

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN MODERN HISTORY

The Assyrian Genocide

Cultural and Political Legacies

Edited by
Hannibal Travis



“One of the fortuitous aspects of the development of comparative genocide studies has been attention to a number of cases of genocide and genocidal massacres that previously were not included in a manner commensurate with the crime. For example, after a century the genocide of the numerically small Herero people has finally entered the consciousness of many scholars and students. The same is happening with the Assyrian genocide, recognition of which I have personally advocated for a long time. Each genocide is different, however, and care should be taken as there are pitfalls in attempting to equate one with the other in every way. For decades, the Assyrian genocide, like the Armenian genocide, had become a ‘forgotten genocide.’ Armenian activists and scholars marshaled their resources relatively early to gradually eliminate the adjective ‘forgotten.’ Assyrians and Greeks tarried, in part because they themselves did not pay sufficient heed to the challenge. It is gratifying that this has changed in recent decades and the fact that both Assyrian and non-Assyrian authors are contributors to *The Assyrian Genocide: Cultural and Political Legacies* is strong testimony to that fact.”

Richard G. Hovannisian, Professor Emeritus,
University of California, Los Angeles,
President’s Fellow, Chapman University, and
Scholarly Advisor, Shoah Foundation,
University of Southern California.



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The Assyrian Genocide

For a brief period, the attention of the international community has focused once again on the plight of religious minorities in Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. In particular, the abductions and massacres of Yazidis and Assyrians in the Sinjar, Mosul, Nineveh Plains, Baghdad, and Hasakah regions in 2007–2015 raised questions about the prevention of genocide. This book, while principally analyzing the Assyrian genocide of 1914–1925 and its implications for the culture and politics of the region, also raises broader questions concerning the future of religious diversity in the Middle East. It gathers and analyzes the findings of a broad spectrum of historical and scholarly works on Christian identities in the Middle East, genocide studies, international law, and the politics of the late Ottoman Empire, as well as the politics of the Ottomans' British and Russian rivals for power in western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean basin.

A key question the book raises is whether the fate of the Assyrians maps onto any of the concepts used within international law and diplomatic history to study genocide and group violence. In this light, the Assyrian genocide stands out as being several times larger than the Srebrenica genocide, which is recognized by Turkey as well as by international tribunals and organizations. That is true both in absolute terms and relative to the size of the affected group, which was larger in the Bosnian case. Including its Armenian and Greek victims, the Ottoman Christian Genocide rivals the Rwandan, Bengali, and Biafran genocides. The book also aims to explore the impact of the genocide period of 1914–1925 on the development or partial unraveling of Assyrian group cohesion, including aspirations to autonomy in the Assyrian areas of northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, and southeastern Turkey. Scholars from around the world have collaborated to approach these research questions by reference to diplomatic and political archives, international legal materials, memoirs, and literary works.

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The Assyrian Genocide

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First published 2018
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Travis, Hannibal, editor.

Title: The Assyrian genocide : cultural and political legacies / edited by Hannibal Travis.

Other titles: Routledge studies in modern history ; 29.

Description: Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon : Routledge, 2017. | Series: Routledge studies in modern history ; 29 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017006188 | ISBN 9781138284050 (hardback : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781315269832 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Genocide—Turkey—History—20th century. | Genocide—Iraq—History—20th century. | Assyrians—Turkey—History—20th century. | Assyrians—Iraq—History—20th century. | Turkey—Ethnic relations. | Iraq—Ethnic relations. | Minorities—Turkey—History—20th century. | Minorities—Iraq—History—20th century. | Christians—Turkey—History—20th century. | Christians—Iraq—History—20th century.

Classification: LCC DR435.A87 A87 2017 | DDC 305.8009561—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017006188>

ISBN: 978-1-138-28405-0 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-26983-2 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Dedication

The editor of this book is greatly indebted to the Mor Afrem Foundation for funding the publication of this book.

The Mor Afrem Foundation (www.mor-afrem.com) was established by Dr. Samir Afram in Gronau, Westphalia (Germany) in 2007.

The promotion of cross-denominational, national, historical, and identity-building projects for Assyrians worldwide is among its stated objectives.



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1 Betlis and Ooromiyah are somewhat dated English versions of the place names Bitlis and Urmia.

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Acknowledgements

The editor would like to thank the contributors for their scholarly efforts and the Florida International University College of Law for its research assistance and support.

Glossary

dhimmi non-Muslim protected people under Muslim rule, Turkish: *zimmi*
fatwa judicial decree by a Muslim cleric claiming expertise on legal matters within Islam, in Turkish: *fetva*

firman Ottoman imperial decree, also: *ferman*

khanjars daggers, in Yemeni culture

qaflat flight, or caravans assembled for this purpose, in neo-Aramaic

Meclis-i Ayan upper house of the Ottoman parliamentary council, known as the Chamber of Notables

Meclis-i Mebûsân lower house of the Ottoman parliamentary council, known as the Chamber of Deputies

millet quasi-autonomous religion or religious community with increasingly centralized political implications of hierarchical governance by a patriarch, chief rabbi, or the *şeyhülislam*, starting in the mid- to late eighteenth century

Osmanlı Meclisi Ottoman Council or parliament

Porte Ottoman administration in Constantinople, named after the gate to the Foreign Ministry, which was impressive, hence also the Sublime Porte

Qaymakam/Kaymakam governor of a *kazâ* or district, a subdivision of a sub-province or *sancak*, within a province or *vilâyet* combining multiple *sancaks*

Rûm Greek Orthodox Christians

şeyhülislam head of the Muslim millet, highest judicial official, minister of religious affairs, mufti of Constantinople, and member of the Council of Ministers Tanzimat reform era in Ottoman history, especially 1838–1878

Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa the Ottoman Special Organization

vilâyet province; as of 1909, and as relevant to this book, the provinces of the Ottoman Empire included Basra, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Mamuret ül Aziz or Harput, Mosul, and Van

zimmi non-Muslim protected people under Muslim rule

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Soy Adı Kanunu [Law on Last Names], No. 2525 (June 21, 1934), *Düstur* [Code of Laws], Third Set, vol. 15, addenda (Ankara: Tüürkiye Büyük Meclis, 1282–1283).

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1 The Assyrian genocide across history

Collective memory, legal theory, and power politics

Hannibal Travis

Introduction

The identity of the Assyrians was complicated for political and religious reasons even prior to 1915. Before considering the Assyrian genocide and its remembrance, it is necessary to locate the Assyrian people in the region and in history. The Assyrian people shares a homeland divided among four states, comprised principally of the نينوى (Nineveh) plains region of Iraq, the Hakkārī and تۇر عبدین [Tūr^cAbdīn] (Tur Abdin) regions of Turkey, the Urmia region of Iran, and the Khabour river and Aleppo regions of Syria. Assyrians, historically, migrated between these regions, whether for trade, to flee persecution, or as a result of deportation.

The Assyrian identity

Ancient inscriptions and records have confirmed an ancient Assyrian presence from the region near Nineveh (Mesopotamia) to the former Assyrian colonies in the northeast (Persia) and northwest (Anatolia).¹ The ancient Assyrian religion was practiced in southeastern Anatolia and northern Iraq prior to the conversion of many of the Assyrians to Christianity, and in the vestigial form of charms and superstitions probably until the present time.²

1 A.K. Grayson, "Assyria: Assur-Dan II to Ashur-Nirari V," in John Boardman (Ed.), *The Cambridge Ancient History: III Part I: The Prehistory of the Balkans and the Middle East and the Aegean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 260–264; D.J. Wiseman, "Assyria," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Ed.), *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: A-D*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 334–335; Shigeo Yamada, *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire: A Historical Study of the Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BC) Relating to His Campaigns in the West* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 68–76; Hugh F. Russell, "Shalmaneser's Campaign to Urartu in 856 BC and the Historical Geography of Eastern Anatolia According to the Assyrian Sources," *Anatolian Studies* 34 (1984): 171–201.

2 Polymnia Athanassiadi. "Persecution and Response in Late Paganism: The Evidence of Damascius," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113 (1993): 1–24, 24; H.J.W. Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 175–176; Michael Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 416–420; Michael Morony, "Magic and Society in Late Sassanian Iraq," in Joel Walker et al. (Eds.), *Prayer, Magic, and*

2 *Hannibal Travis*

The ancient Assyrian religion was practiced in southeastern Anatolia and northern Iraq prior to the conversion of many of the Assyrians to Christianity,³ in nearby Harran until almost 1,000 years after the death of Jesus Christ, and in southeastern Anatolia, northern Iraq, eastern Syria, and far southern Iraq and Iran until the twentieth century in the attenuated forms of Yezidism and Mandaeanism.⁴ Christianity emerged alongside ancient Assyrian religion, not after its death.⁵ The ancient names and stories of the Assyrians also persist in the attenuated form of Yezidism, Mandaeanism, and Magianism/Zoroastrianism in eastern Anatolia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.⁶

Assyrian Christian populations are descended from groups that practiced ancient Assyrian religions and that lived in a place that was called ܐܘܪܝܢܐ [ʿĀlūr] (Assyria) when Christianity arrived.⁷ According to the sixth century CE history of Christianity in Assyria by Mshihā Zkhā, Addai was the apostle of “Adiabene and Assyria” and named Pqīdhā as bishop of that region.⁸ In the eastern Christian tradition, Saint Thomas the Apostle sent Addai to evangelize the east, where Assyrian and Babylonian doctrines of the fallen but risen lord who became king of kings had long been prevalent.⁹ Assyria and

the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2003), 83–107; Simo Parpola, “Mesopotamian Precursors to the Hymn of the Pearl,” in R.M. Whiting (Ed.), *Melammu Symposia 2: Mythology and Mythologies. Methodological Approaches to Intercultural Influences. Proceedings of the Second Annual Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project* (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001), 191, www.helsinki.fi/science/saa; Simo Parpola, “National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times,” in Önver Cetrez, Sargon Donabed and Aryo Makko (Eds.), *The Assyrian Heritage: Threads of Continuity and Influence* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitat, 2012), 3–47, 16; Judah Segal, *Edessa, the “Blessed City”* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 68; Hannibal Travis, “On the Existence of National Identity before ‘Imagined Communities’: The Example of the Assyrians of Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Persia,” in Cetrez, Donabed, and Makko (Eds.), *The Assyrian Heritage*, 87–125; William Wigram, *The Assyrians and their Neighbors* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, reprint ed., 2002), 186–207.

3 Travis, “National Identity,” 87–100.

4 Athanassiadi, “Persecution and Response,” 24; Drijvers, *Edessa*, 175–176; Morony, *Iraq*, 416–420; Morony, “Magic,” 83–107; Parpola, “Mesopotamian Precursors,” 191; Parpola, “National and Ethnic Identity,” 18–19, 34–38; Segal, *Edessa*, 68; Travis, “National Identity,” 113–116; Wigram, *The Assyrians and their Neighbors*, 186–207.

5 Travis, “National Identity,” 87–100.

6 *Ibid.*, 120–131.

7 *Ibid.*, 87–100. See also, “The Large Inscription of Darius From Behistun,” in Robert Francis Harper (ed.), *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature: Selected Translations* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1904), 178.

8 A.J. Maclean, “Syrian Christians,” in James Hastings, John Alexander Selbie and Louis Herbert Gray (Eds.), *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 12 (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1922), 170.

9 George Lamsa and William Chauncey Emhardt, *The Oldest Christian People* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1926), 28. See also, Simo Parpola, “Sons of God: The Ideology of Assyrian Kingship,” *Archaeology Odyssey* (Nov./Dec. 1999), 16–24.

nearby ܐܪܒܝܠ ['Arbelā] (Arbela/Irbil) had Christian bishops between 100 and about 250 years after the death of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ The Assyrian oral tradition is that Assyrians settled in Urmia in the time of the ancient Assyrian empire. The story is that the people of Edessa counseled St. Thomas to preach to the Assyrians of Urmia, with whom the Edessans were familiar.¹¹ Within another century or so, there were more than twenty bishops in the swath of territory from ܘܪܗܝ ['Ūrhāy] (Edessa/Urfa/Ourfa) in Anatolia through Armenia and Assyria to Persia.¹² In the early fifth century, under the Persian Empire, there were nearly forty-six bishoprics.¹³ Nineveh became the seat of a Christian bishop and a place where the Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox church vied for popularity.¹⁴

As the Apostles might have expected, medieval and early modern Assyrian churches contained no images, relics, or statues.¹⁵ The Assyrian church preserved valuable manuscripts written in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke, until Kurds entered its churches, which had built with defense in mind using thick stone, and plundered or destroyed the texts and everything else.¹⁶

That the “Assyrians” survived as a population and not simply the inhabitants of a geographic zone is clear from ancient texts’ description of the pagan heritage of the Edessan Christians as including the worship of the Assyrian gods Bel, Nabu,¹⁷ and Nin-gal,¹⁸ rather than the Aramaean gods Hadad, Atargatis, and Šahr/Šehr.¹⁹ The “Syriac” martyrdom and early church chronicles also confirm the conversion of the Edessan Christians

10 Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 19–22; William Wigram, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church: Or, the Church of the Sassanid Persian Empire, 100–640 A.D.* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1909), 24–43, 69.

11 Geoffrey Khan, *The Neo-Aramaic Dialect of the Assyrian Christians of Urmi*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 233.

12 Baumer, *The Church of the East*, 15; Wigram, *History of the Assyrian Church*, 24–43, 69, 103–104, 246.

13 Wigram, *History of the Assyrian Church*, 103.

14 Hilarion Alfeyev, “Issac of Nineveh,” in William Johnston (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Monasticism: A-L* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2000), 667; Hilarion Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian* (Collegville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016), <https://books.google.com/books?id=5hPODAAAQBAJ&pg=PT27>; John Arendzen, “Isaac of Nineveh,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 8 (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1910), www.newadvent.org/cathen/08176a.htm; Orthodox Church in America, *St Isaac the Syrian the Bishop of Nineveh* (2011), <https://oca.org/>.

15 Lamsa and Emhardt, *The Oldest Christian People*, 60.

16 *Ibid.*, 60, 62.

17 “The Doctrine of Addaeus,” in William Cureton (Ed. and trans.), *Ancient Syriac Documents Relative to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the Neighboring Countries* (Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1967), 14.

18 John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and their Relevance to the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 20.

19 D.J. Wiseman, *Cylinder Seals of Western Asia* (London: Batchworth Press, 1959), 46–48.

from the worship of the Assyrian gods Bel and Nabu.²⁰ The early church in Mesopotamia competed with Assyrian magic before the seventh century CE.²¹ Ancient Assyrian rituals such as the “medicine of life” were used in the Syrian Orthodox liturgy.²² The Akkadian terms for father and brother, bread and water, sun and moon, among others, are still in use in “Syriac.”²³ Akkadian hymns of praise for the Assyrian gods appeared in reference to the Christian God, Christ and the earthly church.²⁴ The Assyrians honored Šameš, the Sun god, well into the Christian period, in Adiabene (which spanned from Arbil to Tur Abdin) and the rest of Persian Assyria.²⁵ Even in the nineteenth century CE, Assyrians continued casting ancient magical spells.²⁶ The patriarch of the Edessan Christians, Michael Rabo, identified his flock with the “Oturoye” or the Assyrians of Mesopotamia.²⁷ Bar Hebraeus, the Catholicos of the Syrian Orthodox Church and chronicler of its patriarchate, referenced Assyria as a key area in which his church was active.²⁸

With the spread of Christianity, Assyrians began converting their temples to churches, or destroying them, and prohibiting ancient Assyrian rituals while adopting Judeo-Christian names.²⁹ However, towns such as ܐܘܪܘܟܐ

20 Jonas C. Greenfield, “The Wisdom of Ahiqar,” in *Al kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 336–342; F.C. Conybeare and J. Rendel Harris (Eds.), *The Story of Abikar* (London: C.J. Clay & Sons, 1898), xiii, xxvii; Francis Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity: St. Margaret’s Lectures, 1904, on the Syriac-Speaking Church* (London: John Murray, 1904), 19–20; Suha Rassam, “Mar Behnam: The Monastery of Saint Behnam,” in Erica Hunter (ed.), *The Christian Heritage of Iraq* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 80, 82.

21 Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 416–418, 420; Morony, “Magic and Society,” 83–107.

22 Sebastian Brock, “Syriac Culture, 337–425,” in John Bagnell Bury et al. (Eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History: The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 713.

23 Wigram, *The Assyrians and their Neighbors*, 180.

24 Amar Annus, “The Survivals of the Ancient Syrian and Mesopotamian Intellectual Traditions in the Writings of Ephrem Syrus,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 38 (2006): 1–25; Joel Walker, “The Legacy of Mesopotamia in Late Antique Iraq: The Christian Martyr Shrine at Melqi (Neo-Assyrian Milqia),” *ARAM: The Journal of Syro-Mesopotamian Studies* 19 (2007): 483, 491–508.

25 Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 384, 386, 397.

26 Wigram, *The Assyrians and their Neighbors*, 186–190.

27 Dorothea Weltecke, “Michael the Syrian and Syriac Orthodox Identity,” in R.B. ter Haar Romeny (Ed.), *Religious Origins of Nations?: The Christian Communities of the Middle East* (Leiden: Brill 2010), 115–126, 119; See also, Richard Frye, “Assyria and Syria: Synonyms,” *Journal of the Near East Society* 51 (1992): 283–285; Muriel Debié, “Syriac Historiography and Identity Formation,” in ter Haar Romeny (Ed.), *Religious Origins of Nations?*, 93–114, 104, 106.

28 Richard N. Frye, “Mapping Assyria,” in *Ideologies as Intercultural Phenomena*, 77; Norman Maclean, “Bar-Hebraeus,” in Hugh Chisholm (Ed.), 3 *The Encyclopædia Britannica* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 400; cf. Sebastian Brock, “Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History,” in *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, 23.

29 Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 394–395, 416–417.

[*Harrānu* or *Káppai*] (Harran), Hatra [*Ḥaṭrā*], Beth Garma, and Nippur continued to be sites of ancient Assyrian rites and vestiges of Assyro-Babylonian worship.³⁰ Even in the Christian stronghold of Edessa, ancient Assyrian practices such as using magical charms, medicine, and divination persisted until at least the fifth century A.D.³¹

In 1553, the Catholic Church created a Catholic patriarch for Assyrians, inviting a Nestorian [*Nestûrî* or *Nasturi*] Christian leader to fill this role.³² The Vatican established this patriarchate for “the Assyrian Nation,” or the Chaldeans.³³ The Chaldeans [*Keldânî* or *Kildani* or *Keldoye*] retained many Assyrian customs, however.³⁴

Assyrian communities continued to exist in the twentieth century. When they came to the United States, not only the “eastern Assyrians” but also the Syrian Orthodox Christians, sometimes now known as “Arameans,” actually referred to themselves and their churches as “Assyrian.”³⁵ Moreover, at the Paris Peace Conference, the Syrian Orthodox patriarchate (of Antioch), under the signature of Mor Ignatius Severius Aphrem I Barsoum, asked for the “emancipation” of and compensation for the residents of upper Mesopotamia, “our ancient assyrian nation.”³⁶

Despite this history, Assyrians have sometimes been known by diverse denominational and quasi-denominational terms as “Nestorians,” Chaldeans, Jacobites, Syrians, Syriacs, and “Syriac-speaking Christians.”³⁷ “Syrian” is the English form, as “*Syrien*” is the French and “*Syrer*” is the German, of the

30 *Ibid.*, 395, 411–415.

31 *Ibid.*, 416.

32 Charles Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453–1923* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), 57.

33 Jean Maurice Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, vols. 2–3 (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1965), 391; Xavier Koodapuzha, “Faith and Communion in the Indian Church of Saint Thomas Christians,” in *St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 2 (Kerala, India: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1982), 59; “Patriarch and Patriarchate,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911), www.newadvent.org/cathen/11549a.htm. See also, Ghassan Hanna, “The Assyrian-Chaldean Dilemma – One Nation, Two Names, Part II,” *Al Muntada Mag.* (June 9, 2000), www.chaldeansonline.org/ghassan/dilemma-part2.html (although there were Christians in Babylonia and Assyria, “only those inhabitants of ‘Assyria’ (due to its geographical location and its mountainous landscape) were able to survive massacres and resist forceful ‘religious conversions’”); Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East*, 165–168, 171 (similar).

34 Lamsa and Emhardt, *The Oldest Christian People*, 78–79.

35 Sargon Donabed and Ninos Donabed, *Assyrians of Eastern Massachusetts* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2006), 80; Sargon Donabed and Shamiran Mako, “Ethno-cultural and Religious Identity of Syrian Orthodox Christians,” *Chronos: Revue d’Histoire de l’Université de Balamand* 19 (2009): 80–81, 112, http://docs.rwu.edu/fcas_fp/53/.

36 Memorandum from Mar Severius Barsoum, Archbishop of Syria, Delegate for Patriarchate of Antioch, to Lloyd George, British Prime Minister, F.O. 371, E. 1221, 6 Feb. 1920, www.bethsuryoyo.com/images/Articles/AframBarsom/AfBarsom6.html. Barsoum became patriarch in 1933.

37 E.g., Gaunt, *Massacres*, 25, 176–177, 228–230, 250–526, 300–315.

modern Assyrian or neo-Aramaic term “*Sūrāyā*,” or in Arabic or Turkish “*Sūryān*,” which becomes “*Sūrāyā*ē” or “*Sūryāni*” to refer to the people.³⁸ For this reason, in the Turkish language, the Assyrian genocide is sometimes known as the Syrian/Nestorian genocide or “*Sūryani Nasturi Soykirim*.”³⁹ Some of these are erroneous because modern Assyrians, including the Syrian Orthodox Christians often known as “Syrians” in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, do not speak literary Syriac.⁴⁰ The International Association of Genocide Scholars used Assyrian as an umbrella term for the Nestorians, Chaldeans, Jacobites, Syrians, Arameans, and “Syriacs.”⁴¹ Similarly, Adam Jones maintains that the “Assyrian” is the historically prevalent term for the various indigenous inhabitants of northwestern Persia, southeastern Anatolia, and upper Mesopotamia.⁴² Moreover, religious historian Dorothea Weltecke and other scholars have shown that the patriarchate of the medieval Syrian Orthodox church, the church of Antioch, described the ancient Assyrians as the ancestors of the region’s Christians.⁴³

The identities of the Assyrians before 1915 may have been tied to local contexts, more so than a national or transnational identity narrative. Literacy was limited, and nationalist literature began to be printed and distributed in the late eighteenth and early twentieth century.⁴⁴ Activists such as

38 Parpola, “National and Ethnic Identity,” 13–15; Mark Tomass, “Multiple Resource-Sharing Groups as Basis for Identity Conflict,” in Cetrez, Donabed, and Makko (Eds.), *The Assyrian Heritage*, 243–269, 247.

39 The phrases *Asuri Soykirimi* and *Ermeni-Asuri-Keldani Soykirimi* have also been used. Gabriele Yonan, *Asur Soykirimi: Unutulunan Bir Holocoust* (Istanbul: Pencere Yayınları, 1999).

40 Sargon Donabed, “Rethinking Nationalism and an Appellative Conundrum: Historiography and Politics in Iraq,” *National Identities* 4, no. 2 (2012): 1–41, 1–6, http://papers.ssrn.com/s013/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2089774.

41 *Ibid.*, 4.

42 Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2nd ed., 2010), 173.

43 Debie, “Syriac Historiography,” 104–106; Dorothy Weltecke, “Michael the Syrian and Syriac Orthodox Identity,” in ter Haar Romeny (Ed.), *Religious Origins of Nations?*, 119.

44 Adam Becker, *Revival and Awakening: American Evangelical Missionaries in Iran and the Origins of Assyrian Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 5, 33, 328, 332; Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, paperback ed., 2004), 47; H.L. Murre-van den Berg, “A Syrian Awakening: Alqosh and Urmia as Centres of Neo-Syriac Writing,” in R. Lavenant (Ed.), *Symposium Syriacum VII [1996]* (Rome: Orientalia Christiana Analecta 256, 1998), 499–515, 499–502, 513. Murre-van den Berg remarks that the influence of Catholicism and Protestantism broke up into smaller denominational groups what was once a “relatively homogeneous Syrian tradition.” “A Syrian Awakening,” 503. Regarding “illiteracy,” a survey as recently as 2008 of fifty-eight Assyrians (Syriacs in Turkish nationalist lingo) living in Midyat and the surrounding areas revealed that 71% had not completed any higher education or even middle or high school. Hakan Samur, “Turkey’s Europeanization Process and the Return of the Syriacs,” *Turkish Studies* 10, no. 3 (2009): 327–340, 330–331.

Surma d'Bait Mar Shimun, Agha Petros, and Mor Severius Barsoum, each of whom, as Chapters 8 and 9 suggest, attempted to a limited degree of success to establish a common Assyrian identity across religious denominations and differences in language or dialect among them. An overriding uniting factor was the use of a neo-Aramaic language at home; although this was not universal, it may have been prevalent among Assyrians' ancestors or neighbors.⁴⁵ However, their elites understood that they lived in Assyria and said as much in correspondence with the Vatican, Western travelers, and internal chronicles and manuscripts. Syriac religious texts, along with Jewish and Roman sources from long before British or French imperial contact, referred to the people as Assyrians.⁴⁶ The use of Assyrian as a self-designation in pre-modern times, but after the fall of Assyria and the rise of Greece, Rome, and Persia, is evident from Herodotus, Persian inscriptions, church historians such as Michael the Syrian, and the correspondence between the Catholic Church and the Church of the East or the Chaldeans.⁴⁷

45 Bas ter Haar Romeny with Naures Atto, Jan van Ginkel, Mat Immerzel and Bas Snelders, "The Formation of a Communal Identity among West Syrian Christians: Results and Conclusions of the Leiden Project," in R.B. ter Haar Romeny (Ed.), *Religious Origins of Nations?*, 38–42, 57; Samuel Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. 2 (Mary Knoll, NY: Orbis, 2005), 379. The "common usage of self-identity of the inhabitants of the Middle East until recent times was by clan, tribe or village, and little concern was directed to larger designations. General membership in larger units was more by religion than by political assignment." Richard Frye, "Reply to John Joseph," *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 13, no. 1 (1999): 69–70, 70, <http://jaas.org/edocs/v13n1/frye.pdf>. See also, Efrem Yildiz, "The Assyrians: A Historical and Current Reality," *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 13, no. 1 (1999): 15–30, www.researchgate.net/publication/265031842_The_Assyrians_A_Historical_and_Current_Reality.

46 For Syriac texts, see Sebastian Brock, "Christians in the Sasanian Empire: A Case of Divided Loyalties," in Sebastian Brock (Ed.), *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London: Valerium Reprints, 1984), 16–17; Travis, "On the Existence of National Identity," 98–100. For Jewish sources, see Flavius Josephus, *Works*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott Co., 1856), 445; Travis, "On the Existence of National Identity," 103. For Roman sources, see, e.g., Kevin Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East* (London: The British Museum and Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2003), 345; Travis, "On the Existence of National Identity," 92–94.

47 For internal manuscripts, see Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, vol. 1, trans. J.B. Chabot (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899), 32; Heleen Murre-Van den Berg, "Chaldæans and Assyrians: The Church of the East in the Ottoman Period," in Erica Hunter (Ed.), *The Christian Heritage of Iraq. Collected Papers From the Christianity of Iraq I-V Seminar Days* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 146–164, 159; George Yana, "Myth vs. Reality," *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 14, no. 1 (2000): 78–82, 81, <http://jaas.org/edocs/v14n1/e3.pdf>. For correspondence with the Vatican, see Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, 391; John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion and Other Various Occurrences in the Church of England [Etc.]*, vol. 1 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1824), 554; Dr. Walsh, "Account of the Chaldean Christians," *The Christian Observer* 26 (1827): 185–187, 186; Robert Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople*, vol. 2 (London: Westley & Davis, 1836), 410; Yana, "Myth," 79–80. For correspondence of the Assyrian patriarch with the king of Georgia, see Yana, "Myth," 79. For travel literature, see Donabed and Mako, "Syrian Orthodox Christians," 76–84.

Although Assyrians were divided by denomination into various eastern rite churches, they understood that they spoke the same language across these divides.⁴⁸ The eastern rite or “Syrian” churches other than the Armenians, Greeks, Copts, and Maronites were known at times as the Chaldeans, Church of the East or Nestorians, Syrian Orthodox or Jacobites, and Syrian Catholics.⁴⁹ Therefore, aside from the many references to so-called “Syriac Christians” as Assyrians in premodern times, to say that Aramean [*‘ārāmāye*] was the typical self-designation of the Suryaye prior to British influence in the region is not accurate.⁵⁰ Far from being a recent coinage, as Butts, Joseph, Wilmshurst, and others suggest, “*Aššūrāyu*” (Assyrian) is an ancient self-designation, and its variant spelling “*Sūrāyu*” (Syrian) is the original version of the medieval and modern self-designations *Sūrāyā* and *Sūrōyō*.⁵¹ According to an ancient Luwian inscription dedicated to an Anatolian vassal or ally of ancient Assyria, “Assyrian” was translated as “Syrian” [*SHRYM* and *su+ra/i*] in Phoenician and Luwian, cultures from which Greeks may have learned.⁵²

For these reasons, “Assyrian” is a convenient shorthand for populations with Aramaic-speaking and Syriac-reading roots, or for adherents of Syrian rite churches (Chaldean, Nestorian, and Protestant converts from Chaldean or Nestorian churches).⁵³ The advantages of “Assyrian” over Aramean are twofold: (1) the stronger geographic link of upper Mesopotamia and northwestern Persia with Assyria than with the Aramean kingdoms, which were based further west in what is now Syria; and (2) avoiding reference to the biblical myth of Aram, son of Shem, although some Christians used it to designate eastern

48 Eli Smith and H.G.O. Dwight, *Missionary Researches in Armenia* (London: George Wightman, 1834), 370–371; David Tappan Stoddard, *Grammar of the Modern Syriac Language: As Spoken in Oroomiah, Persia and in Koordistan* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1855), 3.

49 “Rites,” in Charles Herbermann et al. (Eds.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13 (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1913), 85–86. See also, Arthur Maclean, *A Dictionary of the Dialects of Vernacular Syriac: As Spoken by the Eastern Syrians of Kurdistan, North-west Persia, and the Plain of Mosul* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1901), ix.

50 This is the argument of Aaron Butts. “Assyrian Christians,” *Academia.edu* (2015), 2, 5, 7, http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/36780681/ButtsAM_Assyrian_Christians.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1480392934&Signature=recz6P0oK5uZBBSIAJXrsozHtsU%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DAssyrian_Christians.pdf.

51 Simo Parpola, “National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times,” *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 18, no. 2 (2008): 11, http://jaas.org/edocs/v18n2/Parpola-identity_Article - Final.pdf.

52 Nathanael Andrade, *‘Imitation Greeks’: Being Syrian in the Greco-Roman World (175 BCE – 275 CE)*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 2009, 11, <https://books.google.com/books?id=0TsSdzpN39MC&pg=PA11>; Robert Rollinger, “The Terms ‘Assyria’ and ‘Syria’ Again,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 65, no. 4 (2006): 284–287 284–285.

53 Andrea Laing-Marshall, *Modern Assyrian Identity and the Church of the East: An Exploration of their Relationship and the Rise of Assyrian Nationalism, From the World Wars to 1980*, M.A. Thesis, Toronto School of Theology, 2001, 14, 38–39.

Christians.⁵⁴ Nor is there much justification for distinguishing ܐܡܝܕ [Āmid] (Diyarbakir or Diarbekir/Diarbeck) and its surroundings from the Mosul region, because the Church of the East in the seventeenth century was divided into “Āmid of Assyria” as well as Babylonia, Arbil, Hakkari, Basra, and Persia.⁵⁵

Some scholars, however, disagree with the use of “Assyrian” as an umbrella term. Mark Levene, for example, may have influenced other genocide scholars when he argued that the very word “Assyrian” was a piece of Orientalist propaganda.⁵⁶ He proposed that the identity referred to by most historians and genocide scholars writing on the late Ottoman Empire as “Assyrian” is actually “a religious creed” called “Syrian.” Levene correctly noted that his position is shared by John Joseph of Franklin & Marshall College.⁵⁷ Joseph and Sebastian Brock have argued that “Assyria” was a term created by Europeans for the Aramaic-speaking people of upper Mesopotamia.⁵⁸ Joseph undermined his own stance when, after coming under criticism, he confirmed that Herodotus referred to the people of Mesopotamia and the Mosul region as Assyrians in an ethnic or racial sense.⁵⁹ He also admits that the Catholic, Anglican, and American churches referred to the Suraye/Suryaya as “Assyrians” long before World War I.⁶⁰

Assyrian population figures

According to British and Russian sources, there were up to 863,000 Assyrians in Asiatic Turkey in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁶¹ Their Assyrian

54 K. Lawson Younger Jr., *A Political History of the Arameans: From their Origins to the End of their Polities* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2016), 1, 35, 37, 41; Frederick E. Greenspahn, *An Introduction to Aramaic* (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature Press, 2003), 6. On the myth of Aram, son of Shem, see the comment of Metropolitan Addai Sher, quoted in Odisho Malko Gewargis (Youel Baaba trans.), “We Are Assyrians,” *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 16, no.1 (2002): 93–94.

55 Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, 391.

56 Mark Levene, “A Moving Target, the Usual Suspects and (Maybe) a Smoking Gun: The Problem of Pinning Blame in Modern Genocide,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 3 (1999): 3–24, 4. Levene does not analyze the sources from the period prior to British contact with Mesopotamian people, which are analyzed in the work of many scholars of identity, religion, and Mesopotamian and Anatolian cultures. Travis, “National Identity”.

57 John Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians of the Middle East: Encounters With Western Christian Missions, Archaeologists, and Colonial Powers* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2000), 21; John Joseph, *The Nestorians and THEIR Muslim Neighbors: A Study of Western Influence on their Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1961), 27–64; see also, John Joseph, “Assyria and Syria: Synonyms?” *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 11 (2008): 40.

58 Sebastian Brock, *An Introduction to Syriac Studies* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 68–69; Joseph, *Nestorians*, 18–19.

59 Joseph, “Assyria and Syria,” 40.

60 Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians*, 7, 18.

61 M.Y.A. Lilian, *Assyrians of the Van District during the Rule of Ottoman Turks* (Rabi Fransa Babilla trans., Tehran: Assyrian Youth Cultural Society, 1968), www.aina.org/books/aov.

population radiated south, east, and west from its center at the patriarchal see of Mar Shimun in ܩܘܕܫܢܝܫ [Qūdsḥānīs] (Qudshanis or Kochanes) (Turkish: *Konak*). About 165,000 to 190,000 Assyrians lived in the mountains before 1915.⁶² Consul Trotter, a “very highly regarded consul” for the British Empire in eastern Anatolia, estimated that 259,600 Assyrians (Nestorians and other Eastern Christians) lived in the *vilayets* of Van (containing Hakkari), Diyarbakir, Erzurum, and Harput [*Kharput*] [Turkish: *Ma'muretü'l'âziz*].⁶³ The Syrian Orthodox Church had 150,000 to 200,000 members, and it claimed 90,000 dead in 1915–1918.⁶⁴ Along with 100,000 Syrian Orthodox and Chaldean or Syrian Catholics in the province of Diyarbekir,⁶⁵ there were estimates of 200,000 Syrian Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire as a whole prior to 1915.⁶⁶ The Syrian Orthodox patriarch identified the affected areas as including “the provinces of Bitlis, [Seert] and Kharput and dependencies, in Mesopotamia; the provinces of Diarbekir, Mardin, its dependencies and Ourfa,” that is, eastern Asia Minor or eastern Turkey.⁶⁷

The Ottoman Assyrian population would have exceeded half a million in 1914, judging by the rate of increase of comparable populations. Smaller-scale massacres and deportations are not necessarily inconsistent with some

htm; Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East*, 273, citing F.O. 424/106, Vice-Consul Emilius Clayton, “Report on Reforms in Van,” in Bilâl Şimşir (Ed.), *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians (1856–1880)* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 1980), 645–646.

62 Said Namik and Rustem Nedjib, *La question assyro-chaldéenne devant la conférence de la paix [The Assyro-Chaldean Question at the Peace Conference]* (Paris, 1919), cited in Gaunt, *Massacres*, 406; Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East*, 238–239; David Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organization of the Church of the East, 1318–1913* (Louvain: Peeters, 2000), 369.

63 Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), 210; Hannibal Travis, “The Assyrian Genocide: A Tale of Oblivion and Denial,” in René Lemarchand (Ed.), *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial, and Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 125, 173; Travis, “On the Existence of National Identity,” 112.

64 Archevêché Syrien de Syrie, *Liste des dommages que la nation syrienne ancienne orthodoxe en Mesopotamie et Arménie, a subit pendant la guerre en 1915–1918*, quoted in Sébastien de Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide: The Eastern Christians, The Last Arameans* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004), 336. See also, De Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide*, 78 (citing Oswald H. Parry, *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004) [1895], vi); Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East*, 273. The church was known as “*syrienne ancienne Orthodoxe en Mesopotamie et en Arménie*,” the Ancient Syrian Orthodox Church of Mesopotamia and Syria.

65 Jacques Rhétoré, “*Chrétiens aux bêtes*”; Souvenirs de la guerre sainte proclamée par les Turcs contre les Chrétiens en 1915 (Paris: Cerf, 2005), 136; Gaunt, *Massacres*, 434.

66 Parry, *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery*, vi; Rhétoré, “*Chrétiens aux bêtes*,” 136–138.

67 F.O. 371/6356, XC 4360, E. 2540, Ignatius Elias I, Ancient Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, to Earl Curzon of Kendleston, Foreign Secretary, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 16 Feb. 1921, in Naures Atto, *Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora: Identity Discourses among the Assyrian/Syriac Elites in the European Diaspora* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011), 545.

population growth, because destitute and poorly educated people without access to advanced medical services tend to have more children. A British Vice-Consul believed that in 1879, up to 500,000 Assyrians resided in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁸ By the late 1890s, therefore, it seems reasonable to assume an Ottoman Assyrian population of 600,000, given population growth of 25% in the twenty years from 1879 to 1899.⁶⁹ Another possibility is that Clayton indulged in an overestimate, and that the Assyro-Chaldean delegation to the Paris Peace Conference was closer to the mark in referring to about 350,000 Assyrians in Diyarbakir province, Hakkari, *ܠܝܫܢܐ* or Seert/Siirt/Sa'irt/Saird, and the northern parts of the Urfa/Aleppo region, the population having been reduced by the massacres of 1894–1896.⁷⁰ There were about 140,000 Assyrians in Persia during the mid-nineteenth century.⁷¹ Adding up the Ottoman and Persian Assyrian totals leads to an overall Assyrian population of 740,000.⁷²

Assyrian history in the nineteenth century

Nineteenth-century British travelers to the Middle East encountered the Assyrians as a “bold and hardy race” that put up a “formidable” defense of their mountain territories, properties, and churches “by force of arms.”⁷³

68 Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East*, 239, citing Clayton, “Reforms in Van,” in Şimşir (Ed.), *British Documents*, 645–646.

69 As noted above, the Ottoman census and Armenian patriarchate’s figures reflect population growth of 20% every twenty years to be reasonable. In the Soviet Union, the population of the Armenian republic nearly doubled in one twenty-year period. E.g., Republic of Armenia, National Statistical Service, *A Brief Historical Review of the Censuses Conducted Previously in Armenia*; IATP-Armenia, *The Number of Men and Women in Armenia (Table 3)* (2003). By way of further comparison, the population of Iraq increased by nearly 75% between the censuses of 1947 and 1965, from 4.8 to 8 million. Metz (Ed.), *Iraq: A Country Study*, <http://countrystudies.us/iraq/25.htm>. Turkey’s population increased by nearly 40% from 1927 to 1945, and by nearly 50% from 1945 to 1965. E.g., Cevat Geray, *Urbanization in Turkey* (1965), <http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/42/435/8751.pdf>; Whkmla, *Turkey 1960–1971* (2007), www.zum.de/whkmla/region/asmin/turkey19601971.html; Helen Chapin Metz (Ed.), *Turkey: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1995), <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/24.htm>. An increase over forty years of about 50% in the Assyrian population of present-day Turkey, Iraq, and Syria as of 1859, estimated by Western travelers at 400,000 Assyrians, would also have resulted in 600,000 Ottoman Assyrians in 1899. Thomas Milner, *The Ottoman Empire: The Sultans, the Territory, and the People* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1799), 296, 312.

70 Namik and Nedjib, *La question assyro-chaldéenne*, quoted in Gaunt, *Massacres*, 405–406.

71 Evand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 12, 15.

72 Again, assuming that the Assyro-Chaldean delegation to Paris was closer to the mark, this figure would be more like 425,000, excluding Mosul province and modern Syria, with 78,000 of those representing the population of the Urmia and Salamas region. Namik and Nedjib, *La question assyro-chaldéenne*, quoted in Gaunt, *Massacres*, 405–406.

73 Aboona, *Assyrians, Kurds, and Ottomans*, 37.

Their population spanned the southeastern corner of what is now Turkey, the northwestern corner of what is now Iran, and the northwestern corner of what is now Iraq. From the Persian conquest to the partition of the Ottoman Empire, the northernmost eastern Assyrians in Ottoman lands often submitted to the temporal as well as the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church of the East patriarch, Mar Shimun.⁷⁴ His seat was in Qudshanis, to the north of Julamerk, west of Urmia and northeast of Tur Abdin, as illustrated in Figures 1.1–1.2.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the Islamic Emir of Hakkari and the Kurdish warlord Bedr Khan Beg targeted and killed the Assyrians, including the family of the patriarch.⁷⁵ The Turkish governor of the Pashalic of Mosul gave leave to Bedr Khan to “punish the Christians.”⁷⁶ According to one report: “Troops were sent out . . . in every direction to destroy the surrounding villages. The war was little more now than a succession of massacres. The Kurds passed from place to place, slaying the people.”⁷⁷ The British diplomat Austen Henry Layard wrote that “Bedr Khan Bey, in 1843, invaded the Tiyari districts, massacred in cold blood nearly 10,000 of their inhabitants, and carried away as slaves a large number of women and children.”⁷⁸ A substantial portion of the Assyrian population of Hakkari was exterminated.⁷⁹

Thousands of Assyrians died in the Ottoman massacres of 1895.⁸⁰ An Assyrian religious scholar in Mosul, writing in 1895, recounted how massacres of Christians occurred

in the city of Amid and the villages round about . . . and in Se’erd and Batlis; and in all the countryside and cities and villages, where there were Syrians and Armenians, they killed them without mercy . . . [a]nd their wives and children were taken away captive.⁸¹

74 Ibid.

75 F.O. 195/204, July 20, 1843, Rassam to Taylor; F.O. 195/228 Mosul July 29, 1843, Rassam to Canning, *quoted in* Aboona, *Assyrians, Kurds, and Ottomans*, 197–198.

