers, but also to hide and seek protection from outsiders.

The market was yet another male space where information circulated among people of different ethnic groups and classes. Van was a significant commercial center, as its market had nearly 500 stores. Local merchants traded with Constantinople in the West and the Russian Empire and Iran in the East, particularly with the cities of Tabriz and Tbilisi. [230] Although direct evidence is scant, these trade ties indicate that information circulated not only circulated not only through Constantinople, but also through different locales in the Russian Empire and Iran. The Van market was a place where information spread and local politics mingled with trade. Consider for example, an 1858 article in *Masis* reporting that in Van the news of the death of

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[227] MM.MS.4184, 202a.

[228] For a discussion of a *gazino* in the Ottoman Greek context see Vakali, "Nationalism, Justice and Taxation."

[229] BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.0013 (Oct. 1, 1863). As an aside, the fact that the good looks of the young boy were mentioned suggests a sexual component to the harassment of the boy. This is not the only instance in my sources, when anxiety around young teenage boys and the dangers they face is expressed. The attractiveness of young boys, or girls who crossdress as boys, also appears in Raffi's novel *Khent* (The Fool). This is a separate topic that needs to be further studied.

[230] Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots'ial-tntesakan,* 214. He cites MM.MS. 6237, 347a, 348b as his source. For more information on the architecture and role of *bedesten* in Ottoman history see Mathilde Pinon-Demirçivi, "Le Grand Bazar d'Istanbul et ses environs: formes, fonctions et transformations des *han* construits entre le début du XVIIIe s. et le milieu du XIXe s.," (PhD Diss., L'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2009), 66-68.

Prelate Gabriel Shiroyean had spread at once, causing "all of the stores belonging to Armenians in the market to close."[231] Sunday sermons were another space where information was disseminated. The church courtyard of a prelacy provided a place where people would go to hear major events discussed.[232] While coffeehouses, the market place, the church and its courtyard existed before print media, their utility as spaces where information was received from newspapers and transmitted orally reconfigured these public spaces. They provided a language of politics for the literate as well as the illiterate.

The range of public spaces through which print was transmitted demonstrates the multiple ways in which print media could be consumed. As I have argued, reading was not the only way to access information. The economy of exchange in newspapers and periodicals renders the number of copies printed per issue—say, of the newspaper *Masis* or any other publication—an inadequate indicator of how many people had access to newspapers. Such practices of sharing information (and the very material objects of the texts) cultivated the desire for books and newspapers among Armenians. As we will see in the next section, references to newspapers in the communications and petitions of the era show that by the 1860s newspapers had become a vital medium through which the Armenians of Van would receive and interpret news.

Petitioning and Collective Action

As print provided new modes of interaction among Armenians of different strata and expanded notions of kinship ties, it also reshaped the older modes of communication. Petitions

[231] *Masis*, issue 323 (April 3, 1858). «Այս սգալի լուրը նոյն օրը քաղաքիս մէջ տարածուելով շուկայի բոլոր հայազգեաց կրպակները գոցվեցան..»:
[232] For example, see MM.MS.4182, 119b.

were transformed in content, but also in the manner in which they would be prepared and the audience that they would be shared with. My corpus of petitions addressed to the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate beginning in the 1840s demonstrates a remarkable increase in the number of petitions in the 1860s and 1870s.[233] While in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s petitions sent to Ējmiatsin and the Constantinople Patriarchate referred to individual matters relating to tax collection, marriage and inheritance issues, starting in the 1850s petitions began to raise demands that would affect the local community at large. By mid-century collective petitions, rather than individual petitions, prevailed. Such a change in the types of petitions has been typical when governments switch to parliamentary systems, such as in England, where "petitioning became a device that constituted and invoked the authority of public opinion as a means to lobby the parliament."[234] Thus, in addition to print, the institutional shifts towards representative governance happening in the Ottoman Empire have also to be considered in understanding the changes in the types of petitions and the increase of their number of petitions.

Indeed, collective petitioning about political matters appeared in other parts of the Ottoman Empire and among other groups of people. By focusing on the petitions of Greek-speaking Christians in Ayvalık—a region on the Aegean coast— historian Evthymios Papataxiarchis argues that during the Tanzimat era petitioning that served political concerns such as "lodging complaints against administrators, making demands for 'just' taxation, or redressing official malpractices" intensified.[235] To these we may add panegyrics of officials that were sent to the Ottoman state, the Armenian Patriarchate, or the newspapers, to praise, express gratitude

[233] Masayuki Ueno in his study of *takrirs* and petitions in the Ottoman archives also affirms such an increase of petitions. "'For the Fatherland and the State',"96.
[234] Ken Lunn and Ann Day, "Deference and Defiance: The Changing Nature of Petitioning in British Naval Dockyards," in *Petitions in Social History,* ed. by Lex Heerma van Voss (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 132-133.
[235] Papataxiarchis, "Reconfiguring the Ottoman Political Imagination," 191-192.

toward or to defend an ecclesiastic or state official's deeds, and to ensure that they stayed in power.[236] Collective petitions could be in support of a particular lay or ecclesiastic official or in opposition to them. Petitions praising a local leader would not only serve to have the voice of the locals taken into consideration in matters regarding the appointment of local leadership, but they would also serve to enhance relations between the signatories of the petition and the official whom they praised in their petition.

Armenian petitions addressed to the Patriarchate often asked that the Patriarch support the placement of a particular individual in an ecclesiastic position, or else remove them from that position. As for lay notables, petitioners would ask that a particular notable's authority be expanded, or that he be punished for unlawful acts.[237] Even as the topics of the petitions referred to the public responsibilities of government officials, the petitions themselves became a public matter. Furthermore, Papataxiarchis argues, "[p]rinting transformed the petition as a traditional instrument of communication and superseded norms of secrecy that dominated its practice."[238] That is, whereas petitions had traditionally remained to be a matter between the authorities and the petitioners, now petitions could be published in the mass media and thus turned into public discourse. Publicizing a petition would put added pressure on the authority to whom it was addressed.

The political initiatives intensified through the printing of petitions. Papataxiarchis argues that petitions "also diversified in form, particularly as they creatively merged with other genres of communicating grievances and expressing opinion, often dissenting, in the emerging spheres

[236] For example, see PMOA, MVL, 83/66 (Feb. 7, 1850).
[237] For example, see BNU.CP.23.1.076 (January 15, 1865). A petition in support of Sahak Bey Vardanean of Van, on behalf of Abbot Hovsēp' of the Narek Monastery and 25 lay notables from the region.
[238] Papataxiarchis, "Reconfiguring the Ottoman Political Imagination," 194.

of publishing and journalism, such as letters in the press."[239] Such transformations, which occurred in the Ottoman Greek-speaking context, can also be seen in Armenian-language petitions. When it came to collective petitions (*mahseragrut'iwn, hanragrut'iwn*), [240] it was no longer a matter between the Patriarchate and the petitioners, as these petitions must have been discussed, argued against and challenged in newspapers, at the National Assembly, by other petitioners, or in the streets. *Masis* occasionally published petitions sent to the Patriarchate or the Ottoman Porte. Indeed, at times we find a note on the back of a petition sent to the Patriarchate, saying "report this information to *Masis* for publication."[241] Petitioners would even write to the Patriarchate to challenge what was published in the newspapers.[242] Newspapers would challenge what was written in petitions sent to the Patriarchate. Whether in handwriting or in print, petitions became a tool with which to influence the opinion of the Patriarchate and the National Assembly, as well as the public at large.

To demonstrate one such conflict let us turn to an occurrence in 1860, when five ecclesiastics—among them celibate priests (vardapet) and priests (*k'ahanay*), including one from the village of Khas (Karakoç) and one layman named Mahtesi Tēr Galust—complained to the "representatives of the National (*Azgayin*) political council" about Vardapet Pōghos Melik'ean. At that time, Vardapet Pōghos was the *locum tenens* prelate of Van, who, according to the

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[239] Papataxiarchis, "Reconfiguring the Ottoman Political Imagination," 192.

[240] "*Mahserakan grut'iwn*" or "*Mahseragrut'iwn*" derives from the Arabic word "mahzar" (محضر) and the Armenian word "*grut'iwn*"-meaning writing. *Mahzar* in Ottoman could mean a judicial recording or a writing signed by those present. *Mahseragrut'iwn* referred to a petition on behalf of multiple people. "*Hanragrut'iwn*" derives from the word "*hanur*" (հանուր), which means "all". But, according to Achaṙean, the word also includes the meaning of place, which also makes part of the meaning of "*mahzar.*" Harch'eay Achaṙean, *Hayeren armatakan baṙaran* (Yerevani hamalsarani hratarakch'utyun, 1971*),* 42. Thus, if we were to give a common meaning to both words it would be a writing signed by all present in a place.

[241] BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.0100 (Feb. 28, 1865). This particular petition on behalf of Prelate Ignatios thanked the Patriarchate for its intervention in alleviating the pains caused to Van people by the royal armies. It further notes that the former *kaymakam* got rid of some Kurdish *derbeys* that were oppressing the local population, but that these derbeys haven't been sent far enough away. Thus he was asking the Patriarch to intervene so that these derbeys would be sent even further towards the regions of "Arabia or Europe".

[242] See BNU.CP23/1.014 (Sept. 25, 1860) against article published in *Meghu;* BNU.CP23/1.112 (May 19, 1879), a petition against an article published against Yeremia Tevkants' in *Hayrenik'.*

petitioners, for months had wandered from place to place because of the conflict between the two parties (*kusakts'ut'iwn*) among Vanets'is: the Pōghos and anti-Pōghos parties.[243] Vardapet Pōghos wanted to return to his position as prelate. The authors of this letter of announcement (*haytarar*) insisted that Pōghos should not return to Van; however, they said they did not have the right (*irawunk'*) to forbid him from returning. In a moment of helplessness, they had turned to "the national (*azgayin*) leadership" in Constantinople to ask for advice so that they could act accordingly. In this letter, they mentioned that some unknown people "giving articles to the newspapers (*ōragir*) are causing much scandal."[244] This is one of the instances where petitions and newspapers intersect, where petitioners challenged the pro-Pōghos and anti-Pōghos positions both in the press and in written petitions. Thus, through petitions and newspapers struggles ensued among competing parties to assert the narratives favorable to themselves, to shape public opinion as well as the opinion of authorities in Constantinople.

Petitioners stating what they had read or heard about from newspapers became more common beginning in the 1860s. I understand this phenomenon as an indication that the press expanded the practice of petitioning, as complaints against newspapers became the subject of their petitions. If a newspaper tarnished the public image of a bishop, for instance, or wrongfully praised a bishop, petitioners would write a complaint to the Patriarchate and the National Assembly against the newspaper and in turn smear the reputation of the given newspaper's editor. Conversely, newspapers would write against a wrongful and untrustworthy petition sent

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[243] While the modern equivalent of "political party" is used in the Armenian text, it simply aims to signify two sides of a conflict. Still, I believe, the use of the word "*kusakts'ut'iwn*" signifies a sense of a more complex organization of a group than simply "side." Richard Antaramian discusses the conflict surrounding Vardapet Pōghos Melik'ean in great detail in Chapter 4 (see particularly pages 131 to 140) and 5 of his dissertation "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State." Also see Poghosyan, *Vapspurakani Patmut'iwnits',* 157-164.

[244] BNU.CP23/1.012 (May 12, 1860). The other signatories of this letter included Vardapet Hovhannes Set'ean, Priest Hovhannēs P'ap'azean, Priest Georg of Khas village, Vardapet Sahak, Priest Grigor Achemean of Surb Yerrordut'iwn Church. For other instances of references to newspapers in petitions see BNU.CP12/1.052 (Oct. 17, 1866); BNU.CP12/1.051 (Oct. 10, 1866).

to the Patriarchate or the Sublime Porte. In other instances, a newspaper would challenge the petitions published in another newspaper. For instance, in 1863 *Meghu*, complained against *Masis*, noting that the newspaper omitted information about the signatories of the letters they published. Such information was omitted in *Masis*. The absence of a name raised doubts about the authenticity of the letters, which often took the form of a petition. Ironically, the author of the article in *Meghu* also chose to remain anonymous, instead signing with the phrase: "a freethinking (*azatamit*) Armenian."[245]

Struggles over religious and lay administrative positions, all part of the hierarchy of the Ottoman state administration, were subjects of collective petitions. Historian Ben-Bassat discusses such practices from Gaza in Palestine during the Hamidian period (1876-1908), writing that "… given the nature of the content of these petitions that applied to groups of individuals, their organization necessitated an intensive level of campaigning and convincing to obtain signatures."[246] The collective petitions of Vanets'is discussed in this dissertation are similar to the Ottoman petitions directed to the Ottoman state in Istanbul from Gaza. In the Armenian case, we have references that show how the signatures were collected. An article, in the biweekly *Artsuik Tarōnoy* spoke of the misuse of seals, claiming that somebody who wants to send out a collective petition "invites those who have seals," gets them drunk, then asks them to sign a petition. These individuals, the author complained, would sign the petitions without even asking about their content. Others would just sign a petition because they would see the seals of their friends and relatives, and others signed out of fear, or because they had been bribed to sign. Sometimes the authors of the petitions carved out fake seals and used them, with the names of

[245] *Meghu*, issue 211 (Aug. 6, 1863).
[246] See Yuval Ben-Bassat, "Mass petitions as a way to evaluate 'public opinion' in the late nineteenth-century Ottoman empire? The case of internal strife among Gaza's elite," *Turkish Historical Review* 4 (2013): 138, 142.

other individuals, or they used the seals of people who had passed away.[247] Although, this newspaper article intended to undermine the credibility of collective petitions and to point out the manipulation that went along with the campaigns to gain support for them, it also reveals the efforts to bring people together in collective action.[248]

Consider for example, a petition published in *Artsuik Tarōnoy* addressed to the Patriarch and the National administration in Constantinople. The petition's format matches the handwritten petitions I have encountered. It begins with a traditional greeting line which mentions the titles of the addressee along with honorifics. The particular complaint and request of the petition appears towards the end of the petition, as was typical in handwritten petitions. The petitioners were complaining against a collective petition sent on behalf of Mshets'is to the Sublime Porte. They claimed that those who sent the petition to the Sublime Porte had used fake seals and had forced people to sign the petition. Apart from a general line describing the petitioners as "the society of the suffering village heads and commoners (*hamba*)," no names are mentioned in the print petition. This print petition focused on the overall condition of Tarōn, on their affection for their patria and on how Armenians were leaving their ancestral lands. The petition made a number of references to Armenian history. While handwritten petitions also discussed or mentioned the topic of history, this petition deploys history more thoroughly and ardently than any I have found

[247] *Artsuik Tarōnoy,* issue 27 (Oct. 1, 1864).

[248] For 17th-century England David Zaret writes that, "Popular interest in petitions was not limited to persons who were able to read them. Petitions were read aloud and discussed in the same public places where oral, scribal, and printed news circulated, in churches, inns, and taverns, often in conjunction with efforts to obtain signatures or marks. The assembling of parishioners on Sundays was a resource for these efforts, as was the parochial authority of clerics. All sides sought to enlist the pulpit to marshal support for petitions and thereby to persuade parishioners to sign petitions or assent to inclusion of their names in lists of supporters." *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and The Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 226. Although the direct evidence that exists for England is not as readily available for the Ottoman-Armenian case, the very availability of the public spaces that appear in Zaret's description lead me to think that his description would also be applicable to petitioning practices in both Van and Istanbul.

in a handwritten petition.[249] It mentions Shah Abbas I (d. 1629), a seventeenth-century ruler of Safavid Iran as an example of an oppressive ruler, and draws on heroic figures from Armenian history, such as Vardan Mamikonean, a fourth-century Armenian who fought against the Persians.

Deploying a passionate language of patria, the print petition mentions historical figures, blurring the genre of petition with the historical writings of the editor of *Artsuik Tarōnoy*, Garegin Sruandzteants‘. It is most likely not a petition that was actually sent to the Patriarchate, but rather the work of the editor Sruandzteants‘, who chose to use the genre of the petition because, at the time, it was the form of writing that most directly expressed the powerful voice of the local. The petitioners directly asked the Patriarchate to "bring our voice to the attention of the Royalty, to the Court of Justice"—in other words to the Sublime Porte and the Ottoman Sultan.[250] With the publication of this petition, Sruandzteants‘ not only aimed to get the attention of the Patriarchate and the Sublime Porte, but the wider readership of his periodical. He aimed to shape public opinion about the condition of the Armenian inhabitants of Mush. This in turn rendered the problems of the Mshets‘is a wider public issue, capable of persuading the readers to help Mshets‘is and instilling in them empathy for their Mshets‘i brethren. Print transformed the petition into a medium through which individual authors could shape public opinion.

Beyond the ability to imagine national communities of which Benedict Anderson has spoken, the Armenian press provided a medium for active political engagement by members of different social strata. Armenians of the Ottoman East not only had to re-imagine their local milieu, but they had to reconfigure their self-image within a wider community of reading publics-in-the-making. Self-representation no longer had to consider only one's local

[249] *Artsuik Tarōnoy,* issue 2 (April 15, 1863) and issue 3 (May 1, 1863).
[250] *Artsuik Tarōnoy,* issue 2 (April 15, 1863), 7.

community, or only the authority to which a petition was addressed. With the appearance of one's name in the newspaper writers had to craft their words and themselves in ways that would appeal to a broad audience of Armenians, thus connecting them with other Armenians in far-flung places.

Patria and the Metropole: Shifting Sites of Power

As we have seen print produced novel ways through which Van Armenians could make their voices heard in Constantinople and expand their connections empire-wide and beyond. While print provided new avenues of empowerment for Vanets'is, it also served to highlight and expand inequalities that existed between the province and the metropole through the language of colonialism. Print shifted the sites of the production of writing from monasteries to printing presses, which in the nineteenth century were largely located in cities like Istanbul and Izmir. It also allowed the narratives of those who had greater access to print media to gain greater prominence in the public domain and to shape future historical narratives on this period.

Print provided space for patrons of publications to be exposed to a wider public. Ottoman Armenians commissioned the publication of books. A well-known amira from Constantinople, Harut'iwn Pēzchean (1774-1834), for instance, sponsored the publication of both a Persian-Armenian dictionary and an Armenian dictionary (*Haykaznean ĕndardzak baṙaran*).[251] Mrs. Yeranuhi of Karin (Erzurum), who was the wife of Mahtesi Manuk Agha from the prominent Astuatsaturean or Allahverdian family, had moved to Constantinople from Karin in the 1790s and she sponsored a new edition of Inchichean's geography of Armenia.[252] The book was

[251] Step'an Perch Pōghos-P'ap'azeants', *Dasagirk' Azgayin Patmut'ean* (Constantinople: Y. Miwhēndtisean, 1862), 160.
[252] For more on the Astuatsaturean family see Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin," Chapter 1, particularly pages 110-114.

published in 1835 in Venice.[253] The practice of sponsoring textual production was not new, as wealthy Armenians had in the past often commissioned handwritten manuscripts. But sponsoring a book meant that one's name would appear and be honored on the first page or the second page of the book. It also meant that recognition of the patron could appear in newspapers that advertised the particular book. Unlike a handwritten manuscript, a book would be produced in the hundreds. With the coming of print, I argue that the individual's name became visible to and known by a larger readership, and therefore providing the patron with greater recognition in an expanding community of readers. With the emergence of periodicals, people of lesser means could become financial contributors to periodicals and have their names appear in a list of sponsors, as was the case with *Artsui Vaspurakan,* which published the names of donors and praised them.[254] Now, as patrons of periodicals, Ottoman Armenians of different financial means could contribute to the production of the written word. Furthermore, with the appearance of the periodicals and newspapers the patron's name could cross socioeconomic lines as well as geographic boundaries.

While the colophon of manuscripts appeared at the end of the text, in print books of the nineteenth century it would appear on the front page.[255] A manuscript colophon would usually start with a phrase expressing glory to the Holy Trinity. Such a phrase was absent from the front pages of books. While in a manuscript colophon the name of the author of the manuscript would appear last and would be accompanied by a deprecatory adjective, in print books the author's

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[253] Ghukas Vardapet Inchichean, *Hnakhosut'iwn Ashkharhagrakan Hayastaneats' Ashkharhi,* Vol. 1 (Venetik: Surb Ghazar, 1835).
[254] For a unique work on the continuities between manuscript and print production as well as the socioeconomics of the establishment of printing houses see Schwartz, "The Political Economy of Private Printing in Cairo."
[255] I thank Michael Pifer for turning my attention to colophons.

name would appear soon after the title of the work, before the name of the patron.[256] Furthermore, epithets of praise rather than deprecation would accompany the author's name in a book. Such lines represent "the modern celebration of human agency as the creative force in the world."[257] Changes in the perceptions of human agency point to a turn to secularity, whereby it was more important to credit the work of the author than to praise God, and whether or not the author was a layman or an ecclesiastic, it was no longer necessary for the author to express his or her humility before God.

While the production of handwritten manuscripts continued in various Armenian monasteries throughout the Ottoman Empire, including in the Lim Monastery of Van, the shift to print would create a change in sites of power. Those who did not have access to the technology of print, such as the monasteries of the eastern Ottoman provinces, centers of handwritten manuscripts, entered into competition with centers of publication. The establishment of printing presses required financial capital as well as connections to the Ottoman state, which issued permission for the establishment of presses as well as publications. Publishers needed to forge close ties with rich notables who were willing to finance their publication house and who could draw on their ties with the Sublime Porte to obtain permission for it. The further one was from Constantinople, the more difficult it was to get permission for presses. Thus, while print provided greater exposure for some, it also underlined and enhanced inequalities between the metropole and the provinces. Shifting the roles of monasteries as producers of writing and knowledge reoriented the commissioning of manuscripts to the production of print material largely centered in Istanbul, Venice, Izmir and Tbilisi. Such aspects of the weakening of

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[256] For details on the content of Armenian colophons see Avedis K. Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301-1480: A Source for Middle Eastern History* (Cambridge University Press: Harvard University Press, 1969), 7-9.
[257] Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age,* 203.

monasteries have to be considered alongside the administrative and juridical reforms initiated in Istanbul that intended to weaken the role of monasteries vis-à-vis the prelacies, in order to bring them under the direct control of the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate.[258]

Obstacles to publishing in the provinces existed even for those who had established close ties with Istanbul. For example, in 1857 the Constantinople Patriarch sent a *takrir* to the Sublime Porte on behalf of Mkrtich‘ Khrimian. A *takrir* was a petition submitted to the Ottoman Porte by the Armenian National Assembly and Patriarch on behalf of petitions they received from Armenians throughout the empire. Every time Khrimian wanted to publish a new book with his printer at the Varag Monastery—two hours southeast of the city of Van—he had to get permission from the local official (*vali*) in the city of Van, who in turn had to get permission from Constantinople to allow the publication of a book. This was a long, drawn-out process. Therefore, in the *takrir* the Patriarch asked the Porte to send an order to the Ottoman official in Van to accelerate the processes of publishing books.[259] Of the ten books for which Khrimian asked permission, only *Artsiw* was produced between 1858 and 1863, as the periodical *Artsui Vaspurakan*. In the early 1860s and early 1870s, a number of books were published in the same printing press, on topics of religion and Armenian history.[260] The difficulties in acquiring

[258] Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 60-64.
[259] PMOA, HR.MKT, 218/27 (December 12, 1857). The Patriarch noted that these petitions were for the education of the Armenian *millet*'s children residing in Van ("*Van'da mütemekin Ermeni millet etfalının tehsil-i ulum*"). The books that were to be published included the gospel, a psalm book, a grammar book (*k'eṙakan*, an alphabet/spelling book (*hegaran*), a liturgy book, a book of hymns (*sharakan*), a book of Narekats'is, a book of liturgy (*zhamgirk'*), a book of church ceremony (*mashtots'*) and *Artsiw*, which supposedly referred to the periodical that Khrimian later started to publish. Interestingly, the majority of the names of the books were given in Armenian in the Ottoman document.
[260] The books include Manuēl Artametean, *Voghberg t'aterakan: gaght'akanut'iwn i Vaspurakanē Senek'erimay ark'ayin Artsunwoy* (Varag: Artsiw Vaspurakan, 1860); Tigran Amirjanean, *Voghbergut'iwn T. Matt'ēosi vehapaṙ katoghikosi Amenayn Hayots'* (Varag: Artswoyn Vaspurakani, 1862); Mkrtich' Khrimean, *Dzayn barbaṙoy hanapati: Handēs jgnaworakan Mkrtch'in Hisusi Metsin I tsnundĕs kanants' srboyn Havhannu haraj ĕntats' Karapetin tnōrenut'ean vordioyn Astutsoy* (Varag: Vaspurakan Artswoyn, 1862); *Nkaragir varuts' Srboyn Hovhannu Mkrtch'in K'ristosi: Tapar aṙ armin tsaṙots' dni* (Varag: Vaspurakan Artsvoyn, 1862); *Hayreneats' Yerger* (Varag: Tparan Vaspurakan Artsuoyn, 1865); Tigran Amirjanean, *Mrmunjk'* (Varag, Van: Tparan

permission to print shed light on why only two Armenian printing presses were established in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century.

The periodicals produced in the eastern provinces in mid-century were *Artsui Vaspurakan* and *Artsuik Tarōnoy.*[261] *Artsui Vaspurakan* (Eagle of Vaspurakan, 1855-1874 with intermittences) was first published in Constantinople in 1855 and then moved to the Monastery of Varag, where Khrimian resumed publication for a few years from 1858 onward. According to one source, in its initial year of publication Khrimian produced 500 copies of each issue.[262] This monthly periodical was distributed throughout the Ottoman Empire as well as to Armenian communities in Qajar Iran and the Russian Empire. *Artsui Vaspurakan* rarely focused on news, but was rather oriented towards representing the various geographic parts of Armenia to its dispersed readers, to attract their attention towards the patria.[263] *Artsuik Tarōnoy* (Little Eagle of Tarōn, 1863-1865) on the other hand, focused on news. When Khrimian was appointed the prelate of Mush in 1862, he took his student Garegin Sruandzteants' to help him establish this four-page biweekly that strayed away from *Artsui Vaspurakan's* geographic emphasis. Unlike *Artsui Vaspurakan, Artsuik Tarōnoy* was fully produced in vernacular Armenian and did not provide lengthy accounts of history, philology and religion.

Vaspurakan Artswoyn, 1873); Tigran Amirjanean, *Useal Pandukht* (Varag, Van: Artsui Vaspurakan, 1873); *K'erkanut'iwn diwr usanelwoy: i pēts varzharanats'* (Van, Varag: Tparan Vaspurakan Artswoyn, 1865).

[261] *Artsuik Tarōnoy* was published in the province of Mush between 1863 and 1865 and *Artsui Vapurakan* was published between 1855 and 1864, first in Istanbul, and later from 1858 on mostly in the Monastery of Varag in the province of Van. Both of the periodicals have Armenian geographical names of the region Vaspurakan, indicating the eastern region of Lake Van and *Tarōn,* the Western region of the lake. *Artsuik Tarōnoy* and *Artsui Vaspurakan* included toponyms based on former Armenian kingdoms. *Tarōn* is a region northwest of Lake Van, while Vaspurakan is to the east of the lake. The titles of the periodicals also included the word eagle, which is what Khrimian called himself—his disciple was therefore the Little Eagle. The eagle was possibly adopted from the symbols of Western powers, Russia and Austria. The eagle, however, also symbolizes freedom, as it is a bird that moves freely.

[262] Hayk Achemean, *Hayots' Hayrik*, 269.

[263] For more on the content of *Artsui Vaspurakan* see Dzovinar Derderian, "Mapping the Fatherland: *Artzvi Vaspurakan's* Reforms Through the Memory of the Past," in Vahé Tachdjian, ed. *Houshamadyan, Ottoman Armenians: Life, Culture, Society,* vol. 1 (Berlin: Houshamadyan, 2014), 144-169.

Newspapers were a vehicle for the Sublime Porte and the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate to communicate with church and state officials, as well as with their subjects throughout the empire. Between 1832 and 1850, the *Takvim-i Vekayi* (Calendar of Facts, 1831-1876), the official newspaper of the Ottoman state, was translated and published under the title of *Lroy Gir* (Letter/Writing of the News) and later *Haytarar Lroy Metsi Tērut'eann Osmanean* (Announcer of News of the Great Ottoman Dominion) printing 500 copies per issue. These publications were sent out to the different Armenian prelacies and to Ottoman governors throughout the empire for free.[264]

Although the Armenian version of *Takvim-i Vekayi* was short-lived, the practice of disseminating official Ottoman decrees and laws through newspapers continued, particularly in the newspaper *Masis*. *Masis* was the main Armenian language newspaper, named after Mount Ararat's highest peak; it was published in Constantinople from 1852 to 1908.[265] *Masis* often published decrees, regulations and announcements released by the Sublime Porte, either in Armeno-Turkish transcription or in Armenian translation.[266] *Masis* would also publish the decisions and announcements of the Patriarchate, the National Supreme Council and later the National Assembly.[267] In 1865, the periodical *Pegasean T'ṙch'nik* (The Pegasean Little Bird) reported that for over a decade the public had perceived *Masis* as the official newspaper of the "Nation" (Azg, meaning of the Patriarchate and the National Assembly), but it turned out that

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[264] T'ēodik, *Tip u Taṙ*, 69. Both the Armenian and Ottoman-language periodicals were printed in the publishing house belonging to a certain Armenian family with the last name of Arapean. The Ottoman state sponsored and financed the Arapean press.

[265] *Masis* was founded by Karapet Utujean (1823-1904), who was educated in Paris and served as the editor of *Masis* for more than three decades. Vartan Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1863: A Study of its Historical Development* (Istanbul, 1988), 72.

[266] For examples see *Masis,* issue 163 (March 10, 1855); issue 671 (December 19, 1864) that published the articles of the Ottoman law on journalism in Armenian.

[267] For examples see *Masis,* issue 181 (July 14, 1855); issue 183 (July 28, 1855); issue 400 (September 24, 1859). Often announcements from the Patriarchate were entitled "Official Announcement." See *Masis,* issue 572 (Jan. 26, 1863); issue 601 (August 17, 1863); issue 659 (September 26, 1864).

this was not the case. In a chastising voice, the editor of *Pegasean T'ṙch'nik* reported that the editors of *Masis* had sent a petition to the Patriarch and asked for their newspaper to be recognized and treated as the official organ of the Patriarchate.[268] Clearly, there was competition among the newspapers, and *Masis* wanted to be recognized as the organ of the Armenian Patriarchate in order to emphasize its legitimacy over other periodicals. It is worth mentioning, however, that the editor of *Masis,* Karapet Iwt'iwchean (1823-1904), was a member of the Constitution Committee in 1859 that was to work on revising the working draft of the Armenian National Constitution. Even if unofficially so, the Patriarchate's ties with *Masis* were strong.[269]

That newspapers published official announcements, however, meant that communicating state decisions was no longer solely mediated through the local prelate or the local Ottoman official, who would announce official communication received from Constantinople during a sermon or in public spaces. For example, in 1863 Prelate Ignatios of Van discovered that the Armenian National Constitution had been promulgated through the newspaper *Masis*. Rather than official communications, newspapers had become an expedient medium for an official like a prelate to receive news.[270] Newspapers, in some cases, trumped official communication through letters when it came to enhancing the circulation of information. Information from faraway lands could now reach the subjects of the empire as soon as it reached local officials like the bishop. Such a shift diminished the roles of individuals who had been tasked with announcing news in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, as in the Ottoman Arab world, where Ayalon notes, "Newspapers came to compete with the official *munadı* [the town or village announcer] and the

[268] *Pegasean T'ṙch'nik,* issue 31 (March 31, 1865), 243-244.
[269] Y.G. Çark, *Türk Hizmetinde Ermeniler* (İstanbul: Yeni Matbaa, 1995), 199 cited by Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 32.
[270] BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.0022 (Dec. 8, 1863).

pulpit and in some ways even replaced them."[271] We can assume that the diffusion of ownership over channels transmitting information transformed the power dynamics, both locally and administratively, breaking the monopoly over the circulation of and access to official news. Furthermore, newspapers allowed the Patriarchate and the Sublime Porte to communicate directly with their subjects, subverting the role of intermediaries. The newspaper reduced the authority of local ecclesiastic and state officials, who previously had a monopoly over the traffic of information, benefiting from first-hand access to news. Print became a site through which the authorities in Istanbul came in direct communication with local inhabitants of Van.

Recipients in the provinces, on the other hand, no longer needed to write a petition to the Patriarchate to complain against a local bishop or a local leader. Instead, they could now send a letter, perhaps in the form of a petition, to a newspaper and make their complaints known not only to officials in Istanbul, but to a wider public. Often petitions from Van were authored by the prelate on behalf of the petitioner. This suggests that the easiest and perhaps the most effective way to send a petition to the Patriarchate was through the influential figure of the prelate. Abbots of monasteries too served a similar role. This does not, however, mean that there were no other ways in which Vanets'is could petition from Van; newspapers were the medium for local Vanets'is to bypass the prelate and make their complaints known to a new "public." Moreover, access to information provided a means for those in the provinces to share their local news and views with the rest of the empire. From the late 1850s to the early 1860s, *Masis* published news coming from the Armenian communities in the provinces. Different newspapers that emerged in the Ottoman capital began to serve different interest groups in the provinces. Rival newspapers published competing narratives about local conflicts, such as the ones regarding the Catholicos of Aght'amar and the Prelate of Van. As I discussed in the introduction, between the 1840s and

[271] Ayalon, *The Arabic Print Revolution,* 196, 187.

1870s conflicts arose regarding these positions, and struggles as to which bishop had the right to occupy either of these positions surfaced in newspapers on a regular basis.

Different newspapers and periodicals competed with one another, challenging each other's politics of representing voices from the patria. One such periodical was *Meghu* (The Bee, 1856-1874), which published twice a week and edited by Harut'iwn Svachean (1831-1874) and after 1872 by Hakob Paronean (1843-1891), a well-known Armenian satirist of the nineteenth century.[272] *Meghu* was a sharply anti-ecclesiastic publication and critical of various Armenian power-holding institutions. Yet, *Meghu*, had rather close ties with Khrimian and Sruandzteants', two ecclesiastics from Van who had close ties with the Patriarchate and occupied important ecclesiastic positions. The works and letters of these two clergymen would be published and praised in the periodical. We know that *Meghu* reached Van.[273] The competition between newspapers was not just about being able to sell more copies, but being able to assert the political line that one editor or author supported versus another—just like a set of petitioners supporting one bishop over another. Newspapers followed the same logic.

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By focusing on the circulation of print and petitions and the way Van Armenians used these technologies of communication, I have highlighted the role of Van Armenians as producers and contributors, rather than just receivers and consumers of ideas and policies. I have argued in this chapter that print media and petitions are fragments pointing to the movement and flow of information that transformed not only forms of communication, but forged new Armenian

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[272] Kevork Bardakjian, "Hagop Baronian's Political and Social Satire," (DPhil Thesis, St. Anothony's College, Oxford, 1978), 12-13.
[273] For example, a letter from Abbot T'ōp'uzean of the Lim Monastery in 1860 mentions the newspaper *Meghu* and discusses the information he has read in it, which indicates that *Meghu* also reached Van. BNU, CP23/1.014 (Sept. 25, 1860).

subjects in Ottoman Van. The circulation of print reconfigured kinship ties and relations of power not only across the empire, but also within Van.

Print was the very media through which new content was published—moving away from theological to lay literature—and through which a vernacularized written language was produced giving a wider public access to the written word. The ability to receive information through print in turn destabilized relations of power. Knowledge of religion and history, together with local and imperial news, had previously been transmitted through ecclesiastic, state and lay authority figures in the local communities. With print the mediation of these figures of authority was no longer needed.

Besides receiving information, newspapers and periodicals provided novel means to express one's voice within the Ottoman Armenian community. The press transformed older forms of communication, like petitions, as they began to change in form and content. Whereas formerly petitions had related to individual matters, now petitions dealt with matters regarding the community in general, and matters of ecclesiastic leadership. In other words, individuals began to articulate their interests in the name of their community and for the common good. Print turned petitioning into a public affair as through the press a greater number of people found out about the matters about which petitions were submitted, and thus engaged more people in the discussion of political issues. Such practices, facilitated by print, allowed Armenians empire-wide to become connected globally. The media of print opened avenues to reimagine and reconfigure kinship ties through material and cultural exchange.

Yet, I argue that while print allowed for the dissemination of information and increased the number of people engaged in public communications and debates, it also provided a platform for making visible the names and highlighting the narratives of patrons of print technology.

These patrons of print culture played a decisive role in shaping the representation of the patria, a theme to which I return in the subsequent chapters. To demonstrate the processes through which print transformed sites of power, I will focus on a few nineteenth-century clergymen from Van (Hakob T‘ōp‘uzean, Mkrtich‘ Khrimian, Yeremia Tevkants‘ and Garegin Sruandzteants‘). We will explore how Khrimian’s and Sruandzteants‘’s access to print came to determine the role they occupied in Armenian historiography, while T‘ōp‘uzean and Tevkants‘ were marginalized.