76 Henry Ross, *Letters From the East*, ed. J. Ross (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1902), 33, *quoted in* Aboona, *Assyrians, Kurds, and Ottomans*, 203.

77 Thomas Laurie, *Dr. Grant and the Mountain Nestorians* (Edinburgh: Johnstone & Hunter, 1855), 269–276.

78 A. Henry Layard, *A Popular Account of Discoveries at Nineveh* (London: John Murray, 1851), 122, *quoted in* Aboona, *Assyrians, Kurds, and Ottomans*, 211. See also, Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 58, 208.

79 Abraham Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation, or the Ever Persecuted Nestorians or Assyrian Christians* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1916), 2–3, 111–112.

80 Joseph Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?* (New York: Chaldean Rescue, 1921), 274.

81 *Quoted in* Martin Sprengling, “Antonius Rhetor on Versification: With an Introduction and Two Appendices,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages* 32 (1916): 145–238, 204.

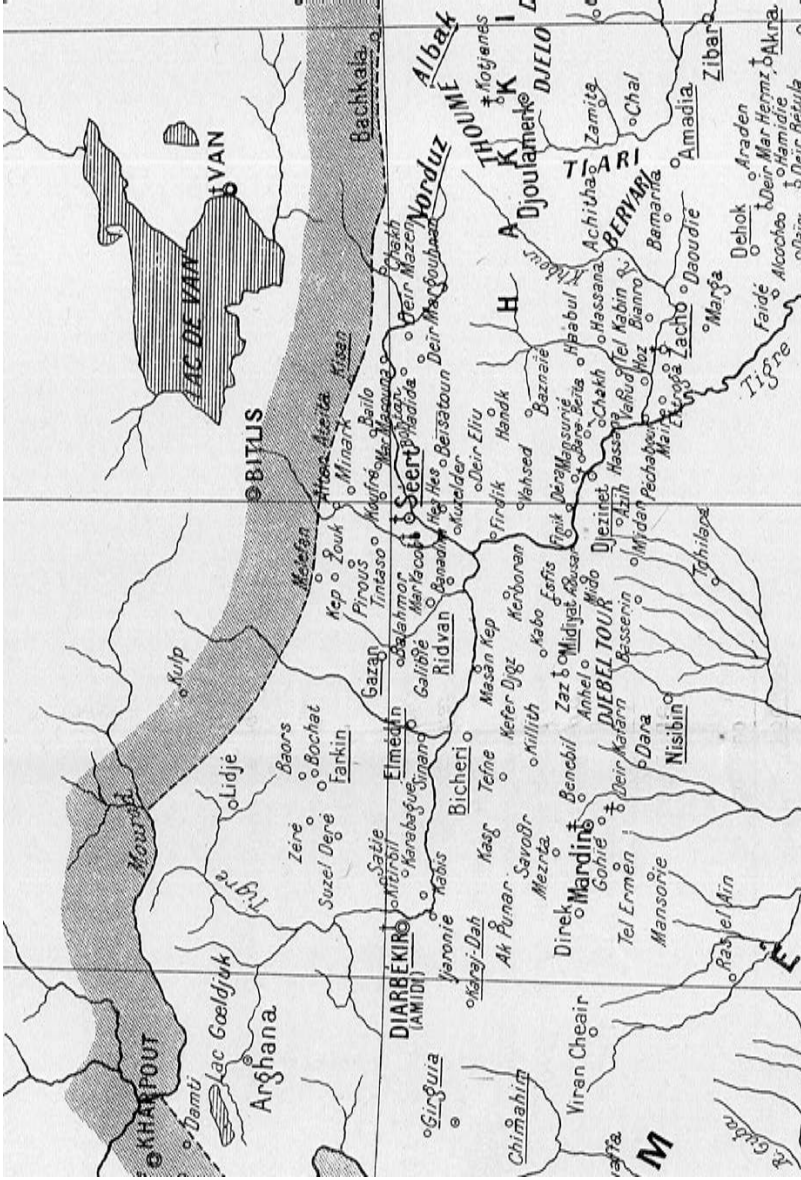


Figure 1.1 Overview of Assyrian-inhabited regions from ܘܪܡܝܐ [Beṭ Dlis] (Bitlis or Betlis) to ܘܪܘܡܝܐ [Urmīā] (Urmia or Oroomiah)

Source: Said Namik & Rustom Nedjib, *La Question Assyro-Chaldéenne devant la Conférence de la Paix* (Paris, 1919), 11.

Note: Qadshanis is inexplicably spelled Kotjanis in this map.



Figure 1.2 Map of Ottoman provinces, circa 1909

Source: William Patten & J.E. Homans (Eds.), *New Encyclopedic Atlas and Gazetteer of the World* (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909), 95.

Anahit Khosroeva also writes that large-scale abductions of women occurred during this time.⁸²

The events actually began in 1894, when 10,000 Armenians were massacred, after which a further 4,000 were killed in the Sivas area by Kurdish forces, and 800 were slain in the Harput area.⁸³ The British *Blue Book Turkey* referred to 8,000 Armenian or other Christians having been slain in the Diyarbakir area in 1895–1896, with more than 500 Armenian girls and children having been kidnapped by Kurds there and in the Silvan area.⁸⁴ Another British official tasked with conducting an investigation of some of these events together with two Ottoman officials reported that 8,000 Armenians had perished in Edessa/Urfa, with Ottoman crowds proclaiming that “no Christians are to be left in the country.”⁸⁵ British diplomats complained to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry in 1896 that more than 100 “Christians remain in the hands of the Kurds,” having presumably been abducted and manifesting “fear.”⁸⁶ A French study commented that at “Bitlis, Van, Harput . . . the same horrors occurred, followed naturally by extreme misery.”⁸⁷

Religion and territorial security in late Ottoman history

From modest beginnings in the early fourteenth century, the Ottoman polity marched across continents to vie with the European empires and Persia for dominance over Eurasia.⁸⁸ While most of its history and politics is beyond the scope of this volume, it is necessary to briefly review the form of government, role of religion, and geopolitical situation of the empire.

The Ottoman Sultan inherited modes of governance and territorial divisions from the caliphs of Islam, the eastern Roman emperors, and the first

82 Anahit Khosroeva, “The Assyrian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire and Adjacent Territories,” in Richard Hovannissian (Ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2005), 7, 268–269.

83 Selim Deringil, “‘The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed’: Mass Conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895–1897,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 2 (2009): 344–371, 362, citing Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Cumberlach, Mar. 17, 1896; *British Blue Book: Turkey, 1896*. See also, “American Responsibility in Turkey,” *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 17, 1895, 32.

84 *Blue Book Turkey*, No. 8 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1896), 127.

85 Deringil, “‘The Armenian Question,’” 364–365, citing G.R. Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939): Chief Dragoman of the British Embassy in Turkey 2* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 27.

86 Quoted in *ibid.*, 361.

87 “Les Affaires Arméniennes,” in Bat Ye’or (Ed.), *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 437–438.

88 Harry Howard, “The Reduction of Turkey From an Empire to a National State,” *The Open Court* 46 (1932): 291–292, <http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4439&context=ocj>.

two Turco-Islamic empires, the Seljuks and Timurids.⁸⁹ Politically, the Sultan was an absolute ruler, leading to charges of “Oriental despotism,” particularly from the British and the Germans.⁹⁰ In practice, however, the power of the Sultan was divided and limited by the *zimmi* (protection or protected; Arabic: *dhimmī*) and *millet* (religion or religious community; Arabic: *milla*) systems; a quasi-nobility of *viziers* (administrative advisers), *pashas* (lords), *aghas* (chiefs or commanders), and guilds; the *Meclis-i Mebûsân* or lower house of the parliamentary council known as the Chamber of Deputies and the *Meclis-i Ayan* or upper house known as the Chamber of Notables; the role of Western consular officials and financiers; and the poor state of communication and infrastructure.⁹¹ Turkoman and Kurdish tribes and tribal confederations were particularly likely to enjoy local autonomy, some scholars maintain.⁹² The millet system permitted vetted religious minority leaders to adjudicate religious matters, administer religious properties, and handle often minor issues.⁹³ A lack of personal security and exclusion from important political and administrative posts plagued minorities, particularly in the period before the “Capitulations” of 1839–1876, until a series of mass atrocities broke out during the Balkan and Armenian struggles as well as Kurdish and Circassian expansion.⁹⁴ The European powers and especially Britain, France, and Russia pressured the Ottomans to increase the rights of Christian subjects, and to reform certain laws.⁹⁵

89 E.g., Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700–1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3–4.

90 Ibid., 32; Albert Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 19. See also, G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: The Colonial Press, 1899), 161; Leslie Schumacher, *A ‘Lasting Solution’: The Eastern Question and British Imperialism, 1875–1878*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Minnesota, 2012, 3, 75, 99.

91 Juan Eduardo Campo (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 703; Hourani, *Minorities*, 17, 19; Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 73–74, 140; Erdem Sönmez, “From *Kaun-ı kadim* (Ancient Law) to *Umumun Kuwveti* (Force of People): Historical Context of the Ottoman Constitutionalism,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 52 (2016): 116–134; S.C. Wyatt, “The Economic and Financial Situation in Turkey: Some Observations,” *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 21 (1934): 216–236, 217. The parliament was dismissed and the constitution ignored starting in 1878, only to be restored in the Second Constitutional Period or “Young Turk” era of 1908–1918/1922. Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict From the Balkans to the Caucasus* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1995), 45–46, 179. See also Klein, *The Margins of Empire*.

92 Hourani, *Minorities*, 20.

93 Hourani, *Minorities*, 21; Karen Barkey, “The Ottoman Millet System: Non-Territorial Autonomy and its Contemporary Legacy,” *Ethnopolitics* 15 (2016): 24–42.

94 Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, 17–48; Hourani, *Minorities*, 21–23, 27; Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 60. Circassians and Chechens are among the peoples speaking Caucasian dialects who entered the Ottoman Empire, including what is now Iraq and Syria, in larger numbers during the nineteenth century. Ibid., 11–12.

95 Hourani, *Minorities*, 23–24; “Protocol Relative to the Affairs of Turkey: Signed at London, March 31, 1877,” in *The Annual Register: A Review of Public Events at Home and Abroad for the Year 1877* (London: Rivingtons, 1878), 181–182, 210–211; *The Annual Register*, 167–204; Schumacher, *A ‘Lasting Solution’*, 132–141.

The millet system seems to have begun as a more local and quasi-democratic system of selecting local leaders, at least in urban areas, which matured into a hierarchical mode of representation, in which the religious leader of a community had access to the Sultan and his local delegates could sit on provincial councils.⁹⁶ By way of exemption from *shari'a* financial law, the system helped the Armenians, Greeks, and Jews in particular to succeed in trade and finance.⁹⁷

The Seljuks and then the Ottomans exploited the weakness of Assyria and Babylonia, Persia, Byzantium, and the Slavic nations due to climatic change, the Roman-Persian conflict, the Arab conquests, and later the Black Death and Turco-Mongol migrations.⁹⁸ It is said that the Ottoman Empire grew to be larger than its Roman predecessor, and that it had a higher level of economic activity than any western state or empire of its time.⁹⁹ The Ottomans arrived at what is now the border between Turkey or Iraq and Iran in the sixteenth century, and were particularly active in the 1400s and 1500s in raiding for slaves in what is now Serbia, Albania, Bosnia, Hungary, Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, the Caucasus, and Russia.¹⁰⁰ The politics of Russia have been shaped perhaps for all time by the legacy of Mongol and Ottoman raids, which made the Crimea region home to hundreds of thousands of Slavic captives in the 1600s.¹⁰¹

Russian leaders saw the fall of Byzantium to the Turks as a grave warning.¹⁰² Russia went on to claim a protective role over the *Rim* or Greek

96 Harry Luke, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Macmillan, 1936), 97–98; Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 62–63; Benjamin Trigona-Harany, *The Ottoman Süryânî From 1908 to 1914* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 84, 88, 92–93, 101.

97 Hourani, *Minorities*, 19, 21, 104; Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 139, 143.

98 Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 15, 17, 25; Adam Schneider and Selim Adali, “No harvest was reaped”: Demographic and Climatic Factors in the Decline of the Neo-Assyrian Empire,” *Climatic Change* 127, no. 3 (2014): 435–446. The Caliphs Omar and Mutawakkil were particularly involved in the destruction of Christian churches in the centuries leading up to the Turkic conquests. Laurence E. Browne, *The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 54; Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1 (London: Westly & Davis, 1835), 936; D.S. Margoliouth, *Umayyids and ‘Abbāsids: Being the Fourth Part of Jurji Zaydan’s History of Islamic Civilization* (Leyden: Brill, 1906), 169; see also, *Decree of Caliph al-Mutawakkil* (850 CE), in Ye’or, *The Dhimmi*, 185–186.

99 Howard, *The Reduction*, 291; Alan Heston, “Crusades and Jihads: A Long-Run Economic Perspective,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588 (2003): 112–134, 125.

100 Halil Inalcik. “Servile Labor in the Ottoman Empire,” in A. Ascher, B.K. Kiraly and T. Halasi-Kun (Eds.), *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern* (New York: Brooklyn College, 1979), 25–43.

101 *Ibid.*; see also, James Billington, *Icon and Axe: An Interpretative History of Russian Culture* (New York: Knopf Doubleday/Viking, 2010), chs. 1–2; Charles Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde: The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987); Maureen Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin’s Russia* (London: Springer, 2001), 43.

102 Robert Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1300–1613* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013), 133–134. Pope Nicholas V responded to the news that Constantinople

Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire, who typically used Greek script to correspond in Ottoman Turkish vernacular.¹⁰³ *Rûm* meant Greek, or in other readings Byzantine (as in holdouts), Orthodox, Anatolian, or Ottoman.¹⁰⁴ This community included many Arabic-speakers, as did the Syrian Orthodox community, although it is unclear what these Arabic-speakers' original nation or ethnicity was in many cases.¹⁰⁵ The *Rûm* also included speakers of Slavic languages, especially in Constantinople.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the *Rûm* are typically referred to as Ottoman Greeks, even though many traditionally Greek areas had Arab and Slavic Christian residents as well.¹⁰⁷

French and Italian Roman Catholic missionary activity expanded in the empire in the seventeenth century, eventually claiming alliances with powerful Armenian, Church of the East, Syrian Orthodox, and Greek Orthodox clerics (e.g., in Aleppo and the areas between Mosul and Diyarbakir).¹⁰⁸ Joining a European faith held out the hope of winning European protection under the Capitulations and due to consular officials' diplomatic efforts.¹⁰⁹ Literacy also improved, due in part to the efforts of missionary schools.¹¹⁰

The borders of the European empires also expanded into former Ottoman territories. France occupied Algeria (1830) and Egypt (1798) to be followed by Britain in Egypt and Sudan (1882); Austria entered Transylvania (1683), Hungary (1699), Serbia (1699–1718 and 1788–1792), Moldavia and Wallachia [Romania] (1789), and Bosnia (1878); Russia attacked Ukraine (1674–1696), Moldavia and Wallachia (1769, 1806, and 1829), Transylvania (1849), Circassia (1863), Crimea (1783), Kabardia (1769–1774), and Ossetia (1774); and Italy conquered Libya (1911) and parts of the Horn of Africa (approximately 1885 and 1909–1911).¹¹¹ Russia also occupied Bukhara (1868) and Khiva (1873); took parts of Azerbaijan (1806–1809), Daghestan

had fallen – and that 40,000 Christians had been killed while an even larger number had been enslaved – with a call to a crusade against the Sultan, designated as the “son of Satan.” Quoted in Kenneth Sutton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204–1571: The Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, reprint ed., 1997), 150.

103 Hourani, *Minorities*, 24; Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 49.

104 Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 50.

105 *Ibid.*, 45, 50. The written Arabic of the Jacobites in Syriac script had a name, *Karshuni*. *Ibid.*, 45.

106 *Ibid.*, 65.

107 Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 81.

108 Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 70, 82–83, 100.

109 *Ibid.*, 152.

110 Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 169; Donald Bloxham, *Genocide, the World Wars, and the Unweaving of Europe* (Portland, OR: Valentine Mitchell, 2005), 22.

111 Edward Shepherd Creasy, *History of Ottoman Turks*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1856), 52–55; Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Emma Murphy, *The International Politics of the Red Sea* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013), 23–42, 24–25; Victor Ostapchuk, “Cossack Ukraine in and Out of Ottoman Orbit, 1648–1681,” in Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Eds.), *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 145–146; Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 84; Walter Richmond, “Circassia: A Small Nation Lost to a Great Game,”

(1812), and Georgia (1800) from the Persian Empire; and nearly conquered Ottoman-held western Armenia and Pontic Greece (now eastern Turkey) in 1877–1878.¹¹² Russia took a leading role in supporting the independence of Greece (1830), Bulgaria (1878), and Serbia (1806–1812 and 1878).¹¹³

The British doctrine of the balance of power contributed to a relatively long stretch of peace in Europe, with the dramatic exceptions of the Franco-Prussian war and a variety of Balkan and Black Sea region conflicts, between 1815 and 1914. The jurist Emerich de Vattel called the doctrine “an arrangement of affairs so that no State shall be in a position to have absolute mastery and dominate over the others.”¹¹⁴ Thus, the War of the Spanish Succession preserved the balance against a combination of the French and the Spanish and their satellites, while the Napoleonic Wars prevented the fusion of France, Germany, Spain, and Russia into a continental empire; the Crimean War kept the eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea coasts, and the Caucasus out of Russian hands; the world wars were waged to protect France and Russia from Germany among other things; and the Cold War was intended to break up the Warsaw Pact bridging East Germany, the northern Balkans, Poland, the Baltics, the Caucasus, and Russia.¹¹⁵ Britain allied with the Ottomans and Russia against France in Napoleonic times and with the Ottomans against Russia in the mid-1800s.¹¹⁶ London also saw the Ottomans and the Persians as useful buffers between its empire and Russia.¹¹⁷

in Alex Hinton, Thomas LaPointe and Douglas Irvin-Erickson (Eds.), *Hidden Genocides: Power, Knowledge, and Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 109–125; Colin Smith and John Bierman, *Alamein: War without Hate* (London: Penguin UK, 2012), ch. 1; Geoffrey Wheeler, “Russian Conquest and Colonization of Central Asia,” in Taras Hunczak (Ed.), *Russian Imperialism: From Ivan the Great to the Revolution* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1974), 264–298.

112 Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians*, 69–70, 108, 113.

113 J.D. Bouchier, “Bulgaria,” in Hugh Chisholm et al. (Eds.), *The New Volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 26 (London: Britannica, 1902), 444–458, 454; Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, 14; Lucien Frary, *Russia and the Making of Modern Greek Identity, 1821–1844* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1, 11–27, 43, 250; Lucien Frary, “Russian Consuls and the Greek War of Independence (1821–31),” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 28, no. 1 (2013): 46–65; Barbara Jelavich, *Russia’s Balkan Entanglements, 1806–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 13–24, 184–190, 235–238.

114 *Le Droit des Gens, Ou Principes de la Loi Naturelle, Appliqués à la Conduite et aux Affaires des Nations et des Souverains*, bk. III (1916 [1758]), 251, <https://books.google.com/books?id=DeyiAAAAA.M.AJ&pg=PA251>.

115 Anthony Carty, “The Iraq Invasion as a Recent United Kingdom ‘Contribution to International Law’,” *European Journal of International Law* 16 (2005): 143–151, 149–150; Alan Heston, “Crusades and Jihads: A Long-Run Economic Perspective,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588 (2003): 112–134; Schumacher, A “Lasting Solution”, 142–143. Some have argued that the post-1815 concert of powers system was distinct from the prior “balance of power” doctrine, although exactly how it differed is not clear. Robert Delahunty and John Yoo, “Kant, Habermas, and International Peace,” *Chicago Journal of International Law* 16 (2010): 437–473, 443 and n.24.

116 Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 80, 86; Schumacher, A “Lasting Solution”, 142–143.

117 Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians*, 110.

Perhaps Russia's prime target in the lead-up to World War I was Constantinople and the Turkish Straits, which would enable Russia to break out of the Black Sea and have a Mediterranean port.¹¹⁸ Britain and France were opposed to this possibility.¹¹⁹ The Ottomans, due to British training of their fleet and construction of a dreadnought battleship, were expected to obtain a naval superiority over the Russian Empire that would seriously threaten the latter's exports.¹²⁰ Russia, meanwhile, was a threat to the British sphere of interest in India and Persia.¹²¹ Britain failed to come to the Ottomans' aid in fighting the Italians over Libya, or the Balkan League in 1912, dissolving the "pro-Ottoman European coalition" of the 1850s.¹²²

European and U.S. influences overlapped in the Assyrian-populated areas of the Ottoman Empire and Persia. In the 1840s and 1850s, British diplomacy was "instrumental" in pressuring the Ottomans to halt a campaign of extermination against the northwestern communities of Assyrians.¹²³ In 1869, the Church of the East complained to Russia that Kurdish tribes "constantly abduct our virgins, brides, and women."¹²⁴ During the war, the American Minister Plenipotentiary to Persia John Caldwell wrote to the Foreign Minister of the Persian Empire asking whether, in light of the "massacre" of Christians in Diliman, "the Persian Government can guarantee the . . . safety" of American "nationals and other Christians in Urmia."¹²⁵ The French Lazarist order, the Church of England's mission to the Assyrians, and the American protestants including the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions opened schools and printed books for the Assyrians.¹²⁶ The Russian Orthodox Church also attracted adherents, especially from the Church of the East, about which Anahit Khosroeva will relate more in Chapter 4.¹²⁷ It was written that one or more Kurdish leaders had a saying that the Assyrians were the "little Russia" and that exterminating them would defeat the "big Russia."¹²⁸ The zone of contention between Assyrians and Kurds at this time is illustrated in Figure 1.1, above.

118 Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin, 2013), 126, 128, 188, 341.

119 *Ibid.*, 128, 250–251.

120 *Ibid.*, 340–341, 349.

121 *Ibid.*, 322–324, 337, 546–547.

122 *Ibid.*, 250–256.

123 John Joseph, *The Nestorians and their Neighbors: A Study of Western Influence on their Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961 [1949]), 95.

124 Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians*, 110.

125 Empire de Perse, *Neutralité Persane: Documents Diplomatiques* (Paris: Imprimerie Georges Cadet, 1919), 155.

126 Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians*, 18, 64–80, 94–105; H.L. Murre-van den Berg, *From a Spoken to a Written Language: The Introduction and Development of Literary Urmia Aramaic in the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: De Goeje Fund/Brill, 1999), 97.

127 Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians*, 103–133.

128 William Walker Rockwell, *The Pitiful Plight of the Assyrian Christians in Persia and Kurdistan* (New York: American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, 1916), 30.

The concept of religious genocide

The founder of the Genocide Convention, Raphael Lemkin, prepared a framework for analyzing genocide cases that is well suited to the study of the Assyrian tragedy. While his focus was the Nazis and “Axis rule,” Lemkin wrote of genocides during the persecution of Christian sects by the Roman Empire and the Holy Roman Empire, even during episodes more similar to the nineteenth-century massacres of Ottoman Christians than to the larger massacres in 1915.

Lemkin arguably viewed genocide as a form of intense persecution or forcible assimilation. He named the communist persecution of Christian clergy in his own lifetime as a form of genocide, and described as genocidal policies “interfering with the activities of the Church.”¹²⁹ In recognizing a communist genocide in the 1950s, Lemkin emphasized that “genocide is a concept that carries the highest moral condemnation in our cold war against the Soviet Union” and that “[b]y resorting to genocide [communist governments] are threatening our civilization.”¹³⁰ Writing his plan for an autobiography, Lemkin explained that the Convention had saved “five nations” between 1948 and 1955; he may have had in mind Ukraine, Hungary, and the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.¹³¹

Lemkin’s notion of “cultural genocide,”¹³² as later articulated within the U.N. Human Rights Council, extends to “[a]ny action which has the aim or effect of depriving [peoples] of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities,” or “[a]ny form of assimilation or integration by other cultures or ways of life imposed . . . by legislative,

129 Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation – Analysis of Government – Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1943), xi–xii.

130 Quoted in Anton Weiss-Wendt, “Hostage of Politics: Raphael Lemkin on ‘Soviet Genocide,’” in Dominik Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer (Eds.), *The Origins of Genocide: Raphael Lemkin as a Historian of Mass Violence* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 112–113 (quoting Lemkin papers from 1951 and 1954).

131 Raphael Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin*, ed. Donna-Lee Frieze (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 240. See Weiss-Wendt, “Hostage of Politics,” 112. On the other hand, he might have been referring to Greek children captured by communist insurgents, or to the Czech and Polish victims of Soviet denationalization, in addition to the Lithuanians and Ukrainians. Weiss-Wendt, “Hostage of Politics,” 112; John Docker, “Are Settler-Colonies Inherently Genocidal? Re-Reading Lemkin,” in A. Dirk Moses (Ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 93. But cf. Anton Weiss-Wendt, “The Soviet Perspective on the Drafting of the UN Genocide Convention,” in Harmen van der Wilt, Jeroen Vervliet, and Göran Sluiter (Eds.), *The Genocide Convention: The Legacy of 60 Years* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 2012), 187–198, 197.

132 Lemkin argued that “the destruction of cultural symbols is genocide, because it implies the destruction of their function and thus menaces the existence of the social group which exists by virtue of its common culture.” Quoted in Jones, *Genocide*, 30.

administrative, or other measures.”¹³³ In Lemkin’s day, Germanization or Aryanization was a typical way of analyzing the Nazi genocide of the Jews, Poles, Slavs, and Gypsies.¹³⁴

The text of the Genocide Convention and the vision of Lemkin as its founder indicate the broad sweep of the concept of genocide. Lemkin wrote:

Generally speaking, genocide does *not* necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. . . . Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor.¹³⁵

Accordingly, Article II of the Genocide Convention contains several forms of genocide that do not require killing, and that in fact may assume the survival of the affected victims: infliction of serious bodily or mental harm on group members, interference of births within a group, and forcibly transferring children from the group to another group. Lemkin argued that the crime of genocide must also cover “the slow and scientific murder by mass starvation or the swift but no less scientific murder by mass extermination in gas chambers, wholesale executions or *exposure to disease and exhaustion*.”¹³⁶ Article II(c) of the Convention recognized that deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to destroy a group, such as a lack of food or medical care, is a form of genocide as well. An increase in the infant mortality rate, viewed by Lemkin as genocidal, could also trigger Article II(d) of the Convention, directed at interference with the reproductive process.¹³⁷ Lemkin

133 U.N. Human Rights Council, Resolution 2006/2, Rights of Indigenous Peoples (June 29, 2006), ¶¶ 7(a), 7(d), www.gcc.ca/pdf/INT000000021.pdf.

134 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 21, 80–83, 173, 194, 244; Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, ed. Peter Hayes (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2009 [1942]), xiv–xv, 116–120, 179–182, 274–277, 289–290, 326; Franz Neumann, Herbert Marcuse and Otto Kirchheimer, *Secret Reports on Nazi Germany: The Frankfurt School Contribution to the War Effort*, ed. Raffaele Laudani (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 60, 83, 265, 424, 443, 520; United States Senate, Special Committee to Study and Survey Problems of Small Business Enterprise, *The Fate of Small Business in Nazi Germany* (Washington, DC: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1943), 52, 70; Raphael Lemkin, “Genocide – A Modern Crime,” *Free World* 4 (1945): 39–43, www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/freeworld1945.htm.

135 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 79–80.

136 Lemkin, “Genocide – A Modern Crime” (emphasis added). Lemkin regarded it as strong evidence of genocide that under Nazi rule, a “carefully graduated scale allowed protein rations of 97 per cent to Germans, 95 per cent to the Dutch, 71 per cent to the French, 38 per cent to the Greeks and 20 per cent to the Jews.” *Ibid.* It was well known that such rations did not lead immediately to the death of all detainees, as the exploitation of camp inmates in the armaments industry and the eventual liberation of survivors from the camps also showed.

137 Lemkin emphasized that because of the Nazi conquests: “Chronic undernourishment, deliberately created by the occupant, tended not only to discourage the birth rate but also to an increase in infant mortality.” *Ibid.*

also maintained that genocide could target the economic, emotional, religious, artistic, or scientific life of a group:

Genocide is, as we have noted, a composite of different acts of persecution or destruction. Many of those acts, when they constitute an *infringement upon, honor and, rights*, when they are a *transgression against life, private property and religion, or science and art*, or even when they encroach unduly in the fields of taxation and personal services, are prohibited by Articles 46, 48, 52, and 56 of the Hague Regulations. Several of them, such as those which cause, *humiliations*, debilitation by undernourishment, and danger to health, are in violation of the laws of humanity as specified in the preamble to the Hague Regulations.¹³⁸

Lemkin saw genocide happening when “necessities of life as warm clothing, blankets and firewood in winter were either withheld or requisitioned from Poles and Jews.”¹³⁹ Dividing family members by deportation, conquest, or enslavement was genocidal in his view: “Millions of war prisoners and forced laborers from all the conquered countries of Europe were kept from contact with their wives. Poles in incorporated Poland met obstacles in trying to marry among themselves.”¹⁴⁰ Removal of children and their Germanization in German schools made up part of the genocide, for Lemkin: “The Germans sought to obliterate every reminder of former cultural patterns. . . . Attendance at a German school compulsory through the primary grades and three years of secondary school.”¹⁴¹ The prevention of genocide required criminal liability based on the “formulation and teaching of the criminal philosophy of genocide” and on the “toleration” of genocide by governments or political parties, as well as on the genocidal acts themselves.¹⁴² Therefore, the Convention proscribes both “incitement to commit” and “complicity in genocide.”

As the “founder” of the Genocide Convention, Raphael Lemkin also inferred genocidal intent from the factors the tribunals use. He spoke of genocides during the persecution of Christian sects by the Roman Empire and the Holy Roman Empire, even during episodes more similar to what happened in *ṭiyārī*, [Tiyārī] (Tiyari) in the 1840s or in Adana in 1909 than to Diyarbakir in 1915. In writing of the Native Americans, Lemkin emphasized enslavement and deprivation of homes and economic necessities as genocidal.¹⁴³

138 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 92 (emphasis added).

139 Lemkin, “Genocide – A Modern Crime.”

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid.

142 Raphael Lemkin, “Genocide,” *American Scholar* 15, no. 2 (1946), 227–229.

143 Michael McDonnell and A. Dirk Moses, “Raphael Lemkin as Historian of Genocide in the Americas,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 7, no. 4 (2005): 501–529, 507.

In speaking of communist genocide in the 1950s, Lemkin emphasized that victims were deported and that spiritual leaders were targeted, not just that massacres occurred.¹⁴⁴

Most of the genocides that Professor Lemkin identified as occurring throughout human history were instances of religious violence on an appalling scale.¹⁴⁵ Although he no doubt saw and read of signs of anti-Semitic persecution all around him, as a Pole of Jewish heritage, he was initially troubled by the massacres of Armenians by Turks.¹⁴⁶ During the last decade of his life, Lemkin focused on the suffering of Christians under communism in Eastern Europe, and forged a coalition to use the concept of genocide to condemn such crimes, even though they occurred, by his estimate, on a much smaller scale than the events of 1914–1926.¹⁴⁷ Courts and parliaments echoed his findings after the fall of the Berlin Wall.¹⁴⁸

International criminal tribunals have adopted the broader reading of genocidal intent that extends to cultural and religious devastation, and not simply to racial extermination. Both the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the World Court have concluded that “the destruction of historical, religious or cultural heritage does not in itself qualify as genocide, but it can be considered as evidence of intent to physically destroy a group.”¹⁴⁹ In the first international criminal tribunal decision authorized by the Security Council on the basis of the Genocide Convention,

144 Anton Weiss-Wendt, “Hostage of Politics: Raphael Lemkin on ‘Soviet Genocide,’” *Journal of Genocide Research* 7, no. 4 (2005): 112–113.

145 Stephen Jacobs, “Genesis of the Concept of Genocide According to Its Author From the Original Sources,” *Human Rights Review* 3 (2002): 98–103; American Jewish Archives, Guide to the Raphael Lemkin (1900–1959) Collection, 1763–2002 (2003), www.cjh.org/academic/findingaids/AJHS/nhprc/lemkin02-03.html. A “pogrom” was the term used for outbreaks of violence by Russian Christians against Russian Jews, in which Jews would be suddenly attacked with a variety of weaponry, many civilians being killed, and many Jewish homes being burned to the ground. E.g., Mary Antin, *The Promised Land* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1912), 7–8.

146 American Jewish Archives, Guide to the Raphael Lemkin (1900–1959) Collection, 1763–2002 (2003), www.cjh.org/academic/findingaids/AJHS/nhprc/lemkin02-03.html; Tanya Elder, “What You See before Your Eyes: Documenting Raphael Lemkin’s Life By Exploring His Archival Papers, 1900–1959,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 7 (2005), [www.ideajournal.com/articles.php?sup=12](http://74.125.113.132/search?q=cache:cRvWyPWY9V8J:www.inogs.com/JGRFullText/Elder.pdf; Dennis Papazian, “Modern Genocide: The Curse of the Nation State and Ideological Political Parties: The Armenian Case,” <i>Idea: A Journal of Social Issues</i> 7 (2002), <a href=); Raphael Lemkin, *Europaworld* (June 22, 2001), www.europaworld.org/issue40/raphaellemkin22601.htm.

147 Weiss-Wendt, “Hostage of Politics,” 551–559.

148 Lauri Mälksoo, “Soviet Genocide? Communist Mass Deportations in the Baltic States and International Law,” *Leiden Journal of International Law* 14 (2001): 757–787, 774–778, 780.

149 Larissa van den Herik, “The Meaning of the Word ‘Destroy’ and Its Implications for the Wider Understanding of the Concept of Genocide,” in van der Wilt, Vervliet, and Sluiter (Eds.), *The Genocide Convention: The Legacy of 60 Years*, 56.

the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda ruled that the Rwandan government's "systematic expulsion from homes" of the ethnic Tutsis was a form of genocide under Article II(c).¹⁵⁰ In the first genocide conviction arising out of the U.N.-backed tribunal for Yugoslavia, the tribunal found that although it was "impossible to determine with precision the number of Bosnian Muslim men killed by Bosnian Serb forces," a military officer had become complicit in genocide by aiding subordinates who had the "intent to eradicate a group within a limited geographical area such as the region of a country or even a municipality."¹⁵¹ The same tribunal has ruled that driving a group out of the country or local area while burning down their houses could be genocidal because it prevents the return of the group.¹⁵² National courts have also convicted defendants for smaller massacres, including by the Ethiopian communist regime against its opponents the 1980s, and by Iraq against Kurdish communities located near the front lines of the Iran-Iraq war and Kurdish insurgency.¹⁵³

Warning signs of genocide

Lemkin viewed eight social conditions as leading to genocide and referred to thirteen techniques, the preparation of which could be a warning that genocide was commencing. The conditions were religious or racial fanaticism, irredentism in terms of changing national borders, social or political turmoil, economic exploitation, colonialism or militarism aimed at conquest, proximity of the victim group, genocidal ideology on the perpetrator side and contempt for the victims, and circumstances contributing to the weakness of the victim group.¹⁵⁴ The techniques were massacre, mutilation, deprivation of conditions necessary for life, slavery, separation of families, sterilization, abortion, destruction of cultural treasures, plunder, destruction of religious sites, proscription of religious rituals or other group activities, forced conversion, and demoralization. All of these conditions and techniques occurred in the Assyrian case.

150 *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Case No. ICTR-96-4-T, Trial Chamber I, Judgement (Sept. 2, 1998), § 6.3.1. www.un.org/ictt/english/judgements/akayesu.html (last visited Nov. 1, 2014).

151 *Prosecutor v. Krstic*, Case No. IT-98-33, Trial Chamber, Judgement (Aug. 2, 2001), ¶¶ 80–84, www.un.org/icty/krstic/TrialC1/judgement (last visited Nov. 1, 2014).

152 *Prosecutor v. Blagojevic and Jokic*, Case No. IT-02-60-T, Trial Chamber, Judgement (Jan. 17, 2005), §§ 666–675.

153 Michael J. Kelly, "The Anfal Trial against Saddam Hussein," *Journal of Genocide Research* 9, no. 2 (2007): 235–242 (Kurds), citing Al Anfal, Special Verdict Pertaining to Case No 1/C Second/2006 (Iraqi High Tribunal, Second Criminal Court, June 24, 2007); John Quigley, *The Genocide Convention, An International Law Analysis* (London: Ashgate, 2nd ed., 2013), xiii–xiv, 41–42, 48–51, 196, 273, 283 (Brazil and Ethiopia).

154 Raphael Lemkin, Revised Outline for Genocide Cases, American Jewish Historical Society Lemkin Papers, Box 8, Folder 11, quoted in Docker, "Are Settler-Colonies," 88–89.

First, religious and racial fanaticism prevailed under Ottoman rule, and reasserted themselves in 1911–1914. Pan-Islamism, a habit of thought with roots in the conception of a global war between Muslims and pagans or other monotheists, coalesced into a more organized and recognized political movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. ‘Abdülhamid became sultan in 1876 and eventually became known as the “Red Sultan.” Sultan ‘Abdülhamid “surrounded himself with religious dignitaries, reintegrated them into the political elite and adopted a pan-Islamic rhetoric, appealing to Muslim solidarity in both internal and external matters.”¹⁵⁵ The Associated Press reported in May 1895 on “indication[s] the Sultan has set foot on systematic persecution of Christians in all parts of the empire.”¹⁵⁶ One method was to starve out the remaining independent Assyrians in the region between Mosul and Lake Van.¹⁵⁷ Most of the Christian clergy had been slain in dozens of villages.¹⁵⁸

Although the transition from this Sultan to the CUP is often described as a regime change from pan-Islamism to secular progressivism, religious fanaticism did not disappear in the “Young Turk” era. In a 1910 meeting, the CUP discussed how Christians “stubbornly resist every attempt to Ottomanize them,” so that “all such efforts must inevitably fail.”¹⁵⁹ A confab of the CUP leadership in 1911 discussed the Christian subjects of the Empire as a problem.¹⁶⁰ CUP intellectuals looked to Genghis Khan and Timur Leng, the perpetrators of widespread massacres, as role models of sorts.¹⁶¹ The removal of “non-Turks” from Anatolia was decided upon.¹⁶²

Ziya Gökalp, a member of the Young Turk regime from 1911 to 1918, advocated the creation of a nation unified by religion and established the founding narrative of modern Turkey, which is that there had been treason by minorities against Turks, similar to the Nazi ideology of a Jewish “stab in the back” during in 1918.¹⁶³ Rather than a crime of passion during wartime, massacre

155 Dietrich Jung, “Minorities as a Threat: A Historical Reconstruction of State-Minority Relations in Turkey,” in *European Yearbook of Minority Issues: 2002–2003* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands, Martinus Nijhoff, 2004), 140.

156 “New Torture Devised by the Turk,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (June 10, 1895), 1–2.

157 *Ibid.*

158 “Woes of the Armenians,” *The New York Times* (Jan. 4, 1896), 5.

159 Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Macmillan, 2006), 75.

160 Richard G. Hovannisian, “The Armenian Genocide: Wartime Radicalization or Premeditated Continuum?” in Hovannisian (Ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, 9–14.

161 Robert Melson, “Provocation or Nationalism: A Critical Inquiry Into the Armenian Genocide of 1915,” in *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 10th printing, 2010), 76–79.

162 Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 197.

163 Robert Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 163–165.

policies emerged along a “premeditated continuum.”¹⁶⁴ Even before World War I, the Ottoman Empire shared the Prussians’ ideal of “*absoluten Kriegen*” or “absolute war,” the type of unchivalrous population-based exterminating campaign that later evolved into “total war.”¹⁶⁵ German geopolitical theorists were advising the Ottomans to operate “without any sentimentality toward all the subject nationalities and races in Turkey who did not fall in with the plans of the Turks.”¹⁶⁶ U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau explained the Germano-Ottoman strategy in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, as the Russo-Ottoman conflict was resumed: put the subject peoples such as Armenians, Greeks, Syrians, and other Christians “to the sword,” and populate their lands with Muslim Turks, to prevent a repeat of the “Bulgarian problem.” In other words, “make Turkey exclusively the country of the Turks.”¹⁶⁷

The strategy was arguably carried out during the massacres of about 20,000–30,000 Armenians in Cilicia in 1909, in a case of incremental recourse to religious cleansing and forced conversion.¹⁶⁸ The “entire Christian population” of Adana, other parts of Cilicia, Aintab, and Marash experienced harsh measures in 1909, after which the CUP adopted the doctrine of Turkism, according to which the empire must be of exclusively Turkish stock so as to deny European powers cause to interfere on behalf of their Christian coreligionists.¹⁶⁹

In 1911, the CUP engaged in planning concerning the deportation of Christian subjects of the Empire.¹⁷⁰ At secret meetings in Erzurum in 1913, preparations were put in place for the Armenian massacres, or so Armenian revolutionaries believed.¹⁷¹ The CUP elevated ultranationalist extremists to the governorships of eastern Anatolia by 1913.¹⁷² Arson and mass plunder

164 Hovannisian, “The Armenian Genocide,” in Hovannisian (Ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, 3–19, 5–6.

165 Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz* (New York: Random House, 2011), 116–117. On the influence of Clausewitz on Ludendorff and “total war,” see Erich Ludendorff, *Kriegführung und Politik* (Berlin: Mittler & Son, 1922), 9; see also, Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz*, 117.

166 Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* (New York and Garden City: Doubleday, 1919), 290–292, 367.

167 *Ibid.*, 290–292.

168 Bloxham, *Genocide*, 23; Hovannisian, “The Armenian Genocide,” 5, 7. The report of a parliamentary commission of inquiry established by the Ottoman parliament accused the “government officials” of “massacres that they had premeditated” while blaming the Armenians with “all sorts of lies.” Quoted in Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 92. Ottoman soldiers had committed the massacres, it was reported. *Ibid.*, 93. There were executions of perpetrators after courts martial, but the French foreign minister believed that those who were punished to have played minor roles, while those even more culpable went free. *Ibid.*, 105–106.

169 Hovannisian, “The Armenian Genocide,” 6, 10.

170 *Ibid.*, 12.

171 *Ibid.*

172 *Ibid.*, 5–12.

against Armenians began in August 1914, before the Ottomans attacked Russia to join the war.¹⁷³ The destruction of Armenian life in the Ottoman Empire therefore began well prior to the war, as far back as the 1890s, and continued with Mustafa Kemal after 1918.¹⁷⁴ This trend, along with the attacks on unarmed Armenian and Assyrian civilians in Albaq, near Bashkala (Turkish: *Başkale*) before the war and in many other places during the war, disprove the implication by Anzerlioğlu, Özdemir, Sonyel, and Wilmshurst that had the Chaldeans and Nestorians remained neutral, as they might have, they would have been spared the genocide.¹⁷⁵

In November 1915, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador Pallavicini¹⁷⁶ confirmed that Talât Pasha, the Ottoman Minister of the Interior, had admitted that his plan was “destroying the alien elements” in Anatolia.¹⁷⁷ *The New York Times* reported on this minister’s statement that “there was no room for Christians in Turkey.”¹⁷⁸ In July 1915, the German consul in Samsun wrote that: “It is the firm principle of the current rulers to Islamise the whole of Turkey and to use any available means of doing so.” None of the victims would survive, he predicted.¹⁷⁹

173 *Ibid.*, 10.

174 *Ibid.*, 7, 11.

175 Lt. Col. Ronald Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1935), 27; Surma d’Bait Mar Shimun, *Assyrian Church Customs and the Murder of Mar Shimun* (London: Faith Press, 1920), 2; William Wigram, *Our Smallest Ally: A Brief Account of the Assyrian Nation in the Great War* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920), 7; see also, Bloxham, *Genocide*, 52. Compare, Yonca Anzerlioğlu, “The Revolts of Nestorian Christians against the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey,” *The Muslim World* 100, no. 1 (2010): 45–59; Özdemir, *Assyrian Identity*, vii–viii, 46–50, 81–91; Sonyel, *Assyrians of Turkey*, 63–66, 73–76, 85–96; David Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church: A History of the Church of the East* (Sawbridgeworth, Herts: East & West Publishing, 2011), 423–427.

176 12 *Türkei*/209, No. 50/P.C., 27 June 1915, quoted in Vahakn Dadrian, “Documentation of the Armenian Genocide in German and Austrian Sources,” in Israel Charny (Ed.), *The Widening Circle of Genocide: Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review*, vol. 3 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 103; 12 *Türkei*/209, No. 51/P.E., 1 July 1915, quoted in *ibid.* 103.

177 I. Allgemeines/944, No. 93 A-E, 7 Nov. 1915, quoted in *ibid.*, 104. See also Dadrian, “The Documentation of the World War I Armenian Massacres in the Proceedings of the Turkish Military Tribunal,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23 (1991): 549–576, 568; Gust, *The Armenian Genocide*, 204–205.

178 “Says Turks Advise Christians to Flee,” *The New York Times* (Jan. 11, 1915), www.teachgenocide.org/files/Newsaccounts/Report%20Christians%20in%20Peril%20in%20Turkey%20and%20Says%20Turks%20Advise%20Christians%20to%20Flee%20-%20NYT%20Article%20-%20Nov%202012,%201914,%20Jan%202011-13,%201915.pdf. See also, Gust, “Magical Square.”

179 Imperial Consul in Samsun, Mr Ruckhoff, Report on the expulsion of Armenians, DE/PA-AA/R14086, DuA Doc. 116 (abbr.), 1915–07–16-DE-003-M (July 16, 1915), enclosure No. 349 (July 4, 1915), www.armenocide.de/armenocide/armgende.nsf/WebStart-En?OpenFrameset.

A holy war was launched and calls for revenge appeared.¹⁸⁰ One holy war document stated that that “the blood of infidels in the Islamic lands may be shed with impunity – except those to whom the Moslem power has promised security and who are allied with it,” the latter exception being suited for Germans and Austro-Hungarians.¹⁸¹ The CUP elevated an enthusiast for such blood-shedding, Dr. Mehmed Reşid, to *vali* of Diyarbakir, and made him a candidate to govern the entire southeastern expanse of Anatolia.¹⁸² He blamed Greeks for undermining the empire.¹⁸³ Again in 1922, Mustafa Kemal led the *cihad-i milliye* or national holy war of the Turks against Britain, Greece, and the surviving indigenous Christians, the French taking his side after the massacre of the French garrison at Urfa in 1921, and the Russians as well under Lenin and Stalin.¹⁸⁴ Former prosecutors of Ottoman aggression and extermination policies joined the Kemalist cause in 1919–1920.¹⁸⁵ The Kemalists prohibited the distribution of food or blankets as charity to many Christians, notably ethnic Greeks.¹⁸⁶ The rationale was that “the Greeks were enemies of the Government and that they should be killed.”¹⁸⁷ Mustafa Kemal proclaimed in 1922 that more “massacres” were coming.¹⁸⁸ George Horton, U.S. Consul in the Near East, believed him.¹⁸⁹

180 Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, 112–116; Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, 240; Hannibal Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East: The Ottoman Empire, Iraq, and Sudan* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2010), 189–190, 245–253, 263. On other calls for revenge, see Hannibal Travis, “Counterinsurgency as Genocidal Intent: From the Ottoman Christians to the Bosnian Muslims,” in Alexis Demirdjian (Ed.), *The Armenian Genocide Legacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 149–166, 153–155.

181 Henry Morgenthau, *Secrets of the Bosphorus: Constantinople 1913–1916* (London: Hutchinson, 1918), 107–108.

182 Hans-Lukas Kieser, “From ‘Patriotism’ to Mass Murder: Dr. Mehmed Reşid (1873–1919),” in Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman Naimark (Eds.), *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 135–136.

183 *Ibid.*, 130.

184 Russia officially made peace with the Ottomans in 1918 and supplied arms to Kemal during his rise. France and Italy were seen as excusing Turkish massacres of Greeks during this period. “Bishop Would Use Navy against Turks,” *The New York Times* (Sept. 14, 1922), 3; “Who Equipped Kemal? The Soviet, One Report,” *The New York Times* (Sept. 17, 1922), 2; “Finds Blame for US in Killing by Turks,” *The New York Times* (Sept. 18, 1922), 3.

185 Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 98–106.

186 Herbert Adams Gibbons, “Near East Relief Prevented From Helping Greeks,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 13, 1922, in Sofia Kontogeorge Kostos (Ed.), *Before the Silence: Archival News Reports of the Christian Holocaust that Beggars to Be Remembered* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010), 175, 178.

187 *Ibid.*

188 Edwin James, “Kemal Won’t Insure against Massacres,” *New York Times* (Sept. 11, 1922), in *ibid.*, 183.

189 *Quoted in* Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou, *American Accounts Documenting the Destruction of Smyrna by the Kemalist Turkish Forces: September 1922* (Athens: Caratzas, 2003), 110.

Second, irredentism and an aspiration to expand Ottoman territory were urgent matters.¹⁹⁰ In an eerie foreshadowing of some of the great battles of World War II, Ottoman Minister of War Enver Pasha's scheme for seizing territory from the Russian Empire involved taking the oil fields of Baku, and proceeding against the rest of the Caucasus, Afghanistan, and India.¹⁹¹ The official declaration of the CUP to its regional commanders was that the Turkish race would unite for the "destruction" of the Russians.¹⁹² When it comes to atrocities against Greeks, Turkish officials and sympathetic journalists and scholars almost always mention Greek "irredentism," even though this word is rarely used for Turkish nationalists, Pan-Turkists, Pan-Islamists, or other national or religious leaders in the Middle East during the early twentieth century.¹⁹³ Pan-Slavism is often blamed as well, and it is said that the Russians or Slavs conquered the Caucasus in general or Circassia in particular and displaced the indigenous Muslim or Turkic inhabitants, but the Georgians were indigenous there prior to the Arab and Seljuk Turkic Muslim conquests.¹⁹⁴ As with German conquests, which led to German flight when they unraveled, massacres, enslavement, and plunder of the civilian population were widespread when Georgia and eastern Armenia fell to the Seljuks.¹⁹⁵ Greek and Slavic schemes were less ambitious.¹⁹⁶

190 Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, 96, 113–114.

191 *Ibid.*, 113–114.

192 *Ibid.*, 113.

193 E.g., Donald Bleachler, *The Genocide Debate: Politicians, Academic, and Victims* (London: Springer, 2011), 89–116. By 2014, there were more than two thousand references to "Greek irredentism" in books scanned by or provided in eBook form to Google, but only a few hundred references to "Turkish [or Ottoman] irredentism," despite the philosophy of pan-Turkism, the Young Turks' attempts to invade Russia and Central Asia, the Turkish occupation of Cyprus since 1974, and neo-Ottoman politicians' interference in Libya and Syria since 2011. Google Inc., Google Books (2014), books.google.com.

194 "Georgia, Patriarchan Orthodox Church of," in John Anthony McGuckin (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity* (New York: Wiley, 2011), 268–270; Amiad Jaimoukha, "Circassians," in Carl Skutsch (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013), 314–315.

195 Andrew Bostom, *The Legacy of Jihad* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2010), 90; Marius Canard, *L'Expansion arabo-islamique et ses répercussions*, vol. 6 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1974), 255; Osman Turan, "Les souverains seldjoukides et leurs sujets non-musulmans," *Studia Islamica* 1 (1953): 65–100; Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity*, 109. A Georgian historian wrote: "The country became empty and turned into forest." Quoted in Ronald Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 34. The Ottomans were allies and vassals of the Seljuks. Ernest Tucker, *The Middle East in Modern World History* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016), 34.

196 For example, neither Greek nor Slavic aims meant leaving the Turkic peoples without a homeland; indeed, Greek territorial aims were quite limited and the Russian Empire was the site of widespread conversion from Orthodoxy to Islam, due in part to a "well-developed network of Islamic primary education." Agnes Kefeli, *Becoming Muslim in Imperial Russia: Conversion, Apostasy, and Literacy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 1, 207–210. See also, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "The Treaty of Sévres, 1920," in *The Treaties of Peace 1919–1923*, vol. II (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1924), <http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/versa/sevres1.html>.

Third, social and political turmoil reached a boiling point in the spring and summer of 1915. As early as August 1914, the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, predicted an “imminent” massacre of the Christians after the announcement of a war waged by the Ottomans and their allies on the Russians and their allies.¹⁹⁷ In March 1915, the governor of Van province charged the Armenians with insulting Islam, having “assaulted . . . the world of Islam, . . . changing of mosques into stables, . . . forcing students to accept Christianity, . . . obscene insults[,] . . . attacks on religion[,]” and other “treachery.”¹⁹⁸ By July, some Ottomans blamed a vast “Armenian conspiracy” to join up with the Russians, and stated that to suppress the “revolutionary movement,” all Armenians must go.¹⁹⁹ The Ottomans had suffered 70,000 casualties including at least 33,000 deaths in the campaign against the Russian Empire in the east,²⁰⁰ and 86,000 deaths, including 10,000 dead or wounded on May 19 alone, in the campaign against the British Empire in the west.²⁰¹ In 1916, Talât Pasha conceded that “security of Turkey” had overridden humanitarian concerns, as “grave excesses” had taken place during the deportations.²⁰² Late Ottoman leaders regarded ethnic Greeks and those of Christian faith as being a fifth column that might aid Russia or the powers of Western Europe, in a similar way that Hitler and the Nazis regarded Jews as being a fifth column that might aid Britain, America, the Soviet Union, and global anti-Nazism.²⁰³

Some German observers, allies of the Ottoman Turks, reflected and sometimes encouraged this perception of a crisis of Christian rebellions. A renowned German expert on Turkey, Baron Max von Oppenheim, agreed that Armenians had grown “openly . . . hostile[e]” to the Turks, and that “should the

197 “Turkey Yet Wavers on Brink of War,” *The New York Times* (Aug. 27, 1914), https://umdearborn.edu/dept/armenian/bts/Apr_8-27-1914_NYT_TurkeyYetWaversOnBrinkOfWar_copy.pdf.

198 *Arşiv Belgeleriye Ermeni Faaliyetleri 1914–1918*, vol. 1, 90–91, quoted in David Gaunt, “Ottoman Bystanders: Report for Forum,” in Kristian Gerner and Klas-Göran Karlsson (Eds.), *Levande Historia* (Stockholm: Forum för Levande Historia, 2005), 41–42.

199 DE/PA-AA/R14086, DuA Doc. 116 (abbr.), 1915–07–16-DE-003-M (July 16, 1915), enclosure No. 349 (July 4, 1915), www.armenocide.de/armenocide/armgende.nsf/WebStart-En?OpenFrameset.

200 “Caucasian Front,” in Spencer Tucker and Priscilla Mary Roberts (Eds.), *World War I: A Student Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 450–451; see also, Edward Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 59–60.

201 AAP, “Did Gallipoli Make an Australian Nation?” *Australian State Broadcasting System* (Apr. 17, 2014), www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/04/17/did-gallipoli-make-australian-nation; John Hamilton, *Gallipoli Sniper* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, 2008), 156; Matt McLachlan, *Gallipoli: The Battlefield Guide* (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2010), <http://books.google.com/books?id=ct8AWvmF9nQC&pg=PT204>.

202 Quoted in Channel 4, *The First World War* (2003), www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaHdS4LzZ10 & www.vidqt.com/id/BONdcQ4V2Go?lang=en&kind=asr.

203 Matthias Bjørnlund, “The 1914 Cleansing of Aegean Greeks as a Case of Violent Turkification,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 10, no. 1 (2008); 41–57; Melson, *Revolution and Genocide*, 207–226, 237–240.

[British] enemy land [in Turkey], the Armenians would join the enemy to form a mutual revolt.”²⁰⁴

Fourth, economic exploitation intensified between the 1890s and 1910s. After months of expropriations in 1895, “no official utterance has condemned the practice of killing and robbing Armenians wherever they are met.”²⁰⁵ The United Press confirmed in 1896 that nearly all Christian areas in Bitlis province had been looted.²⁰⁶ In the city of Harput in 1896, there was “a great throng of shivering and hungry men, women, and children[,] who had passed through similar experiences of [fleeing barefoot] . . . [and] cowered among the ruins of the Christian quarter.”²⁰⁷ At the outset of World War I, the Ottoman Empire deported the Greeks of Thrace and northwestern Anatolia, and allocated their homes and properties to the refugees from the Balkan Wars or Russia’s conflicts with Turkic peoples.²⁰⁸ Christians deported into the interior of Anatolia for service in labor battalions were in fact enslaved, denied food and shoes, tortured, and killed by the tens or hundreds of thousands.²⁰⁹ In 1918, a German diplomatic report stated that by the end of 1917, the Ottoman Empire had drafted more than 200,000 Greeks into the army and labor battalions, with many perishing from violent treatment, hunger, disease, and exposure to the cold weather.²¹⁰ The departure of the Greeks in particular left behind a “national Turkish/Muslim economy,”²¹¹ with racial Turks claiming the many farms and businesses used to belong to Greeks, Armenians, or Assyrians.²¹²

204 Quoted in Wolfgang Gust, “The Question of an Armenian Revolution and the Radicalization of the Committee of Union and Progress toward the Armenian Genocide,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 7 (2012): 251–264, 255.

205 “Distress of Armenians,” *The New York Times* (Jan. 5, 1896), 7.

206 “Woes of the Armenians,” *The New York Times* (Jan. 4, 1896), 5.

207 *Ibid.*

208 Speros Vryonis, “Greek Labor Battalions in Asia Minor,” in Hovannisian (Ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, 275–290, 286.

209 *Ibid.*; see also, Vahakn Dadrian, *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide* (Boston: Blue Crane Books, 1995), 230; William C. King (Ed.), *King’s Complete History of the World War* (Springfield, A.M.: The History Associates, 1922), 436–437; “Full Text of Premier’s Speech,” *The New York Times* (Oct. 15, 1922), 20; “Turks Proclaim Banishment Edict to 1,000,000 Greeks,” *The New York Times* (Dec. 2, 1922), 1.

210 Vryonis, “Greek Labor Battalions,” 287.

211 Matthias Bjørnlund, “The 1914 Cleansing of Aegean Greeks as a Case of Violent Turkification,” in *Late Ottoman Genocides*, 44.

212 *Ibid.*, 39, quoting UM 2–0355, 196, 1914. Racial or religious rather than ethnic Turks may be a better term of the beneficiaries of this policy, because Greeks and Turks often spoke the same language, differing by ancestry, and because Turks need not be devout Muslims in order to partake in the redistribution of Christian properties. “Racial” had the added connotation of ancestry in the early twentieth century, while somewhat strangely, “ethnic” meant racial or national, without covering ancestry. *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, A.M.: G.&C. Merriam Co., 1896), 305; *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, A.M.: G.&C. Merriam Co., 1914), 305.

Fifth, the Ottomans had a long tradition of colonialism or militarism aimed at conquest, and the Young Turks developed a new and virulent strain of this aggressive ideology. One caliph would rule from Africa to India, according to the CUP.²¹³ The Armenian historian Tigran Matsoyan reveals pervasive similarities between the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust, including Pan-German and Pan-Turkist ideology and propaganda; the mass burning, drowning, or starving of victims; the acceptance of bribes to withhold deportation to murder; and threatened prosecutions for “crimes against humanity.”²¹⁴ An “extreme wing of the CUP” hoped to establish “a new society based on a single ethno-religious, linguistic, and cultural identity.”²¹⁵

At the Young Turk (CUP) conference at Salonica (Thessaloniki) in 1908, its leaders had discussed and reached an understanding to pursue the “complete Ottomanization of all Turkish subjects.”²¹⁶ This was strictly speaking not necessary insofar as the subjects of the Turkish Sultan were already Ottoman subjects. The discussion might have concerned the elimination of international treaty guarantees for Ottoman Christian subjects, which brought about international inspection of sites where Armenians and Assyrians had been massacred and deported from their homes by Kurdish tribes and Ottoman officials. Talât apparently announced at the Salonica conference that “equality” before the law would require first “Ottomanizing the Empire.”²¹⁷ The verb “to Ottomanize” recalls what Lemkin called “Germanization,” or “the imposition by one stronger nation (Germany, Hungary, Italy) of its national pattern upon a national group controlled by it.”²¹⁸ He designated this imposition as a genocide, or a “policy of imposing [a] national pattern,” using “a system of colonization.”²¹⁹ In the Ottoman case, the CUP mobilized a “Special Organization . . . for the purpose of destroying and annihilating the Armenians,” and equipped “butcher” units in the Ottoman Third Army, notably in Harput but also in Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Sivas, Trabzon, and Van.²²⁰ As the subsequent chapters will show, *Seyfo* also involved the actions of the Special Organization, at least in part.

213 *Ibid.*, 96.

214 “Comparative Aspects of the Armenian and Jewish Cases of Genocide,” in Hovannisian (Ed.), *Armenian Genocide*, 291–302.

215 Hovannisian, “The Armenian Genocide,” in Hovannisian (Ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, 6.

216 Vartkes Yeghiayan and Leon Fermanian, “The Armenian Genocide and the Armenian Cause Series,” in *British Reports on Ethnic Cleansing in Anatolia, 1919–1922: The Armenian-Greek Section* (Glendale, CA: Center for Armenian Remembrance, 2007), xiii.

217 Yeghiayan and Fermanian, “The Armenian Genocide,” xiv.

218 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 80.

219 *Ibid.*, 83.

220 *Takvîm-i Vekâyi* #3771, s. 1–2: *Ma’muretü’l-âziz Taktîl Muhakemeleri (Karar Sureti)* [*The Harput Verdict*], quoted in Vahakn Dadrian and Taner Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), 300. See also, Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 186–187.

Sixth, as in other genocides, in which proximity made the victim group vulnerable, the Assyrians lived among the Turkish, Kurdish, and Persian peoples who would contribute perpetrators to the genocide, while they had no strategic depth or outlet to the sea or to another land to draw upon. Moreover, this proximity existed under circumstances guaranteeing the weakness of Assyrian defenses. After the fall of Nineveh and subsequently of Babylon, Assyria became a province, sometimes a kingdom, within other empires.²²¹ The Greeks, Persians, Arabs, and Romans recognized that Assyria was still a region in their geographical literature.²²²

The Assyrian homeland sat amidst significant trading routes in late medieval and modern times, along a route from Angora, Izmid, Aleppo, and points west to Mosul, Baghdad, Susa, and points east, which features Harran, the Nineveh plain, مەردێن [Merdā] (Mardin), نیشیبین [Nīšībīn] (Nisibin) [Turkish: *Nusaybin*], Edessa, and فەيشخابور (Pesh-khabour/Faysh Khabur) [Arabic: فەيشخابور].²²³ Mt. Izla, near Mardin, is referred to in ancient Assyrian texts as İzela.²²⁴ Some Assyrians fled to Mt. Izla, or the “Izlo Mountains,” after the fall of the Assyrian Empire.²²⁵ The ancient Assyrians called the Tur Abdin region “*Nirbu*” and its mountains “*Kašiari*” (*Kashiari daglari*).²²⁶ It is southeast of Diyarbakir, northeast of Edessa, northwest of Nisibin, and southwest of مەدیاد [Mēdyād] (Midyat).²²⁷

In order to expand their control and suppress rival nationalities, the Ottomans and their Kurdish allies employed massacre, separation of families, and deprivation of conditions necessary for life, which are the focus of Chapters 2–5. Moreover, mutilation, enslavement, plunder, devastation of cultural and religious treasures, bans on minority religions, and forced

221 Hirmis Aboona, *Assyrians, Kurds, and Ottomans: Intercommunal Relations on the Periphery of the Ottoman Empire* (Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2008), ch. 5; Parpola, “National and Ethnic Identity”; Robin Waterfield, *Christians in Persia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), 23; William Warda, “Assyrian Heritage of the Church of the East, Chaldean Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church,” *Christians of Iraq* (2004), www.christiansofiraq.com/reply.html.

222 Travis, “National Identity,” 87–131; S.H. Longrigg and F. Stokes, *Iraq* (London: Ernest Benn, 1958), 63; “Nestorius and Nestorianism,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, ed. Charles Herbermann et al. (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1911), www.newadvent.org/cathen/10755a.htm; “Patriarch and Patriarchate,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11 (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1911), www.newadvent.org/cathen/11549a.htm; Robin E. Waterfield, *Christians in Persia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), 23.

223 Consul Taylor, “Report, Inclosure to Letter to Earl Granville, Jan. 8, 1872 (Received Feb. 17),” in *Accounts and Papers of the House of Commons*, 39–55; Consul White, “Report, Inclosure to Letter to Earl Granville, Jan. 31, 1872 (Received Feb. 12),” in *op cit.*, 55–56.

224 *Ibid.*, 11.

225 Atto, *Hostages*, 412.

226 Nejat Göyünç, *Mardin Sancagi* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basimevi, 1969), 2, <http://bnk.institutkurde.org/images/pdf/AZD5L261TX.pdf>; Lokman Toprak, “Significance of Dayro D-Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel Monasteries within the Scope of Belief Tourism,” *European Journal of Science and Theology* 10 (2014), 6–28, 11.

227 Toprak, “Significance,” 12.

conversions took place. In the nineteenth century, the Assyrian patriarch petitioned for aid from the Russian Empire, on the ground that his flock was suffering the “constant” kidnapping of Assyrian girls and women.²²⁸ Meanwhile, Turkish and Kurdish landlords demanded “unpaid labour” and seized grain from Assyrian farmers.²²⁹ A British agent reported that the Turks “already hate” the “Christian population, . . . believing them to have been a principal cause of the late [Russo-Turkish] war and the consequent misfortunes of Turkey.”²³⁰ The British received reports that the Sultan “feared that an active and intelligent Christian population might seek liberty as the Bulgars had . . . obtained it at Russia’s hands in 1878.”²³¹ In 1895–1896, European officials reported that 328 churches were lost to Christian populations, probably mostly Armenians.²³² By 1896, the German humanitarian and activist Johannes Lepsius had done a survey of Christian areas in Turkey and asserted that 1,100 churches and monasteries had been damaged or leveled in the violence, and that 546,000 people had been driven into poverty by the destruction of their homes, villages, and livelihoods.²³³

In 1915, Ottoman forces rounded up Assyrian and other Christian men in the Diyarbakir area, executed them, and then abused the women and destroyed Assyrian towns.²³⁴ A British administrator in the former Ottoman province of Mosul described how, during the war, bands of Kurds took Assyrian women captive, drove large numbers to their deaths in flight across inhospitable terrain, and plundered Assyrian homes and religious buildings.²³⁵ Near East Relief reported on the condition of these refugees, as well as those displaced within Persia:

Practically all of their household furnishings and food supplies had been plundered; the same was true of their domestic animals on which

228 Baumer, *The Church of the East*, 247–258; David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 31–32; Salâhi Sonyel, *The Assyrians of Turkey: Victims of Major Power Policy* (Ankara, Turkey: Turkish Historical Society, 2001), 29–41; Hannibal Travis, “Native Christians Massacred”: The Ottoman Genocide of the Assyrians during World War I,” *Genocide Studies & Prevention: An International Journal* 1, no. 3 (2006): 327–371, 329.

229 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 93.

230 F.O. 424/106, p. 260, No. 131/1, Inclosure in No. 345, in Bilâl Şimşir (Ed.), *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians, Vol. 1 (1856–1880)* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 1980), 692–963.

231 Sir James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation* (London and New York: Hoddes & Stoughton, 1915), 21.

232 Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, 156–157; Baum, *Christian Minorities in Turkey*, 55.

233 Cited in Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, 156.

234 Ishaq Armalto, *Al-Qusara fi nakabat al-nasara* (1919), 97–98; Abed Mshiho Na’man Qarabashi, *Vergoeten Bloed: Verhalen over de gruweldaden jegens Christenen in Turkije en over het leed dat hun in 1895 en in 1914–1918 is aangedaan*, trans. George Toro and Amil Gorgis (Glanerbrug, The Netherlands: Bar Hebraeus, 2002), 60–72, 85, 124–127.

235 Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians*, ch. 3.

they depended in large measure for their subsistence; their houses were without any doors and windows and probably a full third of them had been demolished. They were in terror about going back to their villages; they feared their Moslem neighbors who had despoiled them of their property, outraged their wives and daughters, and killed many of their relatives.²³⁶

A British officer wrote that the collapse of Russia in civil war had allowed the Ottomans to advance well into Persia, surrounding Assyrian towns and villages in the Urmia region and pushing into Azerbaijan.²³⁷ Not long after that, the governor general of the Azerbaijan province of Persia confirmed to the Prime Minister of Persia the substance of Assyrian complaints that Kurds in Urmia “set about massacring some Assyrians” and then “sacked the villages of the environs, massacred the peasants and occupied all the shores of [Lake Urmia].”²³⁸ When Assyrian refugees from Persia arrived at refugee camps in Iraq, the administrator there observed an infant mortality rate that was so high “that it was simply race suicide if this high death rate among babies was allowed to continue.”²³⁹ About 3,000 refugees died in a series of months from diseases such as dysentery, smallpox, cholera, measles, typhus, and fevers.²⁴⁰ Up to 65,000 Assyrians perished while fleeing north or southwest from the Urmia and Salamas region.²⁴¹

The killings of Assyrians in 1915 in particular, but also in other years, were reminiscent of those that occurred at Srebrenica eighty years later. During that criminal episode, the killing of 7,000–8,000 Bosnian Muslim men was ruled to be a genocide because it could “potentially” eliminate the entire Muslim population at Srebrenica.²⁴² In fact, the Srebrenica killings were arguably less severe than those of the Assyrians because they were preceded by the exchange of many Bosnian Muslims for Serbian prisoners and because the women and children were intentionally spared death, orders being issued for the safe transportation of them away from the front.²⁴³

236 “Latest News Concerning the Armenian and Syrian Sufferers,” *The American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief Bulletin* no. 4 (1916): 8.

237 L.C. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce* (London: Edward Arnold, 1920), 173–174, 179, 268–276.

238 U.S. National Archives, General Records of the Dep’t of State, Record Group 59 (Decimal File, 1910–1929), Doc. No. 59,867.4016/45, July 16, 1919, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires in Persia to U.S. Secretary of State; Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?*, 287.

239 Austin, *The Baqubah Refugee Camp*, 54.

240 *Ibid.*, 22.

241 Baumer, *The Church of the East*, 247–258, 263; Joseph Yacoub, *Les Assyro-Chaldéens: Un Peuple Oublié de l’Histoire* (Paris: Groupement our les Droits les Minorites, 1985), 42. See also Chapter 4.

242 *Prosecutor v. Krstic*, Case No. IT-98–33-A, Appeals Chamber, Judgement (Apr. 19, 2004), para. 28 www.icty.org/x/cases/krstic/acjug/en/krs-aj040419e.pdf.

243 *Ibid.*, paras. 97, 100, 132.

Four-fifths of the population captured by the Bosnian Serbs survived.²⁴⁴ The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia concluded that the key Bosnian Serb commander convicted of complicity in genocide knew that Bosnian men were being murdered and did not stop his subordinates from doing so, which proved his “genocidal intent.”²⁴⁵ Thus, the tribunal found that genocide was committed at Srebrenica and this was affirmed on appeal in 2004. The International Court of Justice echoed this finding in 2007.²⁴⁶ In 2015, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu attended the genocide anniversary event in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the following year the office of his successor Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu released a statement confirming Turkey’s view that Srebrenica was a genocide.²⁴⁷ Back in 2012, the Foreign Ministry “condemn[ed] any attempts to minimize or deny the genocide which took place in Srebrenica.”²⁴⁸

After the war, the Turkish government told the League of Nations that the Assyrians “were obliged to leave the country” on account of having attacked the Turks at the Russians’ suggestion.²⁴⁹ Genocidal deportations continued into the mid-1920s, when the Kemalists conquered the Iraqi-Turkish border area.²⁵⁰ The Kemalists rounded up the Assyrians and exhibited them like

244 Ibid., paras. 15, 28. There was no finding that the Bosnian Muslim women and children who survived Srebrenica were subjected to widespread rape, although the concept of rape as a crime against humanity was brought up. Ibid., 84–95. See also *ibid.*, partially dissenting opinion of Judge Shahabuddeen, para. 57. There was one rape that a witness came across, perpetrated on a “young woman” by “Serb soldiers,” and stories of other rapes, but no finding initially of multiple rapes, nor of a pattern. *Prosecutor v. Krstic*, Case No. IT-98–33, Trial Chamber, Judgement (Aug. 2, 2001), paras. 45–46, www.icty.org/x/cases/krstic/tjug/en/krs-tj010802e.pdf.

245 Ibid., para. 129, 132, 137.

246 *Prosecutor v. Krstic*, Trial Chamber, Judgement; *Prosecutor v. Krstic*, Appeals Chamber, Judgement; *Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*, Case No. 2007/2, 2007 I.C.J. 191, Judgment of 26 Feb. 2007, www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/91/13687.pdf; Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: Draft Resolution, U.N. Doc. No. S/2015/508 (July 8, 2015), 1.

247 Anadolu Agency, “Srebrenica Genocide Slayed Human Conscience: PM Davutoğlu,” *Daily Sabah* (July 10, 2015), www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2015/07/10/srebrenica-genocide-slayed-human-conscience-pm-davutoglu; Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Release Regarding the Commemoration Ceremonies for the Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide No. 156 (July 9, 2016), www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-155_-9-july-2016_-press-release-regarding-the-commemoration-ceremonies-for-the-anniversary-of-the-srebrenica-genocide.en.mfa.

248 Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Release Regarding the Commemoration Ceremonies for the Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide No: 183, 11 July 2012, www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-183_-11-july-2012_-press-release-regarding-the-17th-anniversary-of-the-srebrenica-genocide.en.mfa.

249 Republic of Turkey, “Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq,” *League of Nations Official Journal* 6 (1925), 1437–1438.

250 League Council Doc. No. C.799.1925.VII (Dec. 11, 1925), in Racho Donef (Ed.), *Masacres and Deportations of Assyrians in Northern Mesopotamia: Ethnic Cleansing by Turkey, 1924–1925* (Stockholm, Sweden: Nsibin, 2009), 159–162.

merchandise to willing buyers, who paid small sums to buy Assyrian women and youth.²⁵¹ The deportees were penniless, emaciated, and “vermin-infested.”²⁵² A report in 1922 by Near East Relief to the U.S. secretary of state stated that like Armenians, “Greek deportees are now in a condition worse than slavery,” with children going hungry and without clothes.²⁵³

Assyrian transmission of Ottoman Christian genocide accounts

In the immediate aftermath of the 1915 massacres, accounts were published by non-Assyrians. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* published the story of an Assyrian from Urmia who confirmed the extermination of the city’s Christians, the destruction of the surrounding villages, and the deaths of 200,000 innocents while the survivors struggled with hunger.²⁵⁴ William Walter Rockwell, a member of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, published in 1916 a report finding that during World War I, “great numbers” of Assyrians had died in massacres in the highlands north of Mosul and as a result of the Turkish occupation of Persia.²⁵⁵ He later published a book containing the narrative of Abraham Shlemon, who wrote that the Kurdish tribes from the Jezireh region to the Persian border were planning to exterminate the Assyrians in order to preempt a Russian invasion of the area.²⁵⁶ Rockwell also included the account of Paul Shimmon that the Assyrian remnant fled to the Persian-Russian border, where many perished of hunger, exposure, deprivation, and disease.²⁵⁷ In February 1916, the British government commissioned James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee to compile a report on events in Armenia. Among the evidence collected by Bryce and Toynbee were testimonies from Assyrians documenting the destruction of forty villages in the vicinity of Berwar, and 8,500 deaths in a brief period in the vicinity of Urmia alone.²⁵⁸

Foreign diplomatic documents often read like dry lists of cities and populations that have been destroyed or subjected to atrocities in some way. The

251 *Ibid.*, 162–163.

252 *Ibid.*, 21. See also “Starving Die in Persian Streets,” *The Washington Post* (Aug. 25, 1918), 17.

253 Herbert Adams Gibbons, “Near East Relief Prevented from Helping Greeks,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (July 13, 1922), in Kostos, *Before the Silence*, 175, 177.

254 “Syrian Tells of Atrocities,” *The Los Angeles Times* (Dec. 15, 1918), I-1.

255 William Walter Rockwell, “The Total of Armenian and Syrian Dead,” in *The New York Times Current History: The European War. Vol. IX.* (New York: New York Times Co., 1916), 338.

256 Rockwell, *The Pitiful Plight*, 30.

257 *Ibid.*, 42–43.

258 Y.M. Nisan, “Urmia,” in Sir James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee (Eds.), *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1916: Documents Presented to the Viscount Grey of Fallodon* (London: H.M.S.O., 1916), 156; Jacob Sargis, “Urmia,” in *ibid.*, 160; Paul Shimmon, “Urmia, Salmas, and Hakkari,” in *ibid.*, 167.

freshest sense of Assyrian memory of the Ottoman Christian genocide is conveyed by books written in the late 1910s and early 1920s by authors such as Joseph (Jean) Naayem, Yonan Shahbaz, and Abraham Yohannan, Assyrians who wished to communicate to a wider public what was happening to their communities. In 1916, Yohannan, a professor at Columbia University in New York, wrote that Turkish and Kurdish forces had massacred many of the Assyrian men of Hakkari, with a contingent of about 30,000 mostly women and children making their way as refugees to northern Persia, where the surviving remnant was often “hungry, and homeless.”²⁵⁹ He maintained that a total massacre occurred in such communities as Hassan, Jezireh, Mansuriyeh, Sheikh, and Seert.²⁶⁰ He wrote that:

by reason, probably, of their small number and lack of representatives, [the Assyrians] have excited almost no interest. They have no advocates in the cities of Europe and Asia. In the highlands of Turkey and Persia, they are without a leader or adviser, and are rarely visited by travelers. . . .

[Yet] the tragedy enacted against the Syrian Nestorians in Urumia, Persia, in proportion to their numbers and social condition, is hardly equalled, and never exceeded in history.²⁶¹

Yohannan concluded that Turkish and Persian forces had united to wage “holy war” on Christians.²⁶² Shahbaz, meanwhile, described a personal ordeal; he had fled with his wife from hundreds of armed men intent on murder, witnessing orphans and babies being left by the road, and the thousands of Assyrians starving or perishing of exposure in flight from Persia.²⁶³

In 1921, Joseph (Jean) Naayem, an Assyrian who had acted as a chaplain to Allied prisoners in Turkey, published his memoirs. His father had been slain in prison, having been reassured of his family’s safety but then being accused of aiding rebels.²⁶⁴ Stating at the start that he is an “Eyewitness and victim” of the “atrocities and massacres perpetrated by the Turks,” the book reproduces “detailed narratives given [to him] personally by eyewitnesses or actual victims of the persecution who survived, miraculously, their sufferings.” The book also contains Naayem’s firsthand account of the massacre of 5,000 Christians in the city of Urfa by Ottoman forces when he was seven years old.²⁶⁵

Other Assyrians attempted to communicate what was happening to their communities. The Chaldean archbishop of Diyarbakir wrote a letter

259 Yohannan, *Death of a Nation*, 148, 150.

260 *Ibid.*, 149.

261 *Ibid.*, v–vi.

262 *Ibid.*, 6.

263 Yonan Shahbaz, *The Rage of Islam* (Providence, RI: Roger Williams University Press, 1918), 87–90.

264 *Ibid.*, 4–22.

265 *Ibid.*, xxviii.

published in *The Times* of London stating that all young Chaldeans pressed into Ottoman service had perished, followed by a massacre of the other males, a famine among widows and orphans, and the devastation of homes, churches, and schools.²⁶⁶

Foreign confirmation of Assyrian genocide narratives

A British dossier on Turkish war criminals recounted how Turkish gendarmes entered into Assyrian villages and unleashed Kurdish bands to massacre the population, as at least one gendarmerie commander enslaved Armenian girls and grew rich with plunder.²⁶⁷ Likewise, a British administrator in the former Ottoman province of Mosul described how Kurds took Assyrian women captive, drove large numbers to their deaths in flight across inhospitable terrain, and plundered Assyrian homes and religious buildings.²⁶⁸ A former Ottoman official described how Kurds and Ottoman forces massacred the Assyrians and Armenians of far eastern Anatolia from Diza to Mush, a swath of towns and villages about 200 miles in length.²⁶⁹ According to Sir Percy Cox, the Assyrians in northwestern Persia had “practically ceased to exist as a community.”²⁷⁰ William Francis Hare, later the British Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, noted that despite attempting to aid the Allies in the war, the Assyrians were “encircled by the Turks and exceedingly short of ammunition, [and] they lost altogether by the end of the War about two-thirds of their total number.”²⁷¹ Other high officials described the Assyrians as losing between one-third and half of their total numbers, perhaps depending on whether the global or only the Turkish Assyrian population was meant.²⁷² The British also condemned the Kemalists in 1925 for deporting the remaining Assyro-Chaldean populations of southeastern Turkey; the measures left the Christian deportees in

266 “Chaldean Victims of the Turks,” *The Times* (Nov. 22, 1919), 11.

267 Vartkes Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers on Turkish War Criminals* (La Verne, CA: American Armenian International College, 1991), 213–237.

268 Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians*, ch. 3.

269 Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, 324–327. A British handbook from the World War I era called this region “Central Kurdistan” and noted that Diza was 34 miles southeast from Kochanes, which was 85 miles southeast from Van, which, in turn, was 88 miles east from Bitlis. *A Handbook of Mesopotamia, Vol. 4: Northern Mesopotamia and Central Kurdistan* (London: Admiralty War Staff, Intelligence Division, 1917), 113–114, 147–151, 205–219. According to nineteenth century authors, the distance from Bitlis to Mush was about 60 miles, while Diza was separated by a mountain range from northwestern Persia.

270 His Majesty’s High Commissioner, *Iraq: Report on Iraq Administration: October, 1920–March, 1922* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1922), 102–109.

271 *The Parliamentary Debates (Official Report): House of Lords*, vol. 90 (London: H.M.S.O. by Harrison and Sons, 1933), 131.

272 Lord James Bryce, “Preface,” in Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?*, v; Stafford, *The Tragedy*, ch. 2.

destitution, and involved massacres of men and the deaths of hundreds more from cold and hunger.²⁷³

In 1919, Johannes Lepsius, a German Protestant missionary, published the important collection of German archival material upon which many studies of the Armenian genocide are based, although typically scholars writing in the period 1919–1999 often failed to mention that Assyrians are also mentioned in the Lepsius documents. These documents referred to deportations and/or massacres in many of the cities and towns depicted in Figures 1.1 and 1.2: Amadia, Bashkala, Fayshkhabour, Jezireh, Mardin, Midyat, Nisibin, Tell Ermen, and elsewhere in northern Persia and the Ottoman provinces of Diyarbakir and Van.²⁷⁴ In June 1915, Ambassador Ernst Wilhelm Hohenlohe acknowledged in writing that the Ottoman “government is resolved . . . to eliminate the indigenous Christians.”²⁷⁵

The Lepsius documents described how not only Turkish officers, mullahs, and civilians but also the British and French press and “public opinion in neutral countries” saw Germany as bearing responsibility for the crimes in Turkey on account of its influence on or even instigation of the Young Turks.²⁷⁶ They recognized that “all Christians, irrespective of their race or religion, have suffered the same fate.”²⁷⁷ A vice-consul of the German Empire wrote that “agreement of Germany to this mass murder is being assumed . . . by all Christians.”²⁷⁸

The German ambassador observed that the “among the Turkish population” of central Anatolia, “many believe” that the German government “was the instigator” of the Armenian extermination.²⁷⁹ As the “leading power in the alliance” of the Central Powers, Germany must have been behind these “atrocities,” the British and French press (and perhaps also the Russian press) observed.²⁸⁰ A German officer in Anatolia, Field Marshal Colmar von der Goltz, received the plan for deporting and resettling masses of people,

273 Leo Amery, “Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq,” *League of Nations Official Journal* 6 (1925): 1440–1441, 1440; Associated Press, “Mosul Awarded to British; More Turk Killings Alleged,” *Wash. Post* (Dec. 16, 1925), 1; “Assyrian Christians,” *Irish Times* (Dec. 21, 1923), 5; “Britain’s Smallest Ally: The Deeds and Needs of the Assyrians,” *Manchester Guardian* (U.K.) (Nov. 12, 1924), 11; League Council Doc. No. C.799.1925. VII (Dec. 11, 1925), in Donef (Ed.), *Massacres and Deportations*, 159–162; George Seldes, “300 Chaldeans Die at Hands of Turks; 8,000 Go to Exile,” *Wash. Post* (Oct. 25, 1925), 1, 18.