The appearance and wide circulation of print, I argue in the next three chapters contributed to transformations in the sphere of education, in the language of love and kinship, as well as in the emerging representative politics. Changes in these spheres can be tied closely to processes of nationalization, democratization and secularization: the features of a modernizing society. As printed books became available to a larger public, learning reading and writing conferred greater social and financial capital, which was the impetus behind the opening of schools, as we will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Expanding Education and Competing for Schools (1820s-1870s)

In the nineteenth century, a plethora of authors in Armenian newspapers, periodicals and books insisted that education would bring progress (*aṙajadimut'iwn*). A long list of conditions detailed the meaning of progress, from love of nation and patria, to love of study (*usumnasirut'iwn*), to the ability to communicate with the state and knowledge of the laws of the Ottoman Empire. Along with progress, it was argued, education was to bring Armenians freedom—yet it was rarely articulated what freedom was to be gained. Discursively education came to play the role of Christ as the Redeemer, which points to a process of secularization that was taking shape. With the appearance of print texts, a larger number of people were learning how to read and write, either through books at home or through small classes. By mid-century the efforts to expand education became more systematic.

In this chapter I show that education in Van was not a direct result of reform policies by the Ottoman state, the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate or the efforts of the missionaries. Rather, I see the early nineteenth-century efforts of Vanets'is to expand education in their city as a sign of a rising demand for education. By mid-century, conflicts surrounding the management and finances of schools ensued. In the context of these conflicts individuals in opposing political camps accused each other in print media and handwritten petitions of being against education and enlightenment. These accusations in turn portrayed the provinces, including Van, as places where people of different ranks, from bishops to villagers did not deem education important. Furthermore, clergymen like Khrimian and Sruandzteansts', who needed to raise money and gain the support of Ottoman state officials as well as the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate, further complained in print media of the resistance to education in places like Van, of the lack of

local initiatives and the ignorance of the local population. Such discourse was meant to magnify the urgency of expanding education in the provinces, but it also served to extend the language of colonialism that put start differences between the metropole and the eastern provinces.

I argue that in Van schools became sites of conflict between the 1850s and 1860s, not because of opposition to education, but because schools represented a source of finances and social capital within the local Armenian Apostolic community.[274] Although different parties accused each other of being against education, by analyzing three different conflicts around the establishment of schools, I show that the quarrels centered on control over the finances and administration of the schools, as well as the disputants' desire to be recognized as the initiators of advancement in education, which was tied to ideas of progress. These conflicts demonstrate that both ecclesiastics and laymen struggled to acquire the means to expand education, in rural and urban centers. Yet in print media, discourses about the provinces undermined the educational activities taking place in Van, therefore also Ottoman Armenia, by portraying it as a place of ignorance and stagnation. Such discourses have shaped our understandings of education in the Ottoman provinces. Going against the grain of these discourses, I show how fragmented information from print media, petitions and memoirs provides us with tools to detect patterns regarding education in Van that may not be obvious when relying exclusively on central archives (i.e., the Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives and the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate archive in the Nubar Library). These fragments show that the will to expand education in Van existed before the Tanzimat, and thus the beginnings of the expansion of education cannot be directly tied to a singular Ottoman Armenian reform movement originating in Constantinople, as has been argued by historians.

[274] Focusing on notables in Erzurum, Tolga Cora, too, has argued that in the second half of the 19th century education provided a site of symbolic capital for Armenian notables. Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin," 312-317, 355.

In the cases of both Ottoman and Ottoman Armenian education, scholars have focused on the expansion of education from Istanbul to the provinces and on the policies of the Ottoman state and the Patriarchate in Constantinople.[275] In this chapter I instead argue that expectations tied to education and the efforts to expand education emerged simultaneously in Van and Constantinople. By delineating the synchronicity with which efforts to build the foundations of a new education manifested themselves in Van and Istanbul, I argue that this expectation of education existed among a socioeconomically and geographically diverse group of Ottoman Armenians. I therefore push back against the notion that efforts to expand education spread from Istanbul to the provinces. That fewer schools existed in the provinces should be linked to the unequal access to financial and administrative resources, rather than a resistance towards education.

Scholars have argued that the expansion of education in the Ottoman Empire was a secularizing project, by which they mean to indicate a split between civic and religious institutions, change in curricula as well as the end of the role of religious figures as educators.[276] Benjamin Fortna notes that in the field of Ottoman Studies, "One of the most tenacious views is

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[275] For examples see Pamela J. Young, "Knowledge, Nation, and the Curriculum: Ottoman Armenian education, 1853-1915," (PhD Diss., University of Michigan, 2001); Selçuk Akşın Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in The Ottoman Empire: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline, 1839-1908* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2001), Emine Evered, *Empire and Education under the Ottomans: Politics, Reforms and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012); Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

[276] To point out that the expansion of education was a secularizing project in the Armenian case, scholars have often pointed to the administrative transformations taking place within the Armenian millet. Roderic Davison in his still often-cited work titled *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, has argued that the role of the church and clergy significantly decreased as a result of the administrative reorganization of the Armenian millet. But his conclusions are based on the Armenian National Constitution and the regulations attached to it. See Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire (1856-1876)* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1963), 124-125; Göçek, drawing on the works of Libaridian, Artinian and Etmekjian, focuses on the processes whereby the governing body of the Armenian community opened to include laymen in conjunction to ecclesiastics. Based on these transformations she has argued that strict lines were drawn between "secular education" and "religious education" and that increasing emphasis on the former eventually weakened the role of the church. Fatma Müge Göçek, "The Decline of the Ottoman Empire and the Emergence of Greek, Armenian, Turkish and Arab Nationalisms," 41-42.

the notion that the schools were agents of a seemingly inevitable process of secularization."[277] Fortna, two decades ago, rightly argued against this view in his study of Ottoman school curricula and the engagement of the *ulema* in the expansion of education during the Hamidian era. Yet, whether the argument is for the secularizing role of schools or against it, scholars continue to perceive the term "secular" in the strict sense of a separation between religious and non-religious. Through the Armenian case I argue against the utility of defining the secular as strictly separate from religion. In the nineteenth century, church and religion remained intimately entangled in the spread of education, and religion remained a central part of the school curricula.[278] Yet the very power that petitioners and literati discursively bestowed upon education is what rendered the transformation, ultimately, secular. Ecclesiastics and laymen, Armenians and Muslims, began to insist that education could give ordinary people the ability to change their economic and moral conditions. In this moment of secularity, the individual was increasingly conceived of as being at the mercy of his or her own ability to effect change.

Love of Study (1820s-1850s)

In the early nineteenth century the desire to obtain education became a prominent social phenomenon in the Ottoman Empire. Print media played a significant role in propagating the importance of education. More readers would signify greater profit. The editors of periodicals and newspapers portrayed their publications as tools of education and emphasized the importance of education for the well-being of the nation. For anyone who had the means to buy books, newspapers and periodicals, or borrow reading material, print must in itself have made

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[277] Benjamin C. Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular' Schools," *IJMES* 32 (2000): 369-393.

[278] An 1873 order for Armenian schools that was drawn up by the political and religious councils of the National Assembly in Istanbul listed Christian doctrine, translations of the Bible along with Armenian history and geography as the necessary subjects for primary education. For secondary education, arithmetic and geometry was also required. *Sahmanadrakan Hrahang Taghakan Khorhrdots Hamar: Vaveratseal i Kronakan ev K'aghak'akan Kharn Zhoghovoy Ketronakan Varchut'ean. (*Constantinople: Tparan O. Khojasarean: 1873).

the acquisition of literacy more urgent and appealing; and for those who wanted to sell their publications, the spread of education was vital.

Armenian newspapers and periodicals stressed the importance of education for the improvement of the Armenian nation's economy, health, religion, governance and morality. Some also emphasized that the success of the Armenian nation would contribute to the success of the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, the first issues of periodicals and newspapers often focused on education or study. The periodical *Bazmavēp,* for example, launched its publication in 1843 in Venice by praising "the love of study" and the steps that Europeans had already taken to advance knowledge for the past two hundred years. The publication saw itself as a tool for providing education, as the initial article proclaimed: "[W]e hope that our periodical (*ōragir*) will fulfill the wish of our nation-lovers (*azgasirats'*), and in a short period of time will make a great difference in the scholarly (*usumnakan*) progress of our nation."[279] The aim of the periodical was, as the author wrote:

> "to explain to our nation with a simple and entertaining style, that now in Europe to what degree and in what way different types of studies (*usmunk'*) are advancing, what new inventions have flourished artisanship…what knowledge there is on economics…and health that has been affirmed through concrete experiences."[280]

The emphasis on "a simple and entertaining style" points to *Bazmavēp's* goal of reaching a wide audience, and covering a broad range of topics. Accordingly, the biweekly included sections on natural science, economics and philology. The aims declared by *Bazmavēp* demonstrate that the editor Vardapet Gabriel Ayvazean/Ayvazovski (1812-1879)[281] of the Catholic Mkhit'arist order perceived his publication as contributing to the advancement of education among Armenians,

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[279] Ibid 6.
[280] *Bazmavēp,* issue 1 (Jan. 1, 1843), 3-6.
[281] Gabriel Ayvazean was born in the Russian Empire and subsequently studied at the Mkhit'arist seminary in Venice. He was the editor of *Bazmavēp* between 1843 and 1848. He was the brother of the world-renowned painter Hovannēs (Ivan) Ayvazovski (1817-1900).

which would in turn contribute to their economic and physical well-being (health). Imbued in a vision of secularity, human agency, rather than God, was becoming a factor in determining prosperity.

Besides health and the economy, authors considered education vital for purposes of governance, morality and religiosity. In 1852 Karapet Iwt'iwchean (1823-1904), the editor of *Masis,* a major Armenian newspaper published in Constantinople, emphasized that, "the main purpose of this newspaper is to provide moral and material help to the nation… We think that if someone is not knowledgeable and enlightened, he/she cannot appropriately serve his/her God or his/her king."[282] Education was thus important to cultivate morality and religiosity, as well as to form productive and obedient subjects of the empire. Similarly, Harut'iwn Svachean, the editor of another periodical, *Meghu*, in the first issue (1856) stated that he was writing at a time when the light of the sciences was fighting off the darkness of ignorance everywhere in the world. The sciences were educating both the minds and souls of people. He proclaimed that the aim of the periodical was to "introduce the nation to the endless benefits of the sciences (*gitut'iwn*)." [283] The periodical therefore covered topics of morality, the humanities, literary matters, economics, artisanship and trade. Whether ecclesiastics or laymen, the editors of the publications all emphasized the importance of education, not only as a tool that would fulfill people's material needs, but also their spiritual needs, which included morality, religiosity, love for nation and education (*azgasirut'iwn and usumnasirut'iwn*). Like their fellow Arab intellectuals of the *nahda,* the cultural renaissance among Arabic speaking communities of the Ottoman Empire,

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[282] *Masis,* issue 1 (February 2, 1852).
[283] *Meghu,* issue 1 (September 15, 1856).

Armenian literati too saw education "as the ideal mechanism to produce well-mannered and civilized subjects."[284]

This sense of urgency around educating and being educated was articulated in Ottoman state documents, in Ottoman and Armenian print media and in handwritten petitions from Van. Ottoman statesmen repeatedly insisted that a good economy and the economic well-being of the people depended on education. An 1839 memorandum of the "Council of Public Works" stated that "arts and sciences (*maârif ve ulûm*)" were important "sources of wealth for the people." [285] The worldly sciences, contemporaries believed, would also boost commerce, industrial production and agriculture. In contrast, the memorandum emphasized that ignorance could lead to poverty. In 1840, an Ottoman statesman, Mustafa Sami, in the newspaper *Takvim-i Vekayi* insisted that science had strengthened Europe and stated that, "No country on the continent, save Italy, has an agreeable climate or fertile soil. They have stepped forward thanks only to science and knowledge."[286] The implication was that education could allow a country to flourish despite existing financial difficulties. In 1855, the Armenian ecclesiastic from Van, Mkrtich' Khrimian, made a strikingly similar comment in *Artsui Vaspurakan*, evoking the little and unproductive soil that Europeans had, and expressing amazement at how "European nations" had been able to plant one seed, but reap thirty or sixty times more produce.[287] Both Sami and Khrimian gave significant agency to the human mind in improving agricultural production and economic conditions. Such secular arguments for the utility of education were shared across ethno-religious lines.

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[284] Orit Bashkin, "The Arab World: Thoughts on Civility and Wilderness," in *Civilizing Emotions: Concepts in Nineteenth-Century Asia and Europe*, by Margrit Pernau, Helge Jordheim, et al. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 140.
[285] Somel, *Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire*, 29-30.
[286] As quoted in Yalçınkaya, *Learned Patriots*, 49-50.
[287] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 2 (July 1855), 29.

Before state policies and print newspapers and periodicals expressed aspirations related to education, Armenian notables and ecclesiastics in Van, were already looking for avenues to expand education in their city. In Van we can trace the momentum regarding education through the opening of new schools, which was also happening in Istanbul.[288] As early as the 1820s, several notables of Van invested in opening schools in their hometown, and employed Vanets'is who had received further education in Istanbul or Jerusalem as the teachers of the schools they founded. At this time, Hakob agha Gharaseferean invited Karapet of Moks from Constantinople, who at the time was known as a learned man (*gitnakan*). Moks is a region southwest of Lake Van, also known as Müküs, indicating that Karapet was from the region of Van. Turning a room of the St. Vardan church in the city of Van into a school, Karapet of Moks started teaching a few dozen children. Due to the lack of funds, however, in a short period of time the teacher abandoned the school and left for the Monastery of Ktuts' in Lake Van; he eventually became a bishop.[289] In 1826, the son of Hakob agha Gharaseferean, Grigor, again attempted to open a school, this time inviting a learned man from Constantinople named Petros of Artamet (Edremit). Artamet was a town north of Lake Van, which indicates that Petros was originally from the province of Van.[290] Petros also taught there for a short period of time, since Grigor agha Gharaseferean lost his authority in the region and could no longer finance him. Petros became a priest (*k'ahanay*) in the Church of Arark', in the Aygestan neighborhood of the city of Van, and opened a school in that church where he taught a few teenagers. That the educators whom these

[288] For schools and education in Istanbul in the early nineteenth century see Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System,* 59-68.
[289] *Van Tosp*, issue 38 (Oct. 12, 1913), 450. Also see H.M. Poghosyan, *Varspurakani Patmutyunits'*, 178-180. The name of the periodical, "Van-Tosp" was a toponym of the region of Van. This periodical was published in Van between 1911 and 1915.
[290] The last names of both of these teachers, Artamets'i and Mokats'i, derive from toponyms of the region of Van, suggesting that they were at some point locals.

notables brought from Constantinople were originally from Van means that there was already a drive among Vanets‘i young men to receive and provide education.[291]

Another notable of Van named Sargis agha Achemkhach‘oean was more successful at founding a school in 1839. Reportedly, while building the Norashen Church of Aygestan, he also constructed a building to serve as a school. More than one hundred children started attending the school and a learned man, Hovhannēs Amirzanean, known with the nickname K‘oloz (1814?-1879), became the principal of the school, remaining there until 1877.[292] K‘oloz was a native of Van who had studied at the seminary in Jerusalem between 1829 and 1836. After his formal education he spent a few years in Constantinople working at the Armenian Patriarchate.[293] That young men like K‘oloz traveled to Constantinople and Jerusalem for their studies and returned back to Van to become teachers, shows the ways in which knowledge circulated in this early period.

The trend of founding schools increased in the subsequent decades. By mid-century, ecclesiastics began to actively participate in the expansion of education, relying on the help of rich merchants and notables from Van who would often travel to Constantinople on business. If until the mid-nineteenth century the newly-established schools had short lives, with the involvement of the ecclesiastics who had administrative backing of the church as well as greater social capital and juridical power to raise money, newly established schools became more

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[291] Apart from the initiatives of opening schools, we also have some evidence concerning those who attended the existing schools. In his memoir Bishop Yeremia Tevkants‘ noted that he and his brothers and cousins attended a school in Van in the 1830s and 1840s.[291] Tevkants‘ also mentioned that his teacher from Van "was not appointed by the prelacy, by the nation (azg)[291] or by the people of the neighborhood. Instead, he had set up a school in the first floor of his home, in a medium-sized room… All of the notables (*ishkhank‘*) and people (*zhoghovurdk‘*) would send their children (*tghayk‘*) to the priest-to-be (*tirats‘u*) Hovhannēs." MM.MS.4184, 67. Also see Poghosyan, *Vapspurakani Patmut‘iwnits‘,* 297.

[292] *Van Tosp*, issue 38 (Oct. 12, 1913), 450. Also see H.M. Poghosyan, *Varspurakani Patmutyunits‘*, 178-180.
[293] Shoghik Voskanyan, *Urvagtser Arevmtahay dprots‘i yev mankavarzhakan mtk‘i patmut‘ean (1850-1900),* 2nd ed. (Yerevan: Lusakn, 2009), 318.

permanent. In 1847, when Bishop Gabriel Shiroyean (1790-1857) became the prelate of Van,[294] he pushed for the development of education.[295] Shiroyean contacted Vardapet Hakob T‘ōp‘uzean of Van and asked him to help find a teacher and collect money to open a school in Van. In turn, T‘ōp‘uzean turned to a wealthy Vanets‘i merchant and notable, Sharan agha Sharanean, who was in Constantinople on business. T‘ōp‘uzean visited Constantinople to raise money in order to open schools in Van and to repay the depts. Of the Lim and Ktuts‘ monasteries.[296] T‘ōp‘uzean and Sharanean applied to the Patriarch of Constantinople asking to find a teacher.[297] At the same time, in 1847 pandukhts (travelers, migrants) from Van in Constantinople formed a society named the "Society of Artsrunis" (Artsruneats‘ Ĕnkerut‘iwn).[298] We know that a notable of Van, Sapon Saponjean, donated money to this society, and the above-mentioned notable Sharan Sharanean was its treasurer.[299]

Back in Van, Shiroyean transferred the existing St. Vardan to a new building and appointed two teachers.[300] This school later became known as the Hisusean Varzharan (School of Jesus). *Artsui Vaspurakan* in 1858 reported that the school was financed by the income of the estates of the nearby seven churches and that around 150 students were studying there.[301] Estates of churches and monasteries were part of a *vakıf* (pious foundation), the finances of which were

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[294] Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots‘ial-tntesakan*, 245. According to an article in *Artsui Vaspurakan*, Shiroyean had at the age of 23 retreated to Lim Monastery to become a celibate priest. In his twenties he travelled to Akn and other parts of Armenia for two months under the patronage of bishop Arpiarean Hakob of Akn. To be consecrated a bishop Shiroyean traveled to Constantinople and stayed there for seven months. For a few years he served as the Abbot of the Lim monastery. Then upon the demand of the notables of Van, and with the permission of the Patriarchate and the state, Gabriel Shiroyean became the prelate of Van. In 1850, he was consecrated as Archbishop in Ējmiatsin. *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 2 (1858), 35-38.

[295] Yeremia Tevkants‘'s memoir attests to this. Also see *Van Tosp*, issue 38 (Oct. 12, 1913), 451.

[296] MM.MS.4180, 52a.

[297] *Van Tosp*, issue 38 (Oct. 12, 1913), 451.

[298] Yep‘rem Vardapet Pōghosean, *Patmut‘iwn Hay Mshakutayin Ynkerut‘iwnneru,* Vol. 2 (Vienna: Mkhit‘arean Tparan, 1963), 3. The Artsrunis were an Armenian dynasty of kings that ruled over the region of Van in the 8th to 10th centuries.

[299] Poghosyan, *Patmut‘yun Vaspurakanits‘*, 296, as cited from MM.KD.129.41.

[300] *Van-Tosp*, issue 38 (Oct. 12, 1913), 450.

[301] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 8 (1858), 214.

managed by a *mütevelli*, a non-ecclesiastic manager of the finances of the foundation. The *mütevelli* would usually be a local notable and was a decision-maker regarding the expenditures of the funds of the *vakıf,* which would acquire income through its real estate and agricultural lands.[302] Thus, opening a school could have been a means to redirect the income of the *vakıf* towards the well-being of the community. Schools were therefore becoming a new component of the local economy.

When T'ōp'uzean and Sharanean returned to Van, they worked together to open more schools. At that time, T'ōp'uzean was assigned the post of general principle of five established schools in Van. [303] In 1849, the newspaper *Arshaloys Araratean* (Twilight of Ararat) reported that the existing seven schools in Van collectively had 750 students.[304] By 1850, according to the newspaper *Van-Tosp,* the schools established in Aygestan, the neighborhood adjacent to the inner city of Van, included a total of 850 students.[305] This was at a time when the population of the inner city of Van and Aygestan was estimated at 14,000 people.[306] If a few hundred students received primary education every year between the 1820s and 1830s, we can assume that by the 1860s and 1870s the rate of literacy in Van must have been in the thousands.

One particular village, Ērerin (Dağonu), north of the city of Van, had some informal schooling in the 1840s and 1850s. A famous author and educator from this village, Sargis Gnuni (1838-1889) (formerly called Barseghean-of-Tosp), had received some education in the 1840s and 1850s in Ērerin. The fact that Gnuni received education in his native village shows that the demand for education existed in rural areas as well. In 1855 Gnuni transferred to the Hisusean

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302 Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 124.
303 These did not make up all of the schools in the city of Van. *Van Tosp*, issue 38 (Oct. 12, 1913), 451.
304 *Arshaloys Araratean*, issue 334 (April 1, 1849).
305 Araruts' school (300 students), Haynkuysner school (280 students) and the St. Hakob school (150 students), and Norashen (180 students) and the Haykavan school (80 students).
306 "Statistics based on published tables, 1858" GAT, GS, Section 1, Doc. 63

School in the city of Van. Two years later he had gone to Constantinople to continue his education. In Constantinople he published the periodical *Vard* (Rose, 1861-1863). In 1863 he returned to Van and began teaching at the Hisusean School. He founded the philanthropic society of "Ĕnterts'asirats' Andranik" (The First of the Studious/Reading-lovers).[307] In the 1860s, individuals such as Gnuni, who put together theater plays in Van, circulated knowledge and cultural practices in the Ottoman Empire.

The efforts at opening schools extended beyond the city of Van into the rural areas.[308] In 1855 Vardapet Abbot P'ilipos of the St. Apostle Bartholomew (Bardughemios Surb Aṙak'el) monastery directed a letter to the Ējmiatsin Catholicosate, announcing that schools had been opened in the area of Aghbak (Albayrak).[309] Fifteen years later, as Tevkants' passed through Aghbak, there were still efforts to educate students. He reported that in Bashgala (Başkale), the largest town in Aghbak (made up of 80 households), a small school of twenty students continued to function. In the neighboring villages smaller educational initiatives were undertaken, teaching five to six students to read.[310] Information about such small initiatives remains absent from aggregated sources. For example, the statistical table from 1877 recorded in Bishop Sruandzteants''s files does not list schools in Aghbak, perhaps because such statistics only included schools that had officially been approved by the Patriarchate. Yet by putting together fragments we can ascertain that educational initiatives, albeit small in scope, had been undertaken in Aghbak for almost three decades. Such miniscule efforts speak to the desire to provide and acquire education, regardless of the lack of financial resources.

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[307] *Ararat,* issue 5, vol. 21-22 (May 31, 1889), 297-298. Also see, Poghosyan, *Patmut'yun Vaspurakanits'*, 325-326. Poghosean, *Patmut'iwn Hay Mshakutayin Ĕnkerut'iwnneru,* Vol. 2, 10.

[308] Historian of Van, Haykaz Poghosyan writes that starting in the late 1840s schools were opened in villages, which would often be financed through taxes collected by the local population. *Vaspurakani Patmut'iwnits',* 295.

[309] MM.KD.176.46 cited by Poghosyan in *Vapspurakani Patmut'iwnits',* 295.

[310] Tevkants', *Chanaparhordut'yun*, 304-307.

As the examples above show, some of the Vanets'i ecclesiastics and notables involved in the expansion of education were in close contact with the Patriarchate, as well as with men close to the Sublime Porte, such as Hakob Krchikean (1806-1864), the logothete[311] of the Armenian community (millet) and a close confidant of Ottoman statesman Reşid Pasha. Although the opening of the schools occurred with the support and approval of the Patriarchate and the Sublime Porte, the engagement of Shiroyean, T'ōp'uzean and Sharanean, among others, demonstrates that the development of education in Van was a collaborative process, one that was encouraged by– but not initiated by– Istanbul. On the contrary, rather than the central authorities bringing education to the eastern provinces, the dynamic that I have laid out shows that Van Armenians reached out to Constantinople both to acquire teachers and finances to open schools. Whether they resided in Istanbul or Van, Vanets'is worked for the development of education in their home province. Instead of seeing the effort of expanding education as a uni-directional movement from West to East, I have shown here that local initiatives to expand education began early in the nineteenth century with primarily the work of Vanets'is.

The dynamic circulation of educators, clergymen, notables and merchants from Van across the Ottoman Empire demonstrates the unofficial ways in which Van was connected to the rest of the empire. It also provides us a means to understand how these individuals circulated knowledge and perhaps also print materials. Through such movements and flows, as education gained greater value, being an educator and a founder of schools became a moral commitment and a form of social capital as well as a source of financial capital.

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[311] "The logothete acted as both chairman and secretary of the Supreme Civil Council." Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System,* 74. This position was created in 1847 when the first Supreme Council made up of 20 laymen and the Spiritual (*Hogevor*) Council made up of 14 ecclesiastics were created. Eventually these Councils became the Civil (*K'aghak'akan*/Political) Assembly and the Religious (Kronakan) Assembly. Pōghos-P'ap'azeants', *Dasagirk' azgayin Patmut'ean,* 180-181.

Contending for Schools (1850s-1860s)

Instead of casting the conflicts surrounding education as cultural ones, I argue that the tensions surrounding schools and education had rather to do with control of the management of schools and their finances. The struggles over the establishment and finances of schools, I will demonstrate, were in fact struggles through which Vanets‘is redefined their relations of power. Yet these struggles—both in historiography and in nineteenth-century discourses—were translated as a struggle between the enlightened who were for education and the "backward" or "obfuscators" (*khavareal*), who were against it.[312]

By the 1850s and 1860s, schools became centers of conflict because they were sites of financial resources and politics. Through the establishment of schools bishops could redirect the income from the cultivation of lands that belonged to the monastery from local notables to the church. This means that schools formed the basis and the means to redistribute resources and money. While local landowners would be blamed for using the income of these lands for their own enrichment, the bishops could claim that they intended to use the income for schools, in other words, for the common good and not for selfish purposes. Conversely, local notables would invest in schools as a means to maintain control of financial capital. Furthermore, for local notables it had become a social capital to invest their money in educational projects.[313] The establishment of schools was at the forefront of the conflicts between different political groups, often defined around particular ecclesiastic or notable men. These tensions were recorded in handwritten petitions and newspapers as well as in memoirs.

While the clergymen T‘ōp‘uzean and Shiroyean and the notable Sharanean from Van were among the first to intensively contribute to the opening of schools in the late 1840s and

[312] The language of "backward versus progressive" can be found in the works of Ēmma Kostandyan and Haykaz Poghosyan, among others.
[313] Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin," 312-317.

1850s, from the late 1850s on their role is overshadowed by others. Mkrtich‘ Khrimian, in particular, is praised both by his contemporaries and later historians as a singular figure who brought education to Van.[314] According to Khrimian’s narrative, in 1856 he transported a printing press from Constantinople all the way to Van, and with it he transferred the monthly publication of *Artsui Vaspurakan*, which he had established in Üsküdar (near Constantinople), to the Monastery of Varag.

Khrimian’s story gained greater import relative to other bishops from Van, such as T‘ōp‘uzean, Tevkants‘, Shiroyean and Sharanean. The competing narratives, however, have lingered in the margins. Tevkants‘, in his unpublished memoir, insisted that T‘ōp‘uzean was the cause for the enlightenment of the Mush St. Karapet Monastery and Van’s Lim Monastery and that, moreover, “the cause for the initial enlightenment of the country of Vaspurakan was Bishop Hakob T‘ōp‘uzean and no one else.”[315] He claimed that it was first T‘ōp‘uzean, not Khrimian, who wanted to open the periodical *Artsui Vaspurakan* and move it to the Lim Monastery. Initially, however, T‘ōp‘uzean only managed to open the society of *Artsiw* and started the publication in Constantinople.[316]

Such moments bring out the social and political competition among clergymen as they claimed deeds performed for the nation and the patria. The competition between Tevkants‘ and T‘ōp‘uzean, on the one hand, and Khrimian, on the other, revolved around who was the real mastermind behind the educational project. Not only did Tevkants‘ remain on the margins of historiography, but already in his lifetime he expressed a certain disdain for the fact that

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[314] Rubina Peroomian, “The Heritage of Van Provincial Literature,” in *Armenian Van/Vaspurakan,* ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1980), 133-152; Achemean, *Hayots‘ Hayrik;* Kostandyan, *Mkrtich‘ Khrimian*; Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots‘ial-tntesakan,* 525. In many ways, by focusing on Khrimian as a central figure who called for change, and disregarding the genealogy of people and processes that he was part of, I contributed to a similar narrative in my article, Dzovinar Derderian, “Mapping the Fatherland: Artzvi Vaspurakan’s Reforms through the Memory of the Past.”
[315] MM.MS.4180, 53b-54a.
[316] MM.MS.4180, 52b.

Khrimian had stolen the limelight and that his role, as opposed to that of T‘ōp‘uzean and Shiroyean, had come to dominate the existing narratives of educational expansion in Van.

The tension between T‘ōp‘uzean and Khrimian arose in the late 1850s. In 1859, T‘op‘uzean and Tevkants‘ met the newly elected Catholicos Matt‘eos of Ējmiatsin (1858-1865), who reproached T‘ōp‘uzean for having opposed education, and particularly for resisting the opening of Khrimian's school in the Monastery of Varag, outside of the city Van.[317] Being known as a supporter of education was a form of social capital which enhanced one's reputation. But someone had sullied T‘ōp‘uzean's name. Having a bad reputation would also cause difficulties in raising money for education.

Tevkants‘'s memoir is not the only source that points to tensions between Khrimian and T‘ōp‘uzean. In 1855, Khrimian in his periodical *Artsui Vaspurakan* praised the society that was founded for the construction of a school in the village of Ērerin. He wrote in his periodical that he hoped this would encourage T‘ōp‘uzean to provide monks from his monastery to the village of Ērerin, so that they would help spread education.[318] While this message was not confrontational, there was a sense that T‘ōp‘uzean would not necessarily cooperate. Another article published in *Artsui Vaspurakan* in 1856 also hinted at this conflict. Three years later, in 1858, Mkrtich‘ Tēr Atomean—a teacher at the Varag seminary that Khrimian had established—praised the deeds of Karapet Mahtesi Manukean, a well-to-do Van Armenian, who had established a society to raise money to build new schools in villages near Van. At the end of his article, Atomean wrote that he hoped T‘ōp‘uzean would cooperate with Khrimian to establish schools in villages that fell under the jurisdiction of the Lim Monastery, where T‘ōp‘uzean was the Abbot. Atomean's statement once again indicated that there were doubts about T‘ōp‘uzean's

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[317] MM.MS.4180, 120b.
[318] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 4 (September 1855), 64.

willingness to cooperate with Khrimian in his project of building schools.[319] Those who wanted to open schools in the villages of the Lim Monastery had to have T'ōp'uzean's approval; without his consent no school could be built.

In 1862, *Meghu,* whose editor Svachean was close to Khrimian, complained about rampant corruption in the monasteries, claiming that instead of spending money to open schools, the bishops and the congregation kept the money for their own livelihood. The author wrote, "while the people of Van do not know what a bed (*karyola*[320]) is and while people are lying on the soil (*hogh),* let the Abbot T'obuz Hakob lie in his decorated iron bed…"[321] By calling the abbot T'obuz Hakob rather than Hakob T'ōp'uzean, the author was playing with the Ottoman word *topuz* (طوپوز) which, among other things, meant a chubby little man. The article blamed T'ōp'uzean for being corrupt and selfish, characteristics that were often referred to in newspapers and periodicals in contradiction to love of nation and patria. I see this sullying of T'ōp'uzean's name as an attempt to gain control over finances and the right to manage schools, as well as control over monastery properties that brought income, by Khrimian and his supporters, who seem to have been in competition with T'ōp'uzean.

T'ōp'uzean did not have access to the press in the same way Khrimian did. Therefore, Tevkants''s manuscript memoir and T'ōp'uzean's petitions asking for money for the construction of schools serve as the only sources that speak in support of him and his deeds.[322] The comments about T'ōp'uzean in the press, as well as Tevkants''s memoir suggest that although T'ōp'uzean and Shiroyean had established more schools in Van than Khrimian,

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[319] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 3 (March 1858), 67
[320] A loan word from Turkish.
[321] *Meghu,* issue 153 (February 20, 1862), 35.
[322] See for example BNU.CP23/1.07 (March 1, 1865); BNU.CP23/1.066 (February 10, 1867).

Khrimian through his access to the press sidelined their deeds, and emerged as the enlightener of Van.[323]

Given that education and schools had become a social and financial capital over which clergymen competed, it is difficult to assess whose accusations of corruption and whose claim to being committed to education was genuine. What is clear, however is that in the second half of the nineteenth century, claiming to have been the first to expand education would award the person prestige and social capital. Those who had access to print media, however, were more likely to establish themselves as figures who carried the torch of education to the provinces. Moreover, their conflict shows what an important site of finances schools had become. Conflicts over education, like those between T‘ōp‘uzean and Khrimian, were a common phenomenon.

As the efforts to build schools increased, struggles over their control and management began to surface in print media. According to a letter published in *Masis*, in the late 1850s Abbot Hovsēp‘ of the Narek Monastery located in the south of Lake Van raised money from residents of the surrounding villages and built a school where "more than 30 poor village children" were being educated.[324] In a later issue, *Masis* reported that they had received a letter from Van with the signatures of the inhabitants of Narek village (now Yemişlik, on the southeastern shore of

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[323] There must have been a falling-out between the two. Tevkants‘ had been the acting prelate between 1876 and 1879. Khrimian was appointed to be the prelate of Van in November 1879. He remained in that position until he was exiled from Van by the orders of the Armenian Patriarchate and the Ottoman state in 1885 (Hayk Achēmean, *Hayots‘ Hayrik*, 572-574). It is possible that Tevkants‘' frustration was related to this transfer of power, the details of which remain ambiguous. Tevkants‘'s anger towards Khrimian might have also escalated due to the fact that Tevkants‘ had spent many years studying in the seminary of the Lim Monastery, on a cold island, in his cold and dark room. He blamed these bleak years for the continuous illnesses and aches that he experienced throughout his life. His mentor T‘ōp‘uzean was a strict teacher who emphasized memorization, discipline and loyalty among seminary students and obedience to their elders. Khrimian, on the other hand, did not pursue a formal ecclesiastic education to become a bishop. In fact, he had been married and his wife had a child while he was in Constantinople. His wife and daughter passed away shortly after his daughter was born, while Khrimian was still away. After this tragic event Khrimian decided to become a celibate priest. He managed to climb the ecclesiastic ladder through his connections in Constantinople and perhaps through his poetic and oratory skills. These different paths to becoming a bishop may have shaped Tevkants‘'s resentment towards Khrimian, who had reached greater fame and a higher position in the ecclesiastic hierarchy.

[324] *Masis,* issue 226 (July 3, 1858).

Lake Van) about Abbot Hovsēp‘’s work in the Narek Monastery. According to *Masis,* Abbot Hovsēp‘ had improved the condition of the monastery: in two years he managed to build a school, which at the time had twenty-nine students. He also founded “a small library (*t‘angaran*) with useful books and newspapers.”[325] This time the newspaper reported that by recuperating the lands that had been seized (it is not clear by whom), and finally by having those lands cultivated, he managed to repay the debts of the monastery within two years and expand education. By sending words of praise about Abbot Hovsēp‘ to the most important Ottoman Armenian newspaper, the villagers were asserting Abbot Hovsēp‘’s legitimacy to act as their local ecclesiastic leader.

Abbot Hovsēp‘’s efforts to raise money locally in Narek village were not enough for the children’s schooling. In 1858, on the front page of the periodical *Meghu,* an article was published entitled “The Defense of the School of the Narek Monastery,” defending the efforts of Abbot Hovsēp‘ and emphasizing the difficulties that he had faced in his efforts to expand education. At the end, however, he had been able to overcome the obstacles and established schools.[326] Yet what Abbot Hovsēp‘ had founded, *Meghu* reported, had been destroyed “unlawfully” (*anōrenk‘*), and the Abbot had travelled to Constantinople with a few other Vanets‘is to find the means to rebuild the school. In Constantinople, the *amiras* of the Tatean family had offered him help, in defense of the Narek Monastery and the school that was to be founded in it. In addition, the Patriarch had sent a few influential decrees to the Catholicos of Aght‘amar, to the notables (*ishkhan*) of Van and to the prelate ordering them to assist in the establishment of the school.[327]

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[325] *Masis,* issue 347 (Sept. 18, 1858). Although at present the word “*t‘angaran*” in Armenian means museum, the description of it used in the nineteenth-century seem to indicate that “*t‘angaran*” was used to mean what we would now identify as a library.
[326] It is important to note here that although *Meghu* is often portrayed as an anti-clerical publication, as on this occasion, the periodical also often praised various clergymen. That the article utilized religious metaphors to clarify its point suggests an assumption on the author’s part that the readership was knowledgeable about Biblical content.
[327] *Meghu,* issue 91 (March 10, 1860), 49-50.