274 Lepsius, *Deutschland und Armenien*, 115, 238, 308; Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust*, 269–280.

275 Quoted in Dadrian, “Documentation of the Armenian Genocide,” 99–100.

276 Wolfgang Gust, *The Armenian Genocide: Evidence From the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915–1916* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 450.

277 *Ibid.*, 303.

278 *Ibid.*

279 *Ibid.*, 302.

280 *Ibid.*, 757.

and approved of it.²⁸¹ As a general, von der Goltz published a paper on the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, arguing that Islamicization and reduction of the Christian minority's strength would be the solution to its problems.²⁸² He gave an order by November 1915 for the Fourth Army to wage war on the Christians defending Midyat, who were "besieged" and threatened with "massacres."²⁸³

A petition to the German chancellor in October 1915 complained that the "conscience" and "honour" of Germany was offended by the fact that "innocent Christian blood is being poured in torrents through Muslim hands, and tens of thousands of Christians are being forced to convert to Islam," while Turkey enjoyed an alliance with not only Germany but "all countries" with feelings of "Islamic solidarity."²⁸⁴ The "Muslim population" looked on Germany's instigation or agreement "partly with approval," a German vice-consul wrote.²⁸⁵ After the nature of the deportations as pretexts for massacre had been made clear to him, Ambassador Hans von Wangenheim in Constantinople wrote in defense of the Ottoman policy, describing it as an effort to "resettle in Mesopotamia" families hailing from rebellious regions.²⁸⁶ German propaganda publicized statements in favor of Ottoman policies that were triggering anti-Christian massacres.²⁸⁷ A report for Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg in 1917 described the Ottoman "strategy" as "displacing people to the interior without taking measures for their survival by exposing them to death, hunger, and illness."²⁸⁸

Likewise, in 1918, Henry Morgenthau, the American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, gave an important speech in which he condemned proposals to confine the Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks to subjection by a Turkish-dominated nation-state after the war. He pointed out that Ottoman Turkish leaders and their allies had "massacred fully 2,000,000 men, women, and children – Greeks, Assyrians, Armenians; fully 1,500,000 Armenians."²⁸⁹ The Ottoman Interior Minister, Talât Pasha, told him that the plan was not to leave Christian populations in the country that might rebel as the Bulgarians had, in league with Russia; their "passion for Turkifying the nation seemed to demand logically the extermination of all

281 *Ibid.*, xxi, 758.

282 *Ibid.*, xxi.

283 *Ibid.*, 435.

284 *Ibid.*, 450.

285 *Ibid.*, 104–105.

286 *Ibid.*, 193–194. See also, *ibid.*, 113, 146–155, 173.

287 *Ibid.*, 31, 51, 96, 122, 512–513.

288 Constantinos Emm. Fotiadis, *The Genocide of the Pontus Greeks by the Turks: Archive Documents of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Britain, France, the League of Nations and S.H.A.T.*, vol. 13 (Heodotus, Greece, 2004) [in Greek], quoted in Adam Jones and Thea Halo, *Notes on the Genocides of Christian Populations of the Ottoman Empire* (2007), genocidetext.net.

289 *Los Angeles Times* (1918), I-1.

Christians.”²⁹⁰ Like the reports for the German leadership, Morgenthau’s memoirs stated that

Greek girls, just like Armenian girls, were stolen and taken to Turkish harems and Greek boys were kidnapped and placed in Moslem households. . . . Everywhere the Greeks were gathered in groups and, under the so-called protection of Turkish gendarmes, they were transported, the larger part on foot, into the interior.²⁹¹

He added that after

the civilized world did not [sufficiently] protest against these deportations the Turks afterward decided to apply the same methods on a larger scale not only to the Greeks but to the . . . Nestorians, and others of its subject peoples.²⁹²

The notion the Ottoman policy of genocide was directed against the Armenian race, rather than against Christians in general, was put to the test once again when the Vatican gave historian Michael Hesemann access to hundreds of pages of previously unstudied documents in the Vatican Secret Archive. Hesemann announced to the Catholic news agency Zenit that the records confirmed that there was a “genocide by definition of the United Nations and, at the same time, the greatest persecution of Christians in history, when altogether 2.5 million were killed – 1.5 million Armenians and about one million Syrian and Greek Christians.”²⁹³ He noted that Armenian women and children could be spared killing if they became Kurdish or Turkish slaves, so these victims should be added to the count.²⁹⁴ Importantly, Hesemann concludes: “Armenians weren’t killed because they were Armenian, but because they were Christians.”²⁹⁵

The decline of the Assyrian population illustrates how widespread the attacks on the Assyrians were. The Assyrian population of Anatolia plummeted from roughly 3–4% of the total population in 1880 to less than 0.5% in 1927. A figure of 4% is the result of dividing the British estimate²⁹⁶ of

290 Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, 284–291.

291 *Ibid.*, 322–326.

292 *Ibid.*, 323.

293 Deborah Lubov, “The Greatest Persecution of Christians in History (Part I),” *Zenit* (Mar. 2, 2015), <https://zenit.org/articles/the-greatest-persecution-of-christians-in-history-part-i/>; Deborah Lubov, “The Greatest Persecution of Christians in History (Part II),” *Zenit* (Mar. 3, 2015), <https://zenit.org/articles/the-greatest-persecution-of-christians-in-history-part-ii>.

294 Lubov, Part I.

295 *Ibid.*

296 Among demographers of Turkey, it is standard practice to use British consular estimates to cross-check the validity of Ottoman estimates, which dramatically undercounted populations living in rural or tribal areas, or in which the adult males desired to avoid military service. E.g., Kemal Karpaz, “Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/82–1893,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9 (1978): 237–274, 256–257.

500,000 Assyrians in 1880 by the Ottoman census estimate of 11.85 million persons in present-day Turkey in 1880.²⁹⁷ The Ottoman census estimate of 11.85 million persons is the sum of provincial figures.²⁹⁸ A figure of less than 3% results from dividing the British estimate of 500,000 Assyrians in 1880 from the French estimate for the sum of Armenian and Muslim populations in present-day Turkey in the 1890s.²⁹⁹ Dividing Turkey's estimated 71,000 Assyrians and Greeks according to the 1927 census³⁰⁰ by that instrument's figure of 13.6 million persons in Turkey generates a figure of about 0.5% of the population being Assyrian or Greek in 1927.³⁰¹ The Assyrian population of Persia fell from 2% in 1850 to 0.1% in 1956, with the Ottoman invasion occurring in between.³⁰² Few other genocides left such a small remnant.

The overall Assyrian population is, therefore, many millions below the level it would have been had the cities and tribes of Assyria not been decimated and dispersed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³⁰³ For example, if there had been 500,000 Assyrians and one million Kurds in the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century, and if the Assyrian population had grown until 1990 at a similar rate to the Kurdish population, there should have been about six to seven million Assyrians in Turkey alone in 1990.³⁰⁴ The Turkish Assyrians would be a people on a scale similar to the population of Azerbaijan in 1990 or of Libya in 2011.

In the aftermath of World War II, the Assyrian nation threatened to be completely forgotten. International diplomacy subordinated Assyrian survival to oil deals, shifting military alliances, and ethnonationalism. The Assyrians were largely ignored by the United Nations.³⁰⁵ Raphael Lemkin prepared several documents which analyzed these massacres as a genocide to be regarded as being on a par with the Armenian genocide.³⁰⁶ However,

297 M. Kabadayı, *Inventory for the Ottoman Empire / Turkish Republic 1500–2000*, www.iisg.nl/research/labourcollab/turkey.pdf, cited in 'Demographics of the Ottoman Empire,' Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_the_Ottoman_Empire (last visited Nov. 1, 2014).

298 Ibid.

299 Fuat Dündar, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question (1878–1918)* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 180–186.

300 Henry Elisha Allen, *The Turkish Transformation: A Study in Social and Religious Development* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1968), 78.

301 Helen Chapin Metz (Ed.), *Turkey: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1995), <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/24.htm>.

302 Abrahamian, *Iran*, 12.

303 Eden Naby, "The Assyrian Diaspora: Cultural Survival in the Absence of State Structure," in Touraj Atabaki and Sanjyot Mehendale (Eds.), *Central Asia and the Caucasus: Transnationalism and Diaspora* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2005), 214–230, 227.

304 Lois Whitman, *The Kurds of Turkey: Killings, Disappearances and Torture* (New York: Helsinki Watch Organization/Human Rights Watch, 1992), 2.

305 Aryo Makko, "Between Integration and Exclusion: Reflections on Contemporary Assyrian Historiography," *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 25, nos. 1–2 (2011): 25–30.

306 Center for Jewish History, *Lemkin Papers* (2012), <http://tinyurl.com/lemkinpapers>.

unlike the Gypsies, these references to the Assyrians did not make it into the official reports of the United Nations that were concerned with genocide and its history.³⁰⁷ The founders of Israel also looked to the Assyrians as a warning from history.³⁰⁸ Yet even these facts were forgotten for many years.

Contemporary remembrance

There was a gap between the major works on *Seyfo* published between 1915 and the 1930s, and the rise of genocide studies in the 1990s.³⁰⁹ Paul Shimon, Jacob Sargis, Surma d'Bait Mar Shimun, Joseph (Jean) Naayem, Yonan Shahbaz, and Abraham Yohannan had documented the genocide early on, and in English. Since the 1980s, a process has been followed in which both scholars and descendants of Assyrian survivors have sought to establish an historical account of what occurred. Initially led by members of the Syrian Orthodox Church the Assyrian Diaspora has expanded these efforts. The Assyrian Universal Alliance organized efforts to obtain *Seyfo* recognition and the Assyrian Australian Academic Society produced a documentary film on the topic in 1999.³¹⁰ The film contained eyewitness accounts of *Seyfo*-era massacres from survivors or family members of survivors, including Deacon Asmar, Gewargis David, Jelila Musa Gorgis, Rezko Shabo, Musa Shamoon, and Gewargis Zorzan.³¹¹ In 2005, Sabri Atman and other Assyrian activists formed the *Seyfo* Center to gain international recognition of the Assyrian genocide. The organization used conferences, interviews, publications, and a comprehensive website to further this end.³¹²

A number of non-Assyrian scholars contributed to the remembrance of the Assyrian genocide, and to placing it in the wider context of Ottoman Turkification policies. In 1982, historian James Tashjian published a book chapter in an anthology on genocide that included Greeks, Jacobites, Nestorians,

307 Compare, United Nations Economic and Social Council, Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Rapporteur Nicodème Ruhashyankiko, *Study of the Question of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (New York: The United Nations, 1978), 4–6; United Nations War Crimes Commission, *Law Reports of Trials of War Criminals: Four Genocide Trials* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1948), 37–39, 125; see also, U.N. General Assembly, *Official Records of the General Assembly* (New York: United Nations, 1991), 323.

308 E.g., Travis, *Genocide*, 318–319.

309 In the 1960s a compilation of survivor testimonies was prepared in Syria. David Gaunt, *The Assyrian Genocide of 1915, Seyfo Center* (Apr. 18, 2009), www.seyfocenter.com/english/38/. In 1984, Joseph Yacoub published his dissertation focused in part on *Seyfo* and its aftermath. Joseph Yacoub, *La question assyro-chaldéenne. Les Puissances européennes et la Société des Nations, 1908–1938*, in 4 vols., Ph.D. diss., Université d'État de Lyon, 1984.

310 *The Middle East, Abstracts and Index* (Pittsburgh: Northumberland Press, 2001), 251.

311 “The Untold Holocaust (Assyrian Genocide),” *YouTube* (Aug. 13, 2013), www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpD_cvj2Vi4.

312 *Seyfo* Center, *Home Page*, <http://seyfocenter.com>.

Maronites, Syrians, and Yezidis in the picture.³¹³ In 1994, genocide scholar Rudolph J. Rummel concluded that the Young Turks committed genocide against the Ottoman Greeks and slaughters against the Ottoman Assyrians.³¹⁴ About a decade ago, Donald Bloxham of the University of Edinburgh argued that tens of thousands of Assyrians perished in “massacre[s] before and after April – May 1915, and [due to] wartime starvation and the conditions of flight.”³¹⁵ He concluded that “closest parallel to the wartime fate of the Armenians was that of the Ottoman ‘Assyrians.’”³¹⁶ Along with A. Dirk Moses, Bloxham maintained that tens of thousands, and up to 250,000, Assyrians died of massacres, as refugees, or due to starvation and disease, in a close imitation of the Armenian genocide.³¹⁷ Scholars conversant with German also look to the works of Martin Tamcke and Tessa Hofmann.³¹⁸

More than twenty years ago, Gabriele Yonan collected testimonies from Assyrian victims and British and German observers, among other persons, of a forgotten genocide of the Assyrians in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³¹⁹ Her work has focused on the German Foreign Office’s role in inciting genocide. Yonan argued that the German Kaiser, the German Intelligence Service for the Orient, and the German Embassy in Constantinople had helped bring about the Assyrian “Holocaust” by aiding and abetting plans of the Ottoman sultan-caliph and Pan-Islamic forces for a “holy war” against the Christian allies of Britain and Russia.³²⁰ She quoted from a letter from Mar Shimun Benjamin, published in German in 1916:

When the constitution was introduced in Turkey, we believed in the government’s promise guaranteeing us safety, and sold a large portion of our weapons. They led us to believe that the Kurds had also been disarmed. In this manner, our people became defenseless. After declaring Jihad (“holy war”), the Turks decided to wipe us out like the Armenians, and let us be attacked by their troops and by the Kurds among

313 James Tashjian, “Genocide, the United Nations and the Armenians,” in Jack Nusan Porter (Ed.), *Genocide and Human Rights: A Global Anthology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1982), 131.

314 R.J. Rummel, *Death by Government* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 224, 228–231, 234.

315 Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 98.

316 *Ibid.*, 97.

317 Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses, “Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing,” in Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth (Eds.), *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 99.

318 Tessa Hofmann, “Mit einer Stimme sprechen – gegen Volkmord,” in Tessa Hofmann (Ed.), *Verfolgung, Vertreibung und Vernichtung der Christen im Osmanischen Reich 1912–1922* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), 17–59; Martin Tamcke, “Der Genozid an den Assyrern/Nestorianern,” in *op cit.*, 109.

319 Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust*.

320 *Ibid.*, 86–97, 250.

whom we live. Our situation got even worse when Khalil Bey retreated with his defeated army through our valleys in April of this year, after suffering defeats in Salamas in the Urmia region. . . .

At the end of May, the Turkish troops from Mosul marched into our area. This is when the official massacres and devastations in our villages began.³²¹

Further, Yonan excerpted German diplomatic correspondence published by Johannes Lepsius in 1919.³²² In it, the German ambassador in Constantinople confirmed to the German imperial chancellor that a systematic extermination (*systematischen Ausrottung*) regardless of race or denomination of Christianity had taken place under the Ottoman governor of Diyarbakir Rashid Bey.³²³ In addition, Yonan demonstrated that the German vice-consul in Mosul wrote to the German Embassy in Constantinople that Ottoman officials in the vicinity of Amadia (present-day Iraq) and Diyarbakir (present-day Turkey) were permitting anti-Christian massacres to be perpetrated by the Kurds.³²⁴ Another document identified by Yonan written by a German vice-diplomat at Erzurum reported that the highland Assyrians were deported and destroyed “by Turkish troops from Mosul,” with their settlements devastated and the survivors fleeing towards Russia, and that the Ottoman invasion of Persia included the massacre and deportations of the Armenian and Assyrian populations of northern Persia.³²⁵

In 2006, historian Taner Akçam also argued that the Assyrians were among the first victims of Turkification policy.³²⁶ Akçam published an in-depth analysis of Ottoman telegram traffic and other archival material and concluded that Ottoman deportation policies affecting the Armenians also swept up the Assyrians and Greeks and that this policy had been formulated prior to the war with Britain and Russia, contrary to Kaiser and others.³²⁷ In 2007, Akçam contended that Ziya Gökalp, a member of the Young Turk regime in Turkey from 1911 to 1918, inspired the Ottoman leadership to seek a fusion of government and national religion, with a founding mythology of treason by minorities against Turks, just as the Nazis used the myth of the Jewish “stab in the back” causing the German defeat during World War I.³²⁸ In a more recent analysis of the genocide as an anti-Christian campaign, Akçam argued that the Ottoman leadership during World War I used

321 Ibid., 250.

322 Ibid., 277–282.

323 Ibid., 277.

324 Ibid., 276–277.

325 Ibid., 279.

326 Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, 8, 201.

327 Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2004), 131–148.

328 Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, 88–93, 290–291.

religion to motivate Ottoman subjects to kill the Christians, as many Kurds, for example, did in the Assyrian case.³²⁹

In 2006, David Gaunt and I separately published comprehensive analyses of the Assyrian genocide, based on Assyrian, English, French, German, Ottoman, Persian, and Russian sources.³³⁰ As Aryo Makko observed in 2011, “[t]he work of Yonan and the modern pieces of Gaunt and Travis are considered standard references today . . . [Their] works . . . have had a substantial impact on integrating *Seyfo* in related academic fields.”³³¹ The time was ripe to apply the legal concept of genocide as articulated in international law to such archival evidence as the reports of the German Consul in Aleppo, Walter Rößler, concerning the extermination of the Assyrians of Tur Abdin and the deportation and massacre of those from Diyarbakir, Harput, and Mardin.³³² Rößler indicated that the killing and deportation of Assyrians took place well before September 1916.³³³ The German consul in Erzurum, Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, relayed to Berlin that, as of 1916, the Assyrians of Hakkari had been “annihilated” after deportation.³³⁴

Moreover, my work and that of Joseph Yacoub revealed that sources from the Triple Entente of Britain, France, and Russia echoed German and American accounts of an anti-Christian mass killing of non-Turks. William Francis Hare, later the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, observed that “the Assyrians . . . lost . . . about two-thirds of their total number.”³³⁵ Col. Ronald S. Stafford, a British official in postwar Iraq, wrote that one in every three Assyrians was slain, as the “men were no doubt massacred and their women and girls distributed round the countryside.”³³⁶ A Russian diplomat and scholar in Urmia, Basil Nikitine, described the Assyrians as being eradicated and their villages as being destroyed.³³⁷ A French missionary, Mgr. Jacques-Eugène Manna, wrote of a pattern of massacres and deportations from homes and villages.³³⁸ All of this recalls the rule that genocidal intent may be inferred from systematic atrocities, including deportation, physical

329 Taner Akçam, “The Anatomy of Religious Cleansing – Non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire,” *You Tube* (Oct. 22, 2014), www.youtube.com/watch?v=wP6FsrVXVwg.

330 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 327–371; Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors*.

331 Aryo Makko, “Between Integration and Exclusion: Reflections on Contemporary Assyrian Historiography,” *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 25, nos. 1–2 (2011): 25–32, 26–27. See also Thomas De Waal, *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 30–33, citing Gaunt, *Massacres*.

332 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 327–372.

333 Gust, *The Armenian Genocide*, 381–385.

334 *Ibid.*, 694.

335 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 334.

336 Stafford, *Tragedy*, 34.

337 Basil Nikitine, “Une petite nation victime de la guerre: les Chaldéens,” *Revue des Sciences politiques* 44, no. 2 (1921): 614.

338 Eugene Griselle, *Syriens et Chaldéens: Leur Martyre, Leurs Espérances* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1918), 21–29.

attacks on the group, the use of derogatory language toward members of the group, the extent of bodily injury, and methodical planning.³³⁹

In 2007, Anahit Khosroeva, an Assyrian academic in Armenia whose roots are in the Urmia region, published a significant account of the Assyrian genocide in a collection of essays on the Armenian genocide. She emphasized that even prior to 1915, massacres by Sultan ‘Abdulhamid’s so-called Hamidiye cavalry in 1896 claimed tens of thousands of Assyrian and even more Armenian lives. She cited an Armenian source for 70,000 Assyrians being killed in the Ottoman highlands in 1915, with tens of thousands more falling victim in Tur Abdin and northern Persia, for an approximate total of 250,000 deaths by 1919.³⁴⁰ Other scholars have since made similar observations, in the context of studies primarily of the Armenians.³⁴¹

International recognition of the Assyrian genocide

In 2000, writer and activist Thea Halo documented the harrowing ordeal of her mother’s Pontic Greek community and wrote of the Assyrian genocide as well.³⁴² Her book, entitled *Not Even My Name*, brought belated attention to the Assyrian and Greek genocides alongside the better-known Armenian genocide.³⁴³ Halo likely contributed to the passage of a resolution on recognition of the Armenian, Assyrian, and Greek genocides by the State of New York in the year 2000, which was repeated in later years.³⁴⁴ States other than New York also recognized the Greek genocide, including Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.³⁴⁵ In 2006, Halo criticized the drafters of a French parliamentary resolution on denial of the Armenian genocide for leaving out the Assyrian and Greek victims entirely.³⁴⁶

339 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 334, 336, 344, 363, 367.

340 Richard Hovannisian, “The Armenian Genocide: Wartime Radicalization or Premeditated Continuum?” in *The Armenian Genocide*, 3–17, 4; Khosroeva, “The Assyrian Genocide,” 267–274, 171, 268, 274.

341 E.g., Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 364–389, 708, 744; Mark Levene, *Devastation: Volume I: The European Rimlands 1912–1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 131–140; Ronald Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else: A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), xvi–xi, 118, 208, 232–245, 256–257, 320, 355, 424–426.

342 Thea Halo, *Not Even My Name: From a Death March in Turkey to a New Home in America, a Young Girl’s True Story* (New York: Picado/St. Martin’s, 2000).

343 Chris Hedges, “A Few Words in Greek Tell of a Homeland Lost,” *The New York Times* (Sept. 17, 2000), 1–49.

344 Hannibal Travis, “The Assyrian Genocide: A Tale of Oblivion and Denial,” in Rene Lemarchand (Ed.), *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial, and Memory* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 135.

345 Armenian National Committee of America, *ANCA Marks Pontian Greek Genocide Remembrance Day – Joins with Assyrian and Greek Communities in Seeking Justice for Turkey’s Genocidal Crimes* (May 19, 2007), anca.org.

346 Thea Halo, “This Was Genocide, But Armenians Were Not Its Only Victims,” *The Guardian* (U.K.) (Oct. 31, 2006), 35.

Since 2006, recognition of the Assyrian genocide has occurred at an accelerated pace, as scholarly resistance faded. In that year, the European Parliament recognized the Assyrian genocide.³⁴⁷ The European rapporteur on Turkey's progress towards accession to the European Union also denounced Turkey's Penal Code, Article 301, which prohibits criticizing the Turkish race, government, or army because this obstructs research on Ottoman genocides.³⁴⁸ The European Parliament "stresse[d] that, although the recognition of the Armenian genocide . . . is indispensable for a country on the road to membership to come to terms with and recognise its past," and that a similar need existed in the Assyrian and Greek cases, so that Turkey should "facilitate the work of researchers, intellectuals and academics working on this question, ensuring them the access to the historical archives and . . . all the relevant documents."³⁴⁹ Also in 2006, the Hon. Stephen Pound made a motion in the British parliament for recognition of the Assyrian genocide.³⁵⁰

In 2007, the International Association of Genocide Scholars issued a resolution recognizing the Assyrian genocide.³⁵¹ Three years after that, the Swedish parliament passed a resolution calling on the Swedish government to pressure Turkey to recognize the Assyrian and Greek genocides in the Ottoman Empire alongside the Armenian genocide. The resolution applied the Genocide Convention definition and declared that hundreds of thousands of Assyrians had fallen victim.³⁵²

In 2007 and 2010, the U.S. Congress considered resolutions to recognize and memorialize the Armenian genocide, but withdrew them under threats to U.S. bases in Turkey and supply lines to Iraq and perhaps elsewhere as well.³⁵³ The historian Bernard Lewis, whose work was instrumental in

347 "Turkey Says EU Report Smacks of Political Bias," *Turkish Daily News* (Sept. 6, 2006), www.turkishdailynews.com.tr.

348 "Eurlings: Turkey Has Achieved Little Progress in Religious Freedoms," *Turkish Daily News* (Oct. 22, 2005), www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=26503&contact=1.

349 European Parliament (2006) Resolution of 27 September 2006 on Turkey's Progress towards Accession, ¶ 56, A6-0269/2006, P6_TA(2006)0381, www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2006-0381&language=EN&ring=A6-2006-0269; "Turkey Says EU Report."

350 Parliamentary Information Management Services, *Assyrian and Armenian Genocide in 1915* (Jan. 24, 2006), <http://edmi.parliament.uk>.

351 Adam Jones, "International Genocide Scholars Association Officially Recognizes Assyrian, Greek Genocides," *Zinda Magazine* (Dec. 15, 2007), www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2007/12.24.07/index_mon.php.

352 Armenian National Institute, *Swedish Parliament Resolution* (Mar. 11, 2010), www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.414/current_category.7/affirmation_detail.html, citing Motion 2008/09:U332 Folkmordet 1915 på armenier, assyrier/syrianer/kaldéer och pontiska greker [text of the resolution], www.riksdagen.se/.

353 Ronald Suny and Fatme Muge Goçek, "Introduction: Leaving It to the Historians," in Ronald Suny, Fatme Muge Goçek and Norman Naimark (Eds.), *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5.

persuading prominent American policymakers to support the invasion of Iraq,³⁵⁴ said that “[w]hat happened to the Armenians was the result of a massive armed rebellion.”³⁵⁵ In late October 2007, the recognition bill’s sponsor agreed to withdraw it, citing a potential Turkish invasion of northern Iraq.³⁵⁶ Another factor that may have affected the calculus in Congress is that Turkey blockaded Armenia’s land crossings to the west, citing the genocide recognition campaign as a prime reason for doing so.³⁵⁷ The Bush administration opposed the resolution.³⁵⁸ Several former secretaries of state wrote to the speaker of the House of Representatives that “Turkey is an indispensable partner to our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, helping U.S. military with access to Turkish airspace, military bases, and the border crossing with Iraq,” and aiding with U.S. interventions with its “NATO allies in the Balkans.”³⁵⁹

In 2007, then-candidate Barack Obama condemned “denial” of the Armenian genocide and campaign official Samantha Power praised his ability to “speak truth to power” on this topic.³⁶⁰ After his inauguration in 2009, however, he stopped speaking truth to power on Turkey. On March 17, 2009, congressman Schiff and seventy-six original cosponsors introduced a resolution for “affirmation” of the U.S. record on the Armenian genocide.³⁶¹ The report on the resolution documented that President Ronald Reagan had used the term “genocide” in 1981, while Presidents William J. Clinton and George W. Bush had spoken of murder and massacres.³⁶²

On March 16, 2010, an aide to President Obama announced the administration’s opposition to the resolution, suggesting that “our interest is in a full, frank and just acknowledgement of the facts related to the events of 1915” by “the Armenian and Turkish people themselves.”³⁶³ This was contrary to Obama’s practice with respect to the Holocaust, Bosnia, Libya, Rwanda, Sudan, and Palestine, which was to condemn genocide or human-rights violations himself, rather than deferring to the peoples themselves to do so in their own way. In 2012, instead of waiting for the reports of

354 See Chapter 10.

355 C-Span, “Bernard Lewis Speaking on Armenian Allegations,” *YouTube* (Oct. 11, 2007), www.youtube.com/watch?v=qG70UWESfu4.

356 Donald Macintyre, “Survivors Protest at Israel’s Stance on Armenian Genocide,” *The Independent* (Oct. 27, 2007), www.miftah.org/display.cfm?DocId=15181&CategoryId=5.

357 Nicole Itano, “Why Armenia Pays High Price for ‘Genocide’ Campaign,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (Apr. 23, 2007), www.csmonitor.com/2007/0423/p07s02-woeu.html.

358 *Ibid.*

359 House Report 111–622, 111th Cong., 2d Sess. (2010), www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-111hrpt622/html/CRPT-111hrpt622.htm.

360 Quoted in ANCA – Armenian National Committee of America, *CNN Slams Obama for Breaking Armenian Genocide Pledge* (2014), www.youtube.com/watch?v=jh-GyhXBlwM.

361 *Ibid.*

362 *Ibid.*

363 *Ibid.*, quoting Philip H. Gordon, assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs.

joint commissions by supporters of the Khmer Rouge and their opponents, Hutu extremists and their opponents, the Bosnian Serb nationalists and their opponents, or the Sudanese government and its opponents, President Obama compared the Holocaust to “[t]he killings in Cambodia, the killings in Rwanda, the killings in Bosnia, the killings in Darfur,” which “shock our conscience.”³⁶⁴ He compared this “madness” that permeates an entire country to how “the Holocaust may have reached its barbaric climax at Treblinka and Auschwitz and Belzec, but it started in the hearts of ordinary men and women.”³⁶⁵ In 2009, President Obama remarked that “the Holocaust was driven by many of the same forces that have fueled atrocities” in other places, and compared those who rescued Jews from the Nazis to his commitment as president to prevent atrocities such as those that occurred in Rwanda and Darfur, historical events that occurred before he became president.³⁶⁶ Also in 2009 he said that: “The situation for the Palestinian people is intolerable. And America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own.”³⁶⁷ The situation of Turkish Christians, genocide survivors experiencing the death throes of their civilization, was tolerable. In 2011, he compared the situation in Libya to how “people were being brutalized in Bosnia in the 1990s” as an example of “preventing genocide.”³⁶⁸ Ten days earlier, he called for “international accountability” for such civilian killings.³⁶⁹

The new U.S. policy of deference to the successors of the perpetrators was also contrary to the practice of Hillary Clinton, who spoke repeatedly of “genocide” in Bosnia, Cambodia, Iraq, Kosovo, Sudan, and Rwanda.³⁷⁰ Secretary Clinton declared these genocides without waiting for a commission report or the blessing of the people of Sudan, for example, even though she announced in 2010 that she and “her government would ‘work very hard to make sure [the Armenian Genocide resolution] does not go to the House

364 The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by the President at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Apr. 23, 2012), www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/04/23/remarks-president-united-states-holocaust-memorial-museum.

365 *Ibid.*

366 U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, *(Part 1/2) Obama’s Speech at U.S. Holocaust Museum’s ‘Days of Remembrance’ 2009* (Apr. 24, 2009), www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3PCStC6Uog.

367 The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *President Obama Speaks to the Muslim World From Cairo, Egypt*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=NaxZPiiKyMw.

368 The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya* (Mar. 28, 2011), www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya.

369 The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by the President on the Situation in Libya*, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/18/remarks-president-situation-libya.

370 E.g., U.S. Department of State, “US Secretary of State Clinton on Meeting the Challenge of Genocide,” *YouTube* (July 25, 2012), www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVWpMq3h3Al YouTube.

floor.”³⁷¹ Secretary Clinton compared a variety of genocides to the Holocaust in 2012, arguing that “what we mean when we say never again” is that “at the end of the twentieth century we have seen campaigns of harassment and violence” on grounds of race or religion, and “some which aimed at the destruction of a particular group of people, meeting the definition of genocide,” including people being “dragged from their homes” and “ethnically cleansed” in Kosovo, the “massacre in the city of Benghazi,” and “the ongoing violence in Syria.”³⁷²

Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida, who became the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 2011, proposed that the resolution be rejected, but that “any archives that may contain relevant documents regarding the atrocities, warfare and inter-ethnic violence in the Ottoman Empire in that period, which have not been fully opened, should be made immediately available to both countries, to a joint historical commission” and to researchers.³⁷³ That was contrary to her own practice on Bosnia, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Venezuela, which was to condemn past genocides and rights violations herself rather than deferring to a joint commission of persons who supported the alleged perpetrators of genocide or other crimes, and those who opposed such mass atrocities.³⁷⁴

In 2010, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted resolution 252 to recognize the Armenian genocide using the U.N. definition. The measure died after the full House refused to schedule a vote on it.³⁷⁵ In the United States, the Assyrian genocide is unlikely to be recognized at the federal level because, as Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole once stated, the “only genocides we can talk about [in Congress] are those which do not embarrass an ally, [and] do not threaten an American company’s profit margin.”³⁷⁶ Thus,

371 House Report 111–622 (2010), quoting *The Jerusalem Post* (Mar. 5, 2010). See also Republic of Turkey, Brief of Amicus Curiae in *Movsesian v. Victoria Versicherung AG*, Case No. 07–56722 (9th Cir. 2010), www.ataa.org/press/Movesian-Amicus-Rep-of-Turkey.pdf.

372 U.S. Department of State, U.S. Secretary of State Clinton.

373 *Ibid.* See also, “Chairman Ros-Lehtinen: UN Human Rights Council Remains as Anti-Israel as Ever,” *US Federal News* (June 20, 2011), <https://web2.westlaw.com> (search within database entitled “USFEDNEWS”).

374 Project Vote Smart, “Ileana Ros-Lehtinen’s Political Summary on Issue: Executive Branch” (2014), <http://votesmart.org/candidate/26815/ileana-ros-lehtinen?categoryId=69>; Project Vote Smart, *Ileana Ros-Lehtinen’s Political Summary on Issue: Foreign Affairs* (2014), <http://votesmart.org/candidate/26815/ileana-ros-lehtinen?categoryId=32&type=V,S,R,E,F,P>; Project Vote Smart, “Ileana Ros-Lehtinen’s Political Summary on Issue: Foreign Affairs” (2014), <http://votesmart.org/candidate/26815/ileana-ros-lehtinen?categoryId=32&type=V,S,R,E,F,P,E&p=2>.

375 Michael Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide* (London: Springer, 2011), 84.

376 Levon Marashlian, *Politics and Demography: Armenians, Turks and Kurds in the Ottoman Empire* (Toronto, Canada: Zoryan Institute, 1990), 127.

Armenian genocide recognition has issued from the White House rather than from Congress, and presidents since George H.W. Bush have retreated even from mentioning the Armenians as a case of genocide.

The states of the United States, as well as foreign nations, have been more active in this area since 2010. In that year, California recognized the role of the Armenian and Assyrian extermination in motivating Raphael Lemkin to coin the term “genocide” and proclaimed April of each year a Genocide Awareness Month.³⁷⁷ In 2012–2013, the parliament of New South Wales, Australia, recognized the Armenian/Assyrian/Greek genocide.³⁷⁸ In 2013, several deputies in the Australian parliament backed a motion to recognize the Armenian genocide and to condemn it.³⁷⁹ Turkish diplomats condemned the resolutions as “hate speech” against the Turkish race.³⁸⁰ In support of the New South Wales resolution, it was said that Raphael Lemkin, a visiting lecturer of law at Yale University in the late 1940s who developed the definition of genocide, saw the crime predominantly manifested in history as a problem of cultural and religious struggle:

The term “genocide” was coined by Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin in 1943, drawing heavily on the experiences of the Armenians, Assyrians and Hellenic Greeks. As Lemkin stated in a radio broadcast on 23 December 1947, “History and the present are full of genocide cases. Christians of various denominations, Moslems and Jews, Armenians and Slavs, Greeks and Russians, dark skinned Hereros in Africa and white skinned Poles perished by millions from this crime.”³⁸¹

In 2014, the State of California mentioned the Assyrians (and Syriacs), Pontians, and other Greeks in the context of the systematic killing of millions of persons

377 State of California, *Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 144-Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month* (2010), http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920100ACR144.

378 Anna Patty and Judith Whelan, “MPs Warned Off Armenia with Anzac Threat,” *The Age* (Australia) (Nov. 16, 2013), www.theage.com.au/national/mps-warned-off-armenia-with-anzac-threat-20131115-2xmcc.html; “Turkey Condemns Australian Motion on Syriac, Armenian, Greek ‘Genocide,’” *BBC Monitoring Europe* (London) (May 9, 2013), advance.lexis.com. South Australia, one of the other six Australian states, had passed a similar measure in 2009. Turkish Embassy in Prishtina, Kosovo, *News From the Turkish Foreign Ministry: Press Release Regarding the Resolutions Adopted by the Parliament of South Australia* (July 5, 2009), <http://prishtina.emb.mfa.gov.tr/ShowAnnouncement.aspx?ID=116240>.

379 Patty and Whelan, “MPs Warned.”

380 *Ibid.*; “Turkey Condemns.”

381 Hon. Fred Nile, Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Genocides – 21/08/2013 (Aug. 21, 2013), www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/hanstrans.nsf/V3ByKey/LC20130821%3Fopen%26refNavID%3DHA6_1. See also, Steven Jacobs, *Lemkin on Genocide: Written by Raphael Lemkin* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 7.

during the Armenian genocide.³⁸² In 2014–2015, the Armenian and Greek parliaments recognized the Assyrian and Greek genocides, with the Greek parliament actually criminalizing denial of the Assyrian and Greek genocides.³⁸³ The deputy speaker of the Armenian National Assembly explained that

we want to show society and our Greek and Assyrian brothers and sisters and the international community that the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia and all the political forces attach importance to [the] condemnation of the genocide perpetrated against the Greeks and Assyrians.³⁸⁴

The Russian Duma and the Dutch lower house of parliament made similar moves in 2015.³⁸⁵ The German parliament recognized Assyrians as victims in passing a resolution commemorating the Armenian genocide in 2016.³⁸⁶ Thus, today there is an established academic and parliamentary record of recognition of the Assyrian genocide, and the possibility that its denial may be criminalized, as in Greece.

Although the Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights concluded that persons living in Europe have the freedom of expression to deny the Armenian genocide, the Council of Europe has directed its members to pass laws criminalizing rhetoric celebrating the Holocaust or the Armenian genocide in the context of xenophobia or hate speech. European law mandates that member states of the European Union enact legislation to criminalize acts condoning, trivializing, or denying past genocides, crimes against humanity, or war crimes.³⁸⁷

382 State of California, *Senate Joint Resolution No. 21* (May 12, 2014), http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=2013201405JR21.

383 RIA Novosti, “Greek Parliament Adopts Bill Criminalizing Genocide Denial,” *Sputnik News* (Sept. 10, 2014), <http://sputniknews.com/world/20140910/192804129.html>; Weekly Staff, “Armenia Recognizes Assyrian and Greek Genocides,” *Armenian Weekly* (Mar. 4, 2015), <http://armenianweekly.com/2015/03/04/armenia-Assyrian-greek-genocides/>.

384 *Ibid.*

385 Law No. 4285/2014, *Gazette of the Hellenic Republic, Part A, No. 191* (Sept. 10, 2014); Nektaria Stamouli and Alkman Granitsas, *Greece’s Parliament Approves Hate-Crime Law* (Sept. 12, 2014), http://stophatecrimes.org/post_greece.html; RIA Novosti, “Greek Parliament.”

386 Miriam Abraham, “German Recognition of Armenian, Assyrian Genocide: History and Politics,” *Assyrian International News Agency/Seyfo Center* (June 7, 2016), www.seyfocenter.com/english/german-recognition-of-armenian-assyrian-genocide-history-and-politics/, citing Bundestags-Drucksache 18/8613 (31 May 2016), *Erinnerung und Gedenken an den Völkermord an den Armeniern und anderen christlichen Minderheiten in den Jahren 1915 und 1916*, <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/086/1808613.pdf>.

387 Council of the European Union, Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating racism and xenophobia, http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/combating_discrimination/l33178_en.htm; Council of the European Union, Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia, 19 April 2007, Press Release No. 8665/07, 2794th Council Meeting, Justice and Home Affairs (Apr. 19–20, 2007).

The imperialists write back

Defenders of the Ottoman Empire's wartime record are a diverse lot, including American scholars and British officials as well as Kurds and Turks of various nationalities. In general, a line of continuity runs from the early diplomatic and propagandistic theories of the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic, to contemporary pro-Ottoman scholarly work. Many of the members of the Young Turk regime that perpetrated the Ottoman Christian genocide secured high positions in the Turkish Republic.³⁸⁸ The Republic created institutions to perpetuate the World War I-era propaganda about the Armenians and Greeks in particular.³⁸⁹ One of these institutions, the Turkish Historical Society, has published work on the Assyrians as well. Its early leader was a disciple of Gökalp, who led the drive for forcible Turkification.³⁹⁰

In the publications of the Turkish Historical Society, the destruction of memory is based upon inverting the historical record to make the Ottoman Turkish civilization the victim of minority schemes and atrocities. Ottomanist scholars are inclined to dismiss evidence of Ottoman official criminality, racial and ethnic violence, and mass extermination as incredible. Such scholars tend to disregard victim testimonials that massacres occurred as being biased and unworthy of attention.³⁹¹ Moreover, the publications by persons linked to the Turkish Historical Society and the Institute for Turkish Studies claim that the Ottoman Assyrian Christian population may have been as low as 300,000. Such low-end estimates of the number of Armenians and Assyrians living in the Ottoman Empire in 1914 deemphasize the scale of the destruction.³⁹²

388 Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 108, 122–190, 219–240, 251.

389 Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 375–376.

390 Margaret Brearly, "The Forgotten Genocide," *The Jewish Quarterly* no. 202 (2002), www.jewishquarterly.org/issuearchive/articlec05b.html?articleid=196; Gary Leiser and Robert Dankoff, "Translators' Introduction," in Mehmed Fuad Köprülü (Ed.), *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012), <https://books.google.com/books?id=KIYqBgAAQBAJ&pg=PR28>.

391 Abdulmesih BarAbraham, "Turkey's Key Arguments in Denying the Assyrian Genocide: A Brief Review of Two Publications of the Turkish Historical Society," *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 25 (2011–2012): 77–89, citing Bülent Özdemir, *Süryanilerin Dünü Bugünü: I. Dünya Savaşı'nda Süryaniler* (Ankara, Turkey: Turkish Historical Society, 2nd ed., 2008); Justin McCarthy, *The Turk in America: The Creation of an Enduring Prejudice* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2010), 209–482; Bülent Özdemir, *Assyrian Identity and the Great War: Nestorian, Chaldean and Syrian Christians in the 20th Century* (Caithness, Scotland: Whittles, 2012), 81, 84.

392 BarAbraham, "Turkey's Key Arguments," 77–89; Özdemir, *Assyrian Identity*, 34–43; Salâhi Sonyel, *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society 1993); Salâhi Sonyel, *The Assyrians of Turkey: Victims of Major Power Policy* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2001).