That such an order was required from the Patriarchate indicates that there was opposition to Abbot Hovsēp‘. In this case, Abbot Hovsēp‘ had turned to the lay and ecclesiastic leaders in Constantinople for their support. In the second half of the nineteenth century, bishops needed official backing as well as financial backing to open a school. Those who did not receive such help struggled against those who did. Articles published in defense of the Abbot would insure the continuation of official and financial support.

Abbot Hovsēp‘ had also helped to open schools in villages in the region of Van and used any opportunity to mention his and his congregation's educational efforts. In 1859, along with other ecclesiastics of the diocese of Aght‘amar and local notables who bore the titles such as village-head (*ṙēs*), prince (*ishkhan*) and lord (*tēr*), he wrote a letter to the Constantinople Patriarchate and mentioned that they had established schools with their "nation-loving soul" (*azgasirakan hogi*). The affective language was a way to assert the good intentions behind the establishment of the school. In Moks (Müküs) they established schools in different villages: one in Ağin (Şerefhane) and another in Andzgh, one in Shatakh (Çatak) and another one in Katjet (Kaçıt), another one in Hasu Dzor, and one in Narek. They concluded by saying that they had fifteen seminarists in the Monastery of Aght‘amar.[328] The authors of the letter clearly needed to demonstrate the extent of their good deeds in order to be able to ask for money and support. The letter sent by the Narek villagers to *Masis* and the collective letter sent to the Patriarchate demonstrate the support an abbot needed from local inhabitants, notables as well as important ecclesiastic seats, such as the Catholicosate of Aght‘amar, to establish and maintain schools.

But such support was not continuous as conflicts between monasteries and the Aght‘amar Catholicosate ensued. In the same summer of 1859, when Abbot Hovsēp‘ had praised his own

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[328] MM.KD.262.26 (August 25, 1859). It seems that Ējmiatsin either received copies or the originals of such letters sent to the Constantinople Patriarchate pertaining to the Catholicos of Ējmiatsin.

work in opening schools, a short complaint appeared against Aght‘amar’s Catholicos Petros Bülbül (1858-1864), asking that the Patriarchate immediately remove him from his position. The note claimed that Catholicos Petros had closed all schools, like the school at the Narek Monastery, “he took the keys and kept them under his chair” and threw out the nation-loving and study-loving (*usumnasēr*) Abbot Hovsēp‘.[329] As such, the Catholicos was portrayed as being against education. Just a few issues later, *Meghu* announced that the news they had printed about Catholicos Petros was false. Now the Catholicos, whose name this time was not given, intended to open the school.[330] Perhaps *Meghu* had been asked or even pressured to correct or retract its defamation of Petros. Not mentioning his name while retracting the defamation shows that *Meghu* was not particularly interested in clearing Petros, as *Meghu* was in alliance with Abbot Hovsēp‘, who clearly had a conflict with him.

While in the late 1850s Abbot Hovsēp‘ established his position as a supporter of education, in the 1860s his opponents tried to sully his reputation. This has to be understood within the conflicts between competing groups of ecclesiastics and notables in the region. In particular, Abbot Hovsēp‘ seemed to have been in competition with the controversial figure of Catholicos Khach‘atur Shiroyean of Aght‘amar (1864-1895).[331] In 1868, a decade after praises of Abbot Hovsēp‘’s work for the establishment of schools had filled the pages of periodicals and letters sent to the Constantinople Patriarchate and Ējmiatsin Catholicosate, the opponents of Abbot Hovsēp‘ wrote a petition to the Catholicos of Ējmiatsin. They complained about Vardapet Hovsēp‘ for his lack of experience and mismanagement of the monastery’s finances and claimed that months ago he had been harassed and exiled by the local people (*zhoghovurd*). But he still held the official tools of power, such as “the seal, decree and Bible of the monastery,” which

[329] *Meghu*, issue 19 (July 10, 1859), 152.
[330] *Meghu*, issue 23 (Aug. 20, 1859), 184.
[331] I discuss this conflict in more detail in Chapter Five.

allowed him to act as the abbot of the monastery and collect money from the Catholicosate of Ējmiatsin on behalf of the school.[332] The petitioners claimed that he had no such rights because he had resigned from his position. Furthermore, they accused him of corruption, claiming that he had sold the eighty or ninety books that had been gifted to the school of Narek. The implication was that the Abbot had sold the books to another school in the region.

This petition signed by the acting prelate of Van, Pōghos Melik'ean, who had become the subject of great conflict in opposition to the Patriarchate and Khrimian, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Pōghos Melik'ean was also an ally of Catholicos Khach'atur Shiroyean. Six priests (*k'ahanay*), and fifty-five laymen, some with titles and others without, had signed the letter, as well. Among the signatories was the notable Sharan Sharanean, who in the 1840s and 1850s had participated in T'ōp'uzean's and Shiroyean's project to open schools, which had been supported by the Patriarchate. Now in the 1860s, however, he was supporting an individual who was involved in many conflicts with the Patriarchate. The fact that individuals such as T'ōp'uzean and Sharanean were sometimes in line with the Patriarchate and sometimes not makes it impossible to categorize these individuals within particular ideological or political lines, such as reformist or anti-reformist, conservative or liberal. In particular, such changeable alliances make it difficult to identify individuals as being against or for education, as their support for the establishment of particular schools depended on who was involved in their finances and management.

Conflicts regarding the establishment of schools had less to do with ideological differences and more to do with acquiring the right to raise money for schools and to manage them as well as the local conflicts among ecclesiastic leaders. Maintaining a good reputation among readers of newspapers and periodicals, as well as the Constantinople Patriarchate and

[332] MM.KD.203.778 (July 3, 1868).

Ējmiatsin Catholicosate, were important for ecclesiastic leaders seeking to raise money from these sources. If word got out that a bishop was not truly dedicated to education or was corrupt, it would become less easy for that person to raise money. Readers of the press—including Armenians in Istanbul and elsewhere—officials of the church and local inhabitants of Van were the sources from which money was raised to build and maintain schools.

Let us now turn to efforts by laymen. According to *Artsui Vaspurakan* Ērerin had 60 households in 1855.[333] In the 1850s labor migrants in Constantinople from Ērerin established a philanthropic society with the aim of opening a school.[334] Khrimian in the periodical *Artsui Vaspurakan* described the founders as garbage-men (*çöpçu*[335]) and water porters. They had secured 6,000 *ghurush* under the protection of Vanets'i Hayrapet Saponjean agha, a notable from Van, who charged interest. Khrimian may have exaggerated his reference to garbage-men and water porters in an attempt to shame men of greater means for not engaging in similar acts of patronage and to encourage them to invest in schools. There is little doubt, however that laborers from the village of Ērerin showed their support for the establishment of schools. This is based on evidence presented in a petition from 1864 that claimed that in the late 1850s, villagers from Ērerin had raised money to build a school. The petition was addressed to the leadership of the Patriarchate in Constantinople:

"Honorable Sirs,

> ...our villagers collected money to build a school and we were trying to increase the money to as much as was needed. We made profit we gave the money we collected to the trade company of Van, with two pieces of bond (*tahvil*[336]) and three thousand *ghurush* and from the treasurer of the company—Mahtesi Malkhas Kuludjean—we bought a bond (*tahvil*) five years ago. Now when we asked the money to build the school, the members of the company for different reasons,

[333] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 4 (Sept. 1855), 63.
[334] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 4 (September 1855), 64.
[335] The word "*çöpçü*" comes from Turkish and was used as such in the article.
[336] "*Tahvil*" is a word borrowed from Turkish and was used as such in the petition.

> they don't want to return the result of our sweat, that has stayed with them as a deposit. Finally, we could not [illegible, probably "take"] the money of our miserable villagers in order to build our school. For the glory of God and for the love of our Nation we plead your honorable assembly to free this money and putting all of our hope in Your decision we apply to You, we beseech you, and we trust you, we the undersigned."[337]

This petition was signed with a long list of names in addition to the collective signature "all of the villagers."[338] A record of this transaction stated that Malkhas Kuludjean had received 1,000 *ghurush* on November 27, 1858. But the transaction noted that the receiver of the money was indebted to the trustees of the Ērerin school and every month he was to pay fifteen percent interest. Sakhah Mardiros of Ērerin gave another 2,000 *ghurush* for the same school.[339] Only two of the signatories had the title Mahtesi—a sign that they had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which symbolized greater wealth and higher status. The majority of the signatories had the title "aşcı," a Turkish word meaning "cook". According to Armenian historian Hayk Ghazaryan there was a guild of cooks in Van, and it is likely that these cooks were originally from the village of Ērerin but worked in Van.[340] It is possible that members of the guild also occasionally went to work in Istanbul. This shows that not only bishops and notables tried to expand education, but villagers who were of lower strata also tried to establish schools. And for these villagers, perhaps, building a school first and foremost meant ensuring a better future for their children.

The three conflicts—between Khrimian and T'ōp'uzean, over the Monastery of Narek, and over the school at Ērerin show that schools had become a site of conflict, as they represented

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337 BNU.CP23/1.087 (March 20, 1864).

338 Phrases such as "all of the villagers" or the "people of Vaspurakan" often appeared at the end of petitions to suggest that the locals were unanimous in regards to the issues raised in the petition. The names were Ashch'i (aşçı) Mahtesi Murad, Ashch'i Harut'iwn, Ashch'i Khach'atur Hovhannisean, Ashch'i Hovhannes Budaghean, Mahtesi Grigor Irkat Başi, Aşcı Harut'iwn K'ahanaean, Khach'atur Georgean, Aşcı Martiros Hovhannesean, Gaspar Muradean and Ghazar Delekean.

339 BNU.CP23/1.088 (July 27, 1858).

340 Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots'ial-tntesakan,* 294-495. There is also a possibility that they were labor migrants in Istanbul. Usually, however, if Vanets'is petitioned from Istanbul, they would indicate it either within the text or below the petition. There was no such mention, nor any other type of indication on this petition that the cooks were in Istanbul.

sources of finance and administrative power. These conflicts also demonstrate the active engagement of ecclesiastics and laymen of both rural and urban areas of Van and of different socioeconomic strata (ecclesiastics, notables, labor migrants, rural and urban) in opening schools. The interactions of Van Armenians with each other in Constantinople and their ties with the Patriarchate and with men close to the Sublime Porte were all important to securing the finances, technical support and permission to open schools.

Patria as the Student in Print

The conflicts surrounding schools served as reasons to represent certain bishops, like Abbot T‘ōp‘uzean and Abbot Hovsep‘, as being against education, which would diminish their abilities to raise money for their monasteries and communities. Furthermore, in print media the literati pleaded with those in Constantinople to invest their efforts in inculcating the love of education among common people (*ṙamik),* thus leaving the impression that the provinces were devoid of such feelings (i.e., love for study, love for nation, love for religion and patria) and ideas, and that they existed only in Constantinople. Despite evidence of local initiatives and the increasing demand for education in Van, a discourse existed that represented the ecclesiastics and common people of the provinces as resistant to education. Historians have adopted similar attitudes towards the "provincial".

Hakob Mirzaean Melik‘ Hakobeants‘ (1835-1888), famous under the pen-name Raffi, an Iranian-born Armenian author and novelist educated in Tbilisi, had maintained contact with Khrimian during the decades of 1850s and 1860s. He harshly criticized the Armenian clergy in the pages of *Artsui Vaspurakan*, stating that, "The more Europeans are trying to multiply their

schools and press, the more the bishops of Armenia are denying them."[341] He insisted that if the bishops would work on founding schools and periodicals to enlighten society, they would earn respect. Yet he lamented that unlike their famed fifth-century ancestors St. Sahak, St. Mesrop and others,[342] his contemporary ecclesiastics were not working to enlighten their people, much the opposite they were resisting education. Armenian national narratives of the nineteenth-century emphasized the role of religious figures' bringing enlightenment to the nation in the first millennium. Raffi encouraged the revival of such a tradition. His discourse provincialized Armenia, making it a place where education had to be introduced, despite the fact that bishops (such as Khrimian, T'ōp'uzean, Tevkants', Abbot Hovsēp', and Sruandzteants') from the same region were engaged in expanding education. At the same time, Raffi's discourse, along with that of Khrimian and Sruandzteants', asked readers to turn their gaze towards Armenia and nurture it with knowledge, engendering an affective relationship between the readers and their patria.

As various efforts were being made to open schools and competition ensued over their control, Khrimian lamented the dark state of Armenia. In 1856, when in Constantinople, he pleaded with Armenians who had migrated away from their ancestral lands. Khrimian asked them to go back to their patria, to reinstate the rights of "the pitiful abandoned people" of Armenia, "to implement the reforms of the national government, …to build schools, to appoint teachers," and to do everything possible in order "to bring an end to the darkness of ignorance and to the evil spirit of discord and instead bring love of unity, modesty and civility."[343] Through such pleas Khrimian undermined the educational process that was already underway in Van and

[341] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 7 (July 1858), 190.
[342] St. Mesrop is remembered in Armenian history as the creator of the Armenian alphabet. St. Sahak was the Catholicos of the Armenian Church when the alphabet was created.
[343] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 12 (May 1856), 187.

as such in the patria. He spoke of Armenia in the language of colonialism, as a place where "civilization" had to be brought.

In 1861 Khrimian, rather than pointing out the initiatives and expansion of education that were occurring in the region of Van, wrote as if the situation was getting worse. In *Artsui Vaspurakan,* he complained against those in Armenia who resisted education. He wrote:

> "In order to extensively spread light, a people's (*zhoghovrdakan*) school is needed in all of Armenia's darkened countries. This is the only path to national enlightenment. Who is that delirious or stupid person, who thinks either through slyness or stupidity that education is only necessary for the officials of the church. And thus the stupid saying exists in Armenia 'My son is not going to be a priest or a bishop, why would he need reading and writing.'"[344]

Khrimian's lament not only mourns the lack of education in Armenia, but the resistance to it. Yet, he did not connect the resistance to issues of corruption and political bickering, but rather to the "mentality" existing in the eastern provinces regarding education. In this article, he refers to Armenia as "our uncultivated Armenia," "unlucky Armenia," and laments that "our pitiful patria" Armenia "has turned into a ruin."[345] In this condition, Armenia needed nurturing and love from outsiders. Khrimian was insisting for the expansion of education for people in all classes. In his writings he often also noted that girls too had to be educated.

Khrimian's student Sruandzteants' also linked the resistance to education to the local mentality. In an article in *Artsuik Tarōnoy,* he complained that in Armenia people say they lack money, so how can reading and writing benefit them. Would learning free them from the Kurds? Sruandzteants''s answer to these rhetorical questions was that people's economic situation would improve, they would be freed from the Kurds, and their condition in general would improve if they were to become educated.[346] It is possible that individuals in the eastern provinces were

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[344] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 3 (1861), 65-66. Article also discussed by Kostandyan, *Mkrtich' Khrimian,* 101.
[345] Ibid 73.
[346] *Artsuik Tarōnoy,* issue 12 (1863).

indeed critical of education, but Sruandzteants‘ and Khrimian's generalizations about resistance to education in the provinces as a mentality issue reflect the way the provinces were represented in the language of colonialism as places of ignorance and stagnation, in need of enlightenment. Cases when a bishop or a group of villagers tried to open a school were cast as exceptional—seemingly uncommon—practices in the provinces. Khrimian and Sruandzteants‘ had to exaggerate the lack of education in Armenia in order to receive help from Constantinople and elsewhere to raise money for schools and printing presses. They also crafted such discourses because of the local resistance they faced to their expanding power through schools and periodicals, to the detriment of other local power-holders.

This discourse, however, quickly shaped the historical narratives of educational expansion in Ottoman Armenia. In an Armenian history textbook published in 1862 in Constantinople, the author claimed that the will to study only started to spread in the provinces during the second half of the nineteenth century, once education had significantly expanded in Constantinople. The author asserted that the Nation (Azg—capitalized in its original form), presumably referring to the leadership of the nation, began to pay particular attention to the education of pandukhts in Constantinople, so that they would be educated and "in little time would return to their patria and enlighten their patria."[347] The narrative highlighted the role of Constantinople in propagating education, attributing legitimacy and authority to the national leadership in the Ottoman capital, and thus furthering the colonial relations between the metropole and the eastern provinces.

The necessity to collect moneys and gain support of the state and the Patriarchate to establish schools, as well as the support of the local population presented just one aspect why the provinces were represented as void of education. Other dynamics, however, also reinforced the

[347] Pōghos-P‘ap‘azeants‘, *Dasagirk‘ Azgayin Patmut‘ean,* 182-183.

necessity of representing the eastern provinces as stagnant and illiterate. Minimizing the extent of education in the provinces served to diminish their political agency, as such a discourse would serve to downplay and dismiss voices that were not in line with the expectations of the Sublime Porte and therefore also of the Patriarchate. In 1863, an article appeared in *Meghu* defending Khrimian against those who had accused him of inciting the people of Armenia to rebel against the Ottoman state. Particularly when it came to his publications, the author wrote, there was no way that Khrimian could incite people through his newspapers, because among the people of Mush there was no one who could read or understand them—nobody was literate in those regions. It seemed, the author of the article wrote, that some people had made such accusations against his periodicals and the Sublime Porte was considering shutting Khrimian's publications down, but the author was hopeful that the Sublime Porte would eventually find out the truth and would understand that "the two main reasons for the people's sufferings and poverty in the different provinces of Armenia [were] the ignorance (*tgitut'iwn*) of the people and the clerics and wickedness among the rich."[348] While most certainly literacy rates were higher in Istanbul, the article exaggerates the ignorance and illiteracy of the provinces.

Such a narrative, even if it was just meant to reduce the concerns of the Sublime Porte, served to discursively depoliticize the people in the provinces, particularly since the episode followed the 1862 Zeyt'un rebellion of Armenians in Cilicia, a region close to the northeastern coast of the Mediterranean.[349] And indeed, in 1863 a committee was put together, mostly made up of provincial Armenians, to provide financial help to those who had suffered during the rebellion. The committee was headed by Yeremia Tevkants'—and among the members of the

[348] *Meghu,* issue 212, (August 3, 1863).
[349] See Libaridian, "The Ideology of Armenian Liberation," 42-46.

committee was Khrimian.[350] In sum, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the political dynamics and existing economic inequality served to shape discourses that understated the level of education in Van and the local efforts to expand education. This discourse in turn grounded the unequal relationship between Istanbul and the provinces.

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The efforts towards the establishment of schools in Van surfaced in the press and petitions particularly when there was a conflict surrounding an ecclesiastic leader or around a school's finances. This means it is very likely that other efforts, particularly those initiated by people who had no institutional positions—such as the cooks of the village of Ērerin—were left unrecorded. The press, as we have seen, played a vital role in forging the images of particular clergymen and of shaping narratives about the expansion of education in Van. That there is no direct record of people resisting education does not mean that opposition did not exist; however, it does speak to the popularity and respectability of education.

Understanding educational expansion in Van is important to understanding how Van in the nineteenth century produced notable ecclesiastics and laymen, who authored periodicals and books and became important political actors in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the expansion of education and of print culture in Van also gives us a sense of the significant degree of literacy in Van in the mid-nineteenth century, which allowed individuals to read and perhaps even write letters and petitions to newspapers and the official authorities. Having a sense of the existing educational opportunities in Van also provides an avenue through which to understand how Vanets'is of different social strata came to involve themselves in representative politics through

[350] Ghazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri sots'ial-tentesakan,* 502. For more on the rebellion and the subsequent reactions to it see 484-524.

novel ideas of popular representation, which was intimately linked with secular ideas of the nation.

Chapter Four

Reconfiguring Nation and Patria: The Language of Love (1820s-1870s)

Azg: 1. Race/type of animals; azg of people; azg of the earth. 2. Family and child descended from the same ancestors. *Millet.*[351] The azg of the Hebrews. The azg of the Armenians. The azg of the Greeks. 3. Tribe and lineage descended from the same azg, from the same tribal leader. *Cet. Soy.*[352] 4. Home, azg lineage, births and generations of one father or ancestor; blood relatives. *Sinsile,*[353] *kısım, akraba, soy sop.*[354] 5. Descendants of the same home; generations of sons and grandsons. 6. Change of people, new and old times, century, time. *Zeman.*[355] 7. People, crowd, persons. *Halk, adam.*[356] 8. Strata of people, rank, class. *Bolük.*[357] 9. Pagans, foreign azg-s, other azgs (aylazg), barbarians. 10. Sort and type of all things. *Soy, türlü, nev.*[358]

Hayrenik': 1) Things, inheritance, goods, possessions of the realm of the father. 2) Ancestors, fathers and forefathers of the tribe or the azg; the azg and the world. 3) Province, country (*yerkir*) and sky of the realm of the father. *Vatan.*[359]

–*Nor baṙgirk' haykazean lezui,* 1836/1837

Hayrenik': *Sıla.*[360] Paternal ground or land/country. Native residence or country, one's province.

–*Baṙgirk' hashkharabaṙē i grabar,* 1869

Azgasēr: Loving the nation, the national and the relatives.

Hayrenasēr: One who loves the world of the fathers and his/her nation (azg).

–*Nor baṙgirk' haykazean lezui,* 1836/1837

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[351] Alongside Armenian explanations the *Nor baṙgirk' haykazean lezui* dictionary also provided Turkish translations. The Turkish words were written in Armenian letters. *Millet* is an Arabic word used in Ottoman Turkish. Here *millet* refers to a people with a common ancestry. For a discussion of the meaning of *millet* see Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the *Millet* System," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society,* Vol. 1, ed. Bejamine Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York and London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1982), 69-74.

[352] *Cet* and *soy* are both Turkish words. *Cet* refers to ancestors and *soy* refers to a lineage, a common ancestry.

[353] This Arabic word used in Turkish is pronounced as "Silsile", however, it seems that rather than providing the Turkish pronunciation of the word the dictionary has provided the Istanbul Armenian pronunciation of the Turkish word as "sinsile." For more details, see Hrach'eay Achaṙean, *Turkerēnē pokhaṛeal baṙerě Pōlsi hay zhoghovrdakan lezwin mēj hamematut'eamb Vani, Gharabaghi yev Nor-Nakhijevani barbaṙnerun* (Moskua-Vagharshapat: Lazarean Chemaran Arevelean Lezuats', 1902), 319.

[354] *Kısım* (a part), *akraba* (relative), *soy sop* (lineage of a clan) are all words from Ottoman Turkish.

[355] Ottoman Turkish word for time.

[356] *Halk* and *adam* are Ottoman Turkish words referring to people and person/man respectively.

[357] Ottoman Turkish words meaning group of men.

[358] *Nev* is an Ottoman Turkish word meaning class or variety. Türlü means variety.

[359] *Vatan* is the Ottoman word used for patria. For a discussion of Ottoman use of *vatan* see Bernard Lewis, "Watan," *Journal of Contemporary History* 26.3/4 (Sept. 1991): 523-533. Although Lewis exaggerates Western influence in the formation of the meaning of *vatan* as patria in the Ottoman context, he nonetheless provides a look at the meaning of *vatan* in Ottoman context.

[360] Turkish word for place of home.

In 1848 the periodical *Bazmavēp,* printed in Venice, published an article entitled "love of nation" (*azgasirut'iwn*). The author noted that of late the word had frequently been used in the press, but there was confusion as to what it meant. The author set out to explain the word and emphasized that love of nation required love of people similar to oneself.[361] Rather than a political entity, nation (azg) in this case signified a community of ethnic kinship with a common ancestral lineage, which was also one of the main definitions of the word "azg" in the *Nor baṙgirk'* dictionary of 1836-1837, cited above. Kinship here translates as the ties that bind not through blood, but through culture.

A year later in 1849, *Bazmavēp* published another article on the topic of love of nation. It explained that one of the reasons why love of nation had diminished among Armenians was because of their physical distance from their Paternal Land (*Hayreneats' yerkir*). The word "*yerkir*", used in the article, can mean soil, earth, land, country or province.[362] Thus, in Armenian, the word "*yerkir*", when used to connote one's country, not only signifies a space, but also expresses the very materiality of the soil. According to the article, formerly the *yerkir* had transmitted to Armenians a knowledge about their past, and therefore maintained their ancestral connections. Now they needed to learn their history because they were far from the land that organically connected them to their past.[363] Not only did the author define love of nation (*azgasirtu'iwn*), but he also explained that it was necessary to cultivate such love; he claimed that connection to the land and knowledge of ancestral history were prerequisites for loving the nation. This assertion hinged on the spatial and material aspects of ancestral lands that told the

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[361] *Bazmavēp,* issue 1 (April 1, 1848), 97-101.
[362] *Yerkir:* 1. *Terra*. The lower world below the sky; the globe; sea and land, especially the land. 2. A part of the earth, province, location, borders of what is of the fathers; *eyalet, vilayet, diyar*. [*Eyalet* and *vilayet* are Ottoman Turkish words that signify administrative divisions of the Ottoman Empire, i.e. a province; *diyar* is an Ottoman Turkish word that signifies country or land] 3. As the inhabitants of the earth, with all or different borders; as the world, the temporal condition. 4. The ground, and the soil. *Toprak* [a Turkish word signifying land and soil]. (Awetik'ean, *Nor baṙgirk' haykazean lezui,* 1836/1837)
[363] *Bazmavēp,* issue 9 (May 1, 1849).

story of their past. *Bazmvēp*'s notion of attachment to ancestral lands opposed discourses on *pandkhtut'iwn* which asserted that the state of being away from home or being a foreigner enhanced longing and connection to the patria and compatriots. The *Bazmavēp* article claimed that distance from one's patria weakened one's ties to the nation and forefathers.

That there was a necessity to define "love of nation" and "love of patria", and explain where such feelings come from, points to a moment in time when "nation" and "patria" were acquiring new meanings. As I will argue in this chapter, love functioned as a concept that regulated sociopolitical interactions. I trace transformations in the meanings and assertion of love between the 1820s and 1870s to explore shifts in sociopolitical dynamics. Competing deployments of love of nation and patria in petitions and print media point to the multiplicity of discourses around conceptions of kinship ties; they symbolize shifting relations of power within the national community. I argue that mid-nineteenth-century newspapers, periodicals, books and handwritten petitions preserved the ways in which Armenian ecclesiastics and laymen from both rural and urban areas of Van contested and reinvented meanings of love, thus reconfiguring social bonds.

Love served as an emotion of power to carve differences and hierarchies between Istanbul and the provinces. The binary representations of the metropole and the provinces in print media have limited our readings of nineteenth-century Ottoman Armenian history, especially since Armenian historiography has predominantly relied on print media. To overcome these dichotomies, however, we need to use untapped handwritten petitions, even though petitioners utilized similar binaries. It is how we read print alongside handwritten petitions that is critical. I compare the language of handwritten petitions and print both synchronically and diachronically. Such a critical method enables me to unsettle the existing binaries and the

unidirectionality of change, to posit dispersed processes of sociopolitical transformation, which elicit new periodizations.

Thinking about emotions allows us to explore how the notions of nation and patria became part of the linguistic and political repertoire of Ottoman Armenians. I deploy the framework of a grid of emotions (i.e., the intersection of love of God, love of nation, love of patria, paternal love, and brotherly love) which enables an analysis of the changes in the concepts of nation and patria through the shifting subjects and objects of love. In other words, the reimagination of communal relations of the nation, paralleled the affective re-imagination of love. Instead of analyzing nation and patria exclusively through the lens of political thought, which has so far been the predominant approach in scholarly literature, the perspective of love explores how love was utilized for higher purposes, situating nation and patria within a grid of emotions that permeated the everyday lives of Ottoman Armenians.

My analysis of the various deployments of love in petitions shows that in the early nineteenth century petitions from Van represented love as a virtuous and patriarchal act. Love had masculine characteristics that rendered the lover, often a patriarchal figure and the addressee of the petition, powerful. The petitions metaphorically expressed the relationship between the addressee and the addresser as a father-son or leader-servant relationship, thus rendering love either as a paternalistic or spiritual emotion. To love was an act of power. The addressee who was characterized as the lover was always in a position of authority vis-à-vis the petitioner. This authority came not only from his hierarchical position within the church and the communal government of Armenians, but from the fact that the addressee was in a position to help and the petitioners had to represent himself as in need of this help. Being the one who loved within the community also gave one the role of an active member of the community, rather than a passive

member who was only at the receiving end of interactions. Yet, in the mid-nineteenth century, the expectation of who had to partake in the improvement of the condition of the Armenian nation, and what role "the people" should take in communal affairs began to change. Petitioners appropriated the notion of love as an act of power to assert their roles in communal governance and within their national community. Thus, through the changing uses we can examine how relations of power were being reconfigured.

The use of love in the language of power is also legible in the edicts of the Ottoman Sultan, as he articulated his rule over Ottoman lands. In January 1853, *Masis,* the main Armenian newspaper in Istanbul, published the translation of an unnamed edict that the Sultan had sent to the governors of the provinces. The edict stated, "Everybody certainly knows that since I rose to the imperial throne, my dearest wish and my main concern has been the well-being and security of all the lands/countries of my dominion (*tērut'eans amen yerkirnerun*) and of all the subjects who are under my imperial authority's justice and care."[364] The edict went on to state,

> "all the political and financial affairs of the provinces have to be governed according to the statutes of the Tanzimat and our imperial *justice-loving* (*ardarasēr*)[365] wishes. Thus, it is the obligation of each official to govern the affairs that pertain to him based on the above-mentioned feelings (*zgats'um*) and understandings."[366]

The edict laid out the hierarchy of officials in the provinces as well as their responsibilities in governing, particularly dealing with rebels and brigands. In the Armenian translation of the edict loving and caring were integral to the Sultan's language of rule. They emphasize the "justice-loving" and "caring" Sultan as well as the necessity that all Ottoman officials govern not just according to the laws of the empire, but also with the right feelings, which would include caring for Ottoman subjects and loving justice. Clearly the language of love, as the language of

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[364] *Masis,* issue 2 (Jan. 14, 1853).
[365] The compound word *ardarasēr* derives from the word *ardar*, meaning just and sēr meaning love.
[366] Ibid. Emphasis is mine.

relations of power was not just used in Armenian texts produced in the Ottoman Empire, but was a shared language of rule and governance that was deployed in a variety of ways.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, petitioners negotiated their roles as subjects whose duty was not simply to obey their leaders, but also to take responsibly for fellow members of their ethno-confessional community. Through a chronological study of petitions, this chapter shows how in the early decades of the 1800s, the role of lover was reserved for the addressee of the petitioners, while in the 1860s petitioners began to represent themselves as lovers. Between the 1820s and 1840s petitioners often represented love as the ecclesiastic or lay leader's act towards God, or towards the weaker or poorer members of the community. By the 1840s the word nation began to appear in petitions. Over time love of nation and, to a lesser degree, love of patria came to dominate the language of love in petitions. The new register of love signals shifts from religious symbolism to national ones that shape new forms of ties among Armenians.[367] The language of love, moreover, transformed as a variety of members of the community claimed roles as loving participants, voicing their expectations in a reconfigured dynamic of power. Positioning themselves as lovers of the nation or the patria, petitioners carved their roles as citizens rather than subjects.

This transforming language of love in petitions, I argue, circulated among Vanets'i merchants, ecclesiastics and labor migrants. It is true that petitions may not provide a fair representation of what was transpiring in the provinces, as they were not directly produced by the local inhabitants. Yet, although the actual composer of petitions was usually the scribe, the petitions were collectively composed through the collaboration between scribes and petitioners, as the petitioners would hear and dictate parts of the petition. This suggests that the petitioners

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[367] This shift corresponds to Benedict Anderson's notion that nationalism has to be understood within the religious cultural system that dominated notions of community before the national community. Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 12-19.

were familiar with the language used in petitions. Moreover, some petitions were published in newspapers, which would be read out loud. Clergymen like Khrimian and Tevkants‘ utilized the language of love of nation and patria, not only in their publications, but also as they preached throughout the empire. Therefore, multiple possibilities existed through which even the illiterate could be exposed to the language of love and patria, for which reason I argue that the synchronic and diachronic differences in language that appear in petitions reflect shifts that were happening in Van.

Following the chronology of shifts in the language of petitions, I suggest a new periodization, questioning the premise that secularization and representative politics emerged through center-periphery and top-down processes. Complaints against local ecclesiastics in petitions from the 1820s and 1830s demonstrate that petitioners contested legitimacy and representation before the adoption of the Ottoman Tanzimat decrees of 1839 and 1856. In the 1840s and 1850s petitioners began to use the language of love of nation instead of love of God, which points to a process whereby the nation (azg)—sometimes translated as the people and sometimes as the political authority of the Ottoman Armenian community—was becoming the source of political legitimacy. Therefore, I see processes of nation-making, democratization and secularization reflected in the changing language of love in petitions between the 1840s and 1850s, before the adoption of the Armenian National Constitution.

While the language of love was changing, it also became a site for contesting relations of power. In the mid-nineteenth century when Vanets‘i petitioners asserted their roles as lovers, Vanets‘i literati continued to represent love as a hierarchical sentiment dividing the powerful from the community. Ecclesiastic literati like Khrimian and Tevkants‘ insisted that love of nation and patria had to be taught, leaving the impression that love of patria and nation could only be

acquired through top-down processes and didacticism. In turn, they painted an image of Armenia as indigent and stagnant, though morally virtuous due to its ancient history and rural character, which embodied a sense of authenticity. Linking love to knowledge and awarding Constantinople as the center of knowledge, these ecclesiastic literati through their language of colonialism further reasserted the unequal power relations between the Ottoman capital and its eastern provinces. They undermined the agency of the Vanets'is and minimized their voices.

In the 1850s and 1860s, Khrimian and Sruandzteants' deployed love of patria in print media to redirect the attention of Armenians living outside of the eastern Ottoman provinces towards the patria. Khrimian and Sruandzteants', as well as lay literati such a Tigran Galp'akchean aimed to expand the boundaries of nation and patria to break the divisions that existed within the Ottoman Armenian community based on regional affiliations, such as Mshets'is and Vanets'is. Their discourse, however, simultaneously reinforced the dichotomy between village and city, as well as between Constantinople and the patria. Rather, it was always argued that the inhabitants of Armenia had to be given the tools to contribute to the progress of the community. Their discourses turned "provincial" Armenians into objects of governance.

The Armenian word "*hayrenik'*", I have translated as patria is derived from *hayr* (father) with the suffix *eni* that signifies "of the realm of" and the plural ending "k'."[368] I use patria as the Latinized equivalent not only because the nineteenth-century dictionaries provided the Greek and Latin *pater* and *patria* as the definitions of *hayr* and *hayrenik'* respectively, but also because the roots of these words correspond in all three languages. While patria in Latin is feminine and Armenian does not differentiate between genders (with some rare exceptions), patria does not translate into a feminine noun. The paternalistic aspect of the word is vital because it points to the kinship ties of compatriots (*hayrenakits'*)—derived from the words "father" (*hayr*) and tied

[368] I thank Gerard J. Libaridian for helping me unpack this word.

"*kits'*", literally meaning tied through fathers, and of patria as being a masculinized space owned by males.[369] I do not find the terms "homeland" and "fatherland" adequate substitutes for hayrenik' because they include the word land. "Fatherland" and "homeland" accentuate the territorial aspect of the word and suppress the multiplicity of meanings that were historically tied to *hayrenik'*. As can be seen from the dictionary entries at the beginning of this chapter, *hayrenik'* or *hayreneats'* sometimes referred to the town or province that one came from, and at times they referred to one's ancestral fathers that included traditions, language, dialect, food as well as land. The dictionary entry from the 1830s shows that besides land and soil, "*hayrenik'*" could also signify the sky, thus incorporating ancestors who had risen to heaven. Whereas *hayrenik'* was being deployed as a national homeland in the second half of the nineteenth century, it also was being used by lay and ecclesiastic petitioners to identify a regional or localized sense of home.

From Loving God to Loving Nation and Patria

To hear the voices of different strata of Armenians of Van, I examine petitions that Van Armenians sent to the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople and to the Catholicosate of Ējmiatsin in the Russian Empire. A few petitions addressed to local ecclesiastics and lay leaders will also be examined. To a reader of the fast-paced digital age, the emotive language of petition first seems to be a nuisance that delays the reader from deciphering the main requests of a petition, the characters involved, and the demands made. A closer reading of affective expressions, however makes explicit how love mediated relations of power. I read the language

[369] Although Armenia referred to as a mother and the word *mayrenik'* appear in the writings of Tevkants, Khrimian and Sruandzteants'—this represents the exception rather than the rule until the late 1870s. An example appears in Mahtesi Abraham's piece in *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 4 (September 1855), 62. In some other cases "Mayr Hayastan" appears in *Meghu,* issue 14, (1859), p. 106, in a piece dedicated to Khrimian. Further studies have to be conducted to determine when the notion of Mother Armenia (*Mayr Hayastan*) gained prevalence.

of love across time and in time, between the 1820s and the 1870s to tease out the function love played in petitions, and how the beloved and the lover changed over time. I begin by scrutinizing the language of petitions written between the 1820s and 1830s, to set the stage for the diachronic change in the language of affection petitioners utilized.