Sonyel has argued that there was no genocide of the Armenians or Assyrians, although “some lives were lost” due to deportations amid generalized chaos and poverty. According to Sonyel, Assyrians, rather being deported, underwent a “self-inflicted exodus.” Yet the same author argued in 1994 that the Bosnian Muslims had suffered genocide, taking at face value their leaders’ claims of 250,000 deaths and disregarding evidence of rebellion, civil war violence, terrorism, and foreign intervention by Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, and other states.³⁹³ Of course, this toll of 250,000 represented a much smaller share of the millions of Yugoslav Muslims than the 250,000 Ottoman Assyrians was of their population; there were more than two million Yugoslav Muslims in 1990 and more than four million altogether in 1998 in the large former Yugoslav republics.³⁹⁴ The Bosnian Muslims today also manifest much less evidence of destruction of their territory or faith and much more evidence of cultural survival, demographic strength, and political power than do the Assyrians of Iran and Turkey, or even of Iraq and Syria.

Relying upon the work of Sonyel and others, the American historian Justin McCarthy suggested that Armenians and Assyrians had exaggerated their losses and engaged in “shooting,” so there could be no genocide.³⁹⁵ McCarthy emphasized two-sided killing and called allegations of genocide “fraudulent” because 5.5 million Ottoman Muslims died in wars or due to starvation and disease from between 1821 and 1922, and 5 million more were displaced.³⁹⁶ The German Foreign Office documents published in English by Wolfgang Gust, first on the Internet and then in a useful one-volume edition, show that few of these deaths took place in the Armenian and Assyrian heartland of Van province; most probably occurred in wars with larger powers.³⁹⁷

In 2000, Professor McCarthy contributed an entry to an encyclopedia of Turkish heritage claiming that the main evidence of anti-Armenian and

393 Sonyel, *The Assyrians of Turkey*, 127–128, 195; Sonyel, *Minorities*, 408; Salâhi Sonyel, *The Muslims of Bosnia: Genocide of a People* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 1994), 60; Hannibal Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East: The Ottoman Empire, Iraq, and Sudan* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2010), 62–72.

394 CIA, *The World Factbook 1990* (Washington, DC: The Author, 1992), 344; CIA, *The World Factbook 1995* (1996), www.umsl.edu/services/govdocs/wofact95/wf950032.htm. The latter figure assumes some growth, 1995–98.

395 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1995), 23.

396 Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who Is a Turk?* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2006), 5; McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, *passim*; Justin McCarthy, *The Turk in America: The Creation of an Enduring Prejudice* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010), 292, back cover; Daniel Pipes, “Book Review [McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims*],” *Middle East Quarterly* (June 1996), www.danielpipes.org/704/death-and-exile-the-ethnic-cleansing-of-ottoman-muslims.

397 Gust, *The Armenian Genocide*, 7–8.

anti-Assyrian massacres was the anonymous, “fabricated,” and “unidentified” reports by the victims or eyewitnesses.³⁹⁸ McCarthy implied that the authors of these reports must have been biased due to their race. This point was previously made by Sonyel, who had no trouble accepting the testimonies of Bosnian Muslims against the Yugoslav government.³⁹⁹

Building on McCarthy’s work, the American political scientist Guenter Lewy published in 2005 *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide*.⁴⁰⁰ Although it did not focus on Assyrians, Lewy’s findings echoed the narrative pioneered by Ottoman officials and the Turkish Historical Society that local rebellions provoked two-sided ethnic violence and some defensive, originally humane deportations of Armenians. Hilmar Kaiser subsequently adopted a similar narrative for the Assyrian case, utilizing archival records to suggest that there was no Ottoman intent to deport or annihilate the Assyrians.⁴⁰¹ McCarthy suggested that with the publication of Lewy’s work, further investigation of the Armenian genocide should stop.⁴⁰² On the other hand, Taner Akçam challenged Lewy’s assumption that there was little documentary evidence or testimony supporting an official Ottoman role in the ethnic violence, pointing out that extensive trials uncovered the proof, that the massacres were known at the ministerial level, and that the officials of Diyarbakir were rewarded after exterminating “all Christians.”⁴⁰³

Lewy’s argument that thousands of Turks and Kurds may have died, and McCarthy’s estimate that 5.5 million died over a century, do not, of course, disprove the existence of an Ottoman Christian genocide. Lewy describes a “terrible death toll among Turkish Muslims,” without noting in that discussion that the 780,000 Turkish deaths to which he refers represented less than 10% of the Muslim population of 12.5 million in 1914.⁴⁰⁴ The Germans

398 “The Bryce Report: British Propaganda and The Turks,” in Kemal Çiçek, Ercüment Kuran, and Nejat Göyünç (Eds.), *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation: Economy and Society*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), 508–509.

399 Salâhi Sonyel, “How Armenian Propaganda Tricked the Christian World in Connection with the Relocations and ‘Massacres,’” *Bellekten* 49 (1977): 157–175; McCarthy, “The Bryce Report,” 508–509; Justin McCarthy, “Wellington House and the Turks,” in *The Turks*, vol. 5 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2002), 457–467. Compare Sonyel, *The Muslims of Bosnia, passim*.

400 *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2005), 115, 137, 250.

401 Hilmar Kaiser, “A Deportation that Did Not Occur,” *The Armenian Weekly* (2008), 16–18.

402 Justin McCarthy, “The American Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide,” *Slavic Review* 66, no. 2 (2007): 337–338.

403 “Guenter Lewy’s The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 3 (2008): 111–145, 134.

404 Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres*, v–vi; see also, Solomon Wank, “The Disintegration of the Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires: A Comparative Analysis,” in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot (Eds.), *The End of Empire?: The Transformation of the USSR* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 94–121, 118.

and Austrians, of course, experienced much larger losses in absolute terms during and after World War II than the Turks and Kurds did in World War I. Seven to nine million Germans died from 1939 and 1954, including one million prisoners of war and two to four million civilians deported from areas occupied by the Soviet Red Army.⁴⁰⁵ Going back decades earlier, as McCarthy does, 2.7 million more Germans died in fighting, from their wounds, or from hunger during World War I.⁴⁰⁶ Surely Lewy would not conclude from these tolls that there was a genocide of Germans starting in 1914 or 1941, or that the Nazis were innocent of genocide against Jews.

Turkish deaths from war and poverty should also be considered in light of the Ottomans launching a war against Russia and its ally Britain, pushing towards Central Asia and India, and the fact that the census of 1927 revealed a country that had become 98% Muslim.⁴⁰⁷ By contrast, the Assyrian population of present-day Turkey declined as a share of the total population well below the minuscule share of the population in present-day Germany that is Jewish.⁴⁰⁸

Akçam also argues that Lewy does not persuasively articulate excuses for the Ottoman government's role in the targeted killings of Christian soldiers and forced laborers, who were not pro-Russian rebels.⁴⁰⁹ For example, Ottoman police and secret service press-ganged Christian men for forced labor and death marches.⁴¹⁰ A correspondent for a New York newspaper reported the mood in Constantinople during the press-ganging: "The European war makes the Turks think that this is their golden opportunity for turkifying the empire from the one end to the other."⁴¹¹ About 200,000 Christian men press-ganged into service by the Ottomans would perish.⁴¹² Yohannan remarked of this service that groups of men on their way back from it were "massacred in cold blood."⁴¹³

Some scholars other than Sonyel and Özdemir argue that there could not have been a genocide because some Armenian and Assyrian men fought

405 Travis, *Genocide*, 228.

406 Ira Katznelson, *Desolation and Enlightenment: Political Knowledge after Total War, Totalitarianism, and the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 11.

407 W.C. Brice, "The Population of Turkey in 1950," *The Geographical Journal* 120 (1954): 347–352, 349–350; R.J. Rummel, *Death by Government* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 235.

408 U.S. Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006*, www.state.gov.

409 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 413–414, 449.

410 *The New York Times* (1915), n.p.

411 *Ibid.*

412 Rummel, *Death by Government*, 216–217; Howard Sachar, *The Emergence of the Middle East: 1914–1924* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 98; Dickran Boyajian, *Armenia: The Case for a Forgotten Genocide* (Westwood, NJ: Educational Bookcrafters, 1972), 288–289, 333–334.

413 Yohannan, *Death of a Nation*, 135.

or attempted to resist the Ottoman military.⁴¹⁴ Of course, genocidal leaders routinely describe victim populations as the enemy or as committing crimes against the state. Hitler blamed Jewish men and women for rebelling against the Weimar Republic and trying to create the Bavarian Socialist Republic with backing from Moscow, and for provoking the British into war with Germany after that.⁴¹⁵ He claimed that Jewish and Slavic communists had murdered or starved to death 30 million people prior to the outbreak of World War II, a toll which would have included many Soviet Germans, Catholics, and other Christians.⁴¹⁶ In the “gigantic struggle” with

414 Edward Erickson has argued that Armenian relocations and battles against Armenians were “reflexive” and “escalatory” on the basis of security imperatives, just like British actions in South Africa, American actions in the Philippines, and other early counter-insurgency wars of conquest or occupation. “The Armenian Relocations and Ottoman National Security: Military Necessity or Excuse for Genocide?” *Middle East Critique* 20, no. 3 (2011): 291–298. See also, Edward Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians: A Study in Counterinsurgency* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Bulent Özdemir made a similar argument about Assyrians in a 2006 speech and a 2008 book. “Assyrian Genocide Claims ‘Bogus,’ Says Turkish Historian,” *The New Anatolian* (Dec. 27, 2006), www.aina.org/news/20061227125027.htm; Özdemir, *Süryanilerin*.

415 Hitler’s “political activity” began, by his own account, right after the fall of a communist regime in Bavaria led in part by a Jewish revolutionary named Kurt Eisner. William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Fawcett Crest, paperback ed., 1992), 57–59. In 1933, Hitler gained political support and began rounding up his political enemies after the German police claimed to have found weapons and plans for revolution in a base used by followers of two Spartacist communists with some Jewish heritage, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. *Ibid.*, 83–86, 267–271; Thomas Friedrich, *Hitler’s Berlin: Abused City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), <https://books.google.com/books?id=nCbWGRhFXbcC&pg=PT398>. The belief was that “agents and admirers of the Russian Revolution, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Kurt Eisner, and many others,” were organizing violence in Germany. Leonard Weinberg, *Democracy and Terrorism: Friend or Foe?* (Abingdon and London: Routledge, 2013), 36. Hitler’s Nazis grew out of the Freikorps, which fought these “agents.” *Ibid.*; Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 57, 64, 70, 84–87, 102, 211. In 1938, the Nazis suspected a Jewish student in the assassination of a German diplomat, prompting them to assault, deport, and plunder the Jews in Germany. Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War against the Jews: 1933–1945* (New York: Bantam Books, paperback ed., 1986), 100–101, 103–104. Hitler claimed that communism was a Jewish plot. R.A.C. Parker, *Struggle for Survival: The History of the Second World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, paperback ed., 1990), 264. He described annihilation of the Jews as his effort to preempt “world bolshevism.” *Ibid.*, 266. Widespread massacres of Jews began with those in Soviet Union government or Communist Party roles. *Ibid.* In December 1941, Hitler told Alfred Rosenberg that Jews must be killed for starting World War II, which had by then claimed 160,000 German lives on the eastern front, he claimed. Geoffrey Megargee, *War of Annihilation: Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front, 1941* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 146.

416 Joachim Fest, *Hitler* (Boston, MA: Mariner Books, reprint ed., 2002 [1992]), 779; Robert Gerwarth, *Hitler’s Hangman: The Life of Heydrich* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 195; Martyn Housden, *Hitler: Study of a Revolutionary* (Abingdon and London: Routledge, 2000), 137; Ian Hershaw, *Hitler, 1889–1936: Hubris* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 243; Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000), 406; Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), 148; Irina Mukhina, *The Germans of the Soviet Union* (Abingdon and London: Routledge, 2007), 37–38.

the Soviets and their allies, “the nation that loses will cease to exist,” he alleged.⁴¹⁷ He connected the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Germans in World War I with Jewish and socialist influence on the Reich.⁴¹⁸ He saw the world war as an apocalyptic struggle for Germany’s very survival.⁴¹⁹ “By economic strangulation of the Reich, they intended to destroy the basis for the material existence of the German nation,” he explained.⁴²⁰ Nevertheless, and despite the fact that the word “genocide,” much less a genocide treaty, did not exist when the Nazi anti-Jewish campaign began and reached its peak in 1942, the United States told the International Court of Justice in 1951 that “the extermination of millions of Jews and Poles by the Nazis [was an] outstanding example of the crime of genocide.”⁴²¹

More recently, the international judges in The Hague, ruling on motions filed in the Bosnian Muslim genocide cases, ruled that the desire to seek revenge on a religious group for rebelling against the state is a sufficient basis to find genocidal intent.⁴²² The Bosnian Serb leadership feared that the supposed Bosnian Muslim and Croatian Catholic “villains” of World War II were being emulated by rebels against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.⁴²³ The judges in one case ruled that some “signs of religious and national animus” were a sufficient basis to find genocidal intent in an international trial.⁴²⁴ Technically, the finding of these judges was that the evidence, taken in the light most favorable to prosecution, could satisfy a person beyond a reasonable doubt that genocide occurred.⁴²⁵ Other evidence of note

417 Max Domarus (Ed.), *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations: 1932–1945, Vol. 4, The Years 1941–1945* (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2004), 2846; Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., reprint ed., 1998), 246, 259.

418 Peter Longerich, “The Wannsee Conference in the Development of the ‘Final Solution’,” *Holocaust Educational Trust Research Papers* 1 (1999/2000), 4, www.gwhk.de/eng/texts/wannsee-conference.pdf; Parker, *Struggle for Survival*, 264.

419 Max Domarus (Ed.), *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932–1945, Vol. 3: The Years 1939–1940* (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy Carducci Pub, 1997), 2863.

420 Domarus (Ed.), *Speeches*, 2964.

421 International Court of Justice, Reports of Judgments, *Advisory Opinions and Orders: Reservations to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Advisory Opinion of May 28th, 1951* (1951), 25.

422 *Prosecutor v. Mladić*, Case No. IT-09–92-PT, Decision on Interlocutory Appeal From the Trial Chamber Rule 98 bis Decision (July 24, 2014), 6–7, www.icty.org/x/cases/mladic/acdec/en/140724.pdf; Rachel Irwin, “Mladic Acquittal Request Denied,” *Institute of War and Peace Reporting* (Apr. 17, 2014), <http://iwpr.net/report-news/mladic-acquittal-request-denied>. See also, *Prosecutor v. Karadžić*, Case No. IT-95–5-T, Transcript of Rule 98 bis Hearing (June 13, 2012), 28639–28640.

423 *Prosecutor v. Karadžić*, Case No. IT-95–5/18-I, Appeals Chamber, Judgement (Rule 98bis) (July 11, 2013), para 97. www.icty.org/x/cases/karadzic/acjug/en/130711_judgment_rule98bis.pdf; *Prosecutor v. Karadžić*, Case No. IT-98–5/18-I, Transcript of Hearing (June 13, 2012), 28708.

424 *Prosecutor v. Karadžić*, Case No. IT-95–5-T, 18-AR-98bis.1, Judgement as to Count 1 of the Indictment on Appeal of Acquittal Pursuant to Rule 98 bis (July 11, 2013), 37–38, n. 277.

425 *Prosecutor v. Mladić*, Case No. IT-09–92-PT, Transcript (Apr. 15, 2014), 20925.

concerned the Serb forces' alleged expulsion of 30,000 Muslims and Croats, effort to change the religion of Muslim captives, and destruction of public and private property belonging to Muslims.⁴²⁶

Like Sonyel, the government of Turkey has not hesitated to recognize genocides in the context of rebellion or secession, outside of the context of its own history. These include the supposed "genocides" of the Turkish Cypriot Muslims, the Chechen Muslims of the Russian Federation, the Bosnian and Kosovar Albanian Muslims of Yugoslavia, the Muslims of East Turkestan (China), and the Palestinian Muslims under Israeli occupation and bombing.⁴²⁷ In none of these cases, it appears, did two-sided casualties or a threat to national security preclude the recognition by the Turkish government of "genocide." Indeed, in several cases, members of the victim group exercised political power after the alleged genocide had taken place, indicating an absence of an intention to annihilate them. For example, a Bosnian Muslim became the leader or co-leader of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkish Cypriots exercised political power since the 1980s in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and Kosovo and Palestine have been led by Muslims.

A key pillar of pro-Ottoman writing is that there was no Ottoman racism. While surveying evidence on both sides of the debate, Lewy questions whether there was Ottoman racism.⁴²⁸ Some of the pro-Ottoman literature does not recognize that there were statements by Ottoman officials to German or American diplomats indicating an intention to eliminate specific ethnic or religious groups, such as when Minister of Interior Talât Pasha told a German embassy official that the Turkish government "is intent on taking advantage of the World War in order to [make a] clean sweep of internal enemies – the indigenous Christians – without being hindered in doing so by diplomatic intervention from other countries."⁴²⁹ Or that there were statements that the "government is resolved . . . to eliminate the indigenous Christians."⁴³⁰ Or that an Ottoman official proclaimed that the empire must be "exclusively Turkish" and free of "foreign elements."⁴³¹ Sonyel also does not come to grips with the prohibition of non-Turkish surnames and village names that had been in use for centuries by indigenous Christian populations, prohibitions enacted

426 Ibid., 20925, 20944, 20947.

427 Travis, "The Assyrian Genocide," 132; UPI, *Turkey's PM Accuses Israel of Genocide* (Mar. 14, 2012), www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2012/03/14/Turkeys-PM-accuses-Israel-of-genocide/UPI-45691331725313/ (last visited Nov. 1, 2014).

428 Lewy, *Armenian Massacres*, 45–46.

429 Travis, "Native Christians Massacred," 343.

430 Ibid., translating Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust*, 99, quoting Johannes Lepsius, *Deutschland und Armenien: Sammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke* (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919), 116.

431 Hovannisian, "Introduction," 10, quoting Yves Ternon, *Mardin 1915: Anatomie pathologique d'une destruction* (Paris: Geuthner, 2007), 168.

in Turkey after the West had abandoned the Armenians and Assyrians to their fate.⁴³² Surely if the Bosnian Serbs had prohibited the use of Muslim given names or Turkic surnames in Bosnia, this would be seen by Sonyel and others as genocidal intent by infliction of serious mental harm and destruction of a culture. Similarly, if Greater Serbia had been declared a Christian state after the Bosnian Muslim genocide of 1992–1995, this would have been viewed as powerful evidence of genocide; Turkey became an Islamic state in 1928.⁴³³

In neither Rwanda nor Yugoslavia was a group actually destroyed; indeed, in both cases, the group victimized by genocide saw one of its members become the head of state in the affected territory.⁴³⁴ Rwanda still has approximately 1.7 million Tutsi residents and Tutsis dominate politics according to Freedom House.⁴³⁵ Imagine that an Assyrian leader had reconquered historic Assyria from the Ottomans and become president of Assyria at the Paris Peace Conference; would we still speak of an Assyrian genocide today?

Explaining amnesia as to the Assyrian fate

It is sometimes said that there is a general amnesia regarding eastern Anatolia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴³⁶ This may be true as regards official memory insofar as it emphasizes Istanbul or past sultans or presidents of Turkey, but it ignores a crucial difference between “Armenia” and “Kurdistan,” on the one hand, which have received extensive treatment from scholars and within the United Nations, and the Ottoman Assyrians, Greeks, and Yezidis, groups generally ignored prior to 2006. The amnesia regarding eastern Turkey is more pronounced when it comes to the Assyrian,

432 Orhan Kemal Cengiz, “How the Names of Places Have Been Changed in Turkey,” *Today’s Zaman* (July 14, 2011), www.todayszama.com; Orom Lahdo, “The Assimilation Policy of Turkey Continues on Surnames,” *EasternStar News Agency* (Feb. 11, 2008), www.aina.org/news/20080211032311.htm, citing *Soy Adı Kanunu* (Law on Last Names [or Race Names]), Nr 2525 (June 21, 1934), *Düstur* (Code of Laws), Third Set, vol. 15, addenda (Ankara: Tüürkiye Büyük Meclis, 1282–1283).

433 Özlem Denli, “Freedom of Religion: Secularist Policies and Islamic Challenges,” in Zehra Kabasakal Arat (Ed.), *Human Rights in Turkey* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 87–100, 90.

434 Perhaps the closest thing to a group being actually destroyed by genocide in these cases are the Twa of Rwanda, but 25,000 of them remain; 30% were killed in 1994. David King, *Rwanda* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2007), 75.

435 This is based on a Tutsi population share of 14%. “Hutu and Tutsi,” in Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Kwame Anthony Appiah (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Africa* (Oxford: Oxford Reference, 2010), www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095952251. See also, Freedom House, *Rwanda: Country Report, Freedom in the World* (2015), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/rwanda>.

436 For a survey of such comments, see Alla Mirzoyan, *Armenia, the Regional Powers, and the West: Between History and Geopolitics* (London: Springer, 2010), 101–103.

Greek, and Yezidi genocides, as opposed to the fate of the Kurds.⁴³⁷ Prior to my own work on the subject, “genocide in the Middle East” was a concept used generally to refer to the Palestinians, the Kurds of Iraq and Turkey, and a few other cases.

As René Lemarchand has written, the Assyrian genocide has been cast into “oblivion” by the United Nations and generally indifferent scholars.⁴³⁸ When the United Nations recognized the Armenian genocide in 1985, it left out the Assyrian, Greek, and Yezidi victims of the Ottoman and post-Ottoman campaign to cleanse non-Muslims and non-Turks from Anatolia, Armenia, and northern Persia.⁴³⁹ Likewise, when the United States and several European countries recognized the Armenian genocide, Assyrians were not mentioned, almost without exception.⁴⁴⁰ More than forty U.S. states recognized the Armenian genocide and some of them include it in history curricula for youth. In the State of Massachusetts, for example, the genocide and human rights curricula included “the Armenian genocide” but omitted its Assyrian victims.⁴⁴¹

437 The Yezidi genocide reached its peak in 1915–1918 and was perpetrated by Ottoman forces. Genocide Prevention Now, “The Virtually Unknown Genocide of Yezidis by the Turks Along with the Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks,” *Genocide Prevention Now* 5 (2011), www.genocidepreventionnow.org/Home/SPECIALISSUE5ARMENIANGENOCIDE/COVICTIMS/tabid/101/ctl/DisplayArticle/mid/607/aid/226/Default.asp. It probably began in 1892–93. John Guest, *Survival among the Kurds: A History of the Yezidis* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2nd ed., 1993), 134–142. The Greek genocide peaked in 1913–1924 and may have claimed up to 1–1.5 million lives. Nikolaos Hlamides, “The Smyrna Holocaust: The Final Phase of the Greek Genocide,” in Tessa Hofmann, Matthias Bjornlund and Vasileios Meichanetsidis (Eds.), *The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks: Studies on State-Sponsored Campaign of Extermination of the Christians of Asia Minor, 1912–1922* (New York and Athens: Caratzas, 2011), 195–244, 225, citing League of Nations (1926), 12.

438 Lemarchand, “Introduction,” 1.

439 U.N. Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (Agenda Item 4), Summary Record of the 36th Meeting of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Revised and Updated Report on the Question of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 38 UN ESCOR, 8–9, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/Sub. 2/1985/6 (1985); U.N. Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (Item 57) 7, Draft Resolution Submitted by Mr. Deschenes and Mr. Mubanga-Chipoya, U.N. Doc. No. E/CN.4/Sub. 2/1985/L.15 (Aug. 29, 1985); U.N. Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (Item 57) 7, U.N. Doc. No. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1985/SR.36 (1985) (summary record of 36th meeting, Aug. 29, 1985); Armenian National Committee of America, Genocide Recognition (2013), www.anca.org/genocide/recognition.php.

440 Armenian National Committee of America, Genocide Recognition, citing Proclamation 4838 of April 22, 1981; Armenian National Institute, *U.S. Presidential Statements* (1998–2016), www.armenian-genocide.org/current_category.4/affirmation_list.html.

441 *Griswold v. Driscoll*, 625 F.Supp. 2d 49 (D. Mass. 2009), affirmed, *Griswold v. Driscoll*, 616 F.3d 53 (1st Cir. 2010).

Encyclopedias of genocide sometimes include the Kurdish case but not the Assyrian one.⁴⁴² Similarly, a search in 2012 of a large archive of digitized academic journals generated 945 results for articles mentioning “genocide” and “Kurds” but not “Assyrians,” but only 106 mentioning both “genocide” and “Assyrians.” In 2012, Google reported 10,100 results for “Armenian genocide” in its News Archive, compared with 927 results for “Kurdish genocide” or “genocide of the Kurds,” 914 results for “Srebrenica genocide” or “Bosnian genocide,” 170 results for “Anfal genocide,” and 154 results for “Assyrian genocide.”⁴⁴³ This may be because southern Kurdistan had been autonomous since 1992, with ever-expanding national institutions and international recognition, and there were 20 million or more Kurds in the world to remember and write about Kurdish history. The disparity is unjustifiable, given that death tolls among the Kurds have been put as low as 20,000–65,000 in Turkey, and 105,000 in Iraq, representing much smaller percentage losses of the Kurdish population than the Assyrians suffered.⁴⁴⁴

Some Armenian-American and Armenian-European scholars omitted Assyrians from edited volumes on genocide prior to 2007 and failed to mention Assyrian victims in countless articles in academic books and journals.⁴⁴⁵ A narrative of 1915 emerged that emphasized an “Armenian genocide” by the Turks, which obscured the destruction of non-Armenian communities and the roles of Arabs, Kurds, Persians, and Circassians as perpetrators.⁴⁴⁶ Most non-Armenian historians of genocide adopt the approach of

442 Christopher Catherwood and Leslie Ann Horvitz, *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide* (New York: Facts on File, 2006), 195, 217–219, 272–273, 286; Dinah Shelton (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity*, vol. 1 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference/Gale, 2005), 584–586, 633–636.

443 Google, *Google News Archive* (2012), <http://news.google.com>. This search function has been discontinued, and folded in part into Google.com search.

444 Martin van Bruinessen, “Genocide in Kurdistan?: The Suppression of the Dersim Rebellion in Turkey (1937–1938) and the Chemical War against the Iraqi Kurds (1988),” in George Andreopoulos (Ed.), *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 141–170, 148; Martin van Bruinessen, “Genocide of the Kurds,” in Israel W. Charny and Alan L. Berger (Eds.), *The Widening Circle of Genocide: Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 180–190.

445 A notable exception is Peter Balakian, who mentioned Assyrians more than a decade ago. *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 25, 43, 184, 286.

446 E.g., Richard Hovannisian, “Preface,” in Richard Hovannisian (Ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007), ix–xii; Anahit Khosroeva, “The Assyrian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire and Adjacent Territories,” in *op cit.*, 267–274, 267; Hannibal Travis, “The Construction of the ‘Armenian Genocide’: How Genocide Scholars Unremembered the Ottoman Assyrians and Greeks,” in Douglas Irvin-Erickson, Thomas LaPointe and Alex Hinton (Eds.), *Hidden Genocides: Power, Knowledge, and Memory* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 170–192.

the Armenian-American scholars and omit reference to the Assyrian genocide.⁴⁴⁷ For example, the important text *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes*, William Schabas, with the exception of the Armenians, made no mention of genocide in Turkey or Iraq prior to 1945 or of the Ottoman Assyrians, Greeks, Mandaeans, or Yezidis in any context.⁴⁴⁸ A parallel emphasis on the Kurdish genocide resulted in much greater awareness of anti-Kurdish massacres, even though Kurds were among the world's largest linguistic and cultural groups by 2005.⁴⁴⁹ Schabas, for example, referred to genocide against the Kurds but not to the larger, and proportionally much greater, losses among the Assyrians.⁴⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch and many international-law journals also analyzed the Kurdish genocide earlier than the Assyrian case.⁴⁵¹ Schabas and Human Rights Watch were not unique. As Israel Charny noted, the Director of the Armenian Genocide Memorial scoffed when Charny told him about how "Armenian Americans" refuse to recognize that there were Assyrian and Greek victims of Ottoman deportation and massacre policies.

As mentioned above, one explanation for the amnesia as to Assyrian history is the small numbers of survivors. In 1956 there were only 190,000 Armenians and 20,000 Assyrians in Iran, despite the historic Assyrian presence in Persia.⁴⁵² The U.S. State Department announced in 1992 its estimate that only 60,000 Armenians and 20,000 Assyrians remained in Turkey.⁴⁵³ In

447 E.g., Hilmar Kaiser, "Genocide at the Twilight of the Ottoman Empire," in Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 371–372; Hilmar Kaiser, "Regional Resistance to Central Government Policies: Ahmed Djemal Pasha, the Governors of Aleppo, and Armenian Deportees in the Spring and Summer of 1915," *Journal of Genocide Research* 12 (2010): 173–218; Michael Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 115–118, 155.

448 William Schabas, *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 104–105.

449 E.g., Hagop Gulludjian, "Exposure of the Armenian Genocide in Cyberspace: A Comparative Analysis," in Hovannisian (Ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, 245–264, 256.

450 E.g., Schabas, *Genocide*, 454, 569, 585.

451 E.g., Payam Akhavan, "Lessons From Iraqi Kurdistan: Self-Determination and Humanitarian Intervention against Genocide," *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 1, no. 1 (1993): 41–62; Human Rights Watch/Middle East Watch, *Iraq's Crime of Genocide: The Anfal Campaign against the Kurds* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (Canada: International Development Research Centre, 2000), 88–90, 168, 190–191, 327–328.

452 Abrahamian, *Iran*, 12.

453 U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 940–941, www.archive.org/stream/country-reports-on-1992-unit/country-reports-on-1992-unit_djvu.txt (last visited Nov. 1, 2015).

1989, the last Soviet census tabulated nearly 5 million Armenians, including 3.3 million in the Republic of Armenia.⁴⁵⁴ Although there has been a great deal of writing on “genocide in Kurdistan,” the danger that the Kurdish nation would disappear or be decimated seems never to have materialized in Iraq or Turkey. Although there were two million internally displaced Kurds in Turkey by 1995, this was out of a Kurdish population of 12 to 14 million in Turkey as of 1990.⁴⁵⁵ The Kurdish population of Turkey was therefore larger than the entire population of Turkey in the nineteenth century.⁴⁵⁶ By 1995, Kurds claimed a majority in Turkey’s southeastern provinces of Mardin, Siirt, Hakkari, Diyarbakir, Bitlis, Muş, and Van.⁴⁵⁷ Meanwhile, the Kurdish population of Iraq has exploded to some four to six million by 2010,⁴⁵⁸ with six million being a figure equal to more than two times the entire Iraqi population in 1920.⁴⁵⁹ By 2010, Kurdish parties controlled the mayors’ offices of many Turkish cities, and the presidency of Iraq.⁴⁶⁰ In contrast to the Armenians and the Kurds, Assyrians possess no national government or well-funded cultural institutions, while refugee flight and assimilation into other national and religious groups has become common.

Although it was achieved during the war, the suppression of Assyrian nationality and autonomy was sealed with the Treaty of Sèvres between the allies and the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War in 1919.⁴⁶¹ The treaty referred to “predominantly Kurdish areas” with an “Assyro-Chaldean” minority.⁴⁶² The Treaty of Lausanne, which officially ended the state of war

454 Rouben Paul Adalian, “Armenia’s Foreign Policy: Defining Priorities and Coping with Conflict,” in Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha (Eds.), *The International Politics of Eurasia: Volume 4: The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015), 309–339, 333; Louk Hagendoorn, Hub Linssen, and Sergei Tumanov, *Intergroup Relations in States of the Former Soviet Union: The Perception of Russians* (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis, 2001), 151.

455 Mark Müller and Sharon Linzey, *The Internally Displaced Kurds of Turkey: Ongoing Issues of Responsibility, Redress and Resettlement* (London: Kurdish Human Rights Project, 2007), 45.

456 Human Rights Watch, *World Report 1990 – Iraq and Occupied Kuwait, 1 January 1991*, www.unhcr.org/refworld/category,COI,HRW,,KWT,467fca3cc,0.html (last visited Jan. 1, 2014).

457 James Brown, “The Turkish Imbroglia: Its Kurds,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 541 (1995): 116, 117.

458 Hussein Hassan, *Iran: Ethnic and Religious Minorities* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010), CRS-5.

459 Sir William Willcox, “Mesopotamia,” in *The Encyclopedia Britannica* (New York: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1922), 916.

460 Mohammed Salih, “Iraq: Uphill Coalition-Building Battle for Winners Unfolds,” *Inter Press Service* (Mar. 29, 2010), www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50838 (last visited Nov. 1, 2011). See also, Karaba, 2009.

461 Donabed, “Rethinking Nationalism,” 4.

462 The Treaty of Sèvres, signed at Sèvres, 10 August 1920, Great Britain, Treaty Series (1920), no. 11, Cmd. 964, 16–32.

between the allies and Turkey, referred merely to “non-Moslem” minorities, eliminating the non-Turkish nations from the picture.⁴⁶³ Thus, in the United States, a coalition of prominent Americans and American aid organizations called the Treaty of Lausanne “morally indefensible” and described it as lacking “guarantees . . . to the remnants of Christians in Turkey.”⁴⁶⁴

The Mosul region and Nineveh province in Iraq, Hakkari and Tur Abdin regions of Turkey, and Urmia region of Iran have had their former Assyrian character very nearly erased, partially by a process of Kurdification during *Seyfo* that had largely been completed by 1920, and by policies of Arabization, Aryanization, and Turkification since then. In 2014, the remaining Assyrians in Mosul and the surrounding areas fled the Islamic State. These events will figure in the conclusion, regarding contemporary legacies of the genocide.

The chapters that follow are focused on the question: how did *Seyfo* affect Assyrian communities, both during and after World War I? Concepts that cut across the chapters include genocide, *jihad*, and Turkism. Temporal connections among the chapters include the precursors to the war and the genocide, the extension of the genocide into the late 1910s and early 1920s, and the postwar effects of the genocide on the culture and politics of the Middle East.

The book may be viewed as having two parts. Part One, comprising the introduction and the chapters by Michael Abdalla, Sara Demir, Anahit Khosroeva, and Eden Naby, deals with the evolution and sources of the ethnic and religious violence in which Assyrians were caught up during the war. Part Two, comprising the work of Sait Çetinoğlu, Racho Donef, Aryo Makko, Stavros Stavridis, and the conclusion, deals with the cultural and political responses by the Assyrians to the massacres and mass abductions that their communities suffered, including active resistance, literary works and memoirs, political organization, and attempts to forge a unified national or ethno-religious community and to seek recognition of threats to its survival. The earlier chapters will disproportionately focus on the violence itself, and its legal and social conceptualization. These chapters analyze the genocide from the standpoint of tribunals’ jurisprudence that has developed since the 1960s, especially insofar as women and children were subjected to killings, mental harm, high rates of mortality, and removal from their families in the 1914–1924 period. The later chapters detail the continuing impact of the genocide on identities, cultures, and politics. They are concerned with efforts to secure a revival of Assyrian identity in the period after 1918, and the successful moves by Turkey, Iraq, and their allies to frustrate this objective.

463 The Treaty of Peace between the Allied Powers and Turkey, signed at Lausanne, 24 July 1923, entered into force 6 August 1924, 28 League of Nations Treaty Series 11.

464 Associated Press, “Mosul Awarded to British; More Turk Killings Alleged,” *The Washington Post* (Dec. 16, 1925), 1.

This volume seeks to gather and correlate the findings of a broad spectrum of historical and scholarly works on Christian identities in the Middle East, genocide studies, international law, and the politics of the late Ottoman Empire and its British and Russian rivals for dominance. One focus, as reflected in the introductory chapter, the chapter by Demir, and the chapter by Khosroeva, is the question of whether the fate of the Assyrians from 1914 through the 1920s maps onto any of the concepts or definitions used by international law and diplomatic history to study genocide and group violence. In the introductory chapter and those by Abdalla, Makko, and Donef, another focus is the origins of the genocidal events in the religious and denominational differences between the Assyrians and other groups, as well as the impact of the genocide period 1914–1925 on the development or partial unraveling of Assyrian group cohesion, including national aspirations. Abdalla writes about the cultural and religious roots of recourse to the sword to eliminate perceived or threatened resistance to the “master” race or religion in the lands that became the Ottoman Empire. Khosroeva discusses several political wellsprings of the genocidal persecution of 1915, including German and Turkish military objectives, the ideologies of Pan-Turkism and Islamism, and ethnic and religious “resentment.” Naby highlights several examples of Assyrians preserving the memory of a particular form in which the genocide of 1914–1925 took, including the abduction and enslavement of women, which has been well documented in the Armenian case – with echoes in the contemporary Yezidi case from northern Iraq – but not so well in the Assyrian case. Çetinoğlu’s chapter serves as a transition between those depicting the causes and course of the genocide and those regarding efforts to respond to it culturally and politically so as to ensure Assyrian survival in compact communities. The national movements of 1918 onwards among Assyrian communities, led by both clergy and secular activists including lawyers and military men, took an early form in the struggle by the Syrian Orthodox in key areas of Tur Abdin to protect their communities from the Turko-Kurdish extermination campaign of 1915. Makko analyzes how the Assyrian genocide’s principal cultural legacy is the dissolution and interruption of Assyrian unity, which might have taken political form as well as the form of ethnic and interdenominational religious unity. A process, common to national group revival within empires and to minority consciousness within nation-states, occurred within the Ottoman Assyrian context, but could not mature as in the Armenian, Hebrew/Israeli, and Kurdish cases, for example, due to the devastating impact of the genocide in scattering and thoroughly subduing Assyrian cultural and political institutions. There was no critical mass remaining to make a viable bid for the institutions enjoyed, for example, by the Jewish Diaspora centered in Israel, the Armenian Diaspora in Armenia, or the Kurdish Diaspora in the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq. For many Assyrians, the main identity markers in countries where they reside today, outside of the lands of the former Ottoman Empire or Persia, may be denominational or linguistic, rather than political or other secular cultural markers. Donef and Stavridis illustrate how loss

of territory, assassination of leaders, and dissolution of interdenominational bonds frustrated the emergent Assyrian nationalist movement, which made well-documented pleas to the League of Nations and its member states to honor the commitments made to the smaller communities that had fought off the German and Ottoman juggernaut that planned on conquering Europe and southwestern Asia in 1915–1918. In the conclusion, the focus is the impact on present-day Iraq and Syria of denial of the Assyrian genocide and outright rejection of Assyrian bids for self-determination. Ignorance of and inattention to Christian and Yezidi persecution led to yet another genocide, peaking in 2014–2015.

Conclusion

Assyrians have struggled to preserve their families' oral histories of the early twentieth century and to transmit those memories to other communities and future generations. Yet they have been frustrated in this by a lack of access to presses, television stations, academic centers, and websites. Even when their work is published, they encounter pressure to reconcile it with the conventional wisdom. When the contemporary political situation of the Assyrians is raised, the objection may be that there is no connection with any historical tragedies. This presents a stark contrast from ordinary work on Middle East Studies and Genocide Studies, which explicitly links the contemporary politics of many nations to their histories.

The Assyrians represent a unique case in scholarship, as a population repeatedly denied the opportunity of having a recognized claim to a distinct ethnic, national, and religious continuity with its ancestors. The history of the Christians of Hakkari and Urmia is regarded as having no moral or legal implications for present-day policies towards Turkey and Iran, or for the legal status of their laws or national boundaries, even as the history of the Muslims of Jerusalem or Sarajevo, for example, is seen as very important in shaping policy towards Israel or Yugoslavia.

Achieving recognition of the Assyrian genocide has been a challenge due to the absence of supportive national institutions, the small number of remaining Assyrians in the world, and efforts by several powerful nation-states to minimize and justify the tragedy. The concept of genocide, invented by Lemkin and adopted by the United Nations, is appropriate to the eradication of a national and religious group from most of its historic homeland, resulting in its decimation and dispersion. Assyrians have struggled for more than 100 years to convey the scope of their national, ethnic, and religious decline to a generally indifferent world.

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2 The term *Seyfo* in historical perspective

Michael Abdalla

Introduction: what is the origin of the term *Seyfo*?

No written sources mention who was the first to use the term *Seyfo*, currently so familiar to everyone, or why and when exactly this term was first applied to the Assyrian experience of persecution and massacre. It seems that the only reasonable explanation for its use is to be found in the history of Islam and the practices adhered to by some of its followers.

The Arab chronicles provide information about such tactics in the initial period of Islam. Probably the earliest mention of these strategies can be found in Ibn Hishām (died 833/834). Summing up the operation involved in imposing Islam on the Christian population of the then-Yemeni city of Najran (now in Saudi Arabia), Muhammad spoke to the delegation of Christians: “Had [my general] not written to me that you surrendered and had not fought, I would have thrown your heads underneath your feet.”¹ He uttered similar threats to the two envoys sent by Maslam bin Habīb, another prophet active in Yemen: “Were it not that the messengers have not been killed, I would have beheaded you.”² Muhammad took part in at least 27 military expeditions (*ghazwa*). Prior to that, armed raids between the Arab tribes in pre-Islamic times were almost a “national sport” and they were suspended only during the month of Ramadan.³

There is a *sura* of the Qur’ān entitled “The Sword,” or alternatively “The Fight,” which refers explicitly to decapitating unbelievers and taking the rest captive.⁴ After the emergence of Islam, facing few dangers from the broader

1 *History of al-Tabari Vol. 9, The Last Years of the Prophet*, ed. and trans. Ismail Poonawala (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2015), 84. Muhammad had sent his general to ensure that the people mentioned “accept Islam.” *Ibid.*, 83.

2 ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Hishām, *سيرة النبي (As-Sīrā an-nabawiyyā) [Life of the Prophet]* (Beirut: Dār an-Nahḍa al-‘Arabīya, 2000) [1936], 250, 256.

3 E.g., Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (New York: Random House, 2007), 19.

4 Qur’ān 47:4 (الْحَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَنْخَنْتُمْوَهُمْ فَسَدُوا الْوَوَائِقَ (بالسيف) رَقَابَ فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبِ الْ) [“. . .] [“Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers, smite at their necks with the sword; and when ye have thoroughly defeated them, bind a bond firmly (on them).”]. There is also another name for this *sura*: Al-Qitāl [“Fight”] (Koran, trans. Józef Bielawski, 1986, 608, 924–925).

world, the Muslims began to organize devastating assaults against the “infidels,” not excepting the month of Ramadan. All Muslims should unite to fight those who commit sin and transgressions.⁵ One such sin is “assigning partners to God,” or Christianity.⁶ Subsequently, political violence among Muslims frequently saw invocations of a Qur’ānic verse authorizing the amputation of hands and feet from different sides of the body, and display of the corpse hanging from a tree.⁷ The severing of heads or noses, and the display or transportation of heads, also occurred, according to Muslim historiography.⁸ In that historiography, Khālid ibn al-Walīd (592–642), who was the companion of Muhammad and responsible for the military success in its conquest marches of the Muslim army, was referred to as the “Sword of Allah.”⁹

The sword has appeared in many cultures, and its use has decided the outcome of many battles. But nowhere was it so closely linked to a faith as it is in Islam.¹⁰ Panygerics to the sword abound in Old Arabic and in later Muslim poetry; there are about a hundred different names for it in Arabic, exceeding the synonyms for either the camels or the date palm.¹¹

Hence, it is not without reason that the Qur’ān verses containing a direct call to fight or kill infidels were referred to as “sword verses.” They include the following verses: 2: 190–193, 216; 4: 76, 89, 144; 5: 51; 9: 5, 14, 29; 42: 35; 47: 4, 35 and 61: 4, 10–12. The differing message of dozens of Qur’ān verses and *hadith* traditions was a fact which already struck early researchers of the Qur’ān, who termed verses with a mild, gentle, and tolerant content expressly praising Christians and Jews منسوخ (*mansūh*), as waived, abandoned (a passive principle). They were replaced by Allah’s will with other verses termed ناسخ (*nāsikh*), repealing or annulling concrete orders (an active principle).¹²

The *hadith* texts also make references to a sword as an instrument of death. One of the most common ones says: لَجَنَةٌ تَحْتَ ظِلَالِ السَّيْفِ (Paradise [in other works: أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ “The gates of Paradise”] is located in the shadows

5 Qur’ān 7:33, 49:9–19 (Alī trans.); Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 37.

6 Qur’ān 7:33; El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence*, 37 n. 24.

7 Qur’ān 5:33–34; El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence*, 47–48, 53–54.

8 El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence*, 54 n. 92.

9 Maxime Rodinson, *Muhammad*, trans. Anne Carter (New York: Random House/The New Press, 1980), 256.

10 In Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, the seat of the Turkish sultans (currently a museum), there is a room with swords, and among them a sword which belonged to Fatih Sultan Mehmet, or Mehmed the Conqueror (of Constantinople in 1453).

11 Jean Pierre Humbert, *Discours sur l'utilité de la langue arabe* (Geneva: Fick, 1823), 24. <https://books.google.com/books?id=xGEVAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA24>.

12 Qur’ān 2”106 (أمْ خَسِنَ نَوْمٌ هِيَ أَوْ أَهْسِنَ نَوْمَانِ رُبِّي حَبِ أَهْنَمُ وَأَ أَهْلُنْشِمُ مَلَأَ مَلْعَتَنَا لَطْلًا لَكَ، عَيْشُنْ رِيْدَقُ) [“We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth [one] better than it or similar to it. Do you not know that Allah is over all things competent!”]].

[in other collections: تحت بارقة “in the light”] of swords.)¹³ According to this *hadith*, a sword constitutes a kind of “key to paradise.” Another *hadith* explains the role of a sword in spreading Islam and distinguishes between different types of believers depending on their attitudes:

Those who are killed belong to one of three categories: (i) believers who have sacrificed themselves and their property when on Allah’s path they met an enemy and they fought to the death. Such a believer is a genuine martyr if he met an enemy on his way with whom he fought and was killed and will therefore rest in Allah’s tent, under His throne and the only difference between the martyr and a prophet is that the prophecy has not been revealed to him; (ii) believers who have done both right and wrong but have sacrificed themselves and their property when on Allah’s path they met an enemy and they fought till they died. Such a believer is purified because a sword which expiates sins [Arabic: مَخَاءٌ لِلْخَطِيَا (mahḥā li-l-ḥaṭāya)] will lead him to Paradise through the gate which he (who was killed) will choose himself; and (iii) a hypocrite who has sacrificed himself and his property but when he met an enemy he fought till he died – he will [burn] in the fire because a sword does not expunge his hypocrisy.¹⁴

In the seventh century AD, killings of this type particularly affected the Jewish tribes of Medina; Jews not expelled from the area first were “put to the sword.”¹⁵ The inhabitants of some Byzantine towns also suffered death by being “put to the sword” in the seventh century.¹⁶ The Persian city of Persepolis, among the wealthiest and most famous in the ancient world, was reportedly put to the sword by an Arab force in the same century, although the city was already by that time a shadow of its former self in the imperial period.¹⁷ In the eighth century, the Umayyad caliphate attacked Armenian fortresses along the Mesopotamian/Armenian border area, put the men “to the sword” and enslaved the women.¹⁸

13 Muḥammad bin Ismā‘īl al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḥārī*, ed. Muṣṭafa Dīb al-Buḡā (Damascus and Beirut: Dār Ibn Kaṭīr, 1993), 1037 [hadith no. 2664].

14 ‘Abdallā bin ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Samarqandī al-Durāmī, *Sunūn al-Durāmī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1987), 272 [hadith no. 2411].

15 Richard Bell, *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment: The Gunning Lectures* (Abingdon/London: Routledge/The Psychology Press, 1968), 65.

16 Andreas Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: 634–641* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1980), 106.

17 *Ancient Egypt and the Near East: An Illustrated History* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2010), 135; Charles Bucke, *Ruins of Ancient Cities*, vol. 2 (London: Thomas Tegg, 1840), 121; James Fraser, *Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia, From the Earliest Ages to the Present Time* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1860), 134.

18 Nina Garsoian, “The Arab Invasions and the Rise of the Bagratuni,” in Richard Hovannisian (Ed.), *Armenian People From Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 1 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan/St. Martin’s Press, 1st paperback ed., 2004), 125–126.

In 1822, tens of thousands of persons fell before Ottoman swords after a revolt in Χίος (Chios or Scio in English, from the Greek).¹⁹ In 1824, Daniel Webster declaimed in the House of Representatives of the United States Congress that:

The Ottoman power over [Greece], obtained originally by the sword, is constantly preserved by the same means. . . . [I]n the case of Greece, there are millions of Christian men . . . trampled into the very earth, century after century, by a pillaging, savage, relentless soldiery. Sir, the case is unique.²⁰

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed even more Ottoman Christians being felled by the sword or the firing of their neighborhoods. In 1860, a force of about 20,000 Muslims and Druze killed up to 12,000 Christians in Damascus, Syria.²¹ In 1876, reports reached Russia of up to 100,000 Bulgarians being massacred by Ottoman forces and irregular *bashi-bazouks*; possibly tens of thousands of Muslims were massacred in turn.²² The *Ittihad* (Union) newspaper in Turkey praised the massacres, opining that Islam is the “religion of the sword.”²³ The U.S. Ambassador to Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau, believed that the Young Turks developed a theory of nation murder due to losing Bulgaria after not putting all Bulgarians to the sword.²⁴ George Horton, U.S. consul-general in the Near East, opined that Christianity was “blotted out of vast areas of the earth’s surface by the sword, the club, by the ax and fire.”²⁵ In 1922, he described

19 Edward Upham, *History of the Ottoman Empire: From Its Establishment, Till the Year 1828*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Constable & Co., 1829), 361.

20 Daniel Webster, “The Revolution in Greece,” in Edward Everett (Ed.), *Works*, vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1853), 80.

21 Ferry de Goeij, *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism, 1783–1914* (Abingdon and London: Routledge, 2015), 51.

22 Barbara Jelavich, *Russia’s Balkan Entanglements, 1806–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1st paperback ed., 2004), 167–168. Estimates on the Bulgarian side range from 3,000 in Ottoman sources to 100,000 in Bulgarian sources. Bendor Grosvenor, “Britain’s ‘most isolationist Foreign Secretary’: The Fifteenth Earl and the Eastern Crisis 1876–1878,” in Geoffrey Hicks (Ed.), *Conservatism and British Foreign Policy, 1820–1920: The Derbys and their World* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 129–168, 146. British and American estimates of Bulgarian dead were 12,000–15,000. Richard Hall, “Bulgarian Horrors, 1876,” in Richard Hall (Ed.), *War in the Balkans: An Encyclopedic History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2014), 59.

23 Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 359.

24 Henry Morgenthau, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation* (London and New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), 19–21, <https://archive.org/details/armenianatrociti00toyn>.

25 George Horton, *The Blight of Asia: An Account of the Systematic Extermination of Christian Populations by Mohammedans and of the Culpability of Certain Great Powers; With the True Story of the Burning of Smyrna* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1926), chs. XXVIII, XXXIV.

the “policy of the Turkish nationalists” as “to exterminate and eliminate the entire Christian element in Turkey.”²⁶

Reliable authors writing on Islam see a connection between a sword and *jizya* (the poll tax):²⁷

It is admissible to accept poll tax from non-Muslims regardless of their [ethnic] affiliation, with one exception, namely Arabs who worship other gods or Arab apostates who may choose Islam or the sword. While Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and those who worship other gods, those who belong to other peoples [non-Arabs], may choose between Islam, *jizya* or the sword.²⁸

Such theories imply that an interruption in submission and taxation may result in death.

Probably one of the first and also the best-known rhyming poems extolling the role of sword as an instrument that brings glory to Islam and the Muslims was written by an Abbasid poet Abū Tammām (d. 846). It is regarded as the precursor of the neo-classical trend in the Arab poetry.²⁹ Its first verse states:

The sword is more true than the book,
Its cutting edge is what divides seriousness from sport.
The white of the blade, not the black of the page,
Its broadsides distinguish uncertainty and doubt.³⁰

26 Quoted in Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou, *American Accounts Documenting the Destruction of Smyrna by the Kemalist Turkish Forces: September 1922* (Athens: Caratzas, 2003), 110.

27 My translation from the original in Arabic.

28 Ğurġī Zaydān, تاريخ التمدن الإسلامي [Tārīḫ at-tamaddun al-islāmī] (History of Islamic Civilization), vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Arabic Collection Phase II, 1958), 229. Citing a seventeenth-century source, Racho Donef states that “the governor of Mardin gave the Shemsi community of the city the choice of either attending a mosque or the Armenian Church or be put to the sword. Many of them migrated to Turabdin, Tokat, Merzifon and elsewhere. At that time the Shemsi community was not counted among the Christians, so it was not obliged to pay the poll tax.” Racho Donef, *Assyrians Post-Nineveh: Identity, Fragmentation, Conflict and Survival (672 BC -1920). A Study of Assyrogenous Communities*. (Sydney, New South Wales: Tatavla Publishing, 2012), www.atour.com/history/1900/20101115a.html.

29 This is one from among a large number of poems written by both pre-Islamic authors and those of the age of Islam, which the students in Arab schools have to learn by heart and distinguish themselves in reciting them at feasts.

30 My translation from the original in Arabic. The astrologers did try to dissuade Caliph Al-Muṭaṣim from trying to conquer a Byzantine city called Amorium (Greek Amorion in Phrygia, today in Turkey), however the caliph was not convinced. The city was eventually captured in 838 and plundered. The majority of its inhabitants were slaughtered. The 42 dignitaries and military men taken captive resisted the demand they be converted to Islam for seven years. Having been given the choice: Islam or death, they unanimously chose death and therefore they were killed on March 6, 845. This event has passed down in the history of the Greek Orthodox Church. J.J. Norwich, *A Short History of Byzantium* (New York: Vintage, 1999), 137–138.

Kurds and Assyrians in Ottoman history

In 1829, Muhammad Pasha, Emir of Rawanduz (east of Mosul), also known as Kōr [the Blind], joined in an alliance the Emir of the Baḥtiyye tribe Sayf ad-Dīn. They merged their tribes to attack two Assyrian towns, Bēt Zabdāy (Āzaḥ) and Esfes, leaving some 300 massacred victims, among them some Yezidis. Twenty years later, in 1847, the incipient Kurdish nation under the leadership of the tyrant Badr Khān again attacked Āzaḥ and thrust farther east, bringing death and destruction to Tur Abdin. Similar atrocities also occurred in 1855, on this occasion at the hands of ʿIzz ad-Dīn ʿēr and Massūr Beg.³¹ Forty years later, in 1895, their scale was much greater and the principal aggressors were the Hamīdiyye regiments formed by Sultan ‘Abdulhamid II (1876–1909) in 1891 from Kurdish recruits. The Sultan claimed to occupy the position of *caliph*, the highest political and religious position in the Muslim world.³² Certainly, the most tragic crimes were perpetrated in the years 1914–1924 during which the policy of extermination was extended to all Christians, regardless of their ethnicity, leaving no stone unturned within the whole territory of Turkey in the hunt for them.

The Assyrian territory of Tur Abdin had inhabitants who spoke a dialect of the Aramaic language. Most Assyrians from that part of Turkey belonged to the western Assyrians (living west of the Tigris River) and were often mistakenly referred to in literature as “Jacobites.” They included Uniate Syrians (Catholics), who had converted to the western church as a result of proselytization by missionaries trained by the Vatican with French support.³³

31 Fragmentary information about this period can be found in the work by Ignātiyyos Afrem I Bēt Barsōm, *The History of Tūr ‘Abdin* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press 2004 [1924]), 175–181, which is a transcript of colophons of books kept in the churches and monasteries of Tur Abdin. Also compare William Wigram, *The Assyrians and their Neighbors* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2002 [1929]), 172.

32 They were an irregular cavalry based on the Kurdish clan system numbering at least 50,000 soldiers notorious for their ruthlessness. “Hamidiye,” in Michael Gunter (Ed.), *The A to Z of the Kurds* (Lanham, MD and Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, 2009), 62. These units were the principal perpetrators of the massacres of Christians, either under orders from or without any orders from the Ottoman authorities. Hannibal Travis, “‘Native Christians Massacred’: The Ottoman Genocide of the Assyrians during World War I,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 1, no. 3 (2006): 327–371, compared the tasks of this formation with those vested in those loyal to the ruling Arab *Janjaweed* forces in Khartoum, which for years have been following a similar genocide policy with respect to the native population in the Darfur region in western Sudan.

33 The report *Wspomnienia z Mezopotamii 1850–1860* [The Memories from Mesopotamia 1850–1860], which was published in the Polish monthly periodical *Missye katolickie* (1890: 176–180), betrayed the attitude of the Roman Catholic missionaries to the local Assyrians, in my translation from the Polish-language original:

From Bessebryna [Basebrin, Bsōrīno] we went to Azekh [Āzaḥ] situated three hours distant to the southeast. A few years ago this big village was ravaged by the Kurds who kidnapped all the women and children because the village took the side of Omar Pasha who declared war on the emir of the Kurds. Its inhabitants took an oath to convert to Catholicism if the prisoners-of-war were returned to them. Then the Rev. Riccadona received a decree from Rome ordering him to go to Azekh to settle the issue.

The region of Hakkari, lying farther east of Tur Abdin and inhabited by Eastern Assyrians (the “Nestorians”), had been completely taken over by the Kurds³⁴ as had most of the formerly Assyrian places in Tur Abdin.³⁵ Tur Abdin had among the highest concentrations of churches and monasteries per square kilometer in the world. Of the nearly 50 monasteries listed by Helga Anschutz (1985), currently only five monasteries are still functional due to the repeated massacres, attacks, and sequestrations of Christian property that have practically wiped out the intellectual life in this region. There were also institutions of higher education in Nisibis (Turkish: Nusaybin) and Urhoy (Turkish: Urfa). Most schools were destroyed, ransacked, and eventually closed down, both those run by the local authorities and those staffed by their western missionary counterparts. Newspapers and periodicals ceased publication (see further G. Yonan 1985, Y. Benjamin 1993, and A. BarAbraham 1995).

This period of history is commonly remembered as the *Seyfo*. The most devastating consequence of the *Seyfo* was an almost total depopulation of the region in the wake of the mass emigration of the Assyrian farmers who survived. Most of them went to Syria. In the 1960s, the most popular emigration destinations were Western Europe, America, and Australia. Currently, the whole region of Tur Abdin is inhabited by no more than 2,500 Assyrians. Most of them live in the towns of Midyat and Mardin, each the home to 65–120 Assyrian families.

References to *Seyfo* in Assyrian literature on genocide

The innocent victims of the *Seyfo* were murdered not only with firearms but also with swords, knives, *khanjars* (traditional Yemeni daggers), and other instruments of torture and killing. The fate of those sentenced to death by emaciation was even worse, as they were driven on foot along endless sand-strewn tracks or served as slave laborers in quarries or on road construction

He traveled with Mr. Bore, a member of the embassy in Constantinople and the latter Superior General of the Lazarists. Neither of them was competent to conduct negotiations to free the prisoners-of-war from Bederkhan-bey [the above-mentioned Badr Khān], the despot of Kurdistan and the great-grandson of the splendid Tamerlan to ensure a successful end to their endeavours. But the village postponed . . . the fulfilment of their promise. It seems, however that in the recent years some of its inhabitants have accepted Catholicism and the other part has accepted Protestantism, only the recalcitrant have remained Jacobites.

34 This occurred in 1924. Their tragic fate has been described in part in my article, ‘Losy Asyryjczyków [The Fate of the Assyrians],’ *Sprawy Narodowościowe – Seria Nowa* 2 (1993): 67–82.

35 One of a few works on the region issued in the Polish language is my study entitled “Asyryjczycy w Tūr ‘Abdinie między kurdyjskim młotem a tureckim mieczem [The Assyrians of Tūr ‘Abdin between the Kurdish Hammer and the Turkish Sword],” in I. Kabzińska-Stawarz and S. Szykiewicz (Eds.), *Konflikty etniczne. Źródła – Typy – Sposoby rozstrzygnięcia* (Warsaw: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 1996), 271–282.

till their last gasp. Some tried to escape and many fugitives sought shelter in mountain hideouts where they fell prey to wild animals.

Assyrians use three terms for the World War I-era genocide. First, they use the term *Seyfo*, for the sword of Islam or of the Ottomans. Second, they refer to a *firman*, or an official edict from a person in authority, in this case an Ottoman decree against the Christians. Third, they refer to *qaflat*, or the forming of caravans, deportation, and death by exile. Shabo Talay's review of the Assyrian sources on genocide, principally those written by authors living in Tur Abdin, emphasizes that the term *Seyfo* was the most widely used. As opposed to the two remaining terms used for the designated period, *Seyfo* undoubtedly encompasses both a wider and a deeper time dimension. The saying *u sayfo d-Mhammad* (the sword of Muhammad) as it is used by the Assyrians, repeated by those who survived the genocide and their children, confirms the relationship in their minds between the sword and Islam. According to Talay, *Seyfo* is therefore a term that can also be employed to give a warning about a calamity that might still happen.

Early works by Assyrian authors, predominantly from the ranks of the clergy writing about the genocide, were in the form of poetry. One of the oldest was written by the Rev. Yūhānon Sbīrīnōyo (died 1729), in which he describes the massacre in Tur Abdin in 1714, perpetrated under the leadership of the above-mentioned Kurdish emir Šams ad-Dīn. The fragment of his work which includes the word *Seyfo*, reads:

A madman appeared and bared his teeth.
He also honed and polished his sword.
He captured and tortured everyone he met.
And cut off their heads.³⁶

Another one, written in the form of a lament by the Rev. Gīwargis d-Bēt Zabdāy (Āzah) (died in 1847), refers to the havoc caused by hordes of other Kurdish *ghas*, namely Kōr from Rawanduz and Sayf ed-Dīn in 1835. It contains the following fragment:

What can I say about the atrocities
Perpetrated during the reign of the godless rulers [emirs]!
They put the men to the sword
And they captured over a thousand of them.³⁷

36 My translation from the original in Syriac.

37 My translation from the original in Syriac. Both texts were published in full in Julius Yesu Čiček, *Memrē de-al saifē da-sbaln mšihājē be-Turkājā men šāt 1714–1914 de-sīmīn be-jad ktübē sūrjājē de-Ṭūr abdi* [Poems of the Sword Years in 1714–1914, Suffered by the Christians in Turkey] (Glance and Losser: Bar Hebraeus Verlag, 1981), 1–7, 8–15. The title of this collection is *Sayfe*; it contains thirteen poems which also describe the events in the 1960s in, for example, Āzah and the way in which the Assyrians were worked like slaves on construction sites, building roads, railways, and bridges in different parts of Turkey. The book published by Jan Bēt-Šawō'e (2006: 291) is also entitled *Sayfo b Ṭurcabdin 1914–1915* [Sword in Ṭūr 'Abdin 1914–1915].

A priest, Yūhānon ʿAynwardōyo, authored another poem depicting the scale of massacres committed in 1895. In this poem, the word *Seyfo* appears often (Cicek 1981: 141–163).

In the year 2207 from the son of Philip the Greek,³⁸
 On the twentieth of October,
 A decree was issued by the Sultan, the Roman,³⁹
 To annihilate all the Christian people by the sword. . . .
 Emperor Titus ravaged Jerusalem and the whole surrounding area
 For having crucified Jesus Christ who is its Lord.
 However, never has there been such a sword as this in any other epoch
 And if I am not mistaken, one like it has never been referred to in
 books.⁴⁰

In the poem by Yausef bar Hammo Šāhīn, an eyewitness to the siege of Āzah by the Kurds and the Turks and the heroic defense of its inhabitants in the years 1914–1917, the expression *sword* appears in two segments:⁴¹

When they enslaved us by violence,
 They were mercilessly planning
 To slay all of us by the sword. . . .
 Having unsheathed [their] swords
 They sorely oppressed them.
 They led them before the horses.
 They had no pity for their plight.⁴²

In the manuscript of ʿBēdMšīho Neʿmān d-Qarabāš (1903–1983), the sword is a synonym for the genocide of both the Armenians and the Assyrians during the First World War. The author gives examples of people being robbed of their lives by the sword, and sometimes mentions the name of a perpetrator.

Yausef took the Gospel in his hands and began to read and he did not let it fall until he was struck down by the sword. . . .

The tyrant Ahmade agha Kačča jumped on the Assyrian priest Abrōhōm, cut off his head and tossed it into the town square. The

38 1895/1896, measured from the time of the son of Philip, namely Alexander the Great.

39 The reference to the Ottoman Sultan as a Roman is an allusion to the persecutions of Christian by the Romans.

40 My translation from the original in Syriac.

41 Jan Bēt-Šāwōʿe (Ed.). *Beth-Zabday Azech. Vad hānde 1915* (Norrköping, Sweden: Bokförlaget Azret Azech, 2009), 280, 285. Yausef bar Khammo Shahin is an author of another poem describing the circumstances in which the inhabitants of Esfes left their village. See further Čiček, *Dmo*, 91–96.

42 My translation from the original in Syriac.

Muslims who were there began to kick this head about the streets as if it were a ball [Siirt].⁴³

In 1953, the priest Ne^cmān Aydin wrote a long poem which is actually a continuation of an earlier one, also long and in the same meter written by Gallo Šābo (1875–1966). He describes the tragic fate of many Assyrian places in Tur Abdin during the First World War and thereafter. Below are two successive fragments.

The beautiful sounds in the churches died away.
 Thankful praise was stilled on the altars.
 The chaplains' lecterns calls them in to mourn.
 A sword burst in and cut short their services.
 Instead of hymns, prayers and worship
 A shining sword separated the faithful from their priests.
 Some they dispersed, others they killed, they perpetrated a massacre.
 Woe, brothers, depopulation and slavery are our plight.⁴⁴

The manuscript of Gibrāʾīl (Gabriel) Tūma Hendo concentrates mainly on describing the events to which he was an eyewitness in Āzah in the years 1914–1916. It also contains references to the fate of the Assyrians in other places. Its description of the massacre in a bad Arabic, corrected here, relates to events in Siirt and the surrounding villages:

On June 15 1915, a throng of displaced Muslims from the region of Wan appeared in Siirt. After their arrival, the governor ordered them to purge the city of all Christians without exception. The swords began to slash and they cut off heads in the markets, in the alleys and in homes. The earth heaved with blood and corpses. The same fate at the hands of the Kurds befell the inhabitants of the surrounding villages. After having collected the corpses from the homes and streets, the authorities began to confiscate all the assets and money which remained after the carnage, proclaiming that they would allocate them to the upkeep of the widows and children. Under this pretext they collected the widows and children in the town hall. They were divided into groups, stripped of their shoes and clothing and harried under the escort of Ġazīrat al-Boḥḥān (Gziro). There were [almost] 950 people.⁴⁵

43 Abed Mschiho Naʿman Qarabāsh, *Dmo zliho awkū nekesto d-^cōne da-mšīho* [*Shed Blood, or the Catastrophe of Christ's Lambs*] (Berlin: ADO – Section Europa, 1997), 149, 177. My translation from the original in Syriac.

44 Jūlīōs Ješu Čiček (Ed.), *Mēmre de-al sajjē da-sbaln mšīhājē be-Turkājā men šāt 1714–1914 de-sīmin be-jad ktübē sūrjājē de-Tūr abdīn* [*Poems of the Sword Years in 1714–1914, Suffered by the Christians in Turkey*] (Glance and Losser: Bar Hebraeus Verlag, 1981), 89–90. My translation from the original in Syriac.

45 Beṭ-Šawoce, *Beth-Zabday*, 93–173.

It should be emphasized that all the Assyrian authors who wrote about the years of the *Seyfo* mourn the fate of the Armenians as much as they do the fate of their compatriots. Hendo recorded an episode associated with the deportation of thousands of Armenians and their subsequent liquidation:

On September 20 1915, the Muslim [Turkish] government forcibly deported [almost] 10,000 handcuffed Christian [Armenian] families from the priory of Nabanukh under the pretext of resettling [them] in Mosul. On this day, out of this group, only about 14,000 individuals reached our Gziro Bohtān. The rest were slaughtered on the way by the soldiers, like a hawk tears sparrows to pieces.

On the 25th of September the soldiers brought them to the bank of the Tigris, the river of blood and sorrows. As they drifted away from Gziro Bohtān after half an hour's sail, they separated out every pretty woman and girl in order to sell them later. The rest they hacked to pieces with their swords. The earth reddened with their blood, whose streams flowed into the Tigris River to join the human flesh as fodder for the fish.⁴⁶

The Christians of Tur Abdin underwent a merciless pacification. The accounts from the time of the genocide, both oral and written in the form of diaries, often refer to scenes of carnage in which whole groups of people are beheaded at the water wells.⁴⁷

The legacy of *Seyfo* in literature and contemporary psychology

In conclusion, among the Assyrians, the *Seyfo* has become a symbol of mass killing, or a threat which is to be avoided at all costs. It has even been incorporated into the everyday language and is found in such sayings as: *Ātī sayfo b-qar'ayna* (We experienced a sword), *Mhalle sayfo ēbayna* (They have unleashed a sword against us), and *Nāfīlīna b-fēme dū sayfo* (We have become the food for the sword). *Seyfo* is a term which denotes intolerance, xenophobia, oppression, aggression, and hatred, regardless of the form these might take and the manner in which they might be executed. Each threat (and these still abound today!) directed against an Assyrian Christian who is a native of Tur Abdin is a reminder of the stories he has heard of the massacres of the First World War and of earlier times.

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46 Ibid., 124, 150–151.

47 This chapter's author's grandfather, a genocide survivor, witnessed many scenes in which people were beheaded with a sword or a dagger. The victims themselves often asked the executioners to kill them by a single blow to the nape of the neck and to be spared the sight of the fatal strike.

- Turkish Sword],” in I. Kabzińska-Stawarz and S. Szykiewicz (Eds.), *Konflikty etniczne. Źródła – Typy – Sposoby rozstrzygnięcia* (Warsaw: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 1996).
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3 The atrocities against the Assyrians in 1915

A legal perspective

Sara Demir

Memory is the key word. To remember is to create links between past and present, between past and future. To remember is to affirm man's faith in humanity and to convey meaning on our fleeting endeavors. The aim of memory is to restore its dignity to justice.¹

Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire

The Assyrian presence in Anatolia goes back to ancient times, and Assyrians administered Christian bishoprics in there during the first centuries AD.² Diyarbakir, the site of much of the mass violence between 1895 and 1925, was an Assyrian province in ancient times.³

With the coming of Christianity, after the fall of ancient Assyria (612 BC) and Babylon (539 BC) and loss of political power, Assyrians were among the first groups that converted as a community to Christianity.⁴ The Assyrian tradition is that the Apostle Peter wrote his first letter from Babylon, often viewed as a code word for Rome in the western church.⁵ Many ancient Christian texts indicate that the Apostle Thomas preached in what was then Parthia.⁶

1 Caroline Fournet, *The Crime of Destruction and the Law of Genocide* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), xxxiii, citing Elie Wiesel, *From the Kingdom of Memory* (New York: Schocken Books, 1990), 194.

2 Klaas Veenhof, "In Accordance with the Words of the Stele': Evidence for Old Assyrian Legislation," *Chicago Kent Law Review* 70 (1995): 1717–1735. For other sources, see Chapter 1.

3 William Ricketts Cooper, *An Archaic Dictionary* (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1876), 319; cf. Percy M. Sykes, *A History of Persia* (London: Macmillan, 3d ed. 1930), 116; George Smith, *The Assyrian Eponym Canon* (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1875), 67.

4 David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 2.

5 Abraham Yohannan, *Death of a Nation: Or, the Ever Persecuted Nestorians or Assyrian Christians* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 32.

6 Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 15.

The Assyrians belong to three main churches: the Assyrian Church of the East (formed by a schism in 424 or 431 AD),⁷ the Syrian Orthodox Church (formed by a schism in 451 or 543 AD),⁸ and the Chaldean Catholic Church of Babylon (formed by a schism in 1553 AD).⁹ Both the Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox can trace themselves to Mar Addai and the conversion of Edessa before 46 AD.¹⁰ The bishops of Rome and Alexandria defeated those of Antioch, Constantinople, and Persia at the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD.¹¹ The eastern bishops then organized themselves under the archbishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, under the jurisdiction of the Persian shahs.¹² Opposed to these easternizing developments, an alternative church emerged in the early sixth century A.D., and formalized its bishoprics at a synod in Antioch in 629 AD.¹³ At an event in 1553 A.D., the former monk of the Church of the East established a Chaldean church with bishoprics in Gezira, Seert, and Hassankef.¹⁴ The Roman Catholic Church named him “Patriarch of the Assyrians in Muzal.”¹⁵ More fully, it made him patriarch

7 Formally, the independence of the Church of the East seems to have been settled by a synod in 424 AD, which built on a synod of 410 and was reaffirmed in 544. Baumer, *Church of the East*, 74–75, 78, 81; W.C. Emhardt and G. Lamsa, *The Oldest Christian People: A Brief Account of the History and Traditions of the Assyrian People and the Fateful History of the Nestorian Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), 48; Mar Aprem Mookan, *The History of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Twentieth Century* (Kerala, India: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 2000), 26–29. Others write that (Assyrian) Church of the East split from the Catholic/Orthodox Church (the undivided church prior to the East-West schism of 1054) as a result of the Nestorian schism in 431. Emhardt and Lamsa, *The Oldest Christian People*, 50–56; Adrian Fortescue, “Eastern Churches,” in Charles Herbermann, Edward Pace, Thomas Shahan, Conde Pallen, and John Wynne (Eds.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1909), 230, 232; Andrew Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), xii–xiii.

8 The Syrian Orthodox Church, although some of its records state that it was established by St. Peter in Antioch in 34 AD. *Syriac Orthodox Church, A Brief Overview – Syriac Orthodox Resources* (May 9, 2004), <http://sor.cua.edu/Introl>.

9 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 3.

10 Baumer, *Church of the East*, 15. Mar Addai is also known as Mor Aday and Saint Thaddeus. According to church historian Eusebius, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, Saint Thomas, dispatched one of the seventy disciples, Addai or Thaddeus, to King Abgar of Edessa, who, upon seeing a vision, listening to Addai, and being healed of an illness, commanded his subjects to attend to Christian preaching. Eusebius, *Church History*, bk. I, ch. 13, 1–5, 10–11, 17–20, in Arthur McGiffert, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Kevin Knight (Eds.), *From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, vol. 1 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1890), www.newadvent.org/fathers/250101.htm.

11 Baumer, *Church of the East*, 47–49.

12 *Ibid.*, 73–75. Ctesiphon is currently located in Baghdad governorate, Republic of Iraq.

13 Baumer, *Church of the East*, 15.

14 Mookan, *The History*, 32–33.

15 *Quoted in* Jacob Kollaparambil, *The Babylonian Origin of the Southists among the St. Thomas Christians* (Rome: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, 1992), 88.

of “eastern Assyria (*Assyriæ Orientalis*),” Mosul in Syria (*Muzal in Syria Orientali*), the island of the Tigris (*insulæ Tigris*), and other cities in eastern lands.¹⁶ These regions of Gziro/Jazirah/Cizre, Seert/Sa’irt, and Hesno-d Kifo/Hassankef were targeted during *Seyfo*.¹⁷

Various Assyrian communities speak different dialects of the Assyrian Neo-Aramaic language.¹⁸ Despite their differences, they often identify themselves as Assyrians.¹⁹

In the Ottoman Empire, the community was subdivided into millets. A millet was a semiautonomous religious community and its members had to follow the law of their religious group.²⁰ The leader of the millet represented their people to the government. Each church belonging to the Assyrian people was part of a millet and was led by a patriarch.²¹ Among the Church of the East Assyrians, an informal millet system was in effect whereby the patriarch governed like a feudal lord of the Scottish highlands, using a hereditary principle of succession to ensure national continuity.²² The Ottomans reportedly created the Chaldean millet in 1844–1846.²³ The Syrian Orthodox or *Sûryani Kadim* millet received recognition in about

16 Caesaris Baronii, *Annales ecclesiastici demuo excusi* (Paris: Bloud et Barral, Bibliopolas, 1878), 489. Moreover, a bull signed by Pope Gregory XII in 1580 referred to the patriarch for Mosul in eastern Assyria, and for its nation (*Muzal in Assyria orientali*). Quoted in Xavier Koodapuzha, *Faith and Communion of the Indian Church of the Saint Thomas Christians* (Kerala, India: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, India, 1982), 98. See also *ibid.*, 58.

17 E.g., Israel Audo, *Maktbonutho cal Rdufye da Kristiyone d Marde, w d Amid, w d Sacêrd, w da Gziro w da Nsibin d bi sato 1915* (Jönköping, Sweden: Ashurbanipal Bokförlaget, 2004); Gaunt, *Massacres*, 224, 227–230, 250–256. For a map of these towns, see Nicholas Aude, Nineb Lamassu, and Nicholas al-Jeelu, *Modern Aramaic (Assyrian/Syriac) Dictionary & Phrasebook* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 2007), 300.

18 Parpola, “Assyrian Identity,” 4–9.

19 *Ibid.*, 11. See also, Sargon Donabed, *Remnants of Heroes: The Assyrian Experience* (Chicago: Assyrian Academic Society Press, 2003), 22–34; Sargon Donabed, “Rethinking Nationalism and an Appellative Conundrum: Historiography and Politics in Iraq,” *National Identities* 4, no. 2 (2012): 14, 41, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2089774; Sargon Donabed and Shamiran Mako, “Ethno-cultural and Religious Identity of Syrian Orthodox Christians,” *Chronos: Revue d’Histoire de l’Université de Balamand* 19 (2009): 71–113, 77–81, 109, 112; Sargon Donabed and Ninos Donabed, *Assyrians of Eastern Massachusetts* (Boston: Arcadia, 2006), 38, 64, 79–80, 84, 104; Heleen Murre-van den Berg, “Chaldeans and Assyrians: The Church of the East in the Ottoman Period,” in Erica Hunter (Ed.), *The Christian Heritage of Iraq* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 160–161. See also Chapter 10 in this volume, by Aryo Makko.

20 Gerrit Steunebrink, “Soevereiniteit, nationale staat en de islam,” *Ethische Perspectieven* 7, no. 2 (2007): 445.

21 *Ibid.*, 446. The churches included the Syriac Orthodox, Chaldean, Syrian Catholic, and (Assyrian) Church of the East.

22 Sir H. Luke, *The Making of Modern Turkey: From Byzantium to Angora* (New York: Macmillan, 1936), 8; Sir H. Luke, *Mosul and Its Minorities* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, reprint ed., 2009), 96–99.

23 Wigram, *The Assyrians*, 162; see also, Joseph, *Modern Assyrians*, 59–60.

1882.²⁴ For a long time the Syrian Orthodox were represented by the Armenian patriarch, whereby they were often classified as Armenians.²⁵ By creating the millet administration, the Ottoman Empire tolerated Christians, Jews, and other monotheists as second-class citizens because they were “people of the book.”²⁶ However, the system did not protect Assyrians from actions such as conversion to Islam, economic and social injuries, and physical harassment.²⁷

The first massacres against the Assyrians date from the mid-nineteenth century in upper Mesopotamia.²⁸ In the 1840s, the Kurdish Amir Badr Khan Bey gave the order to attack the Assyrian villages with the intention of killing the Assyrians and destroying or occupying all of their towns and villages.²⁹ By the calling up of the Muslim population in the area, 10,000 Assyrians were killed and the population of half a dozen Assyrian villages was murdered.³⁰ Women and children who survived were the victims of kidnapping and enslavement.³¹

The mother of the patriarch of the Church of the East, Mar Shimun, was captured and they cut her body into two parts and threw her into the river Zab. “Go and carry to your accursed son the intelligence that the same fate awaits him,” they exclaimed.³²

The massacres of 1895–1896 were carried out by Hamidiye. Hamidiye were troops created by the Ottoman Sultan ‘Abdulhamid II and contained Kurdish cavalry.³³ Their existence is due to the chaos in the Empire at the end of the nineteenth century, and the growing danger of an occupation of western Armenia or even Constantinople or the Black Sea coast by the Russians.³⁴ In fact, the Kurdish tribes were occasionally disobeying the government, and due to the fear of Russian influence on the Ottoman east, the government decided to deploy the Kurdish tribal chiefs.

24 Naures Atto, *Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora: Identity Discourses among the Assyrian/Syriac Elites in the European Diaspora* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011), 86; Yūsuf Malik, *The British Betrayal of the Assyrians* (Warren, NJ: The Kimball Press, 1935), 112.

25 Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (Eds.), *Oosterse Christenen Binnen de Wereld van de Islam* (Kampen: Kok, Open Theologisch Onderwijs, 1997), 158.

26 People of the book are Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

27 Baumer, *Church of the East*, 256, 258. See also, Assyrian Iraqi Documents Project, *Who Are Assyrians*, zindamagazine.com (2003), https://web.archive.org/web/20040204144402/www.zindamagazine.com/iraqi_documents/whoareassyrians.html; Luke, *Mosul*, 94–96; Wigram, *The Assyrians*, 171–175.

28 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 329.

29 Baumer, *Church of the East*, 256; Yohannan, *Death of a Nation*, 111–112.

30 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 329; Wigram, *The Assyrians*, 172–173; Yohannan, *Death of a Nation*, 111–112.

31 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 329; Yohannan, *Death of a Nation*, 111–112.

32 Yohannan, *Death of a Nation*, 111–112.

33 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 329.

34 E.g., Geoff Hicks, John Charmley, and Bendor Grosvenor (Eds.), *Documents on Conservative Foreign Policy, 1852–1878* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 320.

Initially, the Hamidiye were mobilized in vulnerable places where Russian attacks could be expected. However, this was not the case in upper Mesopotamia, but the Hamidiye settled there anyway.³⁵ The Ottoman Empire did not intervene because it could not afford losing the tribes' loyalty and used the Hamidiye for extorting taxes from Christian villages.³⁶

In upper Mesopotamia, thousands of Christians were massacred without distinction. This resulted in mass extermination of Assyrians and Armenians and the ravaging of towns and villages.³⁷ The Sultan was aware of these violations against the Christians and even after the threat of British and Russian intervention the Sultan did not "implement reforms to protect minorities."³⁸

The Ottoman Empire and the Young Turks

Sultan 'Abdulhamid II renewed the full power of the caliphate in 1878 by dissolving parliament and setting the constitution aside. He considered himself as the main defender of Islam worldwide. Partially as a reaction to this, the Young Turks formed an opposition movement. The Young Turks seemed to be young, liberal, and progressive, and proclaimed allegiance to the parliamentary system that was undermined by this sultan. On paper, their plan was to create a secular state which would lead to harmonious relations among all religious groups. In 1899, the Young Turks established the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and very soon, the CUP was dominated by militarists such as Enver Pasha, Talât Pasha, and Djemal Pasha.³⁹

Due to several wars, the Ottoman Empire had been weakened and had lost territories.⁴⁰ The CUP wanted to revive its glorious past while also implementing Western ideas of nationalism that underlined the plan for a "homogenous nation with one language and one religion."⁴¹ A combination of these factors led to the formation of a policy of one common culture, language, and religion.⁴²

The power of the CUP grew. In the elections of 1912, they won an overwhelming majority whereby the Young Turks controlled the Ottoman government and legal system.⁴³ They formed a military dictatorship directed by

35 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 35.

36 Ibid.

37 Travis, "Native Christians Massacred," 329.

38 Ibid., 330.

39 In an English version of the original, *Ittihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*.

40 For example, in Crimean War, the Balkan Wars, etc.

41 Ninos Warda, *Seyfo; The Assyrian Genocide in International Law* (London: Firodil Publishing House, 2005), 23.

42 Taner Akçam, *De Armeense genocide; een reconstructive* (Nieuw Amsterdam: Uitgevers, 2007), 90; Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006).