One of the earliest petitions in my collection from Van belongs to Abbot Ghazar of the Varag Monastery, who in 1833 greeted the Catholicos in Ējmiatsin saying: "I ardently kiss your holy Right [hand]."[370] Such greetings were customary in the early 1800s and exemplified the affection communicated through a kiss. The ritual hand kiss was a performance of respect based on rank and age. It therefore exemplified the affection and respect of a lower-ranked or younger person towards the figure of authority. The abbot praised the "sweet and soft (*amok'eli*) love of holiness" of the Catholicos and his human-loving (*mardasirakan*) characteristics, which would make him a generous person, particularly vis-à-vis his supplicant. He further asked the Catholicos "to open the atrium of the river-flow of your love, full of caring fatherhood, and irrigate the arid field of this servant's heart that is thirsty for love."[371] The letter concluded, "With great eagerness and longing I remain waiting to receive and enjoy your consoling loving writing."[372] In this emotional dynamic, the Catholicos, who represented the highest position of the Armenian Church, was cast as the lover, while the abbot was the beloved. Abbot Ghazar's petition encapsulates the affective language of petitions in the early nineteenth century that relied on notions of fatherhood and love for humankind to praise the addressee.

In the abbot's petition love is the act reserved for higher-ranking clergyman—in this case the Catholicos—to be directed towards those in need, such as the lower-ranking abbot. The petition's language suggests that love was an act of the stronger towards the weaker. But loving

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[370] MM.KD.78.116 (July 27, 1833).
[371] Ibid.
[372] Ibid.

the weak and poor was accompanied by the responsibility to help. Clear identification of who loved whom demarcated the power dynamics between the petitioner and the addressee. Petitions referenced to these relations drawing on the language of kinship ties between father and son. It is only mid-way into the petition that the abbot voices his request. He recounts that the Armenian city-dwellers of Van (*haykazun bnakich'k' k'aghak'in Vanay*) had previously written a collective petition (*mahsarakan grut'iwn*) to the Constantinople Armenian Patriarch demanding that Abbot Ghazar be removed from his position in Yevdokia (Tokat) to serve as an abbot in Varag. Now the Abbot was serving in the Varag Monastery but he complained of the horrible conditions of the monastery, of the poverty of the local populations and the attacks by Kurds. He asked for help and protection from the Catholicos.[373] The Abbot's petition is evidence that already in the 1830s, before the Tanzimat Van inhabitants who petitioned the Patriarchate, demanding who should be their ecclesiastic leader; they had expectations from clergymen in positions of power.

A collective petition from 1825, sent from Kars—a borderland city north of Van—to the local archbishop further confirms the practice of locals expressing their expectations from ecclesiastic leaders. A petition, with seventeen seals and one lone signature, requests the archbishop not to increase the payments that they had to make to the local church. They asked that the fee remain at 230 *ghurush*, instead of the new 500 *ghurush,* that the local ecclesiastic authorities now demanded. Petitioners collectively resisted arbitrary forms of taxation, along with arbitrary love. In the second paragraph, the petitioners from Kars expressed their view on the politics of love, holding their leader accountable for maintaining peace and justice within their community. They declared: "One should not hate ten of his servants (*tsaṙayk'*) and love one; all are the spiritual children of your Dominion (*Tērut'iwn*); of course, when you loved one and hated everyone else there was a lot of grief and mischief and cheating among the peoples

[373] The word "*haykazun*" meant the descendants of Hayk, a mythological figure, the forefather of Armenians.

(*zhoghovrdots'*) and the priests."[374] Love, here, emerges as a responsibility to be performed towards all subjects with fairness and justice. The petitioners took the rather paternalistic and empowering role of advising and teaching their archbishop to behave correctly, thus holding him accountable. Yet, by evoking love, the petitioners asserted the paternalistic role of the archbishop, as he was referred to as the lover. As the petitioners reminded the archbishop that "We are all the sons of your dominion,"[375] they asserted the father-son liaison between leaders and the members of their community, and demanded that the archbishop act according to the ideal role of a father. Although they recognized the hierarchy between church and the people, they deployed the fraternal language to equal treatment. The petitioners identified themselves as a collective—as the "class of the priests and Small and Big people of Kars"—presenting themselves as a community of diverse social strata. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the hierarchical distinctions in the collective signatures would disappear since petitioners would sign as "the commoners/society of Van" (*hasarakut'iwn Vanay*)[376] or "the people of Van" (*zhoghovurdk' Vanay*). This points to the expanding egalitarian notions of the community.

Love expressed in the petitions before the 1850s was not directly articulated as a shared sense of brotherly love among the members of the community. The love of their communal leaders, equally distributed towards all—rather than love between the members of the community—was what the petitioners claimed maintained peace in their community. Love was only expressed as a paternalistic act and therefore as an act of the powerful, even if the leader

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[374] MM.KD.51.212 (March 23, 1825). «Տան ծառայն ատել և մինն սիրել չի լինիր և ամէնն Տէրութեանդ Հոգևոր զաւակն էն. ի հարկէ մինն սիրել և ամենեցունս ատելուդ եղև բազում վիշտ և տարակուսութիւն խարդախութիւն համայն ժողովրդոց և Քահանայից մէջըն»:
[375] «մէնք ամէնքս ալ տէրութեանդ որդին ենք»:
[376] "Hasarakut'iwn" in Armenian is the noun form of the word "common" (hasarak). "Hasarakut'iwn" currently translates as society, but in the mid-nineteenth century it also seemed to point to "the common people" or the "commoners" pointing to the lower classes.

was expected to spread that love equally among his flock. The solidarity among the petitioners was only expressed through their shared act of petitioning and their shared position as sons.

The language of petitions demonstrates that petitions were composed through the collaboration of scribes and petitioners. The petition from Kars began with classical Armenian. As the petition progressed its mode of writing switched into the local vernacular dialect mixed with Turkish words, such as *hesab* (addition, price), *taklif/teklif* (proposal, suggestion) and *ghusur/kusur* (shortcoming).[377] A scribe penned the petition. He began with formulaic salutations that included two paragraphs of panegyrics; the body of the petition drew on the vernacular language of the petitioners. Phrases such as "we are all the sons of your dominion" appeared in the vernacular parts of the petition. These lines were produced in a collaborative mode between the scribe and those few people who came together to prepare a petition. The petitioners must have orally related to the scribe their complaints and demands and the scribe used the petitioners' phrases and sentences, adding his own words and sentences to compose the petition in writing.

In other petitions ecclesiastics pushed forward the interests of their families and children, rather than the community at large. In an 1833 petition addressed to the Catholicos of Ējmiatsin, the priests Pōghos and Sahak from the city of Van asked permission "to go and bless the Armenian people (*azgn Hayots'*) and to collect alms from them."[378] By collecting alms, the petitioners said they would be able to free their families and sons (*ĕntanik's yew vordik's*) from the hands of the unlawful and from hunger. Their justification for collecting alms evokes the obligations presumed and necessitated by kinship relations, whereby the father was expected to love and protect his children and family. The kinship ties that the petitioners evoked related to family ties—in particular those of fathers to their sons, daughters and wives. In this instance, the

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[377] Here where I have provided two different spellings of the word, the first one corresponds to the transcription from the Armenian text and the second one corresponds to the modern Turkish spelling of the word.
[378] MM.KD.78.165 (Nov. 17, 1833).

ecclesiastics speak of their responsibilities towards their families and not towards the Armenian people. When we position the petition of the priests against the 1825 collective petition from Kars to the local archbishop and the collective petition mentioned in Abbot Ghazar's 1833 petition to the Catholicos, we see that in this eastern borderland region of the empire conflicting views about the obligations of the ecclesiastic class towards the people existed. Already in the 1820s and 1830s petitions present the heterogeneity of interests and views in the eastern provinces regarding prioritizing family, versus the larger ethno-confessional community.

The dedication and love of family stand out in another 1839 petition that Abbot Pōghos of the Ktuts' Monastery addressed to the Catholicos of Ējmiatsin. He wrote about a priest named Hovhannēs Manuk, who had fought against Mahmud Khan (a famed Kurdish tribal chief), he and his family had fallen captive to Mahmud Khan. He wrote,

> "They forced him [Hovhannēs Manuk] to renounce Christ and the Redeemer (*azatich'*), and he for the love of his family, and because of the tortures, to save himself from death agreed to renounce [his religion]. … [A]lthough many times he tried to free himself with his family, but it has been impossible. And last year, after many attempts, with the will of God we finally managed to free and bring him to us."[379]

Now, on the priest's behalf, the abbot of the Ktuts' Monastery was turning to the Catholicos of Ējmiatsin because of the threats the priests received from the Muslims (*aylazgik'*).[380] Here, the assertion that Hovhannēs Manuk had converted "for the love of his family" was highlighted in order to gain empathy for his conversion. His commitment to his religious community was cast as secondary to his commitment towards his family, although the petition indicated that his conversion was nominal. Love of family was one of the rare cases in which the petitioners, or those on behalf of whom the petition was written, were portrayed as lovers. But again, as lovers

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[379] MM.KD.99.28 (September 18, 1839).
[380] '*Aylazg*' means 'of another azg'. Azg in this case was used as a community of religious kin, since the word in this era was largely used to indicate Muslims.

they stood as the powerholders within their families, they were the ones who carried the responsibility of protecting their families. Love once again is evoked as an act of power.

Beyond the love between the father and his family, or the ecclesiastic leader towards petitioners or members of his community, love could also be shared among the individuals of higher strata. In 1842, Abbot Gabriel and members of his congregation from Lim and Ktuts' monasteries wrote one of their many petitions in regards to their financial difficulties. They addressed their petition to Yeremia agha who was in Tbilisi. Among other qualifiers they referred to Yeremia agha as "*Aznuazarm*", meaning an honest man of noble background.[381] This word is a compound of "*azniw*", which signifies nobility and "*zarm*" meaning "one branch of a generation, or of a family, of a tribe or of a nation (azg)."[382] They wrote, "we beseech your most honorable Nobleness (*Aznuut'iwn*)" to treat the two vardapets Hakob and Pōghos with "a fervent heart and with *hamshirakan* love."[383] The vardapets went to him to acquire money. The phrase "hamshirakan love" derives from "*hamshirak*", meaning those who have shared the same milk, the same foster-mother or wet-nurse.[384] Thus it evokes a brotherly love, which by the 1840s was a love that could be shared among an agha, meaning a landowner from an upper socioeconomic stratum, and a celibate priest (vardapet), of a higher ecclesiastic rank. Until the mid-nineteenth century, however, it was uncommon to refer to a love shared across socioeconomic boundaries in petitions. This petition is but one illustration of the wide financial network of Armenian monasteries in the first half of the nineteenth century that extended across imperial lines in this case to the Russian Empire. The language of love and respect tied the networks together despite the absence of Constantinople as the mediator. In petitions the language of love that mediated

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[381] MM.KD.102.146 (Dec. 16, 1842). The same matter was addressed in MM.KD.103.277 (Dec. 18, 1842), where we find similar language.
[382] Hayr Manuel Vardapet Jakhjakhean, *Bařgirk' i barbař hay yew italakan* (Venetik: Sb. Ghazar, 1837).
[383] MM.KD.102.146 (Dec. 16, 1842).
[384] MM.KD.102.146 (Dec. 16, 1842).

relationships, whether financial, religious or political in the province of Van and across social and imperial borders.

The appearance of phrases of paternalistic ties in salutations, narratives, petitions (the request portion) and the conclusion of the petition suggests that such articulations were part of the language of petitioners who may not have had the training of the scribe. When petitioners noted why they expected the Catholicos to help them, they referred to his "sweet love of humans" (*k'aghts'r mardasirut'iwn*). [385] In the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s, the affectionate phrases that petitioners used to praise the addressee included "love of humankind" (*mardasirut'iwn/mardasirakan/mardasēr*).[386] "Lover of the humankind" (*mardasēr)* is a compound word that appears in the Armenian liturgy to characterize God.[387] Any churchgoing Armenian would be familiar with the concept as a reference of God; calling someone the lover of the humankind meant elevating that person's virtue to the utmost and ascribing to him as being intimate with God. "*Mardasēr*" derives from "*mard*", meaning human or man, and "*sēr*", which means love. "God-loving" (*Astuatsasēr*) was another compound term used in early nineteenth-century petitions. The word stems from "*Astuats*" (meaning God) and "*sēr*" (love). Such words of intimacy and affection invoked the divine legitimacy of ecclesiastic leaders.

The thirty petitions that I have examined from the 1820s to the 1840s used the concept of love, in particular love towards God to characterize authoritative figures.[388] Petitioners were

[385] MM.KD.102.1 (Dec. 6, 1842).
[386] This phrase appears in the following documents. MM.KD.74.383 (1832); MM.KD.78.116 (July 27, 1833); MM.KD.102.1 (Dec. 16, 1842); MM.KD.102.146 (Dec. 16,1842); MM.KD.103/277 (Dec. 18, 1842); MM.KD.104.34 (Nov. 16, 1843).
[387] *Pataragamatoyts' Hayastaneayts' Aṙak'elakan surb yekeghets'woy. Hayerēn yew Angghierēn. Liturgy of the Holy Apostolic Church of Armenian: Armenian and English* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, St. John's House, Clerkenwell, 1887), 20, 26, 44, 54, 74, (to Christ) 76, 120.
[388] MM.KD.49.275 (Dec. 1, 1824); MM.KD.51.212 (March 23, 1825); MM.KD.74.386 (1832); MM.KD.74.266 (March 2, 1832); MM.KD.74.383 (March 3, 1832); MM.KD.73.176 (May 1832); MM.KD.73.31 (May 20, 1832); MM.KD.74.249b (Aug. 16, 1832); MM.KD.74.249a (Dec. 12, 1832); MM.KD.81.353 (1833); MM.KD.78.116 (July 27, 1833); MM.KD.78.165 (Nov. 17, 1833); MM.KD.79.258a (1833); MM.KD.258b (June 29, 1833);

invariably the weaker actors of the community, represented as the objects of love, never did they identify themselves as God-loving or as lovers of humankind (*mardasēr*). While petitioners were referred to as sons, children, and servants, the addressees were referred to as fathers, thereby invoking a hierarchical relationship between addressee and addresser. Whether it was the father as the figure of authority and addressee of the petition, or whether in reference to the father of a family, he was the father figure bestowed with the role of the lover.

Love of God (*Astuatsasēr*),[389] love of spirituality (*hogesēr* or *sērn srbut'ean*)[390] and fatherly love (*hayrakan sēr*) dominated the semantic field of emotions when Vanets'is described those holding a high rank and status.[391] The corpus of thirty petitions from the 1820s to the 1840s, written from Van or from people who identified themselves as Vanets'is addressing to either Constantinople, the Armenian Catholicosate in Ējmiatsin, or ecclesiastics and aghas in Tbilisi clearly confirms this practice. Until the mid-1840s, petitioners did not use the terms "nation" or "patria" within their language of love. Beginning with the 1840s, the word "azg" appeared at the end of a petition from Van in the phrase "for the glory of the nation (azg)."[392] Although such a phrase does not necessarily make the exact meaning of "nation" (azg) clear, it does signify a shift in the use of nation in lieu of the common phraseology "for the glory of God". Such a deployment of nation marks a moment in time when the Armenian nation's affective role was gaining in value.

MM.KD.91.137 (July 19, 1837); MM.KD.99.28 (Sept. 18, 1839); MM.KD.102.1(Dec. 16, 1842); MM.KD.102.2 (Dec. 18, 1842); MM.KD.102.146 (Dec. 16, 1842); MM.KD.105.302 (Sept. 15, 1843); MM.KD.105.306 (Aug. 21, 1843); MM.KD.104.34 (Nov. 16, 1843); MM.KD.105.317; MM.KD (May 31, 1844); MM.KD.111.330 (Sept. 6, 1844); MM.KD.111.480 (May 31, 1844); MM.KD.111.538 (June 17, 1844); MM.KD.111.539 (June 21, 1844); BNU, CP23/1,028 (March 11, 1849); BNU.CP23/1.027 (Sept. 20, 1849).

[389] MM.KD.91.137 (May 12, 1837).

[390] MM.KD.78.116 (July 27, 1833); MM.KD.102.1 (Dec. 16, 1842).

[391] MM.KD.78.116 (July 27, 1833); MM.KD.102.1 (Dec. 16, 1842).

[392] MM.KD.102.146 (Dec. 16, 1842); MM.KD.111.539 (June 21, 1844); BNU.CP23/1.028; BNU.CP23/1.027 (Sept. 20, 1849). «*i partsans azgis*» This phrase appeared in different variations.

Among the plea letters I have examined from Van, the semantics of love in the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s differed from what followed in the decades of the ‘50s, ‘60s, and ‘70s. Change in language marks the sociopolitical processes of nation-making, secularization and democratization that were taking place in the mid-nineteenth century. The shifts in the construction of compound words most compellingly demonstrate the change from love of God to nation. In an 1844 petition from Van, the compound word “lover of nation” (*azgasēr*) appeared in capital letters characterized an *amira*.[393] In another petition from 1844 “lover of nation” characterized the Catholicos of Ējmiatsin.[394] In addition to the phrase “lover of nation” (*azgasēr*), in the 1850s those “helpful to the nation” (*azgōgut)*, and “caring for the nation” (*azgakhnam*) were among the compound words aligned with the word “nation” (azg). Such epithets were deployed in greetings as well as in other portions of petitions, increasingly replacing compound words joined together with God. Take, for example, “lover of nation” (*azgasēr*) or “lover of patria” (*hayrenasēr*) that replaced “lover of God” (*astuatsasēr*); “chosen by the nation” (*azgĕntir*) took the place of “chosen by God” (*astuatsĕntir*) and “caring for the nation” (*azgakhnam*) appeared instead of “caring for God” (*astuatsakhnam*).[395] The new compound words created a new meaning for the term “lover”. Starting in the 1850s, petitions increasingly emphasized the concept “chosen by the people/nation” (*azgĕntir*) particularly when referring to a *mütevelli* (manager of a pious foundation) and later the Patriarch. The compound words formed with “azg” did not immediately replace the previous vocabulary used in formulaic greetings, which also included adjectives such as the most honorable, divine, graceful, sublime,

[393] MM.KD.111.480 (June 21, 1844).0
[394] MM.KD.111.539 (June 21, 1844).
[395] The compound word “elected by the nation” (*azgĕntir*)—which derives from the verb *ĕntrel,* meaning “to elect”—versus “elected by God” (*astuatsĕntir*), stressed the source of the authorities’ legitimacy.

kind and just.[396] Over the decades, however, even if a petition or a letter was addressed to an ecclesiast, such as the Patriarch, the authors of the plea letters shortened the salutation lines and gradually omitted God and spirituality out of their greetings.

The addressees of these petitions also changed. Earlier plea letters tended to address particular individuals—lay or ecclesiastic leaders, but starting in the 1860s the greetings were addressed to the Patriarch and members of the political assembly (*k'aghak'akan zhoghov*), religious assembly (*kronakan zhoghov*) or national assembly (*azgayin zhoghov*). Particularly the terms "lords" (*teark'*) or "magistrates" (*atenakalk'*) of assemblies were referred to as nation-loving and nation-caring (*azgasēr* and *azgakhnam*). Petitioners positioned themselves as the objects of love, thus cultivating a more direct relationship between themselves and the figure of authority to whom they were appealing, whereas before God was the mediator, he legitimized those in authority to rule. The shift in the positionality of the addressees coincided with the adoption of the Armenian National Constitution in Constantinople in the early 1860s, when a National Assembly of 140 representatives was established. The larger number of addressees could have necessitated a change in the vocabulary of the greetings. But the change from nation to God in compound adjectives of salutations also happened among the petitions that were singularly addressed to the Patriarch of Constantinople. Changes in the formation of new compound words appeared in the 1850s, before the adoption of the Armenian Constitution in 1863; changes in language and meaning of a new conception of authority could not have been a direct result of institutional transformations occurring in Constantinople.

New epithets containing "lover of nation" delineate what the petitioners expected of their authority figures: that they should love God, and love the nation and the patria. Later they would

[396] In Armenian the words include «Ամենապատիւ, Աստուածարեալ, Երանաշնորհ, Առաքելաշուք, վսեմապանծ, Առաքելապատիւ, Պերճաշուք, Ազնուազարմ, Աստաւածազութ, Պայծառափայլ, վսեմաշուք, Գերերջանիկ, ճգնազարդ/ճգնազգեաց, Քրիստոսազօր, մեծահավատ, Արդարազորով, Աստուածազումար, Յարգամեծար, Բարեխնամ, Աստուածապասակ, Գերապատիւ»:

come to require them to be elected by the nation. These loving words point to the obligations assumed to the leadership, as well as the expectations of petitioners from their leaders to help and care for the nation. Although paternalistic aspects of love remained, these shifts in the language of love indicate changes in notions of legitimacy and roles of the ecclesiastic and lay leadership. Affect was the medium through which love of God shifted towards the people or a political elite, responsible for the protection of ethno-confessional boundaries. The modern concept of nation was thus born, true in its infant stage, but directing its political leadership to represent the people rather than obtain legitimacy from God. For Armenians ecclesiastic legitimacy from God would specify a special relationship with God that for ecclesiastics would be obtained through their knowledge of scripture, their ability to read scripture, which was required for them to advance along the ecclesiastic hierarchy thereby cultivating a stronger relationship with God. Obtaining the rank of a bishop would require consecration by the highest office of the Armenian Church, the catholicosate. Of course, these different steps continued to remain necessary for ecclesiastics to enter the church hierarchy, but now it seemed a bishop who was close to the people would garner greater legitimacy. Such was the case with Khrimian for example, whose fame as one who loved and care for the patria and its common people, helped him rise to the position of the Constantinople Patriarchate and later Catholicos of Ējmiatsin. Tevkants‘, on the other hand, was never able to achieve such popularity, as a result he was less successful in his ecclesiastic career.

In the 1830s compound words such as "chosen by the nation" (*azgĕntir)* and "nation-caring" (*azgakhnam*) were absent from dictionaries. Instead the term "chosen by God" (*astuatsĕntir*) and "God-caring" (*astuatzakhnam*) were recorded. While the word "chosen by the nation" (*azgĕntir*) eventually appeared in an 1869 dictionary published in Venice, "caring for the

nation" (*azgakhnam*) and "helpful to the nation" (*azgōgut*) did not appear in dictionaries until the twentieth century.[397] Such absences speak to the novelty of compound words consisting of nation in the mid-nineteenth century. While this absence does not suggest that the ecclesiastics who compiled dictionaries in Venice were unfamiliar with these compound words, it can suggest that they did not valorize these words as did the petitioners. That what mattered for petitions did not matter for ecclesiastic philologists further unsettles the dominant narrative that conceptions of nation and patria, or nationalism and patriotism first developed in the West and then traveled to the East. Rather, these notions circulated through petitions and print, among ecclesiastics, lay elites, merchants and labor migrants, thus launching a long process of the negotiation and redefinition of these words as they reshaped kinship ties and relations of power.

Reorienting Power: Collective Petitions and Love of Patria

Contestations over sources of legitimacy and political agency happened through the symbolic field of emotions that defined the subject and object of loving. With the promulgation of the Armenian National Constitution in Constantinople in 1863, Vanets'i petitioners began to contend for their roles in the Ottoman Armenian community. Negotiation of power within the community can be detected in the language of love that petitioners deployed. Different uses of love of nation and patria became a discursive means for some subjects to unsettle the existing hierarchies within their ethno-confessional community and for others to reassert and extend the existing system of power.

Only 40 out of the 120 lay members of the National Assembly represented the provinces, despite the fact that proportionally there were more Armenians in the provinces than in Constantinople. The unequal representation required novel techniques for the voices of

[397] Gerapaytsaṙ Yeduard Hiwrmiwzean, *Baṙgirk' hashkharhabaṙē i grabar* (Venetik: Surb Ghazar, 1869).

provincials to be heard. Thus Vanets‘i petitioners utilized the rhetoric of compatriotic regional collaboration to exert political pressure on the authorities—whether in Constantinople or in the provinces. As the Constitution maintained that “the power of the National Assembly lies in the multitude of voices,”[398] notables from Van had to now claim that they were not taking single-handed decisions on behalf of the people without consulting the other members of their community. Thus to assert their unanimity with members of their community and to exert their agency, Vanets‘i petitioners turned to the language of love of patria and compatriotism. Petitions from the 1860s point to a shift in the necessity for Armenian authority figures to love their people, to the expectation that the people love one another and support each other.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, to assert their roles and responsibilities towards members of their national and compatriotic communities, Vanets‘i petitioners represented themselves as lovers of nation and patria. I argue here that in contrast to “patria”, petitioners in the 1860s used “nation” to signify a group of people who had to be helped, whose rights the leadership of the nation—be it the administration in Constantinople or the local notables and ecclesiastic leaders of Vaspurakan—had to protect. “Nation” (Azg), especially when capitalized, could mean the administrative leadership of the Ottoman Armenian community as well. In my collection of petitions, the word patria and its associated compounds appeared only in the 1860s. Often the use of these words was predicated on who was claiming an active rather than a passive role within the ethno-confessional community. Petitioners used the words “compatriots” and “love of patria” only when they discussed the agency and actions of Vanets‘is. The emergence of the concept of “love of patria” in the 1860s generated a new site of political power.

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[398] *Azgayin Sahmanadrut‘iwn* (1863), Preamble, Section Z, 12.

The differences in the deployment of "love of patria" and "love of nation" show disparate conceptions of the role of locals from Van concerning the practices of governance, or the management of community. Within my collection of petitions, love of nation*,* rather than love of patria, dominate the language of petitions. The act of loving was now shared among the addressee and addresser and other third parties. This phenomenon points to a contestation over roles played by different strata of a community, in which some insisted that everyone could equally participate in the act of loving. Ecclesiastic and lay elites and commoners of Van and Constantinople negotiated who could actively participate in the affairs of the Ottoman Armenian Apostolic community. I will provide a close reading of a couple of petitions from Van to demonstrate my argument.

In March 1863, a collective announcement from Van most fervently expressed feelings towards the patria. The title reads "Announcement to Constantinople, to the Regal Customs' House, and wherever else, to our migrant (*pandkhteal*) Vanets'i fellow townsmen, honorable brothers of ours, devoted with great, compassionate love and longing for the Paternal bosom."[399] The original word for "townsmen" is *ēmisheri,* referring to the Turkish word *hemşehri*—fellow townsmen. Although *hemşehri* literally refers to townsmen, in this case it signifies fellow men from the region of Van, rather than from the city of Van, as the signatories of the petition came from different regions of the province of Van, such as Gevaş, Artamet, Archesh, and Dzvstan, among many others. In this letter the addressers evoked patriotic and fraternal ties between Vanets'is of the Ottoman capital and those who remained in the province. The patria they had in mind was limited to the region of Van. Distance between migrants and their home province enhanced their sense of belonging to Van as compatriots (*hayrenakts'akan*). The signatures of 150 laymen appeared below the announcement. They represented different villages and towns of

[399] BNU.CP23/1.009 (March 12, 1863).

the Van region, some with official titles such as village head (*ṙēs*) and others without.[400] The signatures were organized according to rank, similar to signatures that appear in Ottoman-Turkish language petitions. The more powerful occupied the higher rows of signatories on a petition. In Ottoman petitions signatures of Muslims appeared above those of non-Muslims.[401] The organization of signatures points to parallel practices and hierarchies within both communities, the Ottoman Armenian and the Ottoman.

Unlike the ritual of a hierarchical listing of signatures, the collective signature of the petition, did not emphasize hierarchical differences and instead intended to emphasize the united community of the local people. The petitioners collectively referred to themselves as "the society/commoners (*hasarakut'iwn*) of the country of Vaspurakan." The use of such a novel signature phrase signals greater emphasis on the ordinary inhabitants of Van as a collective. It also demonstrates the importance of emphasizing that the petition was representing the voice of the entire local population. The use of the term "*hasarakut'iwn*" stands in contrast to hierarchies implied in designations, such as "Great and small people" formerly used in collective signature, say in the 1825 petition from Kars.[402] Whereas, throughout the nineteenth century, abbreviations of "this humble servant" (*khonarh tsaray*) and "this lowly one" (*nuasts*) remained as a marker of individual signatories, designations ascribed to the collective changed. In petitions from the 1850s to the 1870s collective signatures would be replaced by the "commoners of" (*hasarakut'iwn*) a certain locale, with no reference to different strata. Furthermore, despite the differences in the titles of the petitioners, and the unclear rank of their addressees, petitioners evoked brotherly love, implying that such love could be shared across socioeconomic lines,

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[400] Ibid.
[401] For examples see the following petitions sent from Van to the Sublime Porte: PMOA, MVL, 8366 (Feb. 7, 1850); PMOA, A.}MKT.UM, 233/49 (April 19, 1856).
[402] MM.KD.51.212 (March 23, 1825).

rather than from God or the Patriarch to their servants. The transformations in the language of collective representations and the language of love point to contestation and reorientation of power relations occurring on the ground. Of course, this did not signify that the society was becoming egalitarian and democratic, but it demonstrates the petitioners' sense of ideas of popular representation as well as their perceptions that the authorities whom they were applying valued such ideas of representation.

The entire text of the petition deployed a mix of vernacular Armenian and Turkish words. The scribe, however, inserted some sophisticated words. Examples like the inconsistent narration of the petition indicates that the scribe relied heavily on petitioners to dictate their announcements. The paper size of the petition, the use of the vernacular language and references to compatriots (*hayrenakits'*) distinguish this petition from the majority of petitions in my collection. Furthermore, as distinct from other petitions this one addressed those in Constantinople in general, and more specifically the petitioners' brethren in Constantinople. The petition was written in support of the notorious Pōghos Melik'ean, who was at the center of an ecclesiastic conflict, as mentioned in previous chapters. The petitioners opposed their current Prelate Ignatios (Van prelate 1860-1867) whom they criticized for having "no knowledge of political governance." He spoke neither their language, meaning the Van dialect, nor did he speak Kurdish, indicating that he had no local knowledge. Such lack of knowledge meant that he was unable to negotiate with the local Kurdish population. The petitioners complained that his tenure had brought suffering, poverty and loss of property in what they called "our country/land (*yerkir*)."[403] Instead of envisaging the ecclesiastic leader's role as the traditional mediator between the common people and God, his knowledge of classical Armenian, no longer sufficed

[403] BNU.CP23/1.009 (March 12, 1863).

for they expected him to hear and understand the troubles of his ethnic and religious kin in their own language and translate them into political action.

The petitioners thus pointed out that the legitimacy of the clergy depended on their confessional members and on a form of governance that required local knowledge. The members of this Van community in turn valued knowledge of local languages as well as local political acumen on the part of their prelate. They therefore, turned to and pleaded with their Vanets‘i compatriots to "convince the leaders of the Nation" in Constantinople to replace Ignatios with their former Prelate Pōghos, who, they claimed, knew how to put a "sweet image of the Nation (Azg)" before the eyes of the viziers and the Kurds; he knew how to win their hearts! The petitioners concluded by asking their compatriots to listen to their "unfortunate patria's and our weakened voice" and materialize the requests of the Vanets‘is.[404] The Vanets‘is in Constantinople were called to serve as the voice of Vanets‘is at home.

The petitioners' representation of Pōghos shows that they related governance to local knowledge, which would in turn enhance the bishop's ability to render Ottoman statesmen and the Kurds sympathetic towards the Armenian ethno-confessional community, in other words the "nation" (azg). They did not perceive governing as a simple matter of law, but rather a politics, in which feelings would play a central role. They insisted, "If there is true love of nation (*azgasirut‘iwn*) among the Nation then they should be happy" to have such leaders and make sure to place them in positions they merited.[405] Here "Nation" (Azg) in its capitalized form referred to the Armenian administrative leadership in Constantinople: the National Assembly, the Patriarch and his staff. *Azgasirut‘iwn* referred to the affection of the *Nation* (the leadership of the ethno-confessional community) towards the Armenian people—the nation (azg) in the lower

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[404] «Ասոր համար ի փառս Աստուծոյ և ի սէր և յօգուտ Ձեր հայրենի դժբաղդ երկրին մեր նուազեալ ձայնին լսելով մեր այս կարևոր դերը կատարելու բարեհաճեցէք:»
[405] BNU.CP23/1.009 (March 12, 1863).

case). The different meanings reflected in the capitalization of "Nation" (Azg) also appear in the Armenian Constitution of 1863, which point to the prevalence of the two distinct meanings of "azg" based on capitalization.[406]

Love of nation usually signified the obligations of the national leadership in Constantinople and positioned "the people"—and in particular, the petitioners—as objects of love. The petitioners supporting Prelate Pōghos invoked "love of nation" to signify judicious and fair actions of the Armenian political leadership, such as picking leaders based on merit and acting based on the desires and for the benefit of the people. "Nation-loving" meant representing the welfare of their ethno-confessional community. The Vanetsʻi petitioners used the words "nation" and "nation-loving" when referring to their affective ties with Armenians of Constantinople or the Armenian administration in the Ottoman capital or to the latter's affection towards the Armenian people (azg). "Love of nation" carried certain obligations, such as decision-making among political figures that would benefit the people.

Collective petitions also adopted a language that represented the people of Van as active subjects of their community. One such plea letter from November 1864 that expressed local compatriotic bonds, belonged to Mahtesi Sharan Sharanean, Mahtesi Gevorg Khalchean and Mahtesi Martiros Aṙakʻelean: three aghas from Van.[407] This time, as we learn from a note confirming the delivery of the petition to the National Assembly, the aghas had entrusted their petition to Mahtesi Karapet Chitachean.[408] Previously, when they had sent other petitions to the Sublime Porte, they had entrusted their petitions to Mahtesi Astuatsatur, which demonstrates that

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[406] *Azgayin Sahmanadrutʻiwn* (1863). For example, "Every member of the nation has responsibilities towards the Nation, and the Nation on its behalf has responsibilities towards every individual national. Again every individual has rights from the nation and the Nation [has rights] from the individuals." This appears in the first article of the Constitution. It reflects the interdependency of the national leadership (the Nation) and the people (the nation).
[407] BNU.CP23/1.081 (Oct. 12, 1864).
[408] BNU.CP23/1.077 (Nov. 28, 1864).

well-to-do Vanets'is who traveled to Van transported petitions to authorities in Istanbul, in addition to the postal system and the letter-bearer. The petition of the three aghas concerned a legal case through which they explained their involvement in a controversial episode in Van.

Their petition related to a controversy that had arisen around the construction of the barracks. Van, a region bordering Iran and Russia, was a strategic location for feeding and lodging soldiers in the east of the empire.[409] During the Tanzimat period the army depended "on the local notables' social and economic capital to recruit men and supply the army with provisions and credit during the war."[410] By the mid-1850s, some Armenians in Van had decided to build barracks for the Ottoman army. Such a project was undertaken to lessen the weight of feeding and lodging Ottoman soldiers by the local Armenian households. Members of the family, particularly girls, had to be sent away while the Ottoman soldiers lodged in Armenian households. The project of building barracks had given rise to much controversy. The three aghas were accused of being involved in exiling four Armenians who had allegedly opposed the construction of the barracks. One way they could have exiled individuals was through their contacts with local Ottoman statesmen. In their attempt to convince the Patriarchate in Constantinople to release them from accusations, the aghas first attributed the idea of building a barracks to the late Prelate Shiroyean. Describing the suffering that men faced upon the arrival of the army in the winter, the petitioners recounted that Prelate Shiroyean:

> "called us and initiated a meeting to build royal barracks. He made the proposition, and we obeyed his Holiness. And with his ardent demands and counsel, under his presidency we came to an agreement, and certified and sent out a contract with multiple signatures. To advance this proposition *beneficial to the nation [azgōgut],* we did everything we could and we started encouraging everyone to provide charity in accordance with each person's means. And in this way, day by day the steps taken to construct this building advanced and we deemed this service for the *nation and the compatriots [azgi yew hayreneats']* to

[409] Zozan Pehlivan, "Beyond "The Desert and the Sown", 217.
[410] Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin," 6.

> be a virtuous deed pleasing God. All of the *compatriots [hayrenakits']* supported our goal and affirmed their unanimity about building the winter barracks through the contract with multiple signatures […]. Would it have been possible to realize this expensive work that required collecting money and bringing wood, if we had not had a special assembly consisting of *our compatriots*? This was not a secret work among a few people…"[411]

Here the aghas emphasized the values of unanimity, loyalty and cooperation, when it came to decision-making among compatriots concerning the Van community. "Nation and compatriots" being listed side by side suggests the differences between the two. They were not, however, in opposition to one another.[412] The nation was the larger unit; and compatriots consisted of the local community. Their deeds had to serve both local and broader interests as they were to act out of love of patria and nation. In this petition, despite the prevalence of expressions of dedication to nation and patria, God remained integral to the grid of emotions deployed to justify individual deeds. But, we may add, that by saying that they "deemed this service and the compatriots to be a virtuous deed pleasing God" they expressed their sacralized view of nation and patria. Service was not being provided to the church as a means to please God, but to the community at large.