43 Travis, "Native Christians Massacred," 330.

three masters,⁴⁴ Ahmet Djemal Pasha (minister of the navy),⁴⁵ Mehmet Talât Pasha (minister of internal affairs),⁴⁶ and Ismail Enver Pasha⁴⁷ (minister of war).⁴⁸

After the end of the two Balkan wars in 1913, the CUP officially made unification their basic policy, as a reaction to its large territorial losses.⁴⁹ To gain power again, to propagandize Turkish nationalism,⁵⁰ and to protect their party from reprisals, the Young Turks staged another coup on January 23, 1913.⁵¹ Propaganda, under the lead of Talât, included student demonstrations against the loss of territory, publications encouraging war with the West, and poems aimed at creating and stimulating a passion for war in the population.⁵² Refugees who fled from Christian rule in the Balkans were focused on revenge, which raised tensions even more.⁵³

After the CUP came to power, its leaders needed to implement their ideology of Turkish nationalism in a state policy with the central core being nationalistic-economic revival.⁵⁴ While in 1908 the constitutional monarch was tending towards freedom of religion and equal rights for all citizens, this changed after the coup in 1913, under the influence of Gökalp.⁵⁵ He argued that culturally diverse groups could not inhabit the same home country.⁵⁶

Enver Pasha, Minister of War, started to reorganize the Special Organization and the army into forces that could deal with the internal enemy.⁵⁷

44 “*Pasha*” is an honorary title analogous to the British title Lord.

45 Djemal Pasha was born on 6 May 1872 in Istanbul, joined the CUP as a military officer, and became a leader of the CUP. “Leader in Turk Revolt Killed,” *The Spokesman-Review* (Jan. 15, 1922), 12.

46 Born in 1874 in Edirne, in Ottoman Thrace, Talât became the Ottoman minister of the interior in 1909, influenced the Ottomans to wage war on Russia in October 1914, and became grand vizier of the empire in 1917. *The European Powers in the First World War: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Spencer C. Tucker (London: Taylor & Francis, 1999), 679.

47 Enver Pasha was born on November 22, 1881 in Constantinople and organized the Young Turk revolution in 1908, secured Young Turk control over the Ottoman Empire in 1912, and became minister of war in 1914. He fled the empire after his armies’ defeat in 1918. Tucker (Ed.), *The European Powers*, 241.

48 Travis, ““Native Christians Massacred,”” 331.

49 Akçam, *Armeense Genocide*, 90–95.

50 Morgenthau, *Story*, 14.

51 Akçam, *Armeense Genocide*, 93.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., 95.

54 Ibid., 96.

55 “Ziya Gökalp (born Mehmed Ziya; March 23, 1876, Diyarbakir – October 25, 1924, Istanbul) was a sociologist, poet, political writer, and a seminal advocate of Turkish nationalism. He advocated a Turkification of the Ottoman Empire, by imposing the Turkish language and culture onto all the citizenry. His thought, which popularized Pan-Turkism and Turanism, has been described as a ‘cult of nationalism and modernization’.” Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 97.

56 Akçam, *Armeense Genocide*, 99.

57 Or in the original, “*Teskilat-i Mahsusa*”.

The only way to save the position of the Empire was to accomplish unity between the Turkish and Islamic worlds, along with confronting the non-Muslims who did not support the country, according to Enver's speech on February 23, 1914.⁵⁸ He started with Greek deportations in Anatolia carried out by the Special Organization.⁵⁹ Later, Turkish officers claimed that these actions were justified due to the deportations of Muslims in the Balkan area during the Balkan Wars. The historian Arnold Toynbee mentioned a number of around 400,000 Muslims deported to the Ottoman Empire over some decades, as did Turkish sources.⁶⁰

Declaration of *Jihad*

On August 22, 1914, the Turkish governor of Van asked Mar Benjamin Shimun, the patriarch of the Hakkari Assyrians, to support the Ottomans in their war against Russia. This was three months before the Ottomans officially participated in the war in late October 1914, on the side of the Central Powers, the German and Austro-Hungarian empires. Mar Shimun ordered the Assyrians to obey the Ottoman government in exchange for the release of the Assyrian prisoners and permission to establish Assyrian schools.⁶¹

By proclaiming a *jihad* (holy war), two weeks after the Allied Powers declared war on the Ottoman Empire on November 4, 1914, Ottomans broke that vow without the knowledge of Mar Shimun and the violations against Assyrians begun in the same month.⁶² The Assyrian leadership of the Hakkari Assyrians gathered under Mar Shimun Benjamin and, in a desperate attempt to save themselves, declared war on Turkey on May 10, 1915, joining the allies.⁶³ Assyrians from the Tur Abdin region had not declared war in this way.

The *jihad* declared by Sultan Mehmed V⁶⁴ on November 12, 1914 appealed to the Muslim population of the Allied Powers' colonies "to join in a common struggle with the Ottoman Empire."⁶⁵ This declaration was signed by Ottoman ministers and was addressed to the army and navy, directing them to participate in the *jihad*.⁶⁶ Two days later a *fatwa*⁶⁷ issued by the

58 Akçam, *Armeense Genocide*, 111.

59 Ibid., 112.

60 Ibid., 118.

61 K.P. Matfiyef, *Asurlar Modern Çağda Asur Sorun* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1996), 98.

62 The Principal Allied Powers were Great Britain, France, and Russia.

63 Matfiyef, *Asurlar*, 98.

64 Sultan Mehmed V (1844–1918) served as Sultan of the Ottoman Empire From 1909 until 1918.

65 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 62.

66 Gabriele Yonan, "Holy War Made in Germany," *Presentation to the Assyrians after Assyria Conference* (July 2, 2000), www.nineveh.com/Holy%20War%20Made%20in%20Germany.html.

67 A *fatwa* or *fetva* is a religious edict or a ruling on Islamic law issued by an Islamic scholar.

seyhülislam (Sheikh ul-Islam) proclaimed a *jihad* “against the enemies of Islam, who have proven their hostility by their attacks on the Caliphate.”⁶⁸ Thenceforth actions followed like posting the proclamation on the courthouse door of Mardin⁶⁹ and the march through Istanbul on 15th of March organized by the CUP to gain more people’s support.⁷⁰ The declarations of *Jihad* “incited wrath toward Christian minorities in the Ottoman lands” and this hostility formed the foundation for the atrocities committed in a later stage.⁷¹

Even the American ambassador Henry Morgenthau warned the German Ambassador Baron Hans von Wangenheim that with the outbreak of the war, the Ottomans would slaughter the Armenians in Anatolia.⁷² Wangenheim responded that as long as Britain would not attack any Ottoman territory, no problems would occur. There were no guarantees on this matter.⁷³

Crimes against Assyrians during the war

In 1916, Viscount James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, at the behest of the British Government, prepared a narrative of the destruction of the “Christian population of Asiatic Turkey.”⁷⁴ The Syrian Orthodox lived in the regions of Northern Mesopotamia and Central Anatolia, including Tur Abdin, sometimes inhabiting cities such as Diyarbakir and Mardin. The Nestorians (Assyrian Church of the East) and Chaldeans (Catholics) lived in the Hakkari mountains and in western Iran, in a region called Urmia.⁷⁵ Each of the groups has its own leader, a patriarch.

In the Ottoman Empire, there was no office charged to keep a count of the number of Christians, although estimates were made at varying intervals. Due to the sensitive international political implications, observers made efforts to gauge the size and percentage of the non-Muslim populations.⁷⁶ An estimate of the Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire on the eve of the war was put at 485,000, presented at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. This relates mostly to the regions of Tur Abdin, Urmia, and Hakkari.⁷⁷

68 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 331.

69 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 62.

70 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 331.

71 Richard Kloian, *The Armenian Genocide: News Accounts From the American Press: 1915–1922* (Richmond, CA: Heritage Publishing, 2005), xiii; Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 331.

72 Henry Morgenthau (1856–1946) was the American ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during the war.

73 Akçam, *Armeense genocide*, 137.

74 Viscount James Bryce, “Letter From Viscount Bryce to Viscount Grey of Falldon,” in James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee (Eds.), *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1916: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falldon* (London: H.M.S.O., 2000), xvi.

75 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 2–9; Teule, *Christenen*, 300.

76 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 18.

77 Ibid.

Assyrians, followers of the Church of the East, made up 37% of the Hakkari population and 95% of them lived in a special Assyrian enclave. A mid-range estimate is 75,000 men and women, according to a major-general of the Russian general staff.⁷⁸ The Assyrian patriarch Mar Shimun lived in the same area of the Assyrians in an isolated residence “Kochanes” or “Qudshanis.”⁷⁹ The patriarch always carried the name Shimun and is a descendant of the Shimun dynasty, in which at the time of the war, a deceased patriarch was always followed by a nephew. In 1915, the leader of this church was Mar Benjamin Shimun.⁸⁰ The patriarch was the religious and often the secular leader of hundreds of villages and hamlets, mainly in Hakkari and Urmia.⁸¹

On October 26, 1914, the first conflicts arose between the Ottomans and Assyrians by a decree of Talât Pasha to deport the Nestorians of the Hakkari mountains to Konia and Ankara, this with the aim of dissolving their dominant position in one specific area.⁸² Also, the Turks and their Kurdish allies “destroyed many Christian villages and plundered the crops and goods there, condemning the Christian population to mass starvation.”⁸³ In forty villages, only seventeen survivors remained.⁸⁴

By the summer of 1915, the Assyrians lost their homelands in the Hakkari region to Ottoman and Kurdish forces. Kurds attacked villages, murdered men, enslaved women and children, accommodating some in Muslim families, and then left behind the ravaged villages.⁸⁵ The Assyrians that could escape the violations fled under horrible circumstances to Urmia.⁸⁶ The Assyrians lost more than the half of their population and the Apostolic Church of the East was almost entirely eradicated.⁸⁷ The Earl of Listowel stated in his speech in the House of Lords that the Assyrians “lost . . . about two-thirds of their total number.”⁸⁸ The one-third of the population that survived the atrocities was not allowed to return to the Hakkari mountains.

Between January and May 1915, the Turks occupied the Urmia region, where Assyrians (Nestorians and Chaldeans) lived, often as farmers. The last Ottomans left a few days before the Russians returned on May 24,

78 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 125.

79 Teule, *Christenen*, 301.

80 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 125.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 333; Paul Shimmon, “Urmia, Salmas, and Hakkari,” in Bryce and Toynbee (Eds.), *Treatment of Armenians*, 164–171, 577–586.

84 Ibid.

85 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 334, citing Johannes Lepsius, *Deutschland und Armenien 1914–1918: Sammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke* (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919).

86 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 334.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid.

1915. The Russians stayed until the revolution broke out in 1917, which led to a new Ottoman invasion and the cruelties started again.⁸⁹

After the Ottoman-Russian war declaration, Russia closed the Turkish consulates at Urmia, Tabriz, and Khoi and expelled part of the Muslim population from the villages near Urmia. Some Christians received weapons from the Russian authorities. The Turks expelled Christians from the Turkish regions and these refugees settled in the empty villages which first “belonged” to Muslims.⁹⁰ During the occupation there was no secure route to Urmia.⁹¹

With the Russian evacuation in January 1915, the Christians fled with the Russians, because they were in peril. The decision to leave was made in a short period in the heart of the winter which led to the death of many people such as the elderly and young children. Refugees from the Turkish regions between Khoi and Van joined them in the flight towards the villages of Trans-Caucasia in Russia. There the Christians were exposed to diseases and epidemics which led to many deaths as well.⁹² Many perished in indescribable circumstances.⁹³ As one account compiled by Bryce and Toynbee put it:

On the edge of the Salmas plain multitudes could find no lodging and had to sleep in the snow. Some children were carried off by wolves, and many more died before morning. And then the march of those days! Up before daylight, struggling in the snow and slush and darkness to find and keep to the road through the mountain passes, hurrying on ever, knowing that at the end of the day only those who first arrived could be sure of finding shelter for the next night; parents becoming separated from each other and from their children in the darkness or in the mass of hurrying people, unable to find them again, but hoping that they might meet at the end of the day; people throwing away the quilts or other necessary bedding they had brought because physically unable to carry them; the road strewn with abandoned goods; the weak and sick falling by the wayside, many never to rise again; men become as beasts in the common struggle just to live. At night many would arrive long after dark at the appointed stopping place only to find every caravanse-rai and lodging so full that they would be forced to spend the night out of doors. . . . The fugitives have many terrible tales to tell.⁹⁴

89 Bryce and Toynbee (Eds.), *Treatment*, 100–207, 587–588.

90 *Ibid.*

91 *Ibid.*, 114–115, 119, 197, 587–588.

92 Labaree, “First Exodus from Urmia,” 116; Medical Department at Urmia, “Urmia,” in Bryce and Toynbee (Eds.), *Treatment*, 161–162; “Second Exodus from Urmia,” in *ibid.*, 184; Shedd, “Urmia,” 102–104; Shimmon, “Urmia, Salmas, and Hakkari,” in *ibid.*, 166; “Urmia During the Turco-Kurdish Occupation,” in *ibid.*, 130, 132.

93 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 106–108.

94 F.N. Jessup, “Tabriz,” in Bryce and Toynbee (Eds.), 114–115.

The refugees, as well as the Assyrians as the Armenians, were being taken care of by wealthy Armenians. Without their help the outcome would have been even more disastrous.⁹⁵

Approximately 25,000 Christians, mostly Armenians and Assyrians, stayed behind in Urmia. Many died as martyrs to the faith. Kurds were pouring into the plain and local villagers were guilty of looting villages and killing and robbing men and women. Some refugees also found safety with local Muslims or with men of a higher rank.⁹⁶ The Christians who defended themselves with weapons and those who gave up their arms to avoid any conflict suffered the same fate. They were massacred. The ones that could escape fled to the mission compounds. The American Presbyterian Mission initially sheltered around 17,000 Christians and the French Roman Catholic Mission around 3,000. Under foreign flags the people were safe from massacres for a time. The villages suffered plunder and destruction, and everything with any value was carried away or was destroyed. Only two villages escaped the atrocities due to the efforts of the Persian governor.⁹⁷

The Ottoman government not only failed in the protection of the Christian people of the Urmia region, but the worst killings and robberies were under the government's official orders. "One hundred and seventy men thus massacred were buried by the American missionaries, their bodies lying in heaps where they had been shot down and stabbed, tied together and led out to be murdered by Turkish agents."⁹⁸ There were various causes for the Turkish acts; one of them is the jealousy of the greater prosperity of the Christian population, but also the political animosity, race hatred, and religious fanaticism, which were inflamed by the Young Turks.⁹⁹

On March 10, 1915, the Russian consul Pavel Vvedenski witnessed the actions of the Ottomans. The area was full of Christian bodies, severely mutilated and decapitated, and entire villages were empty.¹⁰⁰ The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Persia protested on March 5 to the Ottoman ambassador in Teheran about the cruelties occurring in Urmia. He stated that:

Acts of violence *committed by your soldiers*, who in the course of battle have pillaged many villages, torched many others, and reduced all of the inhabitants to a state of misery. The violence is most noted in the areas where there are many villages inhabited by Christians, where the population has been violated and mercilessly massacred.¹⁰¹

95 Ibid., 105.

96 Shedd, "Urmia," 102–103.

97 Ibid., 102–104.

98 Ibid., 102–103.

99 Ibid., 103.

100 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 81.

101 Ibid., 82 (emphasis added).

As awful and disastrous as the road to freedom was, the possibility to survive was better than staying in Urmia and casting oneself to the mercies of the Kurds and Turks.¹⁰² The Urmia region experienced “the outraging of hundreds of women and girls of every age—from eight or nine years to old age,” with 200 “girls and women carried off into captivity,” indefinitely.¹⁰³

After the assassination of the Mar Shimun in March 1918, the Assyrians were left demoralized and without an effective leader, so that the ultimate defeat of the resistance did not take very long after that. On June 21, 1918, Assyrians were defeated by the Turks and Kurds, which led to a panic within the Assyrian population that remained in Urmia. During those events, thousands were killed by the orders of Ismael Simko, the same Kurd who killed Mar Shimun Benjamin.¹⁰⁴

Ottoman massacres of the Assyrians of Tur Abdin

Tur Abdin, the “mountain of the servants of God,” is the area in the south-east of present-day Turkey. It borders on Syria and 50 km further east is the Iraqi border. It has been the center for Christians such as the Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholics.

The local politicians, such as the military doctor Reshid Bey, a member of CUP, considered all Christians rebels and started to eradicate Christians without any discrimination among them, fully a month before any written order from Constantinople arrived to do this. In the cities and large towns the first targets were the Armenians followed up by the Assyrian Catholics, Assyrian Protestants, and finally the Assyrians of the Syrian Orthodox Church.¹⁰⁵

The Assyrians of Tur Abdin were simple farmers, in the main, and lacked the leadership of a patriarch who could develop a strategy for defense. Generally, there was no prior opposition towards the Ottoman state nor were there any agreements with the Allied Powers.¹⁰⁶ Assyrians from Tur Abdin relied on local villagers as defenders. In the town of Aynwardo, for example, they succeeded in offering resistance. For that reason many Assyrians from surrounding villages found refuge there.¹⁰⁷

102 Shedd, “Urmia,” in Bryce and Toynbee (Eds.), *Treatment*, 103; Labaree, “First Exodus from Urmia,” in Bryce and Toynbee (Eds.), *Treatment*, 105.

103 Shedd, “Urmia,” in Bryce and Toynbee (Eds.), *Treatment*, 103.

104 Baumer, *The Church of the East*, 263; Hannibal Travis, “The Assyrian Genocide: A Tale of Oblivion and Denial,” in Rene Lemarchand (Ed.), *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial, and Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 127; see also, William M. Warda, “The Last Assyrians in Urmia during the World War One Massacres,” *Christians of Iraq Blog* (Jan. 2005), www.christiansofiraq.com/behind.html.

105 Gaunt, *Treatment*, 197–201.

106 Teule, *Christenen*, 303.

107 *Ibid.*, 307.

In 1914, approximately 347 Assyrian villages existed in Diyarbakir, Urfa, and Tur Abdin, with a population of 133,000.¹⁰⁸ According to Jacques Rhétoré, about 118,000 Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholic deaths occurred in the Diyarbakir and Mardin areas, along with 17,000 Assyro-Chaldeans (about 89% in that case).¹⁰⁹ Nearly 8,000 homes in the districts of Baz, Jilu, Tkhuma, and Upper Tiyari in the Hakkari mountains were emptied of their inhabitants, and about 40,000 Chaldean and Church of the East Christians were killed in this first phase.¹¹⁰

Joseph (Jean) Naayem gathered accounts of the genocide shortly after the war, publishing some in a book. An Assyrian woman interviewed in Aleppo reported that Turkish troops and irregular “butcher” brigades systematically killed the Christians of Bitlis and Seert starting in June 1915.¹¹¹ Another woman from the same general area described the following course of events:

The Government had enrolled from among the Moslem population the famous corps known as Tchettas. . . .

The hundred Tchettas who accompanied each convoy included brigands and deserters who had come out from their hiding places to take service in these regiments of cut-throats. Each Tchetta wore a soldier's uniform and carried a sword. . . .

After killing the unfortunate Christians the Tchettas pulled the bodies one upon another, cast them into ditches, and piled earth in on top of them. . . .

They killed all male children of from twelve to fifteen years of age who remained in the town, as well as any men whom they discovered hiding. . . .

Our conductors led us, poor defenceless women, along the country roads with every possible cruelty. They thrashed us with whips, and many died victims to their barbarity. The road was strewn with the decomposing bodies of women and children who had preceded us. We wept unceasingly because of our ill treatment at the hands of the soldiers, our hunger and thirst, and the sight of our children who, tortured by the lack of food, screamed piteously begging us for bread which we could not give them. The sight of the numberless bodies which we trod under foot, and the stench with which they filled the air made us faint.¹¹²

108 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 23.

109 Ibid., 434–435, citing Jacques Rhétoré, “*Les Chrétiens aux bêtes*”: *Souvenirs de la guerre sainte proclamée par les Turcs contre les Chrétiens en 1915* (Paris: Cerf, 2005), 135–139.

110 Ibid., 148, 408–419,

111 Joseph Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?* (New York: Chaldean Rescue, 1921), 122–123.

112 Ibid., 145–154.

In 1918, an Assyrian woman from Khosrowa reported a massacre of 500 persons from among her contingent in flight from Urmia and Salamas, and identified Kurdish bands as the perpetrators. She wrote:

Our women were burned alive, others were sawn to pieces, men, women and children were crucified or hacked to death. So great indeed were the horrors that the barbarous Turks were astonished to find at Urmia Mussulmans more barbarous than themselves. Bishop Thomas Audo, a French missionary in Chaldea, and M. Dinkha were led naked through the streets of Urmia before being martyred.¹¹³

Naayem also quoted a bishop of Mardin, describing the postwar plight of the Assyrians in his care: "In my town there are more than five thousand widows and orphans whom I have to feed as best I can. If assistance does not arrive for the winter, four thousand of the poor creatures will be dead next year."¹¹⁴

A French mission in Persia declared that 6,000 Assyrians had been slain by Turks, Kurds, and Persians.¹¹⁵ About 3,000 refugees died in a series of months from diseases such as dysentery, smallpox, cholera, measles, typhus, and fevers.¹¹⁶ Aid workers observed that the refugees were weak and "vermin-infested," and that the children struggled to speak with their "flesh hanging on bones."¹¹⁷ The Archbishop of Canterbury launched a call for contributions to a fund to provide food to 80,000 "starving and destitute" Assyrians in 1918.¹¹⁸ In 1920, a Chaldean archbishop informed an audience that his flock had been starving since 1918, with most working-age parishioners being already dead, leaving mainly infants, the elderly, and women who were often ill.¹¹⁹ Some of the Assyrian refugees reported that in Turkish concentration camps, no food was provided and the population was reduced to surviving on acorns. The Turkish forces massacred forty men on a single occasion, and in driving the deportees onward shot dead those children or elderly persons who fell to the ground from hunger, exhaustion, or the cold.¹²⁰ The number massacred during one death march reached

113 Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?*, 294–299.

114 *Ibid.*, 119–120.

115 Ant Clarys, French Catholic Mission at Urmia, to Ernest Bristow, British Consul at Tabriz, Apr. 3, 1919, on losses suffered by the Christians of Urmia and Salmas during the war, in *Middle East Minorities: Christian Minorities 1838–1967*, 146–148.

116 *Ibid.*, 22.

117 H.H. Austin, *The Baqubah "Refugee Camp: An Account of Work on Behalf of the Persecuted* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006 [1920]), 21; "Starving Die in Persian Streets," *The Washington Post* (Aug. 25, 1918), 17.

118 "The Assyrian Massacres," *Manchester Guardian* (Dec. 5, 1918), 4.

119 "Starving Chaldeans," *Manchester Guardian* (Jan. 14, 1920), 7.

120 Associated Press, 'Mosul Awarded to British; More Turk Killings Alleged,' *The Washington Post* (Dec. 16, 1925), 1.

300 children and elderly people.¹²¹ Assyrian eyewitnesses and their descendants from the region of Tur Abdin, such as Hanna Ablahad (1909–2001), described massacres led by Kurds in which women were particularly brutalized.¹²² Gallo Shabo (1875–1966) stated that, in Hesno-d Kifo, dead bodies came down the river in numbers.¹²³

Genocide according to international law

The U.N. General Assembly adopted the text of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948. The main object of the Convention was to prevent crimes of this scale and to punish them.¹²⁴

Article VI of the Genocide Convention states that

persons charged with genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III shall be tried by a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed, or by such international penal tribunal as may have jurisdiction with respect to those Contracting Parties which shall have accepted its jurisdiction.¹²⁵

But the realization of the first permanent international tribunal was only achieved in 2002, as the International Criminal Court. Furthermore, only a few cases have been brought before national criminal courts, such as the Adolf Eichmann case.

Retroactivity of the genocide convention and “customary international law”

The Nuremberg Tribunal, famously, rejected an argument by counsel for Nazi regime cabinet officers that to declare “the criminal character of the organization represents a retroactive judgment of it in view of the fact that, in the meantime, it has legally and actually dissolved” by the fall of the regime.¹²⁶ The tribunal recognized that the individual nations participating in the trials of the Nazi war criminals could have established their own

121 George Seldes, ‘300 Chaldeans Die at Hands of Turks; 8,000 Go to Exile,’ *The Washington Post* (Oct 25, 1925), 1, 18.

122 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 334–335.

123 *Ibid.*, 397–404.

124 Nehemiah Robinson, *The Genocide Convention, A Commentary* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1960), 52. Robinson refers to a 1956 publication of the United Nations, *The Crime of Genocide: A U.N. Convention*, which was aimed at promoting a treaty on preventing the destruction of groups and punishing those responsible.

125 “Text of U.N. Convention Outlawing Genocide,” *The New York Times* (Dec. 2, 1948), 12, <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F00813F73E59157A93C0A91789D95F4C8485F9>.

126 *The Trial of German Major War Criminals, 213th Day* (Aug. 28, 1946), 188–190, www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-22/tgmwc-22-213-01.shtml.

special courts for trying crimes against humanity, arguing that “it is not to be doubted that any nation has the right thus to set up special courts to administer law.”¹²⁷ The British prosecutor at Nuremberg looked to other sources of international law, including the law of piracy and the establishment of the League of Nations, in rebutting the Nazis’ retroactivity arguments.¹²⁸

The International Military Tribunal agreed that it was simply applying international law and that punishing aggression, war crimes such as murder, and crimes against humanity such as “extermination” was an “expression of international law existing at the time of its creation; and to that extent is itself a contribution to international law.”¹²⁹ Similarly, the District Court of Jerusalem ruled that the State of Israel could prosecute crimes against the Jewish people committed before that State was proclaimed or existed, because of the “obvious connection” with that later-created state, and because of the migration of Jews from Europe to Israel.¹³⁰ The Attorney General of the State of Israel, in arguing the case, pointed to elementary principles of morality as recognized in the Nuremberg judgment, which stated that while there can be no crime without an existing law, or “ex post facto punishment,” this principle of justice is not applicable when the accused “must have known” that he was defying international law.¹³¹

Article 15 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) provides:

No one shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time when the criminal offence was committed.¹³²

However, article 15 may not apply to state responsibility, which is not the same as a “penalty” following a finding of “guilty” for a “criminal offense.” Regardless, paragraph 2 of the ICCPR’s Article 15 clarifies that the article

127 *Attorney General v. Eichmann*, 36 I.L.R. 277 (Supreme Court of Israel 1962), www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Sessions/Session-002-03.html.

128 Sir Hartley Shawcross, “Opening Address for the United Kingdom,” in International Military Tribunal (Ed.), *Nazi Conspiracy & Aggression*, vol. 1 (1946–1947): 606–607, www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/nca/nca-01/nca-01-09-aggression-05-05.html.

129 International Military Tribunal, Judgment (1946): 216, quoted in *Attorney General v. Eichmann*. www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Sessions/Session-002-03.html. See also, “The Nuremberg Tribunal,” 6 F.R.D. 69.(1948); United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, “In the Matter of the Extradition of John Demjanjuk,” *West’s Federal Supplement*, vol. 612 (1985): 544, 554–558.

130 *Attorney General v. Eichmann*. Criminal Case No. 40/61, Judgment (District Court of Jerusalem, Dec. 11, 1961), paras. 30–34, www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Judgment/Judgment-006.html.gz.

131 *Attorney General v. Eichmann*, www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Sessions/Session-003-03.html.

132 Fournet, *Crime of Destruction*, 118–119, referring to ICCPR, art. 15.

is not intended to prevent the punishment of any person for any act which, when committed, was “criminal according to the general principles of law recognized by the community of nations.”¹³³

The UN General Assembly had declared genocide to be “punishable” in 1946, before the convention was drafted.¹³⁴ Moreover, in 1968 the U.N. General Assembly declared explicitly that there should be no statute of limitations for the crime of genocide as confirmed in 1946 and as defined in 1948.¹³⁵ The drafters had in mind “some Nazi war criminals who had not yet been caught.”¹³⁶ De Zayas also explains that the World Court and the U.N. Commission on Human Rights have rejected the argument that genocide was a new crime created in 1948 with only a forward-looking effect.¹³⁷

The definition of genocide

The legal definition of genocide laid down in article II of the Convention states that “genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such”:

- (a) killing members of the group;
- (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.¹³⁸

133 ICCPR, art. 15(2); De Zayas, *op cit*.

134 Official Records of the First Session of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth plenary meeting, 11 December 1946, 188–189. See also Genocide Convention, preamble.

135 Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity, preamble & art. I, adopted by General Assembly resolution 2391 (XXIII) of 26 November 1968, entered into force Nov. 11, 1970, www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/warcrimes.pdf; Irwin Cotler, “Confiscated Jewish Property: The Holocaust, Thefticide and Restitution: A Legal Perspective,” *Cardozo Law Review* 20 (1998): 601–624, 621; Irwin Cotler, “Nuremberg 50 Years Later: The Restitution of Jewish Property and Norwegian Justice,” *Nordic Journal of International Law* 3 (1998): 275–287.

136 William Schabas, “Crimes against Humanity,” in *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity*, vol. 1, 215; Schabas, “Retroactive Application” .

137 Alfred de Zayas, “The Ottoman Genocide against the Greeks and Other Christian Minorities in the Light of the Genocide Convention,” in Tessa Hofmann, Matthias Bjørnlund, and Vasileios Meichanetsidis (Eds.), *The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks: Studies on the State-sponsored Campaign of Extermination of the Christians of Asia Minor, 1912–1922 and Its Aftermath: History, Law, Memory* (New York: Caratzas, 2011), ch. 9, citing Reservations to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Advisory Opinion, ICJ Reports (1951): 15–69; Report of the ad hoc working group of experts established under Resolution 2(XXIII) and 2(XXIV) of the Commission on Human Rights, U.N. Doc. No. E/CN.4/984/Add.18.

138 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the U.N. General Assembly on 9 December 1948, entered into force Jan. 12, 1951.

To create the final definition, divergent views had to be overcome as to whether to include political groups under the scope of genocide. Lemkin shared the opinion that the draft should exclude the political groups.¹³⁹ The final draft included four specific groups, but no definitions of these four terms were given, nor any clarification as whether the actor must “understand that the group [targeted] is one that qualifies as one of the four types.”¹⁴⁰

In the *Akayesu* case at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, an objective definition of the four groups was employed.¹⁴¹ A national group was defined as “a collection of people who are perceived to share a legal bond based on common citizenship, coupled with reciprocity of rights and duties.” A racial group should be based on “hereditary physical traits often identified with a geographical region, irrespective of linguistic, cultural, national or religious factors.” An ethnic group amounts to “a group whose members share a common language or culture.” A religious group was defined as a group which “shared the same religion, denomination or mode of worship.”¹⁴² In addition, in the judgment of the *Kayishema and Ruzindana* case, the Trial Chamber stated that an ethnic group may be “a group which distinguishes itself as such (self identification) or a group identified as such by others including the perpetrators of the crimes (identification by others).”¹⁴³ A wider definition of ethnical group is a “sub-national” group other than a race.¹⁴⁴ Although Tutsi also use the languages and cultural forms of the Hutus, the ICTR declared them to be ethnical groups.¹⁴⁵ In a principal Rwandan language (Banyarwanda), Hutu and Tutsi are not distinct races; rather, each clan is a “race.”¹⁴⁶ Hutu and Tutsi originated as socioeconomic groups, and were seen as having a common ancestor in Banyarwanda stories.¹⁴⁷

139 William Schabas, *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 104–105.

140 John Quigley, *The Genocide Convention: An International Law Analysis* (London: Ashgate, 2006), 146.

141 *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Case No. ICTR-96-4-T, Trial Chamber I, Judgment (Sept. 2, 1998), paras. 510–516 [hereinafter *Akayesu*].

142 Van den Herik, “Social Concept of Genocide,” 128, which refers to *Akayesu*, 514–515.

143 *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Case No. ICTR-91-1-T, Trial Chamber, Judgment (May 21, 1999), para 98.

144 U.N. General Assembly Official Records, 3rd Sess., 74th Meeting, at 98, reprinted in Hiram Abtahi and Phillipa Webb (Eds.), *The Genocide Convention: The Travaux Préparatoires* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2008), 1400.

145 *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Appeals Chamber, Case No. ICTR-91-1-A, Judgment (June 1, 2001), para. 34; Jens David Ohlin, “The Right to Exist and the Right to Resist,” in Fernando Teson (Ed.), *The Theory of Self-Determination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2016), 74–75. See also, Mark Drumbl, “The Crime of Genocide,” in Bartram S. Brown, *Research Handbook on International Criminal Law* (Cheltenham, UK: Elgar, 2016), 37, 45.

146 J.J. Carney, *Rwanda before the Genocide: Catholic Politics and Ethnic Discourse in the Late Colonial Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 10–16.

147 *Ibid.*, 10–12.

The Trial Chamber in the *Blagojevic* case held that “the correct determination of the relevant protected group has to be made on a case-by-case basis, consulting both objective and subjective criteria.”¹⁴⁸ The International Commission of Inquiry convened by the secretary-general at the instance of the Security Council to inquire into the question whether genocide took place in Darfur affirmed that protected groups were “no longer identified only by their objective connotations but also on the basis of the subjective perceptions of members of the group.”¹⁴⁹

The physical element of genocide

Lemkin’s view of genocide is reflected in article I of the original draft convention; its list of genocidal acts included

mass killing, destruction of the essential potentialities of life, planned disintegration of the political, social or economic structure, systematic moral debasement and acts of terrorism committed for the purpose of creating a state of common danger and alarm . . . with the intent of producing [the group’s] political, social, economic or moral disintegration.¹⁵⁰

The final draft became narrower and the Genocide Convention contains five paragraphs in article II which together defines the *actus reus* of the offense.¹⁵¹ The Secretariat memorandum noted that some scholars “held that cultural genocide represented an undue extension of the notion of genocide.”¹⁵² In favor of the concept of cultural genocide, it observed that Lemkin believed that a shattered or reeducated group has been destroyed in a sense.¹⁵³

The first provision of article II of the Genocide Convention declares the prohibition on the killing of a group to be a type of genocide. Killing should be interpreted in this context as “homicide committed with the intent to cause death.”¹⁵⁴ However, the first provision of article II does not require the killing of large numbers of group members, let alone the entire group.¹⁵⁵ In

148 *Prosecutor v. Blagojevic and Jokic*, Case No. IT-02–60-T, Judgment (Jan. 17, 2005), para. 667.

149 ICID Report, para. 501.

150 Schabas, *Genocide*, 152.

151 *Ibid.*, 154.

152 Secretariat Draft of the Genocide Convention, U.N. Doc. No. E/447, reprinted in Abtahi and Webb (Eds.), *The Genocide Convention*, 234.

153 *Ibid.*

154 Quigley, *The Genocide Convention*, 94, citing J.D. van der Vyver, “Prosecution and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,” *Fordham International Law Journal* 23 (1999): 286–299.

155 *Ibid.*, 97–98, citing S. Glaser, *Droit International Penal Conventiomel* (Brussels: E. Bruylant, 1954), 112.

the *Krstić* case, the Trial Chamber affirmed that genocide may be committed “by a single or a few murders.”¹⁵⁶

In drafting the Genocide Convention, there was not much debate about the second act of genocide, the infliction of serious bodily or mental harm. The drafters decided to include in article II the punishment of serious acts of physical violence failing short of actual killing. These have to be “of such a serious nature as to threaten its destruction in whole or in part.”¹⁵⁷ The Trial Chamber in the *Akayesu* case stated that the second provision includes “acts of torture, be they bodily or mental, inhumane or degrading treatment, and persecution.” It also affirmed that it may include “rape and other crimes of sexual violence.”¹⁵⁸

In the Secretariat draft, the third act of genocide is equated with “the subjection to conditions of life which, by lack of proper housing, clothing, food, hygiene and medical care, or excessive work of physical exertion, are likely to result in the debilitation or death of the individuals,” as well as with “the deprivation of all means of livelihood, by *confiscation of property, looting, curtailment of work, denial of housing* and of supplies otherwise available to the other inhabitants of the territory concerned.”¹⁵⁹ The Ad Hoc Committee agreed with the French explanation that death by “starvation or by illness accompanied by the absence of medical care . . . must certainly be regarded as an instrument of genocide.”¹⁶⁰

Conditions of life “calculated” to bring about death include “rape, the starving of a group of people, reducing required medical services below a minimum, and withholding sufficient living accommodation for a reasonable period, would lead to the destruction of the group in whole or in part.”¹⁶¹ The Trial Chamber of the ICTR explained in the *Akayesu* case that this third provision of article II includes “subjecting a group of people to a subsistence diet, systematic expulsion from homes and the reduction of essential medical services below minimum requirement.”¹⁶²

The fourth provision of article II contains the act of taking measures to prevent births within a group.¹⁶³ In *Akayesu*, the Trial Chamber included rape within this definition. It stated that: “the measures intended to prevent births within the group, should be construed as sexual mutilation, the

156 *Prosecutor v. Krstić*, Case No. IT-98-33-T, Trial Chamber, Judgement (Aug. 2, 2001), para. 685.

157 Van den Herik, 141 citing *Prosecutor v. Semanza*, Case No. ICTR-97-20-T, Trial Chamber, Judgement (May 15, 2003), fn. 541.

158 *Akayesu*, paras. 503, 731.

159 Secretariat Draft of the Genocide Convention, U.N. Doc. No. E/447, reprinted in Abtahi and Webb (Eds.), *The Genocide Convention*, 536 (emphasis added).

160 U.N. Doc. No. E/AC.25/SR.4, at 14, reprinted in Abtahi and Webb (Eds.), *The Genocide Convention*, 720–721.

161 *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*; para. 116.

162 *Akayesu*, para. 505.

163 Schabas, *Genocide*, 172, citing U.N. Doc. No. A/C.6/SR.82 (1948).

practice of sterilization, forced birth control, separation of the sexes and prohibition of marriages.”¹⁶⁴ Mental harm through rape as a “measure intended to prevent births when the person raped refused subsequently to procreate, . . . or through threats or trauma,” qualifies.¹⁶⁵

The last provision of article II was a “replacement” for the concept of a cultural genocide.¹⁶⁶ It covers the “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” Young children will be raised in another group and will learn another language, practice another religion, practice another culture.¹⁶⁷ This form of genocide does not by its terms require either specific intent to bring about an outcome, or physical force (i.e., psychological force is covered by it).¹⁶⁸ Removing children may occur through direct force or through duress, detention, or other coercive methods, resulting in a loss of the group’s own cultural and/or ethnic identity and assimilation into the new group identity, which is genocidal because it aims to destroy the “cultural unit” which the Genocide Convention is concerned to preserve.¹⁶⁹ This result is not necessary to prove, for the removal is the genocidal act and success need not be shown.¹⁷⁰

The mental element of genocide

The actor must have the “individual desire to achieve the destruction of the group, or [act] with the wish to achieve the ulterior purpose to destroy, in whole or in part, the group of which the individual victim of the act concerned is a member.”¹⁷¹ During the trials of the ICTR and ICTY three aspects of the mental element were broadly interpreted so that specific intent could be inferred from actions destroying a group “in part.”¹⁷² The Trial Chamber developed in the *Akayesu* case “a method of inferring the specific intent from certain indicators.”¹⁷³ These included:

- criminal acts systematically targeting the same group, committed by the same perpetrator or by others,
- the scale and nature of the acts committed,

164 *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, para. 507.

165 *Ibid.*; see also Schabas, *Genocide*, 200, citing *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, para. 507; *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Trial Chamber, Judgement, para. 117; *Prosecutor v. Rutaganda*, Case No. ICTR-96-3-T, Trial Chamber, Judgment (Dec. 6, 1999), affirmed, Appeals Chamber, Judgement, Case No. ICTR-96-3-A (May 26, 2003); Bassiouni and Manikas, *International Criminal Tribunals*, 588.

166 Schabas, *Genocide*, 175.

167 *Ibid.*, 176.

168 *Ibid.*, 177, 203, 264.

169 *Ibid.*, 178.

170 *Ibid.*, 173.

171 Van den Herik, “Social Concept of Genocide,” 109, citing *Prosecutor v. Rutaganda*, para. 60.

172 *Ibid.*, 81–82.

173 *Ibid.*, 78.

- the fact that victims were systematically and deliberately singled out because of their membership of a group, in contrast to non-group members.¹⁷⁴

In the *Kayishema and Ruzindana* case, the Trial Chamber of the ICTR referred to the same sort of indicators as in *Akayesu*, namely:

- the physical targeting of the group or their property,
- the use of derogatory language toward members of the targeted group,
- the weapons employed and the extent of bodily injury,
- the methodical way of planning,
- the systematic way of killing, and
- the number of victims from the group.¹⁷⁵

The Appeals Chamber of the ICTR has endorsed the approach of inferring intent in this way.¹⁷⁶

In lieu of confessions, which are rare in cases of genocide, the intention to destroy a group is therefore inferred from “the perpetration of other culpable acts systematically directed against that same group, whether these acts were committed by the same offender or by the others.”¹⁷⁷ Therefore, the specific intent to commit genocide does not have to be based on confessions or admissions, but may be inferred from the testimonies of victims and direct physical evidence.¹⁷⁸

Other indicators are relevant, such as the killing of pregnant women, the elderly, and children.¹⁷⁹ The Trial Chamber of the ICTR wrote:

Not only were Tutsis killed in tremendous numbers, but they were also killed regardless of gender or age. Men and women, old and young, were killed without mercy. Children were massacred before their parents’ eyes, women were raped in front of their families.¹⁸⁰

To infer specific intent, the ICTY used several more indicators. As the Trial Chamber observed in the *Krstić* case; “where there is physical or biological destruction there are often simultaneous attacks on the cultural and religious property and symbols of the targeted group as well.” It concluded that genocidal intent could be “inferred from attacks on cultural and religious property and symbols.” The evidence pointed to the killing of all the Bosnian Muslim *men* in Srebrenica within a certain age range and series of locations, and attacks on the principal mosque and the houses of Bosnian

174 *Akayesu*, para. 523.

175 *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Trial Chamber, Judgement, para. 93.

176 *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Appeals Chamber, Judgement, para. 159.

177 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 344.

178 *Ibid.*

179 Van den Herik, *op. cit.*, 79.

180 *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Trial Chamber, Judgement, paras. 532, 542.