When petitioners claimed their subjecthood they identified themselves as "compatriots" rather than "members of the nation" (*azgayink'*). When petitioners discussed the actions of people, say in supporting the building of barracks and participating in decision-making processes through an assembly, they referred to the people as compatriots (*hayrenakits'*). Their deeds were to be "beneficial to the nation" and they were to act "in service of the nation and the compatriots." However, when petitioners spoke about providing services and help to the people, they used the word "nation". As a nation, the people were assigned in a passive role: they were in

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[411] BNU.CP23/1.081 (Oct. 12, 1864). Emphasis mine.

[412] I started to compare the uses of nation and patria in earnest after reading Gerard J. Libaridian thought-provoking chapter on the matter. See "Nation and Fatherland in Nineteenth-Century Armenian Political Thought," in *Modern Armenia,* 51-71.

need of help and protection of their rights. "All the compatriots supported our goal," the petition read. Thus, as "compatriots", the aghas with the inhabitants of Van became active members of their local community, with responsibilities to help and invest for the common good of the community. Clearly, petitioners understood the power of their local bonds of solidarity, rather than their national ties, giving more weight to their collective voices and agency within their local community.

The petitioners went on to claim that the barracks had helped improve the living conditions. Though pressures on their community had not completely disappeared, their sufferings had diminished. But, when Ferik Pasha had come with his army he noticed that the existing barracks were insufficient for his troops, "he initiated the building of [another] large barracks and Muslim [*aylazgi*] and Christian compatriots [*hayrenakitsk'*] helped quite a lot in the construction of that building."[413] Ferik Pasha was the lieutenant-general of the Anatolian army during the Crimean War (1854-1856).[414] While the petitioners had in mind the Armenians of Van when they spoke of compatriots (*hayrenakits'*), in this instance they also included the Muslims of Van.[415] To indicate their solidarity with local Muslims and the Ottoman state, the petitioners highlighted their cooperation with their Muslim compatriots, rhetorically strengthened their position. The Patriarchate in turn would have wanted Armenian-Muslim solidarity that would be perceived favorably by the Sublime Porte.[416] The petitioners' rhetorical moves of the petitioners' point to their knowledge of imperial power dynamics.

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[413] BNU.CP23/1.081 (Oct. 12, 1864).
[414] Ateş, *Iranian-Ottoman borderlands, 188.*
[415] Other instances of a local sense of compatriots "hayrenakits' Vanets'ik' " or of compatriotic love "hayrenasēr bey" appear in BNU.CP23/1.055 (July 23, 1868) and BNU.CP23/1.076 (Jan. 15, 1865) respectively.
[416] In the 1840s, the Patriarchate had encouraged conflict with Muslims, more specifically with Kurds, as the Porte was fighting against Kurdish tribal chiefs. For example, see Patriarch Mateos's Kondak to the Armenians of the provinces, released on December 9, 1847. A published version of the letter can be found in Avetis Perperyan, *Patmut'yun Hayots'*. 2nd ed. (S. Ējmiatsin: Mayr At'oṙ sb. Ējmiatsni hratarakch'utyun, 2008), 312-317.

In addition to the different roles of the discursive uses of "nation" and "compatriots", petitioners ascribed different meanings to "nation". This we can detect in the rest of the petition, which read:

> "Now the people are completely freed from their previous sufferings. What should we have done, should we have dispersed the unanimity that benefits the nation [*azgōgut miabanut'iwn*] for the sake of the opposition of a few dear individuals? Should we have shattered under our feet the benefit of the general [public]? […] When the late Holy [Prelate] saw that a few people were inhibiting the help to free the nation from its troubles, he counseled them…"[417]

In this communication, "nation" connotes the people, the general public and again it is treated as an object rather than a subject. The petitioners expressed hope that the national leadership's (i.e. National Assembly and Patriarchate) love of nation would allow them to reveal the truth of the matter in support of "the rights of the majority." [418] Love of nation carried with it responsibilities and obligations assigned to the political leadership.

The two petitions from 1863 and 1864 demonstrate that Vanets'i petitioners called on their "compatriots" to participate and enhance their position within their ethno-confessional community. Perhaps it was their direct connection to land and soil, to the patria, being sanctified in print that emboldened their position as compatriots. Rather than relying on their membership in the nation whose institutional leadership was located in Constantinople, Vanets'is were empowered by their local influence.

Love of nation and love of patria mobilized in the language of the petitions point to different roles petitioners imagined to possess within the community. A plea letter from Prelate Ignatios of Van, in support of the above-mentioned three aghas regarding the issue of building barracks, highlights the distinctions in the uses of love of patria and love of nation.[419] Prelate

[417] BNU.CP23/1.081 (Oct. 12, 1864).
[418] BNU.CP23/1.081 (Oct. 12, 1864).
[419] BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.005 (December 1862).

Ignatios was not a Vanets‘i, his position as an outsider was reflected not only in the petitions of Vanets‘is who complained against him, but in the language the prelate used in the petitions he authored. While Prelate Ignatios, justified the construction of the barracks, he related the sufferings of Armenians in terms starkly similar to those of the aghas. Moreover, the prelate never used the word patria (*hayrenik‘*) or compatriot (*hayrenakits‘*). He never claimed to be a compatriot of local Van Armenians, and the latter never claimed to Prelate Ignatios as one of their compatriot.

Prelate Ignatios wrote in defense of the four individuals who were to be taken to court in Constantinople because they were accused of exiling three individuals from their Van community. What stands out when comparing the petition of Prelate Ignatios with the plea letter of the three aghas is that the latter narrated their petition in the first person plural, while Ignatios, even though authoring a collective petition, often veered into the third person, and referred to the people or "my people" (*zhoghovurds*) rather than evoking "us" as a local compatriotic community. Such discursive constructs indicate that the prelate did not see himself as part of the local community. He distanced himself from the Armenians of Van to assert a higher position of leadership and rank. The differentiation also marked the position of the people as those who were in need, rather than the prelate himself, which positioned him as someone who cared about the community, rather than making demands for selfish reasons. Marking one's selfless characteristics was of utmost importance for it also indicated that the person in the position of authority was not corrupt. In other words, he claimed not to have used financial means to enrich himself, something that other ecclesiastics were often accused of.[420]

The Vanets‘is in the petition of Prelate Ignatios stood as objects and rarely as active subjects. The plea letter bestowed agency on the prelate and Ferik Pasha, while it portrayed the

[420] As we saw in the examples of Abbot Hōvsep‘ and Abbot T‘ōp‘uzean in Chapter Three.

people as a passive entity that had to be helped through nation/people-helping (*azgōgut*) tasks. The main plot of the two plea letters was the same; even the details were the same. For example, both mentioned that local Muslims and Armenians cooperated in building the barracks. Yet, although Prelate Ignatios was in support of similar interests as the three aghas, their tone and language differed. The prelate referred to the locals of Van as the "members of the nation" (*azgayink'*) and spoke about helping the nation (azg), which put a distance between himself and the locals of Van, as well as the Armenian leadership in Constantinople and locals of Van. Ignatios minimized the contribution of the Vanets'is to the nation. He addressed the Patriarch and "the benevolent chairmen of the nation-helping [*azgōgut*] political assembly."[421] Although the petition noted that "we suffer tremendously when the army comes to this country," it quickly veered to the third person, describing what was done to the people by the army. When describing what the locals had done, he wrote, "Still the villagers tried to help and with little money they put their carts to use and the city-dwellers provided wood for the Royal building, in agreement with Muslims [*aylazgik'*]."[422] When using the word "*azgōgut*" or helping the nation, the prelate took on the passive voice, and silenced the agency of the people involved in undertaking the task. He wrote, "When this *azgōgut* task was being initiated, many people refused to pay taxes."[423] He ascribed negligence to pay taxes as was their duty in the active voice. At the same time, he did not speak of any action that the local people took out of love for the nation or the patria.

Prelate Ignatios' signature appeared under this letter as "guarantor of the truth" of its content, asserting his position of responsibility and authority in the community. Alongside his signature "The National Assembly of Van and all of the society of Vaspurakan" appears.[424] This

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[421] BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.005 (December 1862).
[422] Ibid.
[423] Ibid.
[424] Ibid.

society of Vaspurakan, referred to the community of Armenians in the Van region, without marking any distinctions of rank, confirmed by the nearly sixty signatures and seals at the bottom of the letter.

The rhetoric of petitions show that by the 1860s representing the unity of one's nation and compatriots were discursive tools used to justify one's deeds and negotiate power. Love of nation and patria stood in opposition to the dishonorable acts of working only for one's personal interest and failing to cooperate with one's co-nationals and compatriots. Claiming to help the nation and love the nation and patria (*azgōgut, azgasēr* or *hayrenasēr*) were a means to asserting one's voice in the ethno-confessional community. In fact, among the main principles of the constitution, one of the responsibilities of the national administration was to "work selflessly for the nation's progress" and "to take care of the needy in a paternal manner."[425] The petitions reveal that petitioners too had adopted such notions of personal responsibilities, but they did not simply use the language of the Constitution. They used their own notions of kinship ties and love to negotiate in their own terms. The discursive processes of petitions shows how the nation and patria were intimately linked to the making of a democratic system, as people negotiated their place in the representative government of the Ottoman Armenian community.

Patria as the Object of Love in Print

The Vanets'i petitioners utilized love of nation and patria to assert their roles and responsibilities they were redefining the power of ecclesiastic and lay authorities within their local or ethno-confessional community. However, if we look beyond petitions and read periodicals and newspapers, the uses and meanings of love of nation and patria corroborate petitioning and deepen our study of those concepts. A variety of genres allows us to complicate

[425] *Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn,* Preamble, Section C (Constantinople, 1863).

the layered negotiations of meaning connected to love of nation and patria. As the lexicon of petitions changed, a vibrant discussion ensued in periodicals and newspapers, like *Bazmavēp, Masis*, and *Meghu*, where a number of articles explain what love of nation and love of patria meant. Vanets'i ecclesiastic and lay literati participated in this discussion through the vehicle of the periodicals *Artsui Vaspurakan* and *Artsuik Tarōnoy*. Vardapet Yeremia Tevkants' even published a textbook titled *Love of Patria of Armenians* (*Hayrenasirut'iwn Hayots'*).[426] These published works, like the *Bazmavēp* article discussed at the beginning of this chapter, traced the origins of fraternal love deliberating their importance, the social dangers of their loss within the family and society at large.

References to patria, compatriots and love of patria that we encountered in the petitions often simply referred to a localized sense of the patria. In periodicals, however, the lay and ecclesiastic literati of Van strove to break away from local compatriotism and the existent dichotomy between patria and the nation. In 1861, Sruandzteants' chastised sentiments of localized love of patria, therefore a localized understanding of patria. He wrote,

> "There are some nationals [*azgayink'*], who although they are city-dwellers [*k'aghak'ats'i*] of Armenia…[they say] 'As I am a city-dweller of Karin I am obliged to my compatriots [*hayreneats'*] that is to help for the progress of the nationals of Karin. The Kharberts'i are a weak and poor people, I am not obliged to help them—I have paid my debt to the enlightenment of Karin. But that is provincialism [*gawaṙasirut'iwn*], not patriotism [hayrenasirut'iwn]. It is because of this that our nation lost its might and was diminished."[427]

Thus, Sruandzteants' cast love for one's place of origin as provincial and not patriotic. This was the weakness of the nation of Armenians. He criticized those who cared only for their immediate community and insisted that Armenians should care for and help Armenians all over Armenia. In

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[426] Yeremia Tēr Sargseants', *Hayrenasirut'iwn Hayots'. Khosk' Yeremia vardapeti Vanets'wots' Tēr Sargseants' Yepiskoposi Tsop'ats' ashkharhi* (K. Pōlis: T. Gēorgay D. Srbaznoyn Kat'oghikosi Amenayn Hayots', 1872).
[427] *Artsui Vaspurakan*, issue 3 (1861), 93.

addition to criticizing Armenians living in the provinces, in the same article he chided Armenians of Constantinople who cared only about their own well-being.

On rare occasions, to explain what he meant by love of patria, Sruandzteants‘ provided some examples to praise and show what love of patria and nation meant. In 1865, Sruandzteants‘ recounted that years ago a few pilgrims from Nor Nakhijevan (in Iran) had donated clothes to the children of the seminary of the St. Karapet monastery in Mush. He called these deeds as love of nation*,* and entitled his article, "Love of Nation." After this gift people began to make donations. Sruandzteants‘ praised the local Mush notable Vardan Mamikonean for his love of nation, as he had also gifted clothes. Later in his article, he praised these patrons for having a patria-loving (*hayrenasēr*) heart.[428] In this rendering of love of patria and nation it was the duty of the well-to-do to engage in acts of loving the patria and the nation.

Khrimian also insisted on the broadening communal sensibilities and explained the subject of one's love of nation. In 1855, he wrote:

> "it is a necessary responsibility of all of our city-dwelling notables [*ishkhan*] who are able to benefit the education [*krt‘ut‘iwn*] of their co-national villagers, because school, education, teacher, love of nation [*azgasirut‘iwn*], are not only reserved for the city-dwellers, God forbid. The one who thinks in this way is outside of the boundaries of nation-loving [*azgasirut‘iwn*], and only thinks in selfish and power hungry terms."[429]

As Khrimian tried to direct the attention of city-dwellers towards villagers, he reified the dichotomy between city and village. Claiming that a divide existed between urban and rural spaces, he aimed to bring Armenian city-dwellers and villagers together. But the responsibility of building the community fell on the city-dweller, just as the responsibility of loving, helping and teaching love fell on the city-dweller. Placing education alongside nation-loving, Khrimian claimed that love of nation was something that had to be taught and brought to villages. His

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[428] *Artsuik Tarōnoy,* issue 4 (June 1, 1865), 73.
[429] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 5 (October 1855), 79.

approach implied that villages lacked the sentiments of love of nation and asserted hierarchies between city and village.

Similar discussions about love of nation and patria re-inscribed hierarchies between notables and commoners. In 1858, Tigran Galpʻakchean, a teacher at the Varag seminary and contributor to *Artsui Vaspurakan,* wrote that covetousness discouraged the notables of Armenia from "helping their friends or thinking about the benefit of the commoners [*hasarakatsʻ ōgutě*]." If notables thought about the commoners, they could help expand the nation's progress by "spreading education throughout all the borders of Armenia."[430] Again love of patria was to be directed from the endowed to the deprived members of the community. These assumptions signified the existence of a linear conception of progress, which according to the literati required education and emotions such as love of nation and patria. Progress would be achieved in stages and the elite wanted to enlighten commoners with education, to cultivate sentiments of love of nation and patria. The economic well-being of the nation was thus imagined as top-down, which would create solidarity, justice and freedom.

In contemporaneous discourses on love and patria produced alongside Khrimian, Galpʻakchean and Sruandzteantsʻ also more inclusive conceptions of community were voiced. In 1858, Harutʻiwn Svachean (1831-1874), a Polsetsʻi, published in his periodical *Meghu* a series of articles under the heading "Nation and Patria Nation-loving" (*Azg yew hayrenikʻ azgasirutʻiwn*). Svachean came from a poor family of artisans and was orphaned at a young age.[431] In 1858 he established the periodical *Meghu*, which was highly critical of the Armenian political and ecclesiastic establishments. In this article, he defined patria as the place one was born and disagreed with those who believed that patria consisted of one's ancestors' homeland. He stated

[430] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 6 (1858), 154.
[431] Grigor Sargsyan, *Svacheaně hraparakakhos-yergitsaban,* (Yerevan: Sovetakan grogh, 1981), 5.

that longing for the patria was actually a longing for the nation (azg), rather than “the places, the cities and villages of the patria.”[432] What Svachean meant by “nation” was one’s relatives, friends and ethnic kin. His definition of the patria differed from the likes of Sruandzteants‘, Khrimian and Tevkants‘, who saw the patria of Armenians as lying outside of the urban centers of the Western domains of the Ottoman Empire. Svachean’s definition of the patria and one’s longing for it, suggests a more essentialized understanding of these feelings, meaning that anyone whether from cities or villages, whether from the eastern provinces or from Constantinople could ‘naturally’ embody such feelings. Svachean’s definition of the patria also differs from the definitions we encountered in the dictionaries published in Venice I have cited at the beginning of this chapter, where patria was tied to one’s ancestors and fathers, rather than to one’s birth and experience. Only one dictionary published in 1869 provides “one’s native province” as the second definition of patria, which indicates a relationship by birth rather than by ancestry.[433]

In Svachean’s view a person’s rank in the community was not the determining factor of an individual’s love and willingness to help the nation. Svachean asserted that a person who loves his nation has to think beyond himself and his family and do his best to help the nation without being asked to do so. Serving the nation should not be accompanied with the will to rule over the nation or receive a high position in it. If one takes such a position, and has to decide on a national matter, one should consult and discuss with the notables and the masses (*bazmut‘iwn*). And if another person has a better idea, then one should accept it.[434] Svachean’s insistence that leaders of the nation should listen to the ideas of the community at large suggests that Svachean had an egalitarian sense of communal participation in the nation’s politics. He aimed to break the spatial

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[432] *Meghu,* issue 1 (January 15, 1858), 1.
[433] Hiwrmiwzean, *Baṙgirk‘ hashkharabaṙē i grabar* (Venetik: Sb. Ghazar, 1869).
[434] *Meghu,* issue 2 (January 31, 1858), 30.

boundaries among Armenians, as well as the hierarchical boundaries that were defined by wealth, urban versus rural life, and through lay and ecclesiastic ranks.

Svachean criticized the undertakings of the literary elite and proclaimed their uselessness to the nation. “And those,” he wrote,

> “who only work for the love of glory, generally, cannot do good for their nation… Such people rather than thinking what the nation needs, want to do something that would be visible. So people who have the ability to write, envying Virgil, Artemis, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Dakitosi[?], Newton, Descartes, want to resemble them or translate their work...without thinking that their nation has absolutely no ability to understand these [works], or is very far from being able to benefit from them.”[435]

Svachean’s criticism targeted Mkhit‘arists though he did not name them, he was critical of the Catholic Armenian order that had established monasteries and seminaries in Venice and Vienna, where some of the earliest Armenian-language books and periodicals were published. Their publications ranged from translations of European works to dictionaries as well as to world and Armenian histories. Svachean’s statement was a stab at Armenians who focused their attention on a cultural renaissance for national progress, rather than the socioeconomic improvement of the masses.[436]

Svachean’s thinking both merged with and diverged from those of Khrimian, Sruandzteants‘ and Tevkants‘, as they shared a dedication towards the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of the masses. Svachean supported Khrimian’s endeavors in the Ottoman eastern provinces, as he described Khrimian’s work in his periodical *Meghu*.[437] Their stance diverged on how this process was to be achieved. In the early 1850s and 1860s, Svachean’s criticism of elitist literary production could have been equally relevant to Khrimian,

[435] *Meghu,* issue 3 (Feb. 15, 1858), 65.
[436] For another take on the tension between the elite and the masses in conceptions of nation and fatherland see Libaridian, “Nation and Fatherland in Nineteenth-Century Armenian Political Thought,” in *Modern Armenia,* 51-71.
[437] For examples see *Meghu,* issue 14 (May 20, 1859); issue 19 (July 10, 1859); issue 127 (March 10, 1861); issue 168 (July 20, 1862).

who reveled in writing Armenian in the classical language, quoting Movses Khorenats‘i and contributing poetry to *Bazmavēp*, the Mkhit‘arist periodical, praising the translation of Virgil in a sophisticated Armenian that would not be legible by or comprehensible to an Armenian speaker with basic education.[438] Yet, Svachean was an ardent supporter of Khrimian, despite the former's criticism of classical Armenian and of the church. While Svachean suggested that the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of the masses was to be achieved through the participation of all strata of the national community, Khrimian, Sruandzteants‘ and Galpak‘chean saw it as a top-down process.

Svachean's *Meghu* published not only in the vernacular language, but often had spelling mistakes. In contrast, during the first years of the publication of *Artsui Vaspurakan,* Khrimian continued to turn into using classical Armenian, deploying sophisticated words to lament the rise of the vernacular, which he actually saw as closer to the language of Polsets‘i Armenians than to the Armenian of the provinces.[439] This assertion about the Armenian language shows that Khrimian also attempted to unsettle the cultural hierarchies between the provinces and the Ottoman capital. In a contradictory way, through his language of colonialism Khrimian also discursively expanded the difference between metropole and the eastern provinces. If in the 1850s and 1860s Svachean's proclaimed goal in *Meghu* was to reach and converse with the

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[438] For example, one of Khrimian's earliest poems in classical Armenian was published in *Bazmavēp* in 1849. It was dedicated to Vardapet Arsen Bagratuni, who had translated Virgil's *Eclogues* in an earlier issue. Khrimian praised him for being able to use Armenian with such talent that a foreigner's words had become the ownership of Bagratuni's soul. In introducing Khrimian's poem, *Bazmavēp*'s editor had mentioned that former translations of Virgil had adopted verses with an Arabic influence, which would explain Khrimian's infatuation with the new translation. *Bazmavēp,* issue 20 (Oct. 15, 1849), 308-310.

[439] In an article entitled "On the Classical and Vernacular Language" Khrimian argued that classical Armenian was the original and pure Armenian, and that the vernacular often veered into foreign (European or Turkish) styles. He wrote that some "try to flourish the vernacular language for the benefit of the commoners, because those books that are written in the classical language benefit only the educated class. Thus the society of commoners (hasarakut‘iwn) remains tasteless and is deprived of the sweetness [of the books in the classical language]." He further claimed that to the provincial Armenians the classical was actually more comprehensible than the current vernacular that was comprehensible to Polsets‘is. *Artsui Vaspurakan*, issue 1 (June 1855), 12-16. Khrimian's insistence on adopting the classical rather than the vernacular Armenian was again framed as an attempt to bring the provinces closer to Istanbul, and to have Istanbul Armenians think about the provincial Armenians.

lower strata of Armenians, the aim of Khrimian in *Artsui Vaspurakan* was to reach the ears of the wealthy and educated Armenians in Constantinople and secondly the notables of the provinces, and to redirect their attention towards the poor and destitute of Armenia. Khrimian's top-down understanding of progress dominated print media not just in the nineteenth century, but also in the subsequent historiography on Ottoman Armenians, which has largely relied on print media. Narratives in print have been read as a reflection of what transpired in the provinces, rather than a mere representation of the provinces.

Svachean insisted that the masses ought to participate in the decision-making processes, while Sruandzteants' had a different understanding of the role of commoners. In 1861, he preached that unity and self-sacrifice as part and parcel of love of patria, to guarantee the progress of every nation. Therefore, he insisted that the religious leaders and notables (*ishkhanakan*) should be headed in one direction. The commoners, like the wheels of the cart, would naturally follow. But according to Sruandzteants' when two leaders take different paths, this is detrimental to the commoners who are drawn in convoluted paths.[440] The metaphor elaborated by Sruandzteants' points to a view of the national community, in which the commoners' basic role was to follow their leadership. As such, Sruandzteants' granted little agency to the commoners in the road to nation-making.

It is possible that the political skirmishes of Van in the 1850s and 1860s regarding the local ecclesiastic leadership had influenced Sruandzteants'. In the midst of the conflicts surrounding the prelate of Van, a strong and unified leadership by the masses seemed to him a way out of ensuing chaos. He called for unity, which he deemed as the only possibility of the progress for the patria (*hayreneats'*). He insisted that a divided community was the reason why the Armenian nation had suffered historically. Through the metaphor of the human body, he

[440] *Artsui Vaspurakan*, issue 3 (1861), 91.

explained the divided condition of the current patria and nation of the Armenians, and why a disjointed body could not function. Such views on the role of the Armenian masses found their way into the 1863 Armenian National Constitution. In its preamble the constitutions stated that the members of the nation (*azgayink‘*) had the responsibility to “obey with love” decisions made by the national leadership.[441]

Although Khrimian and Sruandzteants‘ desired provincial Armenians to obey their leaders—the leadership in Constantinople—they spoke at length of the responsibilities and obligations of Polsets‘i Armenians towards the provincial Armenians in their patria. Sruandzteants‘ insisted that

> “The residents of Armenia are owed a great debt by those who migrated. They preserved the dissolved base of the unity of our nation. I mean our paternal countries. If they had also migrated, now Armenia would have even lost its name among the nations and when we would read our histories, we would consider it to be unbelievable or purely a matter of imagination.”[442]

It is clear that for Sruandzteants‘ the ancestral land and connections with the land were of utmost importance in order for the nation to survive. History alone could not make a nation. The material connection provided by land was more powerful, than an abstract connection through history. Armenians residing in the provinces represented the last vestige of Armenianness in these lands; that was their contribution, everything else had to be taught to them.

Khrimian preached to “Armenian sons” who lived in places, like Constantinople, where they lived in prosperity. He recognized that these Armenians would not have been as prosperous if they had remained in their patria. Khrimian called people to embrace their patria, “the desired Armenia,”[443] to a land whose vitality was identified through its fourth and fifth-century heroes and educators, such as St. Mesrop, St. Sahak, Movses Khorenats‘i, Nerses Partevakan, among

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[441] *Azgayin Sahmanadrut‘iwn Hayots‘, Nizamnamēi millēti Ērmenean,* (K. Polis, [n.p.] 1863), 11.
[442] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 3 (1861), 91.
[443] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 8, (Jan. 1856), 113. «ցանկալին քո Հայաստան».

others. He called on Armenians in "foreign lands" to return to the "bosom of their fathers and leave the fawning ease of Babylon."[444] Through praises of the patria and the love for it, Khrimian also inculcated love for simplicity rather than luxury. Praising Armenia, Khrimian valorized the rural lifestyle. He wrote:

> "Oh, how much joy I have felt in my heart in that place and I wish that the Artsiw (Eagle) [i.e. Khrimian] would return to his nest on the joyful shores of the Euphrates [river] and that he would live there in the plain of the rural lifestyle that is perceived as inglorious. Ay, I wish I would be given to the motherly bosom of Euphrates where being fondled as a child I would endlessly suck the milk and honey that abundantly sprang out as in the Promised land."[445]

Such a feminized rendering of Armenia represented as motherland, evoke a return to the womb. Within the context of Dutch colonialism, Ann Stoler calls such discourse "rural romance," which she says was "part of a reformist vision across the colonial globe."[446] It was also a discourse that intended to boost agricultural productivity by inculcating "love for the soil" and beat poverty, which was a concern for Khrimian as well.

Despite cities like Van and Karin (Erzurum), Khrimian recognized that rural lifestyle was denigrated by the metropole. He knew this from his own experiences in Constantinople, where the local Armenians not only dismissed the rural but *Hayastants'is* in general, that is those coming from Armenia, with a sense of superiority.[447] To valorize Armenia, the rural and the simple had to be recognized. Yet, discussions surrounding the simplicity of rural life in the press erased the very existence of urban centers in the provinces; the press minimized the complex political negotiations occurring on the ground in Van and through the pandukhts of Van in the

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[444] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 8 (Jan. 1856), 117.

[445] *Artsui Vaspurakan*, issue 10 (March 1856), 146. «Վաշ, քանի՜ բերկրութիւն զգենոյր սիրտ իմ անտանօր եւ երանի լինէր Արծուոյն թէ զբոյն իւր եղեալ առ զուարճաւէտ ափամբ եփրատայ յաւէրժաբար բնակէր ընդ անշուք կարծեցեալ դաշտավայր գեղջկական կենցաղավարութիւնս։ Ա՛հ, ո՜ տայր ինձ 'ի մայրենի գիրկն Եփրատայ տղայապէս զգուեալ հանապազ ծծէի զկաթն և զմեղր. Որ բղխէին առատօրէն իբրու զերկիրն Աւետեաց։»

[446] Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 110.

[447] For more on the diminutive connotation of Hayastants'i see Libaridian, "Nation and Fatherland," 58-61.

Ottoman capital. News about such political conflicts was absent from Khrimian's periodical *Artsui Vaspurakan*.

Khrimian differentiated between his co-nationals of Biwzandion (Istanbul) (*hamazgi Biwzandats'is*) and his "migrant compatriots" (pandukht *hayrenakits'*).[448] He wrote:

> "A majority of Armenian migrants [*gaght'akan*], having met good luck in foreign lands have also acquired happiness, some by becoming wealthy merchants, others through princely opulence, others with great estates [*kaluats*] and with other different kinds of successes. With this they consider themselves happier; that with a secure freedom and peace they enjoy the benefits that they have."[449]

He went on to ask how it was possible to leave the prosperity of Constantinople and return to the harsh conditions of the patria. He understood and deemed it natural that people wanted to escape danger, but they should not escape the "misfortune of their patria [*hayreneats']* […]. Especially when people live in free cities without experiencing hardship and enjoy happy, quiet and peaceful lives, how responsible are they to help the poor, destitute and suffering peoples of the realm of their fathers [*hayreneats' zhoghovurdnerun*]."[450] Here, Khrimian implied that Istanbul was a free city, free from the attacks and oppression of Kurds, whom both Khrimian and Sruandzteants' blamed for the condition of Armenians in the eastern provinces. But Armenians in Constantinople were also perceived as free because of their ability to receive education, where laws were enforced, justice achieved and people lived in economically prosperous settings. Economic and political inequalities did exist, but Khrimian justified the role of Constantinople as the ruler of the eastern provinces. The lack of safety and economic opportunities left Armenia underpopulated in need of help, education and care.

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[448] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 12 (May 1856), 179.
[449] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 12 (May 1856), 185.
[450] *Artsui Vaspurakan*, issue 12 (May 1856), 186.

For Khrimian love of patria was about “turning the hearts and spirits” of those living outside of the patria to direct their material gains towards nurturing their patria.[451] The economic possibilities that existed in Constantinople had drawn people away from the provinces, from the ancestral lands of Armenians. In an article entitled “Unanimous Love,” Khrimian praised the plethora of societies that Armenians had formed in different places, and attributed this “to the honest spirit of camaraderie” that was spreading education (*usum*). He lamented, however, that this phenomenon was present only in well-known cities, “but in the different provinces of Armenia in general and in the Armenian [*hayazgi*] cities and large villages this love of camaraderie has not been kindled yet. But the nation-loving [*azgasēr*] souls wait to hear and wish to hear, if a particular town, or village has established a society.”[452] Khrimian praised a group of people who founded the “Ararat bees society” in Üsküdar, a neighborhood on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, to improve education (*usum*): “But the patria-loving [*hayrenasēr*] heart in this sweetness also feels bitterness when he sees these Armenian-born bees of Ararat being expelled in swarm from the land that fed them familial love, [and that they have] put their beehives on foreign lands to make honey again.”[453] Khrimian called for help and camaraderie to be directed to the provinces, the patria. Khrimian assured his readers that if Armenians worked hard to raise “the light of wisdom” and defeat ignorance, God would love them. He told them that God loved Armenians twice as much as the Jewish nation—which, he argued, was obvious because God gave the Jews a land with a dry climate, while God gave an amazingly fertile land to the Armenians.[454] In Khrimian’s discourse the soil of Armenia not only served to inculcate love among Armenians who were understood to be connected through the land of Armenia, but it

[451] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 1 (Jan. 1858), 11.
[452] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 4 (September 1855), 62.
[453] *Artsui Vaspurakan,* issue 4 (September 1855), 53.
[454] *Artsui Vaspurakan*, issue 5 (1858), 135.

also offered a means through which the nation of Armenians could channel divine love. Deploying such a language Khrimian also rendered the land of Armenia sacred.

Love of nation and patria was not a singularly Armenian phenomenon in the Ottoman Empire, but rather were part of a language that circulated across ethno-confessional lines. Yet the meanings given to words of love fluctuated synchronically and diachronically as I have shown in this chapter. The same can be said for Ottoman-language texts in this period. They also gained different layers across linguistic communities. Khrimian's contemporary, Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1883), a Christian scholar from Lebanon also "linked education to the production of love of nation." Unlike Khrimian, however, al-Bustani "saw love of nation as an expression of inter-confessional friendship (*mawadda*)."[455] As Ottoman historian, Carter Findley points out, the word "*vatan*" itself was changing meanings in this period, from being a localized sense of one's home or country, to that of fatherland.[456] An Armenian handwritten translation from the nineteenth century of the *Hatt*-ı Şerif of the *Gülhane Decree* of 1839 from the nineteenth century points to a different understandings of patria. [457] The *Gülhane* Decree declared that when there is security of property then the feelings for state, people/nation, and love of patria (*devlet ve millet gayreti ve vatan muhabbeti*) would increase.[458] In Armenian this was translated as *petasirut'iwn, hayrenasirut'iwn and azgasirut'iwn:* state-loving, patria-loving and nation-loving. The translation of the phrase "*muhâfaza-i vatan için asker vermek âhâlinin farîze-i zimmeti ise de,*"

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[455] Bashkin, *The Arab World,* 140. Bashkin explains this view of love of nation as a reaction to the massacres of Christian in Lebanon in 1860.
[456] Carter Vaughn Findley, "Tanzimat," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, Vol. 4, ed. Resat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 29. For a brief discussion of the meanings of *vatan* and *millet*, and the emergence of *patriotism* in the Ottoman Empire, see Roderic Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923: The Impact of the West,* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990), 88-89, 244.
[457] For the Armenian translation see BNU.P.i. 2/7 Bulles, décrets, appels des Catholicos et des Patriarches. For the original version of *Hatt-i Şerif* I have used the version provided in Halil İnalcık and Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu, eds., *Tanzimat Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmperatorluğu* (Türkiye Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Ankara, 2006): 13-16.
[458] It will be beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss what was meant by *millet* in the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* of 1839. For a discussion see Johann Strauss, "Ottomanisme et 'Ottomanité': Le Témoignage Linguistique," in *Aspects of the Political Language in Turkey, 19th-20th centuries,* ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 2002), 15-39.

meaning "even if it is the duty of the people, as protected subjects, to provide soldiers for the protection of the patria /*vatan*," *vatan* referred to the Ottoman patria. Patriotism in the Gülhane Decree was limited to an understanding of military commitment to the patria. However, the Armenian version in this case translated *vatan* as *yerkir* (country), the very word that it used to translate *memleket. Hayrenik'* (patria), unlike *yerkir*, would have emphasized an affinity to land through kinship ties, which evidently was not how the translator perceived Armenian ties to the Ottoman Empire in its entirety.

The one orphaned emotion appearing in the *Hatt-i Şerif* is *petasirut'iun/devlet gayreti*/love of state. This translation of the Tanzimat decree, into an Armenian text, is unique in its use of this compound word within Armenian texts from this period. In fact, the word *petut'iwn/*state itself was rarely used in Armenian print media and handwritten petitions in the mid-nineteenth century. Instead, Armenian-language texts used the word *tērut'iwn,* which can be translated as rule, or dominion. The frequency of usage of *terturt'iwn*/dominion as opposed to *petut'iwn/*state points to continued perceptions that the empire was being ruled, rather than governed.

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In this chapter I provided a glimpse of the cultural work and the codification of emotions in relation to "nation" and "patria" that over the course of five decades turned these concepts into affective ties. In other words, the language of love iterated in print and petitions allowed the terms "nation" and "patria" to turn into notions that would embody a response. I have described the linguistic qualifications of emotions and the registers of feelings to show how this language was used by particular subjects to achieve specific goals.[459] "Nation" and "patria" accumulated

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[459] It is through this process that the move occurs from emotions to affect. As Charles Hirschkind describes "Affects are part of the presubjective interface of the body with the sensory world it inhabits, a linkage registered at the level

affective qualities and permeated everyday lives of people through discourse, debates and contestation of meanings. As Anderson reminds us "nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love."[460] But it is equally important to note that the language used to render nation affective was also prevalent in Christianity that also propagates self-sacrificing love. The affective language of nation and patria built on borrowed from the cultural system of Christianity. As such, I have tried to explain the coming of the nation, not through "consciously held political ideologies," but with the large cultural system that preceded it, out of which—as well as against which—it came into being."[461]

This chapter has demonstrated that even before the 1839 and 1856 decrees when the Tanzimat was adopted, Vanets'is questioned the legitimacy of their community leaders—in particular ecclesiastic leaders. Such instances point to imperial dynamics, outside of Constantinople, that triggered reforms that the Ottoman state came to adopt during the second half of the nineteenth century. Similarly, the petitions I examined suggest that processes of nation-making and secularization emerged in the 1840s, as the Tanzimat reforms were being adopted. The simultaneity of changes in the language of love in petitions and the appearance of Ottoman decrees challenges the claim that the Tanzimat initiated processes of secularization and nation-making, as well as demands for representation. The chapter does not explore why such transformations began in the early nineteenth century. Instead, I question the West-East and top-down paradigm that scholars have deployed to explain the processes of modernization. Moreover, I have shown that the language of emotions was mobilized to shape the concepts of

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of the visceral, the proprioceptive, and other sites where memory lodges itself in the body….Emotion, on the other hand, refers to culturally qualified affect, affect elaborated and codified within sociolinguistic frames, inscribed within scripted action-reaction circuits, and made the property of a subject inhabiting a world of constituted objects and goals." Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 82.

[460] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 141.

[461] Ibid 12.

nation and patria that emanate from the participation of people of different social backgrounds who negotiated their positions within their community. The paternalistic language of love drew from the church the language of love for God to turn that love toward nation. Some Vanets‘i petitioners and Polsets‘i literati, however, began to challenge the paternalistic language of love, instead evoking a more shared and egalitarian sense of brotherly love.

Chapter Five

Representing the Voices of “the People”: The Pandukhts of Constantinople (1850s-1870s)

Pandukht: One who has moved away from his/her paternal country: wandering in foreign lands. Banished, traveler, guest, outsider, foreigner, *gharib*,[462] *yabancı*.[463]

–*Nor baṙgirkʻ haykazean lezui*, 1837

Pandukht: Outsider, foreigner, *gharib*, *yabancı*.[464]

–*Aṙdzeṙn baṙaran Haykazean lezui,* 1865

In the 1850s and 1860s, as the governance of the Ottoman Empire was turning towards representative institutions, Armenian petitioners, authors in the print media, and protesters on the streets contested as to whose voice should matter in decision-making processes regarding ethno-confessional matters. Pandukhts from Van in Istanbul protested, submitted letters to print publications and sent handwritten petitions to the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate asserting their voices in matters concerning their local communities in Van and Aghtʻamar. Pandukhts highlighted the necessity to hear “the voice of the people” within representative bodies: the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate, the National Assembly, and the local prelacies as well as the Ējmiatsin Catholicosate. They not only espoused ideas of the Enlightenment and modernization regarding political representation, but also acted on them. The voices of Vanetsʻi pandukhts became vital for the legitimacy of those occupying the positions of prelate and catholicosate in Van.

Armenians of the nineteenth century used the word “pandukht” with a variety of meanings. As the Armenian dictionaries cited above show, a pandukht signified anyone away

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[462] The plural of *gharib*, *gureba*, in Ottoman state documents was used to identify labor migrants. See PMOA, NFS.d, 3730/3731. I thank Zozan Pehlivan for sharing with me her transcription of this document.

[463] Որ հեռացեալ ի հայրենի երկրէն՝ յօտար աշխարհս դեգերի. Վտարանդի, նժդեհ, եկ. Դրսեցի. Օտարական. Ղարիպ, եապանճի.

[464] Gharib and yabancı are both Turkish words meaning stranger and foreigner respectively. Պանդուխտ: դրսեցի, օտարական. Գարիպ, եապանճը.

from home regardless of occupation. In the dictionaries the sense of foreignness, rather than a socioeconomic belonging, was the defining feature of a pandukht. The words "pandukht" and "pandkhtut'iwn" (the state of being away from home or in a state of foreignness) appeared in various genres of communication, including newspapers, petitions, songs, poems, novels and memoirs. Often the words appeared as tropes that symbolized the melancholy of someone away from home.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the dominant use of the word pandukht in print media was to delineate labor migrants. One reason for this shift in emphasis is that the majority of pandukhts—people who were away from home—in Constantinople were labor migrants. In this case, pandkhtut'iwn referred to the large number of young Armenian men leaving the eastern Ottoman provinces to work in metropolitan cities like Constantinople, Izmir, Aleppo, and Tbilisi, among other cities.[465] For the Armenian ecclesiastics and laymen, pandkhtut'iwn came to be seen as a significant problem facing Ottoman Armenia.[466] Ecclesiastics, such as Bishop T'ōp'uzean of the Lim Monastery and Prelate Ignatios of Van, who wrote petitions to the Patriarchate, complained of the terrible condition of the wives and children of labor migrants back at home. Khrimian in *Artsui Vaspurakan* lamented that when locals of Armenia migrated, their lands stayed untilled and their abandoned properties were taken over by Muslims. The pandukht as a figure of anxiety has also dominated Ottoman Armenian historiography.[467]

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[465] Christopher Clay, "Labor Migration and Economic Conditions in Nineteenth-Century Anatolia," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34.4 (1998): 1-32.
[466] Cora describes the anxieties connected to labor migration in the late nineteenth century, particularly vis-à-vis the perceived breakdown of the patriarchal home as males left their homes to work in port cities like Izmir and Istanbul. (Cora, "Female Labor, Merchant Capital and Resilient Manufacturing", 376-377); This anxiety was present in the writings of Khrimian and Sruandzteants' since the 1850s and 1860s.
[467] See Ṙobert T'at'oyean, "Mush-Sasun-Bitlis-Pandkhtut'iwn, artagaght', hayrenadardzut'iwn," *Houshamadyan* (Feb. 15, 2018) http://www.houshamadyan.org/arm/mapottomanempire/bitlispagheshvilayet/sassoun/locale/populationmovements.html (Accessed Feb. 28, 2018); *Vahram L. Shemmassian,* "The Sasun Pandukhts in Nineteenth-Century Aleppo," in *Armenian Baghesh/Bitlis and Taron/Mush*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2001),

The various meanings of "pandukht" delineate the different interpretations of the agency of pandukhts in historical processes. If we consider pandukhts as a community of labor migrants who were poor and engaged in menial jobs, their voices remain absent from historiographical narratives.[468] But if we study pandukhts as a community of outsiders in Constantinople made up of merchants, students, ecclesiastics and labor migrants, their potential to shape political and cultural processes surfaces. Through such networks of pandukhts in Istanbul, labor migrants became the political intermediaries for Van.

Recent Ottoman historiography provides us with a multi-layered and complex picture of the lives of multi-ethnic migrants in their host-cities (mainly in Istanbul). This body of scholarship aims to understand how the networks of migrants shaped their lives in Istanbul and to examine Ottoman governance of migrant communities.[469] Few, however, have studied the role of migrants as social and political agents of transformation on an imperial scale.[470] To explore

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174-189; Florian Riedler, "Armenian labour migration to Istanbul and the migration crisis of the 1890s," in *The City in the Ottoman Empire: Migration and the Making of Modernity,* ed. Ulrike Freitag, Malte Fuhrmann, Nora Lafi and Florian Riedler (New York: Routledge, 2011), 163; Vazken Khatchig Davidian, "Imagining Ottoman Armenia: Realism and Allegory in Garabed Nichanian's Provincial Wedding in Moush and Late Ottoman Art Criticism," *EAC* 6 (2015): 155-244.

[468] It must be noted that Shemmassian does point out that pandukhts voiced "the plight of the miserable inhabitants of the hinterland" (176, 185), that they established foundations to expand education in their home regions (178), made donations to different causes (186), and finally fought to rescue Armenians from the genocide (188). Such efforts, however, are only explained through their unconditional dedication to their fellow countrymen (in this case the Armenians of Sasun). The purpose of such narratives is to endow pandukhts with a sense of heroism almost to the degree of sanctification, rather than to explain broader socioeconomic processes. (Shemmassian, "The Sasun Pandukhts in Nineteenth-Century Aleppo").

[469] For examples see Cengiz Kırlı, "A Profile of the Labor Force in Early Nineteenth-Century Istanbul," *International Labor and Working-Class* 60 (Fall, 2001): 125-140; Betül Başaran, *Selim III, Social Control and Policing in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century: Between Crisis and Order* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014). David Gutman's work, which deals with matters of governance vis-à-vis migrants, stands out as he considers transnational migration and return migration, and looks at Ottoman governance outside the boundaries of Istanbul. See "Armenian Migration to North America, State Power and Local Politics in the Late Ottoman Empire," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34.1 (2014): 176-190. Christopher Clay focuses on the causes of migration from the eastern provinces to Istanbul as well as remittances sent back home in "Labor Migration and Economic Conditions." Cora in "Female Labor, Marchant Capital, and Resilient Manufacturing" discusses the rise of female labor in the manufacturing sector of Erzincan that emerged partly due to labor migration and the resulting absence of men in the province.

[470] Florian Reidler points to instances of the political engagement of labor migrants (243) and suggests that labor migrants in Istanbul engaged in "the process of the formation of nation and nationalism," however this is not fully demonstrated in her chapter. "Public People. Temporary Labor Migrants in Nineteenth Century Istanbul" in *Public*

the lives of travelers and migrants within the broader imperial dynamics, this chapter will focus on how pandukhts from Van deployed notions of regional ties to negotiate relations of power, to raise questions of legitimacy and thus to engage in processes that I argue were part of the emergence of representative politics within the Ottoman Empire.

The urban set-up of Constantinople, the occupational and cultural ties among Vanets'i pandukhts served to strengthen both regional ties and cooperation. The acceleration of movement and communication, newspapers and collective petitions, along with the large presence of Vanets'is in Constantinople, I argue, provided the pandukhts, as representatives of their home communities, the opportunity to step forward as the public voice of Van. My corpus of petitions show how pandukhts, through their presence in the Ottoman capital, advanced notions of popular representation. By popular representation I mean the insistence of Vanets'is on having the voice of the majority of Van Armenians be the primary determinant in appointing ecclesiastic leaders. I highlight the participation of pandukhts, including merchants, students, ecclesiastics, and labor migrants in the emergence of representative politics. While pandukhts themselves claimed political ground, however, the discursive representations of pandukhts depoliticized them. In print media pandukhts were deployed as a discursive trope that represented the patria (Ottoman Armenia) as stagnant, indigent and powerless vis-à-vis Istanbul, while simultaneously configuring Armenia as an object of longing. The migration of Vanets'is empowered them and gave them political voice, but it simultaneously produced discourses of colonialism that disempowered them—and indeed disempowered Armenia itself, represented through the figure of the pandukht.

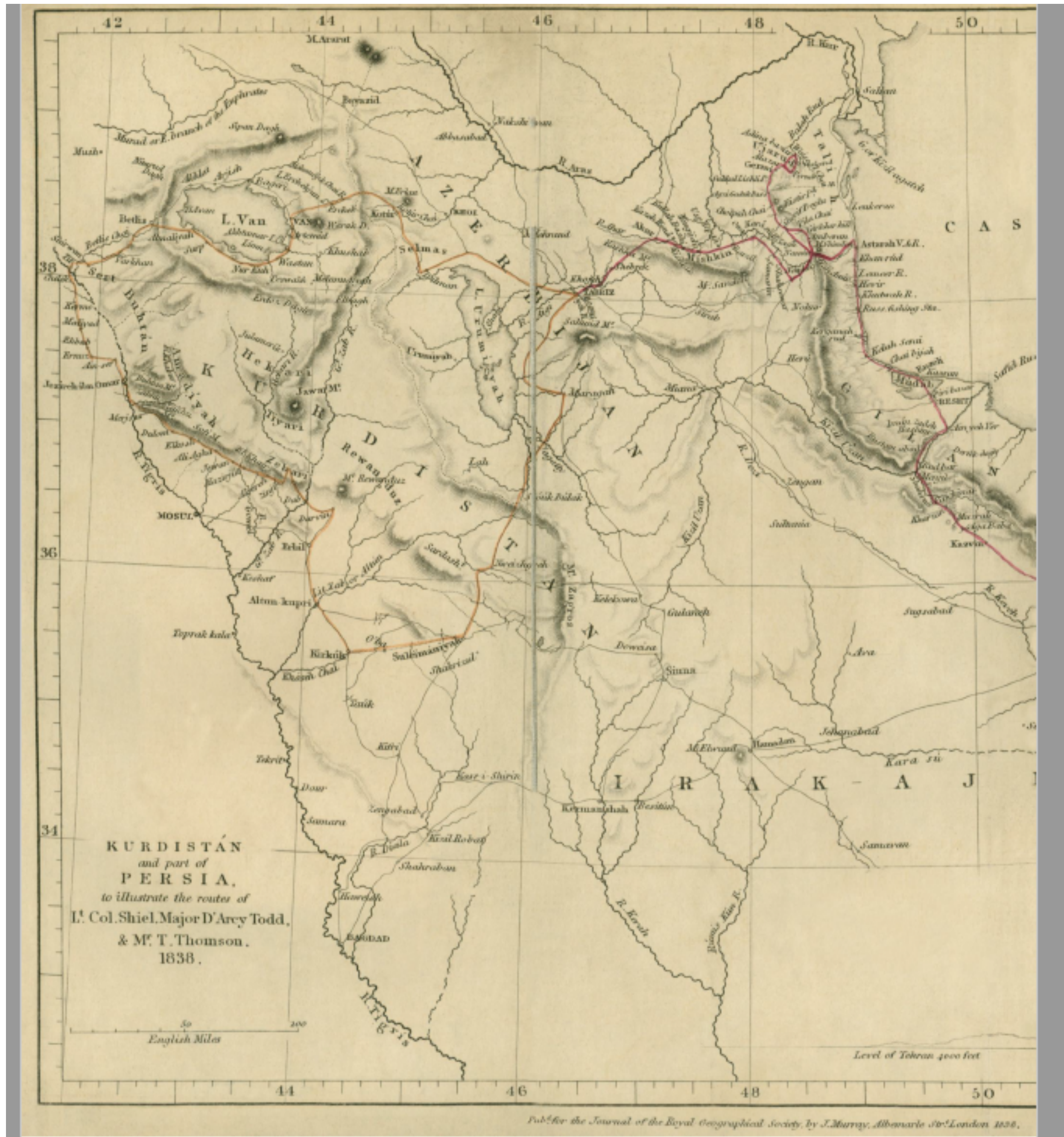
Istanbul: Spaces and Spheres of the Urban, ed. Frank Eckardt and Kathrin Wildner (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015), 233-254.

The Lives and Labors of Pandukhts in Constantinople

In 1836, the first steamship appeared on the Black Sea, run by a British company that served the Istanbul-Samsun-Trabzon line. Within the next few years Ottoman, Austrian, French and Russian companies also opened steamship lines, which served Trabzon—a port city in the north-eastern region of the Ottoman Empire.[471] Since the introduction of the steamship on the Black Sea in the mid-1830s the journey between Van and Istanbul accelerated. At this time, Trabzon became a vital port for European trade with the eastern Ottoman provinces and particularly with the city of Tabriz in Iran.[472] In 1836, it took six days to get from Tabriz to Van.[473] The shortest way to travel from the city of Van to Istanbul was by boat across Lake Van to the town of Tadvan on the western side of the lake. (See Map 3)[474] After crossing the lake, people would travel by horse and caravan from Bitlis to Erzurum and then Trabzon. From there, the trip to Istanbul would continue by steamship.[475] The fastest a person could travel from Van to Istanbul in the mid-nineteenth century was estimated at three weeks, whereas before the appearance of the steamship the journey had taken seven to eight weeks.[476] The decrease of travel time by half allowed speedy contact with various parts of the empire and particularly with Constantinople.

[471] A. Üner Turgay, "Trabzon," *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center) 16.4 (Fall 1993): 445.
[472] The increase in trade started particularly in 1832, when the Russian Empire increased regulations and duties on imported goods at the Port of Odessa in order to increase domestic manufacturing. "Traders, thus discouraged from using the Redout Kale-Tiflis-Caspian Sea to Persia route, changed to a southern course, the Trabzon-Erzurum-Tabriz route." This boom of trade through Trabzon continued until the late 1860s. Turgay, "Trabzon," 442, 452.
[473] J. Shiel, "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz, Through Kurdistan, via Vân, Bitlis, Se'ert and Erbil, to Suleïmaniyeh, in July and August, 1836," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London,* Vol. 8 (1838): 54-60.
[474] A-dō, *Vani, Bit'lisi yew Ērzrumi Vilayēt'nerě: usumnasirut'ean mi p'ordz ayd yerkri ashkharhagrakan, vichakagrakan, irawakan yew tntesakan drut'ean* (Yerewan: Kultura, 1912), 12.
[475] In the seventeenth century Jean Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1689) wrote that while traveling to Van from Diyarbekir to Bitlis the traveler passed through Tadvan. From there one could travel by boat to Van, which would take 24 hours, or by horse, which would take eight days. Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Les six voyages de Jean Baptiste Tavernier en Turquie, en Perse et aux Indes* (Paris 1676), 275-276.
[476] Clay, "Labor Migration and Economic Conditions," 7-8.

Figure 3: Map of Colonel Shiel's Journey: The Road from Tabriz to Van



Source: J. Shiel, "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz."

Movement away from home provided pandukhts new forms and spaces of interaction and exchange. Opportunities existed for the enhancement of regional ties from the moment Vanets'is

left their home. As Vardapet Tevkants' traveled from Karin (Erzurum) to Constantinople (c. 1859/60), merchants of Van (Grigor Yesajanean, Ghevond T'erlemezean, Mahtesi Sargis Pasean), Priest Hovakim and a few "from among the pandukhts" joined him. Here Tevkants' used pandukhts to connote labor migrants whom he did not know by name. But in the same text Tevkants' described his trip to Istanbul as one of pandkhtut'iwn. On the three-day and three-night-long steamship voyage they sang songs.[477] People did not have to know one another beforehand to befriend and communicate with each other on their trip to Constantinople. Such journeys, brought Vanets'is of different strata together as one community, as pandukhts, who despite having just left, already longed for their homes.

Singing songs served to enhance a sense of regional belongings and an idealization of home. Tevkants' specified that on the steamship they sang psalms.[478] On such journeys pandukhts also sang folk songs, which in a book from 1868 were categorized based on regional origin.[479] Music grounded the regional affective bonds. The songs with heavy Van dialect and frequent use of Kurdish words signified the specific locale. Beyond the regional identification of songs, the very practice of singing songs together created bonds among those sharing the experience. Take for example the lyrics of a song called "The Pandukht of Vaspurakan," a lament sung in the dialect of Van:

> "Let me brother, let my heart burn in fire and flame,
> Let my eyes be a babbling murky fountain,
> If you have tears too, come with me and cry,
> Let our tears break the clouds, so that rain pours on Armenian fields."[480]

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[477] MM.MS.4180, 138b.
[478] MM.MS.4180, 138b.
[479] M.M. Minasareants', *K'nar haykakan,* (St. Petersburg: O.I. Baksta, 1868). In Minaseants' book we also find songs for the fatherland and the nation, but these are clearly newly invented songs, or songs adapted from European patriotic songs, as the names of the authors and translators indicate. The authors of these new songs, such as Mik'ael Nalbandean, were contemporaneous Armenian literati in the Russian Empire. Also see Aristakēs Vardapet Sedrakean, *Knar Mshets'wots' yew Vanets'wots'* (Vagharshapat: Tparan Srboy Katoghikē Ējmiatsni, 1874).
[480] Minasareants', *K'nar haykakan*,181.

These lines alone—and, even more, the act of singing—imparted a sense of unison, melancholy and strengthened regional ties, at moments when Vanets‘is were away from their home region. They further reasserted an image of Armenia as a rural place in need of tears and sympathy.

Migration from the eastern provinces to the western shores of the Ottoman Empire had existed throughout Ottoman history. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, migration to Constantinople rose sharply. According to Ottoman censuses number of labor migrants in Istanbul between 1844 and 1857 increased from 76,000 to 93,000 migrants, while the number of the total male population of Istanbul rose from 214,000 to 236,000. In the span of a decade migrants made up 70 percent of the rise of Istanbul's population.[481] The ration of the permanent Armenian male population in Istanbul to the migrants was three to two in the mid-nineteenth century. Migrants certainly made their presence felt to the local population and the local authorities.

A recent compilation of the information of Armenian migrants that appear in the population registers of Istanbul indicate that out of the 9, 697, while the Ottoman census cited above listed 18,000 Armenian migrants in 1857.[482] The discrepancies very likely mean that the registers did not include every migrant, as most would want to avoid such registration to escape tax payments. Only 10 percent of the registered migrants were from Van. Although there is an impression in the field that the number of Armenian labor migrants from Mush and Van were particularly high, the statistics do not suggest the same.[483] The migration of Vanets‘is can be linked to the Ottoman state's war with local Kurdish emirates in the region of Van during the

[481] Kemal H. Karpat, *The Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 203 cited by Riedler, "Armenian labour migration," 164-165. For simplicity's sake I have rounded up the population numbers.
[482] Daniel Ohanian, "Ottoman Istanbul and Its Armenian Inhabitants: Population Data and Maps, 1830s-c. 1907," (May 6, 2019) https://www.houshamadyan.org/en/mapottomanempire/vilayet-of-istanbul/locale/demography.html (Accessed May 18, 2019).
[483] This impression is partly related to the fact that most nineteenth-century publications in print media about pandukhts related to Mshets‘is and Vanets‘is.

1840s and to the 1854-1856 Crimean War. Both wars took a toll on the local population. Furthermore, especially after the Ottoman army brought down the Kurdish emirate of Botan in 1847, local socioeconomic and political relations were destabilized as the main ruling conglomerate in the region had fallen.[484]

Labor migrants worked as firemen (*tulumbacı),* garbage men (*çöpçü*), barbers, servants, porters, and bakers, while women worked as clothe washerwomen (*çamaşırcı*), maids and servants. Despite being seasonal workers, they often lived in Istanbul for more than a decade. Ottoman historian Betül Başaran's study shows that since the eighteenth century both Christian and Muslim migrants tended to find workplaces where the master and employees were from the same region.[485] Co-regionality (*hemşehrilik)* or "place of origin was the most important marker in determining networks in Istanbul in the late nineteenth century."[486] Similarly, historian Cengiz Kırlı demonstrates that "regional allegiances were most central to occupational specializations and often prevailed over other social bonds stemming from confessional and ethnic alliances. … It was rare to find a workplace where the master and his journeymen and apprentices had migrated from different regions."[487] Shared occupation provided one means through which the regional ties of Vanets'is were enhanced in Constantinople.

The living quarters and experiences of the pandukhts, as well as their legal status in Istanbul enhanced regional ties and distinguished them from the permanent residents of the city. Beginning in the 1820s, the Ottoman government aimed to keep labor migrants out of residential

[484] Martin Van Bruinessen, *The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1992), 175-182. A more extended study will be necessary, however, to assess the reasons behind migration from Van.
[485] Betül Başaran, "Remaking the Gate of Felicity: Policing, Social Control, and Migration in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century, 1789-1793," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2006), 39.
[486] Başaran, *Selim III*, 145.
[487] Cengiz Kirli, "A Profile of the Labor Force in Early Nineteenth-Century Istanbul," *International Labor and Working Class* 60 (Fall 2001): 135, 138.

areas, and tried to prevent their dispersion throughout the city.[488] In an attempt to have greater control over migrants coming to Istanbul, the Ottoman government issued a number of regulations in the early 1800s, "which required every worker to register at checkpoints upon entry to the city. Workers were then forced to stay in four supervised inns (*han*) in the bazaar-area of the inner city or in similar institutions" in the suburbs of Istanbul.[489] As the discrepancies between the censuses and registers indicate, however, many were able to escape supervision. Those who worked in small shops tended to reside in the same shops or in their master's home.[490] Sometimes the hans that the labor migrants stayed in would also house the shops that they worked in.[491]

The physical and legal separation of the labor migrants residing in hans from the permanent residents of the city enhanced kinship ties based on regional affiliations. Ottoman historian Tamdoğan-Abel argues that the residents of the han were at once close to and distant from the inhabitants of the town in which they stayed, as the han itself was often located on a dead-end street, yet close to principal roads.[492] Legally those who stayed in a han (often referred to as *misafir/*traveler, guest) were distinguished from the permanent residents of a town, who were categorized as *sakin* or *mütemeskin*. In the judicial system, people were referred to in relation to the han in which they stayed.[493] We see such cases in petitions where the prelate of Van would ask the Patriarchate to get hold of a particular Van migrant and would specify which

[488] Riedler, "Public People," 242.
[489] Riedler, "Public People," 237.
[490] Kirli, "A Profile of the Labor Force," 133.
[491] Zerrin İren Boynudelik, "Kuruluşundan günümüze tarihi belleğimiz içinde Büyük Valide Han," in *Tarihi Belleğimiz İçinde: Büyük Valide Han*, ed. Ayşegül Baykan, Zerrin İren Boynudelik, Burak Sevingen and Belkıs Uluoğlu (Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları: İstanbul, 2014), 36. Hans often served as financial sources for *vakıfs* (endowed foundations) or charities.
[492] Işık Tamdoğan-Abel, "Les Hans, ou l'Étranger dans la ville Ottomane," in *Vivre dans l'empire Ottoman: Sociabilités et relations intercommunautaires (XIIIe-XXe siècles),* eds. François Georgeon et Paul Dumont (Paris et Montréal: L'Harmattan, 1997), 330.
[493] Tamdoğan-Abel,"Les Hans, ou l'Étranger dans la ville Ottomane," 327.

han the individual migrant could be found in.[494] The residents of a han were exempt from the taxes of the town in which they were considered to be guests, but they were expected to pay the taxes of their home-town or village.[495] In the Armenian Constitution one's right to vote for representatives of the local or central national assemblies directly depended on tax payments. The fact that Vanets'is in Constantinople were legally required to pay taxes in Van was an additional measure that marked them as voices representing Van.

Hans not only housed labor migrants of Van and other provinces, but also ecclesiastics, merchants and students from Van—in other words pandukhts of all stripes. Despite their distinct legal status and separate living quarters, residents of hans had enhanced access to communication networks. The living setup also provided them with special access to information and to petitioning.[496] The rooms in the hans were situated around a courtyard, a common space that allowed for greater interaction of the residents, unlike a modern-day hotel.[497] One could find stores on the first floor of a han and lodging rooms on the second floor.[498] In the late 1850s, when Vardapet Tevkants' of Van was in Constantinople he stayed in T'akht' (k)han (Tahta Han), whose *hanci* was Grigor Jrbashean agha (who was possibly also a Vanets'i).[499] There he stayed in a room along with Mahtesi Abraham and a priest-to-be (*tirats'u*) from Yerevan, with whom he

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[494] For examples see BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.0101 (March 26, 1865); BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.001 (July 22, 1860) The hans mentioned are Tülbenci han and Sümbül han respectively.
[495] Tamdoğan-Abel, "Les Hans, ou l'Étranger dans la ville Ottomane," 327.
[496] For an excellent piece on labor migrant sociability and presence in the public sphere of Istanbul see Riedler, "Public People."
[497] Tamdoğan-Abel, "Les Hans, ou l'Étranger dans la ville Ottomane," 322.
[498] Tamdoğan-Abel, "Les Hans, ou l'Étranger dans la ville Ottomane," 319-320.
[499] Grigor Jrbashean seems to have had close ties with Grigor Ōtean and Mkrtich' Khrimian. In 1857, they tried to get Bishop Hovhannēs Yedesean appointed as prelate of Van to mediate the conflict that had arisen as a result of an attempt to build a military barracks on behalf of the Armenian community in Van. MM.MS.4180, 97a-99b. Jrbashean seems to be the name of a family coming from Van as, for example, Khosrov (Georg) K'ahanay Shak'arean lists Hovhannēs Jrbashean, Karapet Jrbashean and Margar Jrbashean among the famous jewelers of Van. (Khosrov (Georg) K'ahanay Shak'arean. *Hishatakaran kam Ardzanagrut'iwn Vanets'i Shakarean Tan*, (Mayr At'oṙ Surb Ējmiatsin, 2004)), 87.

had travelled. Their room was right next to the room of some porters from Armenia (*hayastants'i beṙnakirk'*).[500]

As separate as the hans were from the permanent residents of the city, the variety and multiplicity of transactions that took place in a han made the residences of the pandukhts very much a public space. Hans were spaces for trading and manufacturing.[501] Cengiz Kırlı contends that in nineteenth-century Istanbul information floated through "personal interactions in the public sphere" in the streets, shops, and coffeehouses.[502] I add the han to these spaces. Coffeehouses also provided a space in which regional ties were enhanced, as there were "provincial" coffeehouses in Istanbul that would be frequented by men of a particular province.[503] The hans also housed shops and coffeehouses.[504] Tamdoğan-Abel writes that "The hans were sites of communication, sites one ran to for news, and it is not accidental that politics was discussed here."[505] Ottoman spy reports on public spaces in Constantinople from the 1840s reveal that migrants would complain about officials in the provinces as well as about the tax collectors (*muhassıl*).[506] The space of a han being a sociable one was prone to mobilizing people as they discussed politics, organized to submit collective petitions to the Patriarchate or the Sublime Porte, or joined forces to go out on the street together in protest of a decision regarding Van.

Hans were central spaces for the circulation and dissemination of information. Many publishing houses were established in the rooms of the hans. For instance, the publication of the

[500] MM.MS.4180, 113b.
[501] Boynudelik, "Kuruluşundan günümüze tarihi," 36.
[502] Cengiz Kırlı, "Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, ed. Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 95.
[503] François Georgeon, "Les cafés à Istanbul à la fin de l'Empire ottoman," in *Cafés d'Orient revisités,* ed. Hélène Desmet-Grégoire and François Georgeon, (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1994), 51.
[504] Tamdoğan-Abel, "Les Hans, ou l'Étranger dans la ville Ottomane," 319-320.
[505] Tamdoğan-Abel, "Les Hans, ou l'Étranger dans la ville Ottomane," 328.
[506] Kırlı, "Coffeehouses," 89-90. Also cited by Riedler, "Public People," 243.

newspaper *Masis* in its early years started in Vezir Han. In the early nineteenth century Pōghos Arabyan (1742-1836) established the Amire printing press in Kürkçü Han. The publishing house of *amira* Abraham Terziyants‘ was in the Hasan Paşa Han between 1824 and 1828.[507] Moreover, in 1859, according to the great Armenian satirist Hakob Paronean, the Armeno-Turkish periodical *Münadi-yi Erciyas* (Herald of Argeus) used a coffeehouse in Vezir Han as its editorial office.[508] The pandukhts who stayed in hans would have immediate access to the newspapers and could access news before it was published. The residents of a han would also be able to submit letters to newspapers with some ease due to their proximity to the publication centers. Access to scribes could also be found in hans. Consider for example, the periodical *Pegasean T‘ṙch‘nik,* which in 1865 announced that in the *Mets Nor Khan* (Big New Han/Büyük Yeni Han) there was a scribe who could write petitions in Ottoman Turkish and prepare any other type of text.[509] Hans were also a place where people could assemble to prepare a petition, as pandukhts of Vaspurakan did in 1858 in *Haserli (Hasırlı) (k)han*.[510]

Hans were only one of the spaces of interaction and mobilization portrayed in the writings of Hakob Mirzaean Melik‘ Hakobeants‘ (1835-1888), who later became famous under the pen-name Raffi.[511] His novel *Gharib Mshets‘i* (The Stranger from Mush), published in 1886, focused on labor migrants of Constantinople and vividly depicted barbershops, wineries and churchyards as central spaces where labor migrants discussed politics. It is in a barbershop that one of his characters takes out a thick chunk of papers filled with signatures and waves them in front of everyone, asking who else wants to add his signature to the petition. This moment in the

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[507] Kevork Pamukciyan, *İstanbul Yazıları: Ermeni Kaynaklarından Tarihe Katkılar,* vol.1, (Istanbul: Aras, 2002), 119-120, 124.
[508] Masayuki Ueno, “One Script, Two Languages: Garabed Panosian and His Armeno-Turkish Newspapers in the Nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 52.4 (2016): 609.
[509] *Pegasean T‘ṙch‘nik,* issue 33 (April 31, 1865), 264.
[510] MM.MS.4180, 121b-122a.
[511] An Iranian-born Armenian author and novelist, who had been educated in Tbilisi and maintained contact with Khrimian in the 1850s and 1860s.

novel depicts the importance of the number of signatures collected for the petition and points to a possible means by which signatures for such petitions could have been acquired.

Labor migrants in Raffi's novel knew in which church the good sermons were delivered, pointing to the interest labor migrants had in the content of the sermons delivered to them. The preachers would talk not only about religion and piety, but also about politics.[512] A decree was read in the churches of Constantinople in 1864 that warned people not to buy and not to read publications that included "foreign doctrines and inciting articles."[513] Even for the illiterate, the Sunday sermon would become a place for them to find out about political conflicts and the contents of the newspapers.

After the Sunday service some of the pandukhts would gather in the adjacent hall of the church to take lessons in reading and writing.[514] That pandukhts engaged in educational activities was not just a phenomenon mentioned in Raffi's novel. In the late 1830s, about eighteen to twenty young pandukhts were studying in the Nersisean School in the Hasköy neighborhood of Constantinople and local benefactors had rented a special house for them.[515] In the 1850s, the school called Surb P'rkich' Chemaran played a similar role in providing education for pandukhts.[516] Often music lessons or other subjects were provided in hans.[517] The various bits of information about educational opportunities for pandukhts suggest that within the networks of pandukhts in Constantinople there were some who would have had the basic skills of reading and writing. Some pandukhts would most certainly know how to sign their names, to read a

[512] Antaramian points to these churches and sermons as a site where T'ōp'uzean preached while in Istanbul, and where he raised money for the "construction and operation of schools" in Van. (Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 128).
[513] *Pegasean T'ṙch'nik*, issue 23 (Oct. 20, 1864).
[514] Raffi, *Yerkeri Zhoghovatsu,* Vol. 4 (Yerevan: Haypethrat, 1955-1959), 107.
[515] P'ap'azeants', *Dasagirk' Azgayin Patmut'ean,* 164.
[516] Ibid, 182-183.
[517] Pamukciyan, *Istanbul Yazıları*, 124.

newspaper aloud to their fellow labor migrants, or to read out a petition that they were about to submit to a newspaper, the Patriarchate or the Ottoman Porte.

The presence of pandukhts in Istanbul sped up the process of petitioning. While a petition sent from Van could take four to seven weeks to be read by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the spread of communication through petitions was faster when Van Armenians in Constantinople submitted a petition in regards to matters concerning Van. It could take as little as six days for a petition to be processed when submitted locally. Consider, for instance, a petition composed on October 17, 1866 that reached the Patriarchate in a week.[518] Beyond the speed of submitting a petition, it was also easier for pandukhts in Constantinople to find a scribe in the Ottoman capital than it was in Van, due to the larger bureaucracy and educational opportunities in Istanbul. It was also cheaper to submit a petition locally, as petitioners at least saved the cost of the petition's transportation. These conveniences enhanced the significance of pandukhts within the context of Van politics.

The spatial, living and occupational organizations and settings of the everyday life of pandukhts provided opportunities for enhanced regional networks, as Ottoman legal boundaries, living quarters, and occupational networks sharpened the sense of regional ties. As mediums of communal gathering, communication and learning, these spaces set the stage for the collective actions of pandukhts that we turn to in the next section. The depiction pandukhts' lives in a vibrant setting of communication and sociability allows us to imagine them beyond their menial jobs, beyond the naivety and poverty which literary works, newspapers and books of the nineteenth century usually ascribed to them.

[518] BNU.CP1/12.052 (Oct. 17, 1866/Oct. 24, 1866).

Voicing Van: Collective Petitions and Pandukhts

Ideas of the Enlightenment and of modernization surfaced in the petitions of Vanets'is in the mid-1800s. As I discussed in the previous chapter, ideas of political legitimacy were shifting from God to the people and the nation. In 1851 a national assembly already existed in Van, which demonstrates that institutional transformations of representative governance occurred in Van early on, before Ottoman edicts ordered the formation of such institutions. The Ottoman Reform Edict of 1856 stipulated the formation of an assembly made up of laymen and ecclesiastics for each non-Muslim community of the empire.[519] In line with the Ottoman Edict, the Armenian National Constitution of 1860 stipulated the formation of assemblies for the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople and the prelacies in the provinces. That similar bodies existed before the 1856 Ottoman edict of the Tanzimat both in Van and Constantinople, brings into question the notion that ideas of "popular representation started to circulate in Ottoman contexts after the adoption of the Armenian Constitution in the 1860s."[520] The origins of notions of popular representation is therefore to be sought beyond the legal and institutional spheres.

As Vanets'is moved away from home they began to express their views about politics in Van more vociferously. The presence of pandukhts in Constantinople, their strong regional networks and access to information through sociable living spaces contributed to the transformation of their modes of political involvement and broadened the range of individuals engaged in Ottoman-Armenian communal politics. Vanets'i pandukhts in Constantinople represented themselves as expressing the voice and will of Van. In addition, conflicting parties from Van, organized around their opposition or support of an ecclesiastic leader and used the large presence of pandukhts in Constantinople as a negotiating tool with the Patriarchate and the

[519] For a detailed analysis of the Reform Edict see Koçunyan, *Negotiating the Ottoman Constitution,* 97-103.
[520] For such an argument see Aylin Koçunyan, *Negotiating the Ottoman Constitution*, 44.

Sublime Porte. It was not uncommon in the mid-nineteenth century for workers in Istanbul to mobilize and petition on different matters. They according to Quataert's research on workers' grievances in Istanbul, laborers often mobilized in alignment with their guilds that were multi-ethnic and multi-confessional, but at times also mobilized based on regional ties. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, many collective petitions were composed with the mobilizing of laborers along religious lines.[521]

Regional ties served to mobilize Van Armenians in Constantinople around political matters in their home province. Much of the political conflicts in Van that surfaced in my corpus of petitions surrounded either the Prelate of Van or the Catholicos of Aght'amar, located on an island in Lake Van. My analysis of four different conflicts, surrounding Van ecclesiastic leaders (Gabriel Shiroyean, Hovhannēs Yedesean, Khach'atur Shiroyean, Pōghos Melik'ean), will show that pandukhts—and the notion of "the people"—were integral to the local politics of Van because of the technologies of petitions and newspapers, as well as the collective presence of Vanets'is in Constantinople.

As early as 1850 my archive provides glimpses of Vanets'i pandukhts in the Ottoman capital who stirred the local politics of Van. One of the first traces of pandukhts appears in Prelate Gabriel Shiroyean's (r.1847-1858) letter to the Catholicos of Ējmiatsin, written in 1851, in which he once again reminded Ējmiatsin of the recent death of Khach'atur, the Catholicos of Aght'amar (r. 1844-1851). According to the prelate, the notable men of Aght'amar came to the city of Van and insisted on electing a new Catholicos. Prelate Shiroyean claimed that the prelacy and National Assembly (*Azgayin Zhoghov*) of Van opposed the election and asked the notables to wait for two months until they could inform Constantinople of the matter. Shiroyean noted

[521] The particular instance he notes are workers in Istanbul from Nevşehir in Central Anatolia. Donald Quataert, "Ottoman Workers and State, 1826-1914," in *Workers and Working Classes in the Middle East: Struggles, Histories, Historiographies* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 24-26.

that as the news reached Constantinople the many pandukhts there took the side of the Aght‘amar notables and insisted to the Patriarchate’s Supreme Assembly (*Geraguyn Zhoghov*) to have a new Catholicos elected. The pandukhts in Constantinople claimed that if a Catholicos was not elected then “you will not see us stay in the orthodox confession [i.e. the Armenian Apostolic confession].”[522] The locals of Van, too, insisted on electing Gabriel as Catholicos, otherwise they threatened to turn to the Nestorian Church of the Assyrians, who they claimed “as a confessional community/nation (azg) are close to us.”[523]

Prelate Shiroyean claimed that he wanted to wait until word was received from the Ējmiatsin Catholicos in order to decide who the Aght‘amar Catholicos would be. At the same time, however, he presented a narrative that would leave the Catholicos with little choice.[524] The details of the prelate’s narrative can be questioned. Yet the prelate’s rhetoric shows that pandukhts in Constantinople, along with the local notables in Van, were active tools of negotiation for ecclesiastic leaders. The fact that Prelate Shiroyean mentioned the protests of pandukhts in Constantinople and the wishes of the local population in Van meant that both represented components that Church representatives had to consider in their decision-making processes.

In another petition to the Patriarchate, Shiroyean claimed that the people of Aght‘amar[525] had risen up, fearing that “the Nation”—meaning the leadership of the nation in Constantinople—aimed to eliminate the Catholicosate of Aght‘amar. Three hundred men of

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[522] MM.KD.162.245 (Nov. 14, 1851). «իբր զի եթէ ոչ ընտրեսցի յաջորդ յԱղթամար, այնուհետև և ո՛չ զմեզ տեսանէք կեալ անէն՝ յուղղափառ դաւանութեան»
[523] MM.KD.162.245 (Nov. 14, 1851).
[524] For more on the conflict over the Catholicosate of Aght‘amar and Prelate Gabriel’s role in it see Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State,” 87-90.
[525] The people of Aght‘amar signified those who lived in the ecclesiastic jurisdiction of Aght‘amar.

Aght'amar went to the prelacy of Van, complained and demanded to have a Catholicos in place. They threatened to convert to Islam if their demands were not met.[526]

Ideas of the Enlightenment, were in this case espoused by a representative of the province in opposition to the metropole, thus unsettling the notion that changes linked to modernization occurred from West to East or center to periphery. While letters from Van focused on the will of the people, by pointing to the protests and demands of locals of Aght'amar, the Spiritual Council of the Constantinople Patriarchate, in its recording of a response to another petition, noted that "the people can wish many things without knowing the harms and benefits [of their wishes]. Is it really necessary to do [what the people want]?" Despite having raised this question, the council chose to appease the demands of the people in order to maintain "peace in the nation."[527] We can see here that the members of the Spiritual Council in Constantinople were not really convinced that "the voice of the people" should matter. Yet, it seems they did not have much choice left except to accept what was presented to them as the "voice or will of the people of Aght'amar" in order to avoid commotion.

Gabriel Shiroyean's efforts, and his emphasis on the commotion that Vanets'is in Constantinople and Van had raised, were successful: he ended up serving as Catholicos of Aght'amar from 1851 until his death in 1857. The Constantinople Patriarchate reached a middle ground by declaring the Catholicos of Aght'amar and the prelacy of Van as joint seats.[528] The Constantinople Patriarchate was motivated to keep the seat of the Aght'amar Catholicosate empty in the hope of eliminating Aght'amar's role in the Armenian Church hierarchy (which could override the power of the Patriarchate). Initially, the Patriarchate opposed Shiroyean's

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[526] Matt'ēos Izmirlean, *Hayrapetut'iwn Hayastaneayts' Aṙak'elakan surb yekeghet'woy yew Aght'amar u Sis,* (K. Polis: Zardarean, 1881), 319-320.
[527] Izmirlean, *Hayrapetut'iwn Hayastaneayts',* 318.
[528] Izmirlean, *Hayrapetut'iwn Hayastaneayts',* 326.

appointment as Catholicos of Aght‘amar in particular because it claimed that as Shiroyean was ordained a bishop by Ējmiatsin, he did not have the right to become Catholicos of Aght‘amar.[529] Eventually, however, Shiroyean occupied the seat of Aght‘amar while also remaining prelate of Van.

While some Vanets‘i notables and ecclesiastics mobilized pandukhts to support a prelate, not all Vanets‘is shared the same views on matters regarding the prelate, which complicates as to what can be assessed as "the people's voice" and reveals the heterogeneity of politics within the region of Van. Another conflict around ecclesiastic positions related to Bishop Hovhannēs Yedesean, who was from Artvin, a region in the north-eastern borderland of the Ottoman Empire, close to the Black Sea.[530] According to Bishop Tevkants‘, in the late 1850s, some Van Armenians in Constantinople, including Mkrtich‘ Khrimian, Grigor Jrbashean and Ecclesiastic Hakob (Grigoris) Aghvanean—a student of Khrimian's—supported Yedesean in his wish to become prelate of Van. Tevkants‘ wrote that with the leadership of Yedesean the Vaspurakan pandukhts assembled in Haserli (K)han, where they wrote a collective letter (*hanragrut‘iwn*) to the Patriarchate. Reportedly, three hundred people signed a collective petition threatening that if Yedesean was not appointed as prelate of Van they and other partisans of Yedesean would convert to Catholicism.[531] Later that year Khrimian along with Yedesean went to Van with instructions from the Patriarchate to mediate the conflicts that had surfaced due to local political

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[529] Izmirlean, *Hayrapetut‘iwn Hayastaneayts‘,* 323-324. Also see Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 89- 90. Presumably, they did not want someone ordained by Ējmiatsin because this would increase the legitimacy of the bishop serving as Catholicos in Aght‘amar, whereas a bishop ordained by the Catholicosates of Sis or Aght‘amar would have less legitimacy.
[530] Yedesean seemed to have been the pick of the Constantinople Armenian Patriarchate. The fact that he was from Artvin and not from Van may have been one of the reasons why the Patriarchate would support him, since to strengthen the Patriarchate's power in Van, they needed someone who did not have close ties with the local notables.
[531] MM.MS.4180, 121a-122a.

disagreements, specifically in regards to the military barracks discussed in Chapter Four.[532] Yet, Yedesean met significant opposition in Van and failed in his efforts both to mediate the conflicts in Van and to become its prelate.[533]

As the examples regarding Prelate Gabriel Shiroyean and Bishop Yedesean indicate, the collective actions and petitions among Vanets‘is started in the 1850s, earlier than the 1856 Ottoman Edict and the 1860 Armenian Constitution. The chronology of political engagement of Vanets‘is in the capital and in Van shows that the activities of Vanets‘is cannot be explained only as a reaction to or adoption of reforms implemented by the Ottoman capital. Rather it can be suggested that the acceleration of transport and communications, the increased number of labor migrants in Istanbul, and the context of Tanzimat reforms contributed all together to the political engagement of various strata of the provincial population. The particular conditions of the period facilitated the utilization of notions of popular will as instruments of negotiation by various parties.

Even when pandukhts in Constantinople did not rally around an issue, ecclesiastics from Van used their presence in the Ottoman capital as a negotiating tool. In 1866, members of the congregation of the Varag monastery wrote to Mkrtich‘ Khrimian who was in Constantinople.[534] They complained that the local authorities had their water supply. The Varag congregation, at this time, did not have good relations with the local Ottoman Pasha in Van. They did not bother to give the letter that the Patriarch had written to the Pasha regarding the issue of water because

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[532] “Khrimian’s ally, Boghos Odian, had sent Bishop Edesian to Van specifically to investigate Shiroian and Boghos. Khrimian, meanwhile, went directly to Surp Nshan Church in the center of the city [Van], where he read aloud his instructions from the Patriarchate” (Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State,” 143). We also find praises of Bishop Yedesean’s attempts to bring peace in *Masis* (April 3, 1858), which indicates that the Patriarchate supported the latter.
[533] Hambardzum Yeramean, *Hushardzan*, 35; Antaramian, “In Subversive Service of the Sublime State,” 143.
[534] Giwt k‘ahanay Aghaneants‘ ed., *Diwan Hayots‘ patmut‘ean, Girk‘ ZhG, Harstaharut‘iwnner Tachkahayastanum* (Vaveragrer 1801-1888) (T‘iflis: Tparan N. Aghaneants‘i, 1915), 68-76. Letter written on December 26, 1866 from Varag to Constantinople.

they were convinced that it would not make a difference. Instead, they hoped to get a decree from the Sublime Porte directed to the Pasha of Van through the help of agha Sargis Srgoyean, a notable of Karin (Erzurum) who had good relations with the governor of Erzurum.

For their plan to succeed, Varag congregation members thought that there had to be some popular pressure in Istanbul. So they gave what they thought was an ingenious suggestion to Khrimian. They proposed that he act as if the majority of the Vanets'is "who go in the hundreds and the thousands to Constantinople, are ready to complain both to the Patriarchate and to the Sublime Porte."[535] They warned that nobody should think that the Varag congregation had initiated the complaint of the Vanets'i people in Constantinople, because this would harm their relations with the local Pasha and Ottoman assembly (*meclis*) in Van even further. The congregation members instead told Khrimian to act as if he had managed to appease the Vanets'is in Constantinople and ensured peace.[536] Their caution and attempt to cover up the origin of the complaint are indicative of the dangers related to petitioning, particularly when it came to complaints against local Ottoman officials that could have negative consequences in the province.

The Varag congregation members were so desperate that, with few qualms, they were directly asking Bishop Khrimian to lie. As they noted, having their water cut off for twenty-five days meant that they were losing anywhere from 500 to 12,000 ghurush of agricultural production. What is important for our purposes in this communication is the recognition of the ecclesiastics in Varag of the power of the large number of Vanets'is in Constantinople, who in their unity could raise a substantial commotion and pressure both for the Patriarchate and the

[535] Ibid.
[536] Ibid.

Sublime Porte. Yet, they also realized that if they were found responsible for raising havoc in Constantinople, their situation in Van could become even more precarious than it already was.

Reference to "the people" (azg or *zhoghovurd*) of Aght'amar and Van as a collective keeps reappearing in petitions of the era as a unit of authority. Petitioners also used the authority of the Sublime Porte to put pressure on the Patriarchate. A petition from 1866, signed with the collective name of "the pandukht people of the diocese of Aght'amar" (*Aght'amaray t'emakan vichaki pandukht zhoghovurdk'*) accused Catholicos Khach'atur Shiroyean (b. 1815-1895, r. 1864-1895) of being unlawful and of being a murderer.[537] Catholicos Petros had been murdered in 1864, and the fingers of accusation were being pointed at Bishop Khach'atur.[538] The petitioners specifically emphasized that not only had Khach'atur acted against the law of the church (*yekeghets'akan ōrenk'*), but also against the civil/political law (*k'aghak'akan ōrenk'*). In particular, they stated that he had obstructed civil/political law by being implicated in a murder. Although their religion would have deemed this murder a sin, they invoked the civil law, meaning the law of the Ottoman state, which should have been used to prosecute the act of a murder. As such, they called attention to their belonging not only to the Armenian Church, but also to the Ottoman imperial state. They reminded the Patriarchate that the local government of Van had informed the Sublime Porte of the murder, and that the Sublime Porte had in turn informed the Patriarchate. As a punishment, the pandukhts demanded that Khach'atur be exiled. This time, instead of threatening to convert, they threatened to go to the Sublime Porte and complain that the Patriarchate was supporting a murderer.[539] They used the Sublime Porte against the Patriarchate, demonstrating their understanding of how much power the Sublime

[537] BNU.CP1/12.052 (Oct. 17, 1866/Oct. 24, 1866).
[538] *Pegesean T'ṙch'nik,* issue 23 (Oct. 20, 1864), 180. For more on the conflict surrounding the murder of Catholicos Petros see Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime Porte," 91-99.
[539] BNU.CP1/12.052 (Oct. 17, 1866/Oct. 24, 1866).

Porte had over the Patriarchate. In addition, the implication was that vis-à-vis the Patriarchate, the Sublime Porte would be perceived as having the upper hand in terms of its sense of justice towards its subjects. While the petitioners pointed out the lack of sovereignty of the Patriarchate vis-à-vis the Sublime Porte, they also questioned the moral legitimacy of the Patriarchate.

Pandukhts not only represented Van, but they also represented the multiplicity of opposing voices from Van. In each struggle, different groups claimed to represent the "true" voice of the people of Van or Aght'amar. In October 1866, a few weeks after the petition against Khach'atur was submitted, another petition, again in the name of the Aght'amar pandukhts, declared that they were not the authors of the petition submitted to the Patriarchate in their name. The petitioners found the contents of the former petition almost funny and ridiculous and rejected all the complaints made against Khach'atur. Claiming to represent the true voice of the pandukhts of Aght'amar, they asked the Patriarch and the National Assembly to immediately ordain Khach'atur as Catholicos.[540] In this petition they noted that the Van deputies in the National Assembly were not self-proclaimed representatives as some had claimed, but they were nominated as representatives not only by the congregation of Aght'amar, but by the entire people (*hamayn zhoghovurd*).

The notion of "the people's voice" evoked in petitions was not part of the standard formulaic phrases that a scribe would deploy; rather "the people's voice" was a notion that circulated among the petitioners. The 1866 petition supporting Catholicos Khach'atur had 86 signatures, of which only fourteen had titles such as *Mahtesi*, *Haji* and one *ṙēs* (head of village). This means that the other signatories could possibly have been low-level labor migrants. The paleography of this petition stands out in comparison to the previous petition, but also in

[540] BNU.CP1/12.054 (Nov. 22, 1866). Only two of the signatures had seals, and people's last names were not included.

comparison to the majority of the handwritten petitions of the era. The letters in a word often stand alone, without the usual connections to their adjacent letter which would be expected in Armenian handwritings. Furthermore, the petition lacks any punctuation and contains a number of spelling mistakes.[541] These components of the letter indicate that it was not written by a professional scribe, which may indicate that the petitioners lacked access to or could not afford a professional scribe. While the handwriting, grammar and vocabulary vary among the petitions of pandukhts the insistence on imposing the wishes—therefore the voice—of the majority of Aght‘amar or Van remained a constant.

The conflict surrounding the Catholicos of Khach‘atur ensued for years. In 1871, again members of the Aght‘amar jurisdiction who were in Constantinople submitted a petition asking for the empty seat of the Catholicos to be filled.[542] In particular, this petition referred to "the demand of the people of the diocese" (*t‘emakan zhoghovrdeans ays pahanj*) and asked for the seat of Aght‘amar to be returned to Khach‘atur as the petitioners claimed this was their right by law. This petition had about 110 signatures, the majority of which had seals, but few of them had titles. They were all laymen and all the names were signed individually as the differing handwritings indicate. Such an absence of titles suggests that many of the signatories could have been labor migrants. The sheer number of signatures speaks to the strong networks of pandukhts in Constantinople that facilitated the mobilization of people to sign such petitions.

That the petitioners identified as Aght‘amarts‘is rather than Vanets‘is may have been a way to assert the jurisdiction of Aght‘amar as separate from that of the Van prelacy. The new regulations of the Armenian Constitution and the centralization policy of the Patriarchate were to

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[541] For example, often "ու" was used instead of "ո" and vice-versa. This may be an indication of the way the scribe pronounced the words. BNU.CP1/12.054 (November 22, 1866).
[542] BNU.CP1/12.067 (June 1871). Another petition regarding the same matter was sent to the Patriarchate on behalf of seven people in Istanbul. The signatories collectively represented themselves as "the humble servants of the Aght‘amar people" (*khonarh tsaṙayk‘ Aght‘amaray zhoghovrdean*). BNU.CP1/12.072 (Dec. 17, 1871).

subordinate Aght‘amar to the prelacy of Van. That meant, for example, that whereas previously Aght‘amar would collect taxes from particular areas under its jurisdiction, now this task would fall under the Van prelacy’s jurisdiction. Similarly, according to the new regulations the prelacy was to have the upper hand in the ratification of marriages. In practice, however, the dominant role of the prelate in his diocese continued to be contested by monasteries like Aght‘amar, Lim and Ktuts‘.

Petitions gained additional value as they were written about in the newspapers. Through the press conflicting parties attempted to shape the view of the reading public regarding the truth of the matter as well as to have a say in what the “true voice” of the people of Van was. While Vanets‘is submitted petitions to the Patriarchate, other Vanets‘is wrote letters to the various newspapers to direct public opinion regarding the innocence or criminality of Bishop Khach‘atur, as well as to establish what the Vanets‘i people’s true will was. In 1865, such a letter was sent to the editor of *Pegasean T‘ṙch‘nik*. Perhaps due to the shortage of space, the signatures on the letter were not published, but at the bottom of the letter the word “signatures” was written to indicate their presence. The writers emphasized that, as locals of Van, neither they nor anybody from their neighboring cities could attest to any crimes committed by Khach‘atur, and that in any case the state’s official investigation had shown that Khach‘atur had nothing to do with the murder.[543] That *Pegasean T‘ṙch‘nik* published this letter indicates that the editor of the periodical was a supporter of Khach‘atur’s camp. In 1869, the newspaper *Masis* announced that the pandukhts of Aght‘amar had sent a petition to the National Administration opposing

[543] *Pegasean T‘ṙch‘nik,* issue 45, (December 10, 1865), 358. Just a couple of weeks later another letter was published. This time there were four signatories, who were lay deputies of the Aght‘amar assembly. They complained about what the periodical Varaga-i Havadis had published against Bishop Khach‘atur, and assured that they knew very well that no Aght‘amarts‘i had submitted a petition against Khach‘atur to the National administration, as *Varaga-i Havadis* had claimed. (issue 46, December 22, 1865). Also in issue 47 (Jan. 1, 1866); issue 52, (March 1, 1866);

Khach‘atur, the self-proclaimed Catholicos of Aght‘amar. They asked that the necessary actions be taken to alleviate the suffering of the people.[544] Thus, the feuds over ecclesiastic seats ensued in the newspapers.

In addition to printed text, the writings on the conflict surrounding the Catholicosate of Aght‘amar also appeared in printed images. For example, the following drawing (Figure 4) appeared in the periodical *Pegasean T‘ṙch‘nik* and represented the conflict between the supporters of Bishop Khach‘atur and the supporters of Bishop Hovsēp‘ of the Narek Monastery over the seat of the Aght‘amar Catholicosate.[545] This conflict between these two individuals had also transpired over the schools, discussed in Chapter Three. Characterizations of the conflict were thus not only directly attainable by literate people but also by the illiterate, who could form an idea of the conflict through the newspaper image.

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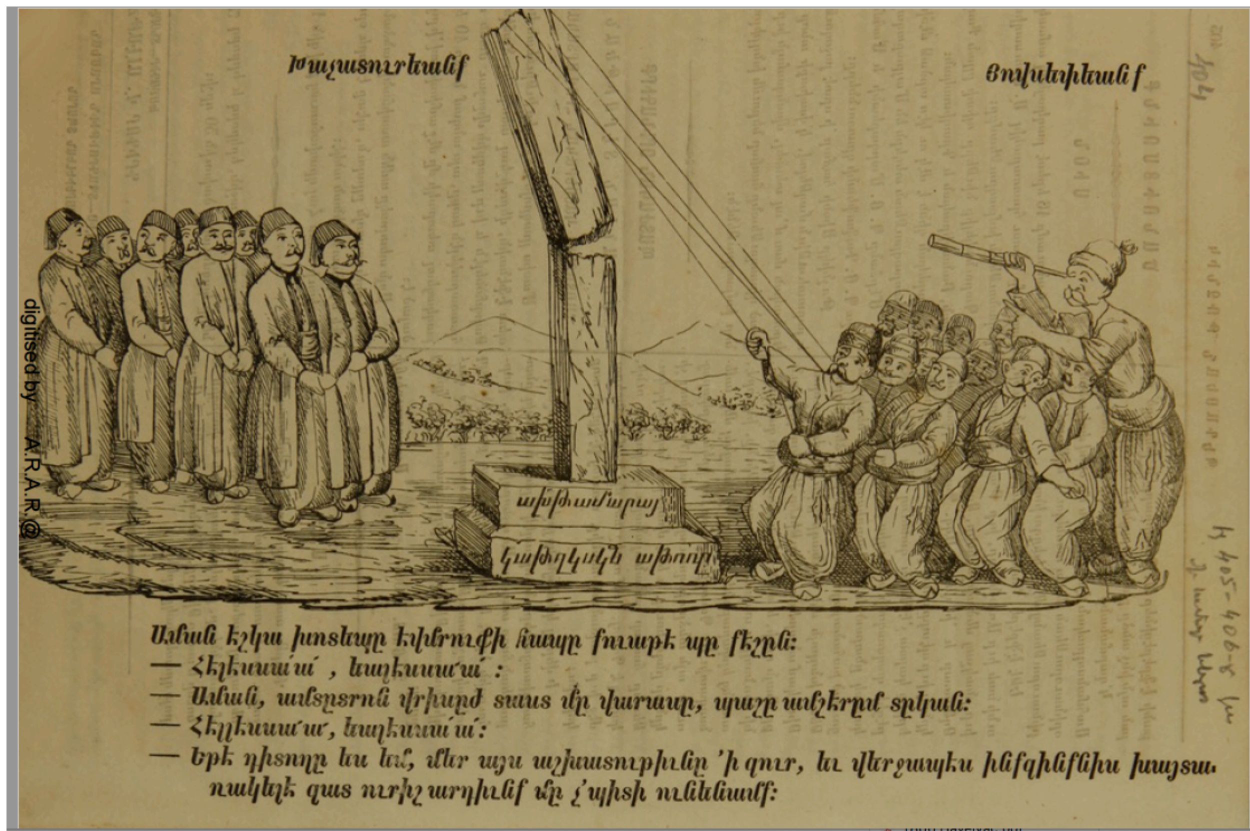
[544] *Masis* (Feb. 15, 1869).

[545] *Pegasean T‘ṙch‘nik,* issue 50, (February 10, 1866).

***Figure 4: The Seat of Aght‘amar in* Pegasean T‘ṙch‘nik**



"[In Kurdish] Ah, for the love of God, pull on it strongly.
-Yallah, Yallah!
-[In Kurdish] Oh my, we cracked it, the rope escaped from my hand, we're going to be embarrassed.
-Yallaah, yallah!
[In Armenian—presumably the voice of the editor] If I am the one looking at this, this production of ours is useless, and will not have any result other than embarrassing ourselves."[546]

In the image, the tall column represents the seat of the Catholicos of Aght‘amar. The supporters of Bishop Khach‘atur, who had claimed the seat of the Catholicosate of Aght‘amar, stand on the left side of the column. The supporters of Abbot Hovsēp‘ of the Narek Monastery stand on the right side of the column. Underneath the image, the dialogue among the supporters

[546] The Kurdish portion text reads as follows: "Eman eşqa xweda bi ew mirofa hebe quwet bikêşin./Yallah yallah!/Eman em diriyan, werîs ji destê min veresiya, paşê emê şerim biken./Yallah! Yallah!" I thank Anoush Suni and Akın Arslan for helping me transcribe and translate this portion of the text. *Pegasean T'ṙch'nik,* issue 50, (February 10, 1866).

of Abbot Hovsēp‘ is mostly in Kurdish, indicating not only the Kurdish language being a prominent one in Van among Armenians, but also the involvement of Kurds in this conflict. The 1864 murder of Petros, Catholicos of Aght‘amar, had been blamed on Kurds, but the question was whether the implicated Kurds had carried out the murder independently or on behalf of Khach‘atur. Some asserted that Khach‘atur was directly implicated in the murder and blamed him for having close ties with Kurds. In this image, however, it is those opposed to Khach‘atur and the supporters of Abbot Hovsēp‘ of the Narek Monastery who are represented as Kurdish speakers, perhaps in an attempt to absolve Khach‘atur of his ties with the Kurds. These distinctions are also revealed through their clothes and body language. In this case the clothing of the supporters of Bishop Khach‘atur seems to indicate that they were largely notables, while the clothing of the supporters of Bishop Hovsēp‘ characterized them as commoners, perhaps even peasants, since they were wearing baggy pants (*shalvar*). In the image the supporters of Khach‘atur are standing calmly and observing the commotion that the supporters of Abbot Hovsēp‘ are creating by pulling on the strings attached to the column, which implied that they were trying to take over the seat of Aght‘amar.

The author indicates that the supporters of Hovsēp‘ have put themselves in an embarrassing situation by preventing Khach‘atur from becoming Catholicos. At the same time, the author implies that if he were the only one to see and understand this drawing, it would be all the more cause for embarrassment—meaning, perhaps, for the nation. It seems that his hope is that others will also look at the drawing and change their minds about the conflict. In such an instance, the author concludes, the drawing will have been of some use.

Besides attempts to shape public opinion through the press about the political conflicts in Van, the individuals involved in such matters engaged in arguments to delegitimize what was

presented as the voice of the people. Notables of Van and clergymen raised questions about the authenticity of petitions by suggesting that the labor migrants were being manipulated. Again regarding the conflict surrounding the Catholicos of Aght‘amar, in 1868 a renowned Van notable Sharan Sharanean wrote to the Patriarchate to inform them that Bishop Hakob had been approved by the local *pasha* and *kaymakam* (Ottoman high-ranking officials) to serve as the locum tenens of the Aght‘amar Catholicosate. A number of ecclesiastics, however, who opposed this appointment went to the city of Van to send a telegraph to Constantinople, with which they "confused the minds of the pandukht commoners who are in the capital."[547] In other words, the suggestion is that even though the pandukhts in Constantinople may have complained and questioned the legitimacy of the appointment of Bishop Hakob to Aght‘amar, it was only as a result of the manipulation that they had been subjected to.[548] And of course such manipulation had become possible because of new technologies of communication, such as the telegraph, which appeared in Van in the late 1860s. As the voice of the collective was becoming more audible and the ability to communicate with a large number of people was not something that authorities could fully control, individuals of higher ranks were finding arguments to delegitimize voices that did not correspond to their interests.

Efforts to delegitimize the voice of migrants in the capital were also prominent regarding the conflict over bishop Pōghos, who was caught in a struggle over the position of the prelacy in Van. During the summer of 1872 Vardapet Mesrop Mokats‘ean, from the congregation of Varag, upon the request of Patriarch Khrimian wrote to Vardapet Garegin Sruandzteants‘, who at the time was in Van. Vardapet Mesrop reported from Constantinople that:

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[547] BNU.CP23/1.062 (Jan. 28, 1868). «ձեռնարկեն միջոցաւ հեռագրոյն շփոթել զմիտս պանդուխտ հասարակութեան որ ի մայրաքաղաքիդ են»:

[548] For more on Khach‘atur Shiroyean's case see Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 92-99.

> "This week the local pro-Pōghos people [*Pōghoseank'*] uniting with a number of porters [*hamal*] and their like [*hamal chamals*] and bringing with them people from the street, addressed the religious assembly with a written question, asking if 'you will put Pōghos in the list of prelate candidates to be elected or not?' And the assembly only answered to this ignorant question saying that 'there are still four months left until Van's constitutional general assembly is in the position to vote for its prelate. How can we provide a particular answer to such a question now?' […] Here the pro-Pōghos people have spread the news everywhere in (*K)hans* and among porters [*hamals*] that 'we pro-Pōghos people constitute a majority' and we even dare to convince the assembly. And here, we hear that they have also written and telegrammed where you are, saying that 'almost all the Vanets'is who are in Polis [Constantinople] want Pōghos.'"[549]

Vardapet Mesrop was worried that both in Constantinople and in Van, interest-driven people manipulated and cheated the common (*hasarak*) Vanets'is. He accused the newspaper *Punj* of lying. Here Vardapet Mesrop put socioeconomic distinctions among Vanets'is to decide as to whose voice mattered more and whose voice could be considered as representative of the majority of the Van population. He invoked the occupations and ignorance of the migrants to argue for the likelihood of these migrants to be manipulated, and thus questioned the validity of their voices as a representation of Van's majority.

That pandukhts protested in large numbers in front of the Patriarchate surfaces in accounts of the conflicts surrounding Bishop Pōghos. Hambarts'um Yeramean (1857 Van and 1929 Cairo) wrote in his memoir that "often crowds made up of innkeepers, managers of coffeehouses or restaurants and porters would shake the halls of the Patriarchate with their screams: 'we want Pōghos' or 'we don't want Pōghos.'"[550] The protests surrounding Pōghos even made it into Raffi's novel *Gharib Mshets'i.*[551] The conflict regarding Pōghos prevailed for more than two decades.

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[549] GAT, GS, Section 2, Doc. 711 (June 14, 1872).

[550] Yeramean, *Hushardzan,* 83. And it was not just Vanets'is who did this. For example, in another letter we learn that Mshets'ies (locals of Mush) were "going to head out to the Patriarchate again with a large crowd." GAT, GS, Section 2, Doc. 4 (Oct. 7, 1865).

[551] Raffi, *Yerkeri Zhoghovatsu,* Vol. 4, 132-133.

Not only did pandukhts claim to be representatives of Van, but those in Van utilized the presence of pandukhts in Constantinople as their voice. In 1871 a petition in support of Vardapet Pōghos signed by forty people from Moks, among them a bishop, started by saying "You can know what condition we are in by seeing our pandukht brothers and you can learn from our pandukht brothers what kind of barbaric nations (*azgats'*) we have ended up living among."[552] In other words, not only did the locals of Van use pandukhts as their political voice, but they also utilized the figure of the pandukht to representing the poor conditions of their home. Towards the conclusion of the letter, the petitioners threatened: "Know well that we will change our religion but we will not give up on Vardapet Pōghos."[553] Thus, they made the harshest of all threats to the Patriarchate to assert their headstrong position on the matter.

Petitioners brought up the threat of conversion in most of the cases discussed above. The official recognition of the Catholic millet in 1848, and that of the Nestorian millet in 1846 gave Armenians a negotiating tool with their communal government that they did not previously have. They continuously reminded the Patriarchate that their loyalty to the Armenian Church was conditional on how the Church treated them. This presented a threat to the Patriarchate, particularly because the church collected taxes from those who belonged to the Armenian Apostolic community (*millet*); conversion by hundreds of people would have signified a loss in tax revenue and would have weakened the authority of the Armenian Church. Often the religion they threatened to change into was Catholicism or Nestorianism. This signifies that, besides being a spiritual or affective affiliation, one's confessional belonging was, in this era, a political card that one could use against the Armenian Church. In fact, petitioners who threatened to convert to Nestorianism emphasized that the latter were not so different from Armenians. In

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[552] BNU.CP23/1.052 (Jan. 22, 1871).
[553] «կրօնքնիս կը փոխեմք Պօղոս վարդապետէն ձեռք չե՛մք քաշեր շիտակ գիտցած լինեք» BNU.CP23/1.052 (Jan. 22, 1871).

other words, petitioners, some of whom were often also ecclesiastics, perceived the confessional differences within the Christian creed as being political and legal rather than doctrinal. Commitment to the Christian creed, rather than a particular confession, was a boundary that they were less likely to claim to cross, although in some rare occasions they did threaten to convert to Islam. The threat to convert shows that the petitioners saw the local pluralistic system, as well as their confessional identity, as a bargaining chip.

It was not only pandukhts of Van in Constantinople—and through them Vanets‘is—who could now raise their voices through newspapers, petitions and the public square of the Patriarchate and the streets of Constantinople. Vanets‘is expressed their voices through all these mediums to put or remove their ecclesiastic leaders from their position. Ecclesiastics too used the concept of the "voice of the people" to their benefit. Such assertions of the voice of the people and of mobilizing the populace and popular representation have to be considered along the horizontal networks of ecclesiastics and alliances of ecclesiastics with local Muslim figures, which helped ecclesiastics to hold on to their sites of power or weaken the positions of their opponents. That the popular voice and popular representation were seen and deployed as tropes that petitioners believed could influence the decision-making of authority figures in Istanbul, in itself demonstrates a change in their approach to politics and political legitimacy.

Through word of mouth, petitions, letters, newspaper and protests people of various social strata of Van struggled to assert their version of the majority's voice and to shape the public images of the ecclesiastics they supported. In other words, petitions, newspapers, and the very bodies of Vanets‘is in Constantinople became tools by which to assert their voices in the decision-making processes of the Ottoman Armenian community, and to derive political legitimacy from the people, in this case the people of the province of Van.

The petitions from the nineteenth century show that regional belonging could be of different geographical scales. The toponyms used to describe collective regional identity included Vaspurakan, Van, Moks, and Aght'amar. As we have seen, petitioners came not only from the city of Van, but also from rural areas. Those who supported one bishop or another were not necessarily divided based on socioeconomic strata. Rather men of different socioeconomic strata joined forces. They deployed their regional senses of belonging to assert their voices as those of a local majority and engaged in a complex set of political dynamics.

The negotiating and contesting voice of the people, was also part and parcel of the process of transforming the ethno-confessional community into a political unit: into a nation. Although in the cases discussed in this chapter it was largely the voice of Vanets'is that was given significance, Armenians all over the Ottoman Empire and beyond followed the conflicts regarding the ecclesiastic leaders of Van. Through the press they followed the news of the Catholicosate of Aght'amar or the prelacy of Van, which often gave the impression of a political thriller. One can imagine that such narratives of the political conflicts would engage readers in such a way that they would root for one side or another. The readers, therefore, could also partake in the pains of the authors of the newspaper articles that lamented of the embarrassment that such conflicts brought upon the nation. In such instances Van was portrayed as a place of malice.

The pandukhts of Van in the Ottoman capital minimized the distance between Van and Constantinople by representing themselves as Van Armenians. They emphasized their ties with their regional kin from Van while carving out spaces for their voices to be heard within the ethno-national leadership in Constantinople to which, in the second half of the nineteenth century, they were tied through the institution of the church under the auspices of the Ottoman

state. Nonetheless, in literary works, art and even the very petitions in which Vanets'is asserted their voices, pandukhts were cast as poor, low-skilled workers, ignorant and powerless. These attributes rendered the pandukhts apolitical. Such representations, as I will discuss in the next section, not only shaped the image of pandukhts, but also that of Ottoman Armenia. Furthermore, the figure of the pandukht offers us a heuristic for understanding relations between Istanbul and the eastern provinces.

The Figure of the Pandukht and the Patria

As exemplified by Raffi's novel *Gharib Mshets'i*, labor migrants in Istanbul were also referred to as *gharibs.* "*Gharib*" is an Arabic word meaning "stranger" that has been used in Armenian texts since the medieval period.[554] As is apparent from the dictionary entries listed at the beginning of this chapter, *gharib* was used to translate the word pandukht. The uses of pandukht and pandkhtut'iwn in nineteenth-century literary texts drew on the medieval concept of the "*ghurba*, or the state of being a *gharīb* [a stranger]."[555] Both *ghurba* and pandkhtut'iwn primarily reflected "a subjective state within the stranger itself; an affective condition of longing and loss…"[556] Yet unlike *ghurba* of the medieval period, pandkhtut'iwn could only be overcome by returning home. And unlike *gharibs* of the medieval period, pandukhts were defined precisely and only by the state of being away from the geographical place of home, rather than simply just being a stranger within a community.[557] Apart from its literary genealogy, however, the current socioeconomic and political dynamics of the mid-nineteenth century further shaped notions regarding pandkhtut'iwn. As expressed in print media and handwritten petitions, pandkhtut'iwn

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[554] See Pifer's "The Age of the *Gharīb*" for the use of *gharib* in Armenian texts.
[555] Michael Pifer, "The Age of the *Gharīb*: Strangers in the Medieval Mediterranean," in *An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion,* eds. Kathryn Babayan and Michael Pifer (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 19.
[556] Ibid.
[557] Ibid 34.

brought about anxieties not only for those who traveled away from home, but also for those who remained behind. With the movement of the pandukhts away from home anxieties about their financial and physical security surfaced, as well as that of their families who remained behind in their patria.

Petitions pointed to pandukhts as representative figures of the terrible conditions in the eastern provinces. Petitioners had to maximize their problems and helplessness, in order to bring a sense of urgency when they presented their plea to the Patriarchate and National Assembly. Articulations of dire conditions can be found in the petition of Bishop Hakob T‘ōp‘uzean, who lamented to the Patriarchate about the Lim Monastery's sorry state of affairs. He complained about the financial situation of the monastery and stated that many of the villagers were in pandkhtut‘iwn: they were away from home. Therefore, the monastery could not gather taxes from those households, as they lacked significant income and few were left to till the soil.[558] While labor migrants were legally bound to pay taxes in their home province, T‘ōp‘uzean's petition demonstrates that in practice they had difficulty collecting those taxes. In another petition, the same bishop wrote about how the villagers of Khzhishk (Halkalı) were poor and in debt and because of that many of them suffered in their pandkhtut‘iwn—which, he noted, "you see in your city Polis and in other places."[559] Rather than pointing to the pandukhts as the voice of Van, in this case pandukhts were the figural representation of the conditions in Van. Pandukhts were also given as a reason why the conditions in the provinces were deteriorating: as the land remained untilled, which resulted in the decrease of agricultural product.[560] The tone of such petitions in their collectivity brought out the powerlessness of pandukhts and the dismal conditions of their home region.

[558] BNU.CP23/1.075 (March 1, 1865).
[559] BNU.CP23/1.066 (Feb. 10, 1867).
[560] For another example see BNU.CP23/1.093 (Nov. 27, 1869).

Such pleas came at the cost of cultural denigration of Ottoman Armenia and its residents; in other words, the portrait they painted was of an uneducated people, a people who were failing to live up to the envisioned progress of the era and lacking in any historical agency. The effects of such representations on individual experience are best captured in the memoir of Bishop Tevkants‘. One day while Tevkants‘ was giving grammar lessons to priest-to-be Paghtasar Irichean, a Polsets‘i priest named Hovakim Tēr Nerses came by, started to correct Tevkants‘ and belittled him in front of his student. Tevkants‘ enraged replied to him:

> "Do not ignore me as a pandukht from Armenia [*Hayastants‘i pandukht*], ignorant and uninformed of knowledge and letters [*gitut‘iwn yew dprut‘iwn*]. In reality, the ancient literary men were from Armenia, in reality the person from Armenia [*Hayastants‘i*] considered ignorant is more erudite than the Istanbulite [*Biwzandion*][561] who is considered to be wise. Priest-to-be Paghtasar [who had come from Lim, a student of Bishop T‘ōp‘uzean], here, is better versed than you in the rules of grammar and the writing of the Bible."[562]

"Hayastants‘i" and "Hayastants‘i pandukht" connoted those from Armenia (Ottoman Armenia) and travelers from Armenia respectively. These phrases had become symbolic representations of the culturally and economically poor condition of Armenia and its inhabitants. In this episode, despite the ecclesiastic position of Tevkants‘, despite the education he had received in the city of Van and subsequently in the Monastery of Lim, and despite his coming from a wealthy household in Van, to the Polsets‘i priest, the Haystants‘i identity of Tevkants‘ stood out. The Polsets‘i priest approached Tevkants‘ with the stereotypes he had in mind of Hayastants‘is as uneducated and abject individuals.

Labor migration and the accompanying poverty that we see in the narration of Tevkants‘ about the conditions of the hans provided one perspective through which Polsets‘is came to imagine Vanets‘is or Mshets‘is. Tevkants‘ complained of the dirt of the room and mentioned the

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[561] Biwzandion, deriving from Byzantium, was a term Tevkants‘ and Khrimian often used to refer to Constantinople and those who were from the Ottoman capital.
[562] MM.MS.4180, 118b.

existence of bedbugs. He noted that the Armenian residents of Biwzantion (Istanbul) lived in great luxury, while his neighbors in the han lived in hell, with torn clothes and little food.[563] Such socioeconomic conditions would come to represent not only the condition of labor migrants in Constantinople, but of Hayastants'is. Representations and perceptions of Hayastants'is shaped interactions between a Hayastants'i and a Polsets'i regardless of socioeconomic background as we saw in Tevkants''s anecdote.

Yet, literary texts of the second half of the nineteenth century aimed to nurture sympathy towards pandukhts and by extension towards Armenia. At this time, writings about the pandukht in print media proliferated. Songs and poems about the pandukht and pandkhtut'iwn were widely published from the 1850s on.[564] Songs of Mshets'is and Vanets'is or Vaspurakan included songs that they sang on particular religious holidays, and at weddings, as well as love songs in the local dialects. Songs about the pandukht emphasized the pandukht's longing for his homeland, represented as a simple and rustic place. Take for example these lines from the song of the pandukht addressing the crane:

> "I have left properties[565] and orchards behind,
> Every time I say ahh my soul breaks apart,
> Oh crane wait for a second, let my soul hear your voice,
> Oh crane, don't you have any news from our country?"[566]

Such songs highlighted the sense of longing of the pandukht towards his home, and simultaneously cultivated a longing for Armenia among readers who had never been to Armenia.

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[563] MM.MS.4180, 113b, 116a.

[564] Hayk Ghazaryan briefly writes about this literature in his book *Arevmtahayeri Sots'ial-Tntesakan yev K'aghak'akan Kats'utyunĕ, 1800-1870t't'* (Yerevan: HSS Gitutyunneri Akademia, 1967), 414-419. Among the many works published he mentions the multiple publications of the song "Krunk" (Crane). For an original work on the use of the crane as a symbol of dispersion and migration see Michael Pifer, "The Diasporic Crane: Discursive Migration across the Armenian-Turkish Divide," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 18.3 (Fall 2009): 229-252. For a compilation of songs about pandukhts see Manik Mkrtch'yan, ed. *Hay zhoghovrdakan pandkhtut'yan yerger* (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA, 1961). Also see Aristakes Sedrakean's *K'nar Mshets'vots' yew Vanets'vots'.*

[565] Here the word is "*mĕlk'er*", which could derive from the Ottoman Turkish word "*mülk*" or could be a mispronounced version of fruits, in Armenian "*mirk'*."

[566] Minasareants', *K'nar haykakan*, 147.

Not only did the pandukht and the readers of such texts long for Armenia in its simplicity and natural beauty, but they imagined Armenia as such.

Polsets‘i Armenians as well as Armenians from Ottoman Armenia, the Russian Empire and Venice expanded the discourse on pandukhts. For example, in 1875 Vardapet Aristakes Tēr Sargseants‘, the brother of Bishop Yeremia Tevkants‘, published a book entitled *Pandukht Vants‘i* (Pandukht from Van).[567] The book consisted of fictional letters that a pandukht sent home, written in the local dialect of Van: one of the letters was from the pandukht to his family, the others were from the different family members (brothers, father, mother, and wife) and friends to the pandukht. The letters were meant to bring out the highly emotional state of longing and pain of pandukhts. Here are some lines that the pandukht of Van writes to his friend back home:

> "Brother, the Patria, the beloveds are yours. Life and medicine is where you are. Nature has blessed you. Feet to head, you are all about love. The dew and rain of the patria, the moon and sun, the trees and flowers, the clean waters and flowing rivers, slopes and fields, hills and orchards, the woman and the wine…they love you. Your hearts are full of love. You don't have any troubles. You are fortunate and happy. I wish a thousand times to be you."[568]

The pandukht in his letter paints a magical and almost heavenly image of Armenia, one that is full of love and without conflicts, especially among Armenians. His love and longing for the patria engages the reader in the same act. The book also included a number of popular songs and riddles from Van and, in the back of the book, a glossary of words that may have been unfamiliar to non-Vanets‘i Armenians. The book introduced Van to Polsets‘is as a simple and rural world. All the characters in it were mournful individuals, speaking with the dialect and pronunciation of

[567] Aristakes Vardapet Tēr Sargsents‘, *Pandukht Vants‘in. namakner, yerger, aṙatsner, aṙeghtsuatsner,* (K. Polis: YE. M. Tntesean, 1875).
[568] Tēr Sargsents‘, *Pandukht Vants‘in,* 48.

Van was difficult to comprehend for those trained in the standardized vernacular, but the dialect gave a sense of the speakers' innocence and naiveté.

Pandukhts in such discourses were depoliticized; the politics of Armenia were non-existent. In 1888, the prominent Armenian literati Arp'iar Arp'iarean (1859-1908) asked Melk'on Kiwrchean (1859-1915), a young writer and teacher, to write about the lives of pandukhts. Kiwrchean was himself a pandukht from Hawaw village in the eastern province of Harput. In four years under the penname Hrand, Kiwrchean produced a series of twenty articles on pandukhts. Like Aristakes Tēr Sargseants', he chose to express the voice of the pandukht in the genre of letters to addressed to the public. His letters described the horrible conditions in which the pandukhts lived, the longing of the pandukhts for their families and for rural landscape of their patria, the painful journey from their patria to Constantinople, the tragic death of pandukhts, their terrible working conditions. He called pandkhtut'iwn a disease because of the degree of pain it caused both for the pandukht and those left behind at home.[569] In his writings pandukhts were not portrayed as people who sought to have agency or a say in politics, but rather as people who accepted their fate. One of his pandukhts, for example, wrote the following in his letter: "Our fate is made up of tears, we shouldn't express our disgust or lament our misfortunes. Instead we should suffer in silence, for the love of the home and the child, for the love of the Nation and the sanctities."[570] Listing the home along the child rendered the former innocent. The pandukht's longing for the simplicity of his homeland rid Armenia of its politics and complexity.

Art historian Vazken Khatchig Davidian's work succinctly captures the role of the migrant population in Constantinople as they shaped perceptions of Ottoman Armenia and its

[569] The pieces that Kiwrchean wrote in *Masis* were published as a book after his death. Some of his articles on pandukhts also appeared in the periodicals *Arevelk'* (East) and *Hayrenik'*. (Hrand (Melk'on Kiwrchean), *Amboghjakan yerker* (Paris, 1931), 22).
[570] Kiwrchean, *Amboghjakan yerker,* 87. Published in *Masis* 1890, p. 3936.

Armenian residents. In his discussion of a painting entitled *Provincial Wedding in Mush* by artist Karapet Nishanian (1861-1950), Davidian writes:

> "Indeed, Nichanian would never have had to set foot outside the imperial capital, to observe those that he represented in his *Wedding*. Constantinople was awash with thousands of *bandoukhds* or *gharibs (ղարիպներ),* migrant workers from Ottoman Armenia. For Nichanian and his fellow urban intellectual elites, any abstract conceptualization of Ottoman Armenia had a powerful material counterpart, a very real physical manifestation on the streets of the imperial capital embodied in the recognizable form of the provincial migrant, referred to collectively as the *Hayastantsi,* and in particular *Mshetsi* or *Vanetsi bandoukhd,* most visible in the figure of the *hamal* [porter]."[571]

Such a circuit of encounter between the Hayastants'i and the Polsets'i allowed for the imagination of Ottoman Armenia as a one-dimensional representation and perception of the Hayastants'i.[572]

The figure of the pandukht as destitute, longing and melancholic found in books, periodicals, newspapers, and visual art shaped the subjectivities of a Vanets'i traveler. It enhanced the trope that one who went away from home had to feel longing and pain. While discourses shaped experiences, the discourses in print media flattened the multiplicity of experiences that travelers to the Ottoman capital would have. Still, not all migrants longed for home.

Longing for home was not just important for its sentimental value. There were practical reasons why those who stayed behind in the ancestral home needed the migrants to stay in touch. One of the concerns was the wives and families that labor migrants left behind. The archives of the Armenian Patriarchate include petitions that complain of labor migrants in Russia or Constantinople who had gone in pandkhtut'iwn and had not sent "a letter or money" back to their

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[571] Davidian, "Imagining Ottoman Armenia," 175.
[572] For a discussion of such oppositions between Hayastants'is and Polsets'is, which Libaridian qualifies as "the dispossessed rural masses" and "the urban population" see Libaridian, "Nation and Fatherland," 51-73.

families.[573] The request would usually be to find the migrant and send them back home, or search for a way to remedy the needs of the wife and family left behind, either by permitting the wife to remarry or securing the finances of the family. Of course, in some of these cases the husband may have died or been stricken with poverty and therefore did not have the means to send a letter home. In some of the cases, however, the petitioners indicated that the migrant had married someone else elsewhere.[574] We have to recognize that some among the migrants transgressed their state of pandkhtut'iwn and made Constantinople their new home. In other words, the overbearing discourse of pandkhtut'iwn of the period did not translate across the board to people's lived experiences.

In this section we have observed how being away from home, the state of pandkhtut'iwn*,* set the stage for a burgeoning discourse on the patria*,* as well as on love and longing for the patria*.* In the cases of Vanets'i husbands abandoning their wives, we see the possibility of migrants becoming detached from their home. However, the specific circumstances of the city, with the large number of Vanets'is and the faster travel time between Van and Istanbul, which meant not only the movement of people back and forth, but also a sustained communication through letters and newspapers that kept Vanets'is in Istanbul informed of what was happening in Van. The accelerated movement of information through print and increasingly faster postal service allowed Vanets'is of Constantinople to remain informed and engaged in the political affairs of Van. Although we do not have letters of pandukhts writing back home we know that they did write, because such letters were mentioned in petitions, as well as in fictional works.

[573] For examples see BNU.CPRG.XIX.81.001 (July 22, 1860); BNU.CPRG.XIX.81.026 (Dec. 24, 1863); BNU.CPRG.XIX.81.041 (May 6, 1864); BNU.CPRG.XIX.81.059 (July 25, 1864); BNU.CP23/1.141 (March 9, 1874). BNU.CPRG.XIX.81.0127 (March 22, 1866); BNU.CPRG.XIX.81.0104 (April 8, 1865).
[574] BNU.CPRG.XIX.81.026 (Dec. 24, 1863).

Rather than focusing on the local conditions that made pandukhts feel like foreigners or outsiders in Istanbul, discourses on pandukhts focused on the ways their distance from home made them feel like foreigners. The definition of pandukht, therefore, most closely matches with the first definition provided by the *Nor baṙgirkʻ haykazean lezui* (1837), because it was first and foremost their distance from their patria that made them feel like foreigners. Instead of serving as a category to make distinctions between insiders and outsiders in Istanbul, "pandukht" rather offered a heuristic to distinguish between Istanbul and Armenia as places and to shape the relationship between those geographies.

The trope of pandkhtutʻiwn provided yet another means through which the role of the eastern provinces and its inhabitants in historical sociopolitical transformations was minimized, befitting the emergent colonialist system of power of the Ottoman Empire. And it provides another heuristic to explain how and why the narratives that highlight the role of the eastern provinces in historical sociopolitical transformations of the Ottoman Empire and of the Ottoman Armenian community have largely remained untold. While it is important to keep in mind the inequalities that undergirded the dynamics between Constantinople and the eastern provinces, such inequalities should not suggest that influence happened in a unidirectional manner. They should not obscure the involvement of people in the eastern provinces in historical processes. Discussing the representation of Armenia in print media through pandukhts does not suggest that the narratives were detached from reality, but instead intends to emphasize that this representation showed only one aspect of the provinces and the pandukhts, while hiding other layers. Print media, that is to say, emphasized the poverty, lack of education, and attacks and harassments by Kurds, as well as the rural aspects of the provinces. Emphasizing the rustic aspect of the provinces was intended to evoke the simplicity of the patria and therefore to offer

an apolitical portrayal of the patria, where Armenian peasants were busy with tilling their lands and communing with nature. This view deprived them of any agency or political action. Discourses on fields, the soil and the mountains of the patria cultivated an embodied vision of Armenia. The representation of it through its nature and ruins gave it an authentic sense which connected Armenia to the past rather than the present.

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Technological and demographic changes allowed Vanets'i pandukhts not only to maintain social and cultural ties with each other and with Van, but also to become active instruments for the local politics of Van—particularly in regards to the appointments of the Prelate of Van and Catholicos of Aght'amar. Changes in political structures and expansion of participatory politics bestowed an added value on being a Vanets'i in Constantinople. Pandukhts and the notion of "the people of Van" represented negotiating tools for prelates and other ecclesiastic leaders in Van when they communicated with the Patriarchate or the Catholicosate as well as the Sublime Porte. The appearance of notions of popular representation in petitions and the existence of a national assembly in Van in the early 1850s demonstrate that ideas of representative politics were present in Van before the adoption of reforms and edicts in the Ottoman capital that promoted institutional transformations, moving the state in the direction of representative politics, albeit a limited one. Such a transformation, along with the formation of the Catholic and Nestorian millets, provided avenues through which Vanets'i petitioners began to collectively bargain, using religion as their political trump card.

While most pandukhts were poor and indigent, despite their poverty they were not cut off from the world of politics. The networks of pandukhts were not just made up of labor migrants, but included merchants, notables, ecclesiastics and students. Their political engagement

manifested itself particularly when I pieced together fragments of evidence about their collective voices in petitions, private letters, memoirs, novels, and newspapers. Pandukhts collectively became engaged in the politics of Van through their presence in the Ottoman capital. At the same time, in print media lay and ecclesiastic literati, who had closer ties with Istanbul, configured pandukhts as a trope to represent the eastern Ottoman provinces (i.e., Ottoman Armenia), as a stagnant and destitute place, its inhabitants lacking education and power. The discourses in relation to pandukhts were built upon the affective aspects of being away from home and from them the literati crafted and enhanced the image of an attachment to Armenia as patria (*hayrenik'*).

Pandukhts and pandkhtut'iwn became both a means to make voices from Van audible in Istanbul and a site through which Van Armenians were represented as destitute and passive provincials, rather than as engaged historical actors. Pandukhts served as a means through which to expand the discourse of colonization, which aimed to establish differences and hierarchies between Istanbul and the eastern provinces, as well as to highlight voices from Istanbul while suppressing those of the provinces.

Epilogue

Critical practices of communication, of representative politics and migration connected Van and its inhabitants with the Ottoman imperial center. Accelerated transport aided the circulation of newspapers and petitions that expanded the possibilities of the formation and function of a representative system of governance. Moreover, the presence of a large number of Vanets'i labor migrants in Istanbul enhanced Van's connections with the Ottoman capital. The inhabitants of Van were agents involved in Ottoman historical processes of change. While an imperial periphery, Van was also at the center of Ottoman processes of modernization. In contradistinction to traditional approaches to the study of the Ottoman province as a laboratory to test the effectiveness of state reforms, my method of examining the various layers of circulation that Van was part of provides a way to understand transformations as integral to broader imperial and global processes, arguing against state-imposed projects of modernization. Yet, the centrality of Van in Ottoman modernization has been obscured as the voices of Van Armenians have been silenced through the archives, as part of colonial and national projects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that have shaped discourses and narratives about the Ottoman East, as well as of Ottoman modernization.

Antaramian in his work argues that the actions of the likes of Khrimian, Sruandzteants', and Tevkants', among other Armenian ecclesiastics, led to the centralization of the Ottoman state. He, however, does not see in their actions "any expression of nationalism, as everything political consistently sought its legitimation in the imperial capital."[575] Such an argument emanates from a supposition that nation-making and empire-making are necessarily in conflict with each other. I have instead shown in this dissertation how the discourses of these same

[575] Antaramian, "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State," 190.

individuals served both to shape affective notions of the patria and the nation, and to render Istanbul the center of power. The clergymen often claimed to work for the benefit of the Ottoman state (*Tērut'iwn*) and the nation, and argued that the progress of the nation would contribute to the well-being of the Ottoman state. The project of Ottomanism, an ideology espoused by the Tanzimat, had many layers. One aspect of it was the political centralization of the empire, whereby powerholders in the provinces, such as ecclesiastics and notables, would be closely bound to Istanbul.[576] Another aspect of Ottomanism, however, was a cultural one that claimed an aim to bond Ottoman subjects with one another and to the Ottoman patria. While our three bishops, Khrimian, Sruandzteants' and Tevkants', participated in the state project of centralization, the cultural component of Ottomanism was absent from their discourses, as they spoke only of an Armenian patria and in their writings emphasized the distinctions, rather than bonds, with other ethno-religious groups.[577] There was no notion of Ottoman identity articulated in their writings, while there was a clear project of delineating the Armenian identity by narrating Armenian history, by attempts to "purify" the Armenian language from foreign words, and by recording ruins in the eastern provinces as Armenian sites and attaching Armenian stories and histories to those ruins. On the one hand, it is this cultural process of identity-making that put a greater distance between Muslims and Armenians. On the other hand, as Antaramian argues in his work, the transformations of political institutions that the Tanzimat introduced, and particularly the reforming of the Armenian millet, weakened the earlier local forms of politics in

[576] For the role of Armenian notables in the project of Ottomanism see Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin." Cora also questions the notion that Ottomanism was a clearly defined project, but rather argues that it was shaped through processes of bargaining, which he examines through the lens of Ottoman Armenian notables of Erzurum.
[577] For more on discourses distinguishing Kurds and Armenians in the writings of Sruandzteants' see Dzovinar Derderian, "Shaping Subjectivities and Contesting Power Through the Image of Kurds, 1860s," in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Society, Identities and Politics,* ed. Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 91-108.

Van that had crossed ethnic lines. This can be seen as one reason why relations between Kurds and Armenians in Van worsened in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Over the five decades analyzed in this dissertation, the condition of Armenians in Van worsened. By the 1870s Van had become one of the poorest regions in the eastern provinces, stricken by violence and interethnic conflict.[578] In 1876, for example, the famous market of Van burnt down, signaling the deterioration of relations between Armenians and local Muslims, as well as the worsening of relations between Armenians and the local Ottoman state officials. At this time, Tevkants‘, who was serving as the acting prelate of Van, wrote multiple letters to the Armenian Patriarchate, pleading for intervention and repeatedly articulating that the fire was no accident. Tevkants‘ insisted that local Ottoman statesmen were involved and had incited the fire and the looting that followed. The Russo-Ottoman war took place shortly after (1877-78) and the Ottoman Empire was defeated. This war became the catalyst for Armenians' being perceived by the Ottoman state and local Muslims as a fifth column, allied with the Russian Empire and seeking British help. Worse was yet to come for Van, however, as a terrible famine ensued in the early 1880s, exacerbated by war and environmental degradation.[579] These events may have worsened relations between local Muslims and Armenians, heightening mistrust among Armenians towards the Ottoman state. The creation of the organization "Miut‘iwn i Prkut‘iwn" in 1872—one of the earliest radical Armenian organizations mentioned in my introduction—is but one example that demonstrates signs of mistrust among Van Armenians against the Ottoman state. In addition, in my corpus of petitions increasingly petitions began to refer to conflicts between Muslims and Armenians. Such changes indicate that relations between Muslims and Armenians had begun to deteriorate before the Russo-Ottoman War. Soon after, we witness a

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[578] 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), 67.
[579] For more on the famine in Van see Ertem, "Eating the Last Seed."

radicalization of Armenian organizations, including the Armenakan party created in Van in 1885, followed by the Hnchak and Dashnak parties. This is the decisive moment when Armenian nation-making discourses and practices directed against the Ottoman state and against the "other" were voiced. Drawing on earlier discourses of justice and representation, I suggest that the emergence of these parties has to be understood in the context of the decades-long practices of voicing demands and negotiating for legitimate representation that I have outlined in this dissertation. The articulation of demands along ethnic lines is a component of a process that made national politics–and therefore the modern nation–possible for Ottoman Armenians.

The deteriorating relations between Muslims and Armenians, and the increasingly tense relation of the state with Armenians, also changed the fate of our three bishops: Khrimian, Tevkants' and Sruandzteants'. In 1879, Khrimian took over the prelacy of Van from Tevkants', at a time when Van was suffering terrible drought that was followed by a famine. The conditions had affected both Kurds and Armenians of the region. Khrimian immediately set out to form committees that would deal with the famine, not just to alleviate the condition of Armenians but also of Kurds. He opened a school of agriculture in Van in 1880, as he deemed that one of the reasons for the famine was the poor agricultural methods used by the villagers of Van.[580] By 1883 Khrimian's relations with the local Ottoman officials had deteriorated, and rumors were being spread that Khrimian was instigating revolutionary activities among Armenians.[581] In 1885, the Sublime Porte ordered the Patriarchate to recall Khrimian to Istanbul.[582] In 1890, Khrimian was exiled from Istanbul to Jerusalem, where he stayed until 1893, when he was elected Catholicos of Ējmiatsin and remained so until his death in 1907.

[580] Poghosyan, *Vaspurakani Patmut'iwnits',* 199-201.
[581] Ibid 217.
[582] Ibid 218.

Sruandzteants‘ served as deputy prelate of Van along with Khrimian. In 1884, he was appointed prelate in Trabzon and remained there until 1888, when he met the fate of Khrimian, as he was called to Istanbul through the Patriarchate at the demand of the Sublime Porte. In Istanbul, both Khrimian and Sruandzteants‘ were being closely monitored by the Ottoman state.[583] Sruandzteants remained in Istanbul until his death in 1892. Although we do not have much information about the latter years of the life of Bishop Tevkants‘, it seems that he retired to the Varag monastery after Khrimian replaced him as prelate of Van in 1879. There he wrote his multi-volume memoir, still heavily relying on classical Armeanian, resisting the full vernacularization of his language. He was less attuned to change than was Khrimian, who adopted the vernacular language in the 1870s. Unlike Khrimian and Tevkants‘, Sruandzteants‘, being of a younger generation, had always written in the vernacular. While in the 1850s and 1860s Tevkants‘ had cooperated with the Ottoman state, traveling with Ottoman statesmen to inner Anatolia to investigate the local conditions and implement reforms, now in his handwritten memoirs he encouraged Armenians to be courageous and not to shy away from being aggressive towards Muslims. Tevkants‘ died in Van in 1885.

During these years of heightened hostility, Khrimian’s stance changed as well, but in a different way. In his writings after he served as Patriarch, between 1869 and 1873, he began to directly communicate with the populace of Van, writing in vernacular Armenian, abandoning the classical Armenians that he had not been able to let go of in the 1850s. This shift likely emanated from an increasing need to speak directly to the common people of Armenia. This is apparent in his stories *Sirak‘ and Samuel: The Educational Lessons of the Kind Father* (1887)[584] and

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[583] Ēmma A. Kostandyan, *Garegin Srvandzteants‘. Kyank‘ĕ yew gotsuneut‘yunĕ* (Yerevan: Haykakan SSH GA, 1979), 136-139.
[584] Sirak yew Samuel. bari hor krt‘akan daser

Grandpa and Grandson: For the Grandchildren of the Rural People (1894).[585] In the 1880s, Khrimian turned away from the writing about Armenian history, Armenian geography, Armenian grammar and religion that had filled the pages of *Artsui Vaspurakan.* He put greater emphasis on the importance of education and agriculture, which had also been among his favorite topics in the mid-nineteenth century, but now he discussed them in greater depth. He put even greater focus than before on the practical aspects of education, a secularizing move.

He wrote *Grandpa and Grandson* while in exile in Jerusalem. Impacted by what he had seen in Van in the early 1880s, he made a point of giving lessons on agriculture and on emphasizing the importance of tilling the soil in the villages. He addressed the anxieties that people had regarding the education of men and women, which they thought broke up families. Khrimian gave his lesson in the voice of a grandfather from a village near Van, who was addressing his grandson. Thus, as distinct from his earlier writings, Khrimian addressed the commoners of the provinces, something he had not done in his earlier writings of the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, when he mainly addressed Istanbul and city-dwellers. Now he was no longer calling for Istanbul Armenians to come and educate and invest in Armenia. He was calling on Vanets'is and Vanets'i villagers in particular to take the reins of education and transmit knowledge to future generations. The grandfather emphasized the importance of planting trees, talked about the maintenance of the stable, the climate of Van and how it affected agriculture and husbandry. Unlike Khrimian's earlier writings, where the villager appeared to be romanticizing the natural landscape, in this story the reader is introduced to the multi-layered activities of villagers that included agriculture and husbandry, but also attending schools and churches.[586]

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[585] Papik yew t'oṙnik. giwghakan zhoghovurdi t'oṙnikneru hamar

[586] Mkrtich' Khrimian, *Papik ew t'oṙnik. Grets' Hayots' Hayrik Giwghakan zhoghovurdi t'oṙnikneru hamar* (Ējmiatsin: Mayr At'oṙ sb. Ējmiatsin, 1894). The full name of Khrimian does not appear on the cover of the page, instead he is identified as Father of Armenians (*Hayots' Hayrik*).

Instead of claiming that Van had more fertile land than Europe, as he had claimed in the 1850s, Khrimian admitted that climactic conditions in Van made it more difficult to till the soil there, as opposed to Çukurova—a region close to the northeastern shore of the Mediterranean. The 1879 drought in Van seems to have changed his conception of agriculture.

These are but some of the changes that occurred in Khrimian's thinking and approach. To take a longue durée view of this transformation, the changes in the language, narrative and intended audience in Khrimian's writings and more generally in print media have to be examined from the mid- to the late nineteenth century to the late 1870s. This would also help provide a comparison of the parallel diachronic changes in print media and in handwritten petitions. In this dissertation, I studied largely the diachronic changes in handwritten petitions. Only once we undertake such an investigation will we be able to understand the fluctuations in an ongoing process of secularization, democratization and nation-making.

Although "Nation-Making and the Language of Colonialism" leaves many questions unanswered, it is my hope that these questions will inspire future studies. Democratization and nation-making are long-term processes both in the current republics of Turkey and Armenia and in the Armenian Diaspora. These two nations continue to redefine and contest the history and legitimacy of each nation. In this dissertation, I have shown that affect and love provide useful analytical tools to study transformations in the political imagination of a people. This approach is applicable to our present time.

"*Vatanseverlik*" in Turkish and "*hayrenasirt'iwn*" in Armenian, both meaning love of patria, continue to be part of the vocabulary of politicians and of society at large. The political authorities in Armenia, particularly the new administration of Nikol Pashinyan, emphasize that the Republic of Armenia is the patria not only of the citizens of Armenia but of the Armenians in

Diaspora. Yet the government of Armenia has initiated a new outreach program to stimulate the hearts of Armenians in the Diaspora and inspire them to invest in and “return” to Armenia. Discourses for a new Armenia are crafted in terms of the patria.

In recent years, love has returned as a strategic tool among politicians in both Turkey and Armenia in rather explicit ways. In April 2018, Nikol Pashinyan and his team overthrew Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan in a revolution which was named the “Revolution of Love and Solidarity.” During the revolution, Nikol Pashinyan vociferously claimed to the protesting crowds, “I love you!” and at the end of each of his Facebook Live speeches he bid farewell to his virtual audience by telling them that he loved them and that he bowed before them—the citizens of Armenia. These turns of phrase had not been common in the language of politicians in Armenia since its creation as an independent republic. Furthermore, it is unusual to hear men in Armenia publicly adopt the language of humility that reveals deep affection. It is not very surprising, though, that in less than a year, when Pashinyan needed to establish his authority as the newly elected Prime Minister, his language turned to one of rage and confrontation, rather than love. Love no longer represented the language of the powerful. A question then arises: has love’s political role changed since the nineteenth century? How have the new technologies of communication of the twenty-first century transformed the language of politics, and the people’s expectations from their politicians?

In Turkey, Ekrem İmamoğlu, the candidate of the Republican People’s Party (CHP), defeated the leading Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the Istanbul municipal elections of April 2019, although the leading party contested that result and has ordered a repeat of the election. İmamoğlu’s party’s new strategy, which has so far garnered him great popularity, was

articulated in a newly published book called the *Book of Radical Love*.[587] Indeed, İmamoğlu's speeches throughout his most recent political campaign and after his election have been sprinkled with affection and love. What he means by love and solidarity, however, refers to the words and actions of his mother, not his father. Has love become feminized in Turkish society, as opposed to the more paternalistic notions of love of the nineteenth century? When did this change occur and why? How did this change in turn redefine gendered boundaries and politics?

While love and representative politics have been transformed, the colonial relationship of Istanbul with Turkey's East persists. Even as the battle over the seat of Istanbul's municipality continues and has dominated Turkish media, in a number of districts in the east of Turkey, including Van, the government has refused the right of victorious candidates from the Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) to officially assume their seats as mayor. By executive order their seats were instead given to the Justice and Development Party candidates who had come in second in the elections. The voices of the largely Kurdish population of this region, just like the voices of the Armenians who lived in this same region, remain marginalized by both the government of Turkey and the media. As it was during the age of the Ottoman Empire, the eastern region of Turkey continues to be marred by injustice, violence and war, and as such remains a colonized and silenced outpost of Turkey.

[587] Nick Ashdown, "'Radical Love Book' hailed as key to Turkish opposition election success," (April 11 2019) https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/radical-love-book-hailed-key-turkish-opposition-election-success (Accessed April 17, 2019).

Appendix 1: Example of a Petition

Most Honorable and August Holy Highness Most Pitying Lord and Assembly of the Holy Spirit and Chairmen of the political nation-helping benevolent administration,

[…]

When seven years ago, the need for building a barrack for the royal armies was felt by the people (zhoghovurd) of Van, they in unanimity with the notables (*ishkhan*) and with the advice of the late Prelate Gabriel Holy Archbishop sealed a collective petition (*mahseragrut'iwn*), so that we would not refuse such a task beneficial for the nation (*Azgōgut*), so that we would stay unanimous, because we suffer tremendously when the army comes to this country. In the winter, the houses of the members of the nation (*Azgayink'*) would empty, a lot of people had to go to foreign places and rent, all of the furniture of the homes and the nourishment provisions of the winter had to be taken out. Girls, brides, little children confused and uncertain, against the cold of the winter, would face many harms. Loss of furniture, massacre, general beatings, as is known, would certainly occur. In the hands of the army, the homes of everyone would almost turn into ruins. Many times the people in this bitterness, were obliged to complain to the government of your patriarchate. The late Prelate would receive many letters from Your holy predecessors: asking why has such and such a person's home been emptied? Many such commission letters came, so that in some way there would be some kind of protection towards the poor people's bitter condition, because it was impossible to recount this in words. As is known, this year as well, when from around Mush the army came, again they rented the National winter quarter (*kışlak*), and whatever we could not provide we had to build by taking loans. And still as the space was insufficient for the army we had to empty homes. The soldiers (*zaptia)* all day long would stay at the Prelacy, ordering us to quickly empty homes. Seeing these torments, the venerable commander Ferik Azmi Pasha with his benevolence started to build a large winter quarters (*kışlak*), which has remained half-built because the winter came. But all of this has brought some quiet to the country, since the horses of the cavalrymen (*suvari)* were tied in the *ksmanots'(?),* many people's stables were freed. Still the villagers tried to help and with little money they put their chariots into use and the city-dwellers provided wood for the Royal building, in agreement with Muslims (*aylazgik'*).

Now that so many places have been built for the army, and still we have troubles, how much more were the troubles when there was no place in the name of the army in this country. When this Beneficial for the nation (Azgōgut) task was being initiated [i.e. building the barrack] many people refused to pay taxes, and many started to convince people to oppose the proposition of paying taxes. The governor of the time Ziya Pasha found out [about the conflict]; many were offended, the late Gabriel Holy Archbishop feeling upset, decided to exile those three main individuals. At the time the notables (*ishkhan)* worked hard to have the holy late Prelate concede, but it was impossible. Finally, [the *ishkhans*] were not informed about the exile, not with an official report (*mazbata*)*,* neither with a seal nor with a title-deed (*sened).* About this no piece of paper exists addressed to the notables (*ishkhan).* But Mahtesi Astvatzatur has submitted a petition saying that these four are the ones who exiled us, although no tax had been taken from him for the winter quarters (*kışlak)*.

Thus we are informing you the full truth of the matter with this collective petition and we ask, that you deign to protect the honor of our chief notables (*ishkhan*) by protecting the truth. If this is not stopped it will probably be the reason for long conflicts and disputes, and we will

become a laughing stock for our enemies, and ashamed in front of foreign people *(ōtar azgats'*). The Kindest God has bestowed you the sovereign (*vehapet*) to protect the chastity of the pure blood, we leave everything to your reasoning.[588]

And if a *takrir* is quickly written from the Patriarchate to the Sublime Porte, the innocent will soon be protected and by doing your duty with Your Love of Nation, you will fulfill the infinite debt to God and give solace to all of the poor commoners, who have reached the door of dangers, from the corner of Armenia the good hearts are beating, hurry to alleviate its troubles.

Remaining your, wishing well to you benevolent chairmen, and sincerely wishing your well-being.

National Assembly of Van and all of the Society of Vaspurakan.

[Signatures]

[588] BNU.CGPR.XIX.81.005 (December 25, 1862). All the words provided in italics such *kışlak, zaptia, suvari, sened* are Ottoman words that are used in Armenian letters. This shows how Turkish was the dominant language when it came to bureaucracy and military matters.

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