Muslims.¹⁸¹ Nonetheless, the property of the targeted group can also be attacked without the specific intent to destroy the group as such, for example in a battle.¹⁸²

The mental element does not require actual annihilation.¹⁸³ In the *Krstić* case the women, children, and the elderly were forcibly transferred outside of Srebrenica, which standing alone does not fall under the scope of genocide.¹⁸⁴ The Appeals Chamber in the *Krstić* case stated that this “transfer” may have “ensure[d] the physical destruction of the Bosnian Muslim community in Srebrenica” by reducing the likelihood of returns.¹⁸⁵

Proving genocide

Chapter 1 and the other chapters of the book describe numerous reports of genocidal acts. In addition to the physical targeting of Assyrians and their property explored in those chapters, the use of derogatory language such as “dog” and “infidel,” the decapitation and torture of civilians, and the planned destruction of communities even outside of wartime, the ideology of the Young Turks is relevant to genocidal intent.¹⁸⁶ The ideology of the Young Turks is sometimes blamed for the manner in which Christians and ethnic non-Turks were targeted.¹⁸⁷ Behaeddin Shakir, a prominent member of the CUP, told the CUP Congress in Salonika in 1911: “The nations that remain from the old times in our empire are akin to foreign and harmful weeds that must be uprooted. To clear our land.”¹⁸⁸ The Assyrians are one such people. The Assyrians have been living in upper Mesopotamia, present-day Turkey, for thousands of years. The monastery of Mor Gabriel is more than 1,600 years old and many other churches and monasteries are more than thousand years old.¹⁸⁹

A passage in the Blue Book outlined the crimes committed by the direct orders of Djevdet Bey, the governor of Van:

They collected all the women and the girls in an open area, *systematically* assaulted them, and then sold them into slavery or gave them

181 *Ibid.*, 82, citing *Prosecutor v. Krstić*, Trial Chamber, Judgement (Aug. 2, 2001), paras. 580, 595.

182 *Ibid.*

183 Van den Herik, “Social Concept of Genocide,” 117.

184 *Ibid.*, 85.

185 *Ibid.*

186 E.g., Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?*, xxv, 44, 54, 58, 87, 98–99, 160, 190, 200–201, 214, 242, 246, 271, 287, 310.

187 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 303–304.

188 Warda, *Seyfo*, 52. See also, Donald Bloxham, “The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1916: Cumulative Radicalization and the Development of a Destruction Policy,” *Past and Present* 181 (2003): 149, 156–157; Colin Tatz and Panayiotis Diamadis, “Turkey and the Politics of Memory,” *Combat Genocide Association Blog* (Dec. 8, 2013), <http://combatgenocide.org/?p=649>.

189 The monastery is near the town of Midyat and is the main center for Assyrians in Tur Abdin.

as “gifts” to one another. Similarly, in Bashkala (Bachcelet), a town in Van, “many hundreds (perhaps some thousands) of Armenians and Syrians . . . [were] massacred.” Armenians reported that the women and children of the Bashkala area had been either killed or forced into “a captivity worse than death.”¹⁹⁰

Lord Bryce stated that: “Although Kurds committed the crimes, they were functioning under the direct orders of the Turkish Military Commands.”¹⁹¹ He described the violations against the Assyrians as being “massacres, *organized and carried out* with every circumstance of cruelty by Enver and Talaat.”¹⁹²

In the *Akayesu* and *Kayiseham and Ruzinadana* cases, the fact “that genocide occurred throughout Rwanda” indicated “a common intent.”¹⁹³ In the Assyrian case, the atrocities took place throughout the southeast Anatolian provinces of the empire, from Tur Abdin to the Urmia region of Persia, so that in a short period of time, bodies were witnessed in numbers on roads, outside of towns, on hills and in valleys, in wells, and floating in lakes and rivers.¹⁹⁴ After the war, a British political officer, Edward Noel, observed: “Corpses still rotting along the roads and noted that all the male corpses were in their stomachs but the corpses of women were lying face up on their backs.”¹⁹⁵ The intention to exterminate was illustrated in places where normally there was friendship between the Muslim and Christian population and where the Muslim authorities protected their Christian civilians.¹⁹⁶ As Gaunt concluded, Assyrians who fled Diyarbakir and its environs in the 1890s ended up being massacred and annihilated in 1915.¹⁹⁷

Genocidal intent is properly inferred from the killing of pregnant women, children, and elderly persons, who were helpless.¹⁹⁸ In the Assyrian case, women were captured and raped, some no doubt becoming pregnant and losing the opportunity to have an Assyrian child. They were sold and given away as gifts among officials. They were removed from their villages, from their people. Their children were no longer Assyrians but Turks, Kurds, and Persians. Other pregnant women had their babies ripped from their bellies. These were measures taken by the Turks to prevent birth, creating a situation which deprived Assyrians from procreating as they otherwise would have in communities in which the men were killed and women were enslaved.¹⁹⁹

190 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 333 (emphasis added).

191 Warda, *Seyfo*, 55.

192 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 335 (emphasis added).

193 Van den Herik, “Social Concept of Genocide,” 121–122.

194 Gaunt, *Massacres*, 305.

195 *Ibid.*

196 *Ibid.*, 306.

197 *Ibid.*

198 Alexander Zahar and Goran Sluiter, *International Criminal Law: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 158, 173.

199 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 332, 336. See also Warda, *Seyfo*, 41.

Attacks took place on Assyrian churches and monasteries, which were “concomitant with the Assyrians themselves,” with the purpose to remove any evidence of Assyrian existence in the Ottoman Empire.²⁰⁰ According to the statistics, 156 churches and monasteries of the Syrian Orthodox church were destroyed. In Hakkari, two patriarchs, the metropolitan, many bishops and the majority of the priests were killed, which was a devastating situation for the Church of the East (sometimes called “Nestorians”).²⁰¹

Confessions may have been made by Abdulahad Nuri, who admitted to receiving orders from Talaat Pasha to “finally solve the Eastern Question.” Talât Pasha noted in another telegram that the “crimes committed serve the purpose of the government with the long decided extermination.” Also he ordered his minions to accelerate the extermination policy, when they tarried.²⁰² Speaking of the danger of Armenian banditry and sabotage using caches of explosives, the governor of Diyarbakir explained that his “Turkishness triumphed” and he “liquidate[d]” them.²⁰³ Raphael De Nogales, a volunteer in the Ottoman military, who became a major in the Van area, wrote that he spoke to the governor of Diyarbakir on the subject, and that Talât’s “party . . . and the civil authorities . . . aimed to make an end first of the Armenians, then the other minorities.”²⁰⁴ The German ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in 1917 described the government’s policy in the east as “systematically trying to exterminate the Christian population.”²⁰⁵

An Ottoman telegram acknowledged that many villages around Midyat, Mardin, and Diyarbakir were deserted.²⁰⁶ These villages were populated by Assyrian Christians. Where are the inhabitants of these villages? They were either massacred or fled from the enemy.

Furthermore, after the Ottoman Empire lost the war, it tried to take responsibility and wanted to convict Enver, Talât, and Djemal Pasha of “widespread massacres, war crimes, and atrocities and sentenced them to death in absentia.”²⁰⁷ As was stated in the court martial:

All the testimony and documents show that . . . bands of brigands were formed for the sole purpose of massacring and destroying the caravans

200 Warda, *Seyfo*, 56.

201 *Ibid.*, 57.

202 Warda, *Seyfo*, 52–57. See also, Vahakn Dadrian, “The Naim-Andonian Documents on the World War I Destruction of Ottoman Armenians: The Anatomy of a Genocide,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18, no. 3 (1986): 311–360.

203 Quoted in Gaunt, *Massacres*, 179.

204 Raphael de Nogales, *Four Years Beneath the Crescent* (New York: Scribner’s, 1926), 135, 146.

205 Vahakn Dadrian, “Documentation of the Armenian Genocide in German and Austrian Sources,” in Israel Charny (Ed.), *The Widening Circle of Genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1994), 102.

206 Gaunt, *Masacres*, 449.

207 Travis, “Native Christians Massacred,” 340.

of the (Armenian) deportees. It is fully proven that these massacres were taking place on the immediate orders and full knowledge of Talaat, Enver and Cemal.²⁰⁸

The massacres were part of a “scheme” resulting from “months-long deliberations and planning at the War Ministry, where ‘the liquidation of the Christian elements . . . was decided on and for which end.’”²⁰⁹ The British ambassador described the policy as one of “pounding the non-Turkish elements.”²¹⁰ Winston Churchill opined: “There is no reasonable doubt that this crime was planned and executed for political reasons,” namely “clearing Turkish soil of a Christian race opposed to all Turkish ambitions.”²¹¹

Conclusion

There were a large number of victims of the Assyrian genocide in Urmia, as well as in Hakkari and Tur Abdin. The victims included thousands of men, women, elderly, children and unborn children, and Assyrians of each denomination without discrimination. The massacres of Assyrians provided genocidal intent in the form of killing all of the Assyrian men of certain regions, as in the Srebrenica massacre, killing Assyrian women and children in numerous massacres, as in the Rwandan genocide of Tutsis, removing Assyrian children from their families, as in the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust, and destroying Assyrian religious and cultural institutions, as in the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, and Bosnia.

To remember is to create links between past and present, between past and future. To remember is to affirm man’s faith in humanity and to convey meaning on our fleeting endeavors. One aim of memory is to restore dignity or justice when it has been lost.

The memory of the Assyrian genocide should not be limited to feeling guilt or sorrow, but also love and pride concerning the strength of the Assyrian ancestors to defend their right to exist. Denial of the massacres should not lead to denial of a people. Assyrians will never lose the knowledge of the sacrifices their ancestors made.

208 Ibid., citing Vartkes Yeghiayan, *The Armenian Genocide and the Trials of the Young Turks* (La Verne, CA: American Armenian International College Press, 1990), xxvi; see also, “Turkey Condemns Its War Leaders,” *The New York Times* (July 13, 1919), www.cilicia.com; Vahakn Dadrian and Taner Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 121, 151, 169, 277.

209 Dadrian and Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul*, 151, quoting Dogan Avcioglu, *Milli Kurtulus Tarihi*, vol. 3 (Istanbul: Ertu, 1981), 1114.

210 Ibid., 168, quoting *British Documents on the Origin of the War, 1889–1914* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1928).

211 Ibid., 169, quoting Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis: The Aftermath*, vol. 5 (London: T. Butterworth, 1929), 405.

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4 The Ottoman genocide of the Assyrians in Persia

Anahit Khosroeva

Introduction

For centuries, the Assyrians lived in the western, southern, and northwestern regions of Lake Urmia. After the first Russo-Ottoman or Russo-Turkish War (1768–1774), the number of Assyrians in the above-mentioned territories fell, as Assyrians along with the Armenians migrated to the Caucasus. For example, in Ushnuk province where the Assyrians once comprised the majority of population, at the end of the nineteenth century no more representatives of that nation were left. However, the Assyrian church is still standing there. The town of Maragha and its outskirts, once densely populated with Assyrians, suffered the same fate.

At the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Persian Assyrians were scattered throughout the Western territories of Lake Urmia in the Persian municipalities of Urmia, Baranduz, Sulduz, and Salamas. There were 128 purely Assyrian villages, out of which ninety were in the region of Urmia.¹ Boris Shelkovnikov, a Russian general of the Imperial Army, reported on the number of Assyrians living in the Urmia region (see Table 4.1):

Table 4.1 Estimates of the population of the Urmia region in 1914, by denomination

<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Estimated population</i>
Church of the East (Nestorians)	40,000
Orthodox	30,000
Chaldeans	4,000
Lutherans and other Protestants	1,000
Persian Kurdistan: Chaldeans	1,000
Total	76,000

Source: B. Shelkovnikov, *Proiskhozhdenie i sovremenniy bit siro-khaldeyskoy narodnosti* [*The Origins and Current Life of the Assyro-Chaldean People: Publication of the Caucasian Military Regional Headquarters*], no. 3–4 (Tiflis, 1904), 60.

1 William Shedd, “The Syrians of Persia and Eastern Turkey,” *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 35, Fzluno. 1 (1903): 1–7.

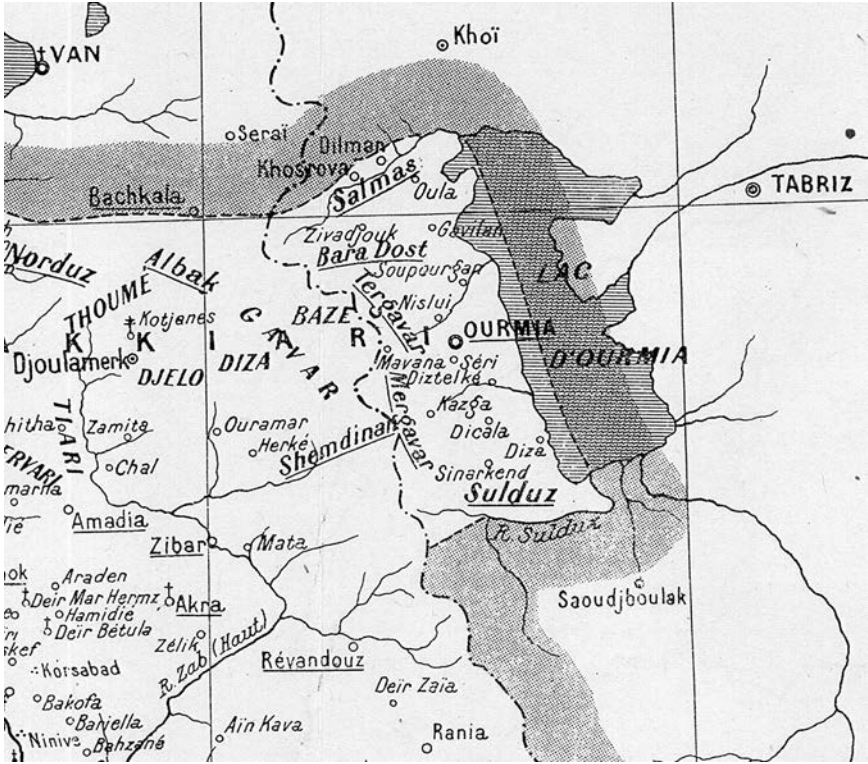


Figure 4.1 Detail map of Northwestern Persia and Hakkari

Source: Said Namik & Rustem Nedjib, *La Question Assyro-Chaldéenne devant la Conférence de la Paix* (Paris, 1919), 11.

Among the areas near Urmia populated with Assyrians were Anzal, Baranduz, Charbash, Diliman, Geogtapa, Khosrova, Nazlu-Chay, Razva-Chay, Salamas, Shahar-Chay (City River), Soldouz, Margawar, Tergawar, Baradost, and Dasht. Some of them are depicted on Figure 4.1.

The Persian Assyrians were virtually eradicated between 1914 and 1918. According to Dr. Tessa Hofmann, the main difference from the Armenians in the treatment of the Assyrians can be described in the following way: “They fell victim predominantly to direct and massive killings by the Ottoman forces and their Kurdish auxiliaries in two states: the Ottoman Empire and northwest Persia, which the Ottomans occupied twice, in 1914 and 1918.”²

2 Tessa Hofmann, “The Genocide against the Christians in the Late Ottoman Period, 1912–1922,” in George Shirinian (Ed.), *The Asia Minor Catastrophe and the Ottoman Greek Genocide* (Bloomington, IL: The Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center, Inc., 2012), 60.

Prelude to a massacre

The Ottoman Empire and allied Kurds invaded Persia before the declaration of the Great War – as early as 1907 – and had left the countryside in the border area and on the plain of Urmia in ruins. The reports on prewar events come from German sources attached to the Lutheran Mission, and therefore present a perspective sympathetic to Turks and Germans. Elizabeth Wendt, the daughter of a German pastor, described the events in a letter dated August 2, 1907. She was married to an Assyrian from the Tergawar district, which was the location of numerous Christian villages and parishes:

Our village, Charbash, is now completely filled with people coming through, fleeing from Tergawar. Hundreds of people . . . arrive starving . . . I sewed a German flag which we intend to raise in case of emergency, as the Turks are friendly towards the Germans. Yesterday morning the Kurds came and everyone who was not killed fled. They fled from there without bread, without clothes, with only their lives. Many hundreds have gone to the city to the Russian consul and more keep coming. The actual reason for the terribly rushed flight was that the Turks came up behind the Kurds with cannons.³

The events in 1908 are described in another report by Pastor Karl Robbelen written in 1909:

The Newspapers have reported about the terrible events which caused the political confusion in Persia. Havoc has also been wrought in the Northwest province of Azerbaijan. . . . In August of last year (1908), the unrest and turmoil began in that province when the Turkish troops crossed the border, first occupying and plundering the region of Tergawar. Thousands of Syrian (Assyrian) Christians were robbed of all their possessions, expelled from their home and their land and left to their misery. This example incited the predatory Kurdish tribes in the mountainous districts. The confusion in the countryside and the government's powerlessness and inactivity encouraged them to stage ever bolder raids. Since spring the Kurds' looting has been constantly increasing in intensity. The rich Baranduz region was the first to be devastated in this manner, the Urmia region, where our brothers live, was next.⁴

The Ottoman troops occupied the whole region west of Urmia until 1912.⁵

3 Gabriele Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust: die Vernichtung der christlichen Assyrer in der Türkei* (Gottingen: Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker, 1989), 67.

4 *Ibid.*, 75.

5 John Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians of the Middle East: Encounters with Western Christian Missions, Archaeologists, and Colonial Powers* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 73, 83. See also, William Wigram, *The Assyrians and their Neighbors* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1929), 127.

Turkey had not even entered the war when Turkish commanders sent their troops to the territories of Van, Sarai, Bashkale, and Shamdinan. In response to that on November 20, 1914, Russian troops under the leadership of General Fyodor Chernozubov entered Persia. Soon, as a result of successful military operations, the Russian army occupied Khoi, Urmia, and Tabriz. The Persian government headed by Prime Minister Mostowfi ol-Mamalek expressed its dissatisfaction regarding the entrance of the Russian troops to Persia, perhaps because Persia had declared neutrality in the war on November 2, 1914.⁶ Mostowfi approached the Russian authorities and asked that they withdraw their troops from Azerbaijan as their presence gave the Turks a reason to invade. The Russians responded by asking what guarantees could be given that their withdrawal would not be followed by the insertion of the Turks. In the absence of a centralized state in Persia, both Mostowfi's cabinet and the Shah were both impotent on this matter.⁷

Before the Russian troops entered Persia on November 14, 1914, Vvedensky, the Russian vice-consul in Urmia, had telegraphed that Turks intended to conquer the Urmia region in order to move from there in two directions: Khoi-Julfa and Sulduz-Sauj Bulak, and later to the Tabriz region. At this conjuncture the Russian command resorted to the support of such an anti-Turkish force as the 70,000 Assyrians living in Urmia and its surroundings.⁸

On the territories of both the Ottoman Empire and Persia the Assyrian subjects suffered from terrible conditions. As regards this, Prince Orlov, the viceroy's assistant in the Caucasus in 1915, mentioned: "The Assyrians of Urmia and Salamas are at bay, and in general, in the current war the Assyrians pin their hope on Russia, expecting help from it."⁹

By 1884, many Nestorian Assyrians had already adopted Russian Orthodox Christianity. Through the efforts of the Russian Orthodox mission of Urmia region, fifty schools opened, and a lot of books were translated into Assyrian. By 1897, the number of Russian Orthodox Assyrians had exceeded 30,000.¹⁰ Russian media called this success of the Russian Orthodox Church "The Victory of Orthodoxy."¹¹ Some of the Church of the East Assyrians of Salamas, Mergawar, Tergawar, Sulduz, and Baradost adopted

6 National Archive of Republic of Georgia, file 9, list 2, no. 35, 223.

7 Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 40.

8 Anahit Khosroeva, *Asorineri tseghaspanutiune Osmanian Turkiaum ev harakic tiurkabnak vairerum (XIX dari verj – XX dari arajin qarord) [The Assyrian Genocide in the Ottoman Turkey and Adjacent Turkish Territories (Late 19th – First Quarter of the 20th Century)]* (Yerevan: Institute of History, National Academy of Sciences, 2004), 73.

9 Makich Arzumanyan, *Hayastan 1914–1917 [Armenia 1914–1917]* (Yerevan: Hayastan, 1969), 488.

10 A.J. Maclean and W.H. Browne, *The Catholicos of the East and His People* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1892), 43, 53.

11 *Tserkovniye vedomosti [Church sheets]* no. 13 (St. Petersburg), 1898, 67–77. See also *Bogoslovni vestnik [Theological bulletin]* (Moscow: Theological Academy, 1898).

Orthodoxy in 1911–1914. The Assyrian church in Urmia was designed in a more Russian Orthodox style than those in the Hakkari mountains, as shown in Figure 4.2. Some Assyrians believed that if they adopted Orthodoxy, the Russians would not leave them alone in their struggle against the common enemy.

On the other hand, as it has already been mentioned above, the Russian command expected from the Assyrians an active support. In August 1906, the Russian command approached to Assyrian religious leader Patriarch Mar Shimun XXI Benyamin, requesting help in case of a war. In response to these feelers, the Assyrian patriarch promised a strong army with 40,000 fighters to the Russian vice-consul in the Van region.¹² On July 23, 1914, S.D. Sazonov, the Russian minister of foreign affairs, wrote to Vladimir Sukhomlinov, the minister of war: “There is no doubt that in case of war with Turkey the local Assyrians can help us significantly.”¹³



Figure 4.2 St. Mary's Church, Urmia

Source: Abraham Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation: Or, The Ever Persecuted Nestorians or Assyrian Christians* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 12.

12 Russian State Military Historical Archive, microfilm col. 9 (receipt 29), file 2000, list. 1, no. 265, 2.

13 M.S. Lazarev, *Kurdskiy vopros (1891–1917) [The Kurdish Question (1891–1917)]* (Moscow: Godakh, 1972), 296.

Flight to Russia

During the Great War, the Assyrians who joined the war on the side of Russia provided a military and personnel benefit to the Russian units in the area. With the Russian advance into eastern Anatolia, Armenian units within the Russian army were of great importance. Similarly, armed Assyrian units, who knew the area well, were better adapted to the environmental conditions than Russians. The Assyrian units were able to obtain support from local people and, in the areas in which they were located, served as guides and advance guards for the Russian army.

By September 1914, eleven Assyrian volunteer military detachments were formed in Urmia Plain. Nine of them (before Turkey entered the war) defended the Assyrian villages. The reserve army included two more detachments.¹⁴ As soon as the Caucasus front of the war was opened, the Assyrian fighters were to leave their villages and act together with the Russian army. For this purpose a stronger company was formed from the reserve Assyrian detachments in the village of Charbash at Urmia lakeside. Taking into account the military abilities of Assyrian detachments, the Russian command assigned them to protect the territories they had occupied.

As it was mentioned above, the Persian authorities had a hostile attitude towards the Russian troops for entering their territory and considered it a violation of neutrality. Certainly, they were not hiding their displeasure with the formation of Assyrian units, and did not prohibit Turkish and Kurdish detachments from entering their country and carrying out offensive actions against the Russian army.

The Assyrian approach in terms of the national liberation struggle against Ottoman tyranny fully coincided with that of the Armenians. During the First World War, mass violence started on the territory of Western Persia. On the Urmia Plain, the towns and villages were plundered and burnt to ashes by Kurds.¹⁵

Starting in early October 1914, Paul Shimmon and Vice-Consul Vvedenski described a Kurdish offensive on Assyrian villages such as Anhar, Alwach, and others in Urmia and the Ottoman-Persian border districts of Mergawar and Tergawar. Vvedenski reported:

The consequences of jihad are everywhere. In the village of Anhar I saw burnt corpses of Assyrians with big sharp stakes in their bellies. The Assyrian buildings are burnt and destroyed. . . . The fire is still burning in the neighboring villages. . . . The Assyrian families have gathered in the fields near the town.¹⁶

14 Lev Sargizov, *Assirytsi stran Blizhnego i Srednego Vostoka* [*The Assyrians of the Near and Middle East*] (Yerevan: Hayastan, 1979), 36.

15 G.E. Hubbard, *From the Gulf to Ararat, An Expedition through Mesopotamia and Kurdistan* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1916), 256–258.

16 National Archive of Republic of Georgia, file 13, list 27, book 2, no. 3361, 103. See also Paul Shimmon, “Urmia, Salmas, and Hakkari,” in Sir James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee

In late October 1914, Vvedensky sent further telegrams concerning mass killings and refugee flows from Turkey to Persia.¹⁷ Dozens of villages had been burned, accompanied by atrocities against civilians, the newspaper *Baku* reported¹⁸

In December 1914 and January 1915, Turkish troops intensified their military operations against the Russian forces operating in the Urmia region. Concerned about Turkish attacks, Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov, the viceroy of the Caucasus, thought the Russian detachment of Urmia separated from the main army could be easily defeated by the large Ottoman forces. That is why on December 20, 1914, he ordered General F. Chernozubov to lead his troops out from Urmia and head for Khoi. The unexpected and unjustified retreat of the Russian army had tragic consequences for Assyrians living in Persia. A Persian official in Urmia observed that a holy war had begun.¹⁹ More than 40,000 Armenians and 8,061 Assyrians left Urmia with the Russian army.²⁰

However, according to consul Vvedensky, the initial stream of Assyrian refugees stretching from Urmia to Russian frontiers amounted to 15,000 persons, mostly women and children, en route from Diliman and Urmia via Khoi to Russia. On February 8, 1916, *The New York Times* wrote: "Dr. Jacob Sargis, an American Methodist medical missionary who has arrived in Petrograd on January 12, told that during the previous year along with Russian troops 14,000 Assyrians had left Urmia and 100 surrounding villages."²¹ According to Abraham Yohannan, on January 2 and 3, 1915, along with Russian troops 25,000 Assyrians migrated to Russian territory.²² In his turn S. Melikyan, the news reporter of the Armenian newspaper "*Msbak*" visiting Northern Persia, wrote: "Before our arrival to Tabriz, turmoil had already started there. We saw a stream of 40,000 Assyrian refugees fleeing from Turks. Before reaching Dilman the pictures of endless disasters of the Assyrian refugees one after another opened to our eyes."²³

The census conducted on January 30, 1915, in ten provinces of Eastern Armenia, to a certain extent reveals the number of Assyrian refugees who reached there. The result was as shown in Table 4.2.

(Eds.), *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents Presented to the Viscount Grey of Fallodon* (London: H.M.S.O., 1916), 578.

17 Sargizov, *Assiriytsi stran Blizhnego*, 25.

18 *Ibid.*, 26.

19 David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 63.

20 Hovhannes Ter-Martirosyan [A-Do], *Metz depkere Vaspurakanum 1914–1915 tvakanerin* [*The Great Events in Vaspurakan in 1914–1915*] (Yerevan: Luys, 1917), 114.

21 Richard D. Kloian, *The Armenian Genocide: News Accounts from the American Press (1915–1922)* (Richmond, CA: ACC Books, 1985), 139.

22 Abraham Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation: Or, The Ever Persecuted Nestorians or Assyrian Christians* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 120.

23 Sargizov, *Assiriytsi stran Blizhnego*, 46.

Table 4.2 Results of one-day census of refugees in Armenia on January 30, 1915

<i>Province</i>	<i>Households</i>	<i>Refugees</i>
Yerevan	952	5,847
Etchmiadzin	8	39
Nakhichevan	33	211
Sharur-Daralagyaz	263	1,529
Alexandropol	18	85
Kars	458	3,391
Total	1,732	11,102

Source: Armenian National Archive, file 50, list 1, no. 28, 80–83, 85, 88, 90. See also, *One-day Census of the Refugees from Turkey, Persia and Territories Adjacent to Turkey* (Yerevan, 1915), 30–33.

Thus, from the one-day census conducted in Eastern Armenia in January 1915, we see that 11,102 largely Assyrian refugees (1,438 families) immigrated here. Out of them 659 (132 families) were deported from Salamas and four neighboring villages, 5,929 (986 families) – from Urmia and forty-four neighboring villages, 354 (fifty-eight families) – from three villages near Ardahan, ninety-six families – from Sarai, four families – from Sultan Saray, thirteen families – from Bashkale,²⁴ and 1119 refugees (149 families) – from Archi and five to six neighboring villages.²⁵

From Tabriz, Khoi, Salamas, and Urmia, almost 44,000 Armenian and Assyrian refugees had to leave their places where they had lived for centuries and take refuge in Armenia, Georgia, and Russia.²⁶ This was the report of the Brotherly Help Committee of Nakhichevan-Sharur-Daralageaz-Salamas. Another document from April 18, 1915, entitled “The situation of the Armenian and Assyrian refugees from Iran,” explains in detail how the Armenians and Assyrians left their properties, lands, animals, and everything else, and became refugees.²⁷

Mortality among the refugees

The refugees were walking from morning until night in the severe frost. Some of them died on the way from hunger and diseases. The majority fell victim to epidemic diseases; especially heavy were losses among children. One British missionary who left Urmia with the fugitives described the flight in these words:

As far as the eye could reach in both directions there was a constant stream of fugitives, sometimes so dense that the road was blocked. It

24 Armenian National Archive, file 50, list 1, no. 21, 6–8, 142–152, 155–250, 251–266.

25 *One-day Census of the Refugees From Turkey, Persia and Territories Adjacent to Turkey*, 62.

26 Armenian National Archive, file 50, list 1, no. 127, 108–115.

27 Armenian National Archive, file 227, list 1, no. 199, 18–19.

was dreadful sight, and one I never want to see again. Many of the old people and children died on the way.²⁸

The Armenian bishop Nerses Melik-Tangyan sent a letter to his friend in February 1917 in which he wrote: "Give my regards to Mar Shimun and tell him I take care of His people. There is no difference for me [between] Armenians [and] Assyrians."²⁹ One more document from January 1915 by the governor of Yerevan to the head of the Brotherly Help Committee says: "We should equally care for all refugees, regardless of their nationality. Therefore I ask you not to forget the Assyrians."³⁰

In that period the Armenian press very often adverted to the Christian refugees from Ottoman Turkey and Persia. For example, in the article called "Assyrian refugees," published in the newspaper *Mshak* on February 21, 1915, it is written: "2,000 Assyrian refugees, the remnant of the elite of their nation, arrived in Tiflis from Persia. But even being in such severe conditions they sought help not for themselves but for the 12,000 Assyrians, remaining in the "homeland," who had somehow taken refuge in the building of the American missionaries of Urmia."³¹ "Hundreds of people die every day," the newspaper *Horizon* wrote, "they flee from violent death to slowly die from poverty and hunger. We should also try to help those who did not manage to leave Turkey, but still could escape the methodical annihilation."³²

On January 24, 1915, the *Russkie Vedomosti* (Russian news) wrote that "the stream of Christian refugees from Turkey and Iran seems to be endless."³³ In June 1916 the weekly newspaper *Van-Tosp* reported: "The refugees' distress is becoming increasingly tragic."³⁴

Seyfo 1915 in Persia

At the end of December 1914, after the Russian army had left, a group of Turkish brigands crossed the Persian frontier, entered the location Sauj Bulak in the south of Urmia, and created panic among the local Christian population. Nearly 100 Assyrian villages were burned and turned into ruins, and their population was plundered.³⁵ About 500 people were killed; 800 women and young girls were taken in an unknown direction, while 750

28 Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation*, 120.

29 Armenian National Archive, file 57, list 1, no. 643, 1.

30 Armenian National Archive, file 50, list 1, no. 10, 70.

31 *Mshak*, no. 38 (Feb. 21, 1915).

32 *Horizon* (Dec. 20, 1915).

33 V. Mikaelyan, *Armyanski vopros i genotsid armenyan v Turtsii (1913–1919)* [*The Armenian Question and the Genocide of Armenians in Turkey (1913–1919), The Materials of the Political Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kaiser Germany*] (Yerevan, 1995), 171.

34 *Van-Tosp*, no. 28, June 5, 1916.

35 Sargizov, *Assirytsi stran Blizhnego*, 72.

people were beheaded in the Assyrian village of Haftevan, and afterwards 5,000 Assyrian women were reported to be captive in Kurdish households.³⁶

Mar Elia, a bishop of the Assyrian Orthodox Church, was exiled along with the clergymen. Later, being saved by a miracle and leaving for Moscow, he reported: "I witnessed the death of the population of the Assyrian village of Takalui located in Urmia lakeside: after the enemy attacked us from the land, 300–400 Assyrian women preferred to plunge into the water and drown."³⁷

From December 1914 till February 1915, according to eyewitness accounts, in Salamas sixty-four Assyrians were killed by Turks and nineteen disappeared without a trace.³⁸ In January 1915 a platoon headed by Kachali Khan encircled the largest and the richest Assyrian village in Urmia, Gulpashan, where 300 Assyrian households (about 2,500 Assyrian population) lived, and entirely destroyed it. All but a couple of hundreds of Assyrians were murdered.³⁹

During the winter of 1915, 4,000 Assyrians died from disease, hunger, and exposure, and about 1,000 were killed in the villages of Urmia.⁴⁰ On April 29, 1915, *The New York Times* published the letter of Dr. W.S. Vanneman, head of the Presbyterian mission hospital at Tabriz, to his wife: "About ten days ago the Kurds in Salamas with the permission of the Turkish troops gathered all the Nestorian and Armenian men remaining there it is reported about 800." They were massacred in Khosrova or Haftevan and the women and girls were "maltreated" and "taken away."⁴¹ American documents report widespread sexual violence against Assyrian women of all ages and the looting and destruction of the houses of about five-sixth of the Assyrian population. Reports state that over 200 girls were forced into sexual slavery and conversion into Islam. Eugene Griselle from the Ethnological Society of Paris gave the figure of 8,500 for the number of deaths in the Urmia region; according to other reports, out of an Assyrian population of 30,000, one-fifth was killed, their villages and churches destroyed. An English priest in the area estimated the death toll over this first phase at 6,000.⁴²

William A. Shedd, the American vice-consul in Urmia, as well as head of Protestant missionary, in his letter of March 1 recounted: "Gulpashan has turned into ruins. The notable men of the village were shot in the graveyard at night. Women and young girls were raped by Turks. Within several hours more than 800 people were murdered." Dr. Shedd sent a petition to Gordon Paddock, the American consul at Tabriz, asking him to visit Urmia and personally

36 Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation*, 127, 128, 134.

37 *Mshak*, no. 223, October 10, 1915.

38 S. Avagyants, *Kotoratze Salmastum [The Massacre in Salamas]*, Tiflis, 1915, 24.

39 *Mshak*, no. 55 (Mar. 14, 1915).

40 Hannibal Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East: The Ottoman Empire, Iraq, and Sudan* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2010), 237–277, 293–294.

41 "Says Turks Aided Recent Massacres," *The New York Times* (Apr. 29, 1915), <http://armenian-genocide100.org/en/100-years-ago-en/1915/04/29/>.

42 Hannibal Travis, "'Native Christians Massacred': The Ottoman Genocide of the Assyrians during World War I," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 1, no. 3 (Dec. 2006), 327–371.

see all those murderous atrocities. The consul in his turn sent telegrams out asking for help.⁴³ Robert Labaree, of the Presbyterian mission, wrote that: “The Kurds driven back from Khoi massacred 800 Syrian and Armenian men with cruel torture. This in the plain of Salamas.”⁴⁴ Shedd wrote of the “outraging of hundreds of women and girls of every age – from eight or nine years to old age,” and of 200 girls and women being taken captive.⁴⁵

In 1915, in an article entitled “Really Hell,” the *Mshak* wrote: “Urmia is no more the happy town it used to be: life is dead in here, and ruins are all around. Turks and Kurds destroyed here not only the houses of wealthy Armenians and Assyrians, but also the Russian consulate and the lodgings of the soldiers.”⁴⁶ Dr. Labaree made a similar report in a letter to his mother written on March 12, 1915: “Sixty men were taken out of the French Mission, where they had taken refuge, and shot. Others have been hanged.”⁴⁷ Referring to the atrocities committed by Muslims on the Assyrian population, Dr. Labaree continued: “All women were raped without exception: it was the intended part of their program.”⁴⁸

In addition to Gulpashan, massacres took place in Geogtapa, Ada, Khosrova, Haftevan, and other Assyrian villages; while all the local schools and churches were ruined.⁴⁹ In one of the gardens more than 100 corpses were found. One of the eyewitnesses reported: “I saw five corpses near a wall: they were tied together, killed and the wall was pulled down on them.”⁵⁰ About 300 people were burned alive in the Nestorian church of the village of Ada located on the bank of Nazlu-Chay.⁵¹ The same thing happened in the village of Geogtape: after burning the seventy Assyrians hiding in the cloister they tied the hands of the sixty defenders of the village and shot them. Two hundred women were taken to Turkish harems. The cemeteries of Geogtape were full of dead bodies.⁵² In the neighboring village of Khanishan, where fifty Armenian and Assyrian households resided, Turks did not spare a single Christian.⁵³ In the same period, Kurds entered the Assyrian village of Patamur and destroyed it, murdering the local population.⁵⁴

43 William Shedd, “Urmia,” in Bryce and Toynbee (Eds.), *Treatment of Armenians*, 101.

44 Robert Labaree, “First Exodus from Urmia,” in *ibid.*, 110.

45 Shedd, “Urmia,” in *ibid.*, 103.

46 *Mshak*, no. 41 (Feb. 25, 1915).

47 Robert Labaree, “Azerbaijan, Behind the Russian Front,” in Bryce and Toynbee (Eds.), *Treatment of Armenians*, 110.

48 Kloian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 17.

49 Anahit Khosroeva, “The Assyrian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire and Adjacent Territories,” in Richard Hovannisian (Ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2007), 271.

50 Hovhannes Ter-Martirosyan [A-Do], *Metz depkere Vaspurakanum 1914–1915 tvakanerin* [*The Great Events in Vaspurakan in 1914–1915*], 121.

51 Joseph Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?* (New York: Chaldean Rescue, 1921), 272.

52 *Mshak*, no. 62 (Mar. 27, 1915).

53 *Mshak*, no. 41 (Feb. 25, 1915).

54 Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?*, 272.

Turks, furious about the occupation of Dilman by Russians on April 20, 1915, murdered the population of the twenty neighboring Assyrian villages.⁵⁵ Here several hundred Assyrian women were undressed and brought out to the central street. They were given an hour to decide whether they would change their religion or not. According to an eyewitness the blood of those killed women was flowing down the central street of Dilman.⁵⁶

Resistance and a struggle between the Assyrians and Kurds started in Sauj Bulak (also then known as Saoudjboulak). The only way to escape the slaughter was emigration; a lot of people set out on the roads and paths out of the region. The Russian consul in Julfa sent a petition to his government in the hope of saving the 15,000 Assyrian refugees (see Figure 4.3).⁵⁷ Within several days the number of refugees in Julfa started to grow and soon it was 44,000, out of which 20,000 were Assyrians from Tabriz, Khoi, Salamas, and Urmia.⁵⁸

On April 26, 1915, the *New York Times* published an article entitled “The Great Exodus of Christians”:

The exodus of from 20,000 to 30,000 Armenians and Nestorian Christians from Azerbaijan Province, the massacre of over 1,500 of those



Figure 4.3 Assyrian refugees in Urmia during the war

Source: Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation*, 118.

55 Sargizov, *Assiriysi stran Blizhnego*, 72.

56 Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?*, 288.

57 National Archive of Republic of Georgia, file 519, list 1, no. 21, 289.

58 Armenian National Archive, file 50, list 1, no. 127, 109.

who were unable to flee, the death from disease of 2,000 in the compounds of the American mission in Urmia, and possibly of an equal number of refugees in the Caucasus have been confirmed. . . . Isaac Yonan was among the refugees who kept a diary of the happenings during the exodus. Telling about the suffering, losses and the desperate situation they went through, added that after walking 20 miles per day the situation was so unbearable that it seemed those who died seem to be envied by the living.⁵⁹

Especially severe was the situation of those who could not manage to or did not want to emigrate abroad. According to the head of the hospital in Urmia, Dr. Jacob Sargis, within five months after the Russians' departure 8,500 Assyrians died in their region: 1,500 were killed, and the rest died from hunger and cold.⁶⁰ In his letter of March 17, 1915, an American missionary F.N. Jessup wrote:

From Urmia 17,000 or 18,000 must have fled. . . . Some children were carried off by wolves, and many more died before morning. And then the march of those days! Up before daylight, struggling in the snow and slush and darkness to find and keep to the road through the mountain passes, . . . the weak and sick falling by the wayside, many never to rise again.⁶¹

According to the bulletin of the Brotherly Help Committee of Salamas, in the Urmia region 20,000 Assyrians took shelter at the American missionary building, in order to escape Turkish attacks.⁶² In Georgian archival documents this number as 22,000.⁶³ Turks managed to find and shoot many of the Assyrians hiding there.⁶⁴

In the western part of Urmia was located the Assyrian village of Zumalan. The majority of its population (about 1,200 people) migrated to Caucasus. Only the elderly stayed in the village, and Kurds slaughtered all of them. Kosi, another Assyrian village near Zumalan, suffered the same bitter fate: 1,000 people managed to flee to the Yerevan province, but the rest fell victim to Turkish atrocities. They were invited to adopt Islam and escape death, but Assyrians chose death. According to eyewitness accounts the Assyrian children of the village "were hacked to pieces while alive, thrown into fire and roasted. Then they forced the mothers to eat that meat."⁶⁵

59 Kloian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 9.

60 *Ibid.*, 139.

61 F.N. Jessup, "Tabriz," Mar. 17, 1915, in Bryce and Toynbee (Eds.), *Treatment of Armenians*, 115.

62 Armenian National Archive, file 50, list 1, no. 127, 111.

63 National Archive of Republic of Georgia, file 13, list 3, no. 1583, 14.

64 *Ibid.*

65 *Mshak*, no. 59 (Mar. 19, 1915).

Helen Schwarten, was only five years old when in spring 1915 those tragic events happened in Urmia.⁶⁶ “I remember,” she told, “how the adults were saying that both Russians and Turks want to win the Assyrians to their side. When the representatives of my people refused to cooperate with Turks a horrible massacre began. Thousands of people were killed.”⁶⁷

In April 1915, in Urmia, 500 Assyrians including the bishop of that region and five other clergymen were dragged to the building of the French mission and murdered in front of many people.⁶⁸ On May 28, 1915, bishop Nerses telegraphed to the Armenian patriarch that 4,000 Assyrians had been killed so far in Urmia, while 6,000 were dead from disease.⁶⁹ He also reported that 20,000 Armenians and Assyrians arrived in Julfa as early as at the beginning of 1916.⁷⁰ According to Dr. Jacob Sargis, 60 wealthy Assyrians were brought from Bashkale to Urmia and next day they were killed.⁷¹ On February 12, 1916, the prefect of Tabriz telegraphed to Caucasus, reporting: “The houses of local Assyrians were plundered and scorched out. Especially severe is the situation of the Assyrian refugees.”⁷²

In September 1916, the representatives of Turkish and German embassies of Persia announced that they would prevent any further attempts of violence towards Armenians and Assyrians on the occupied territories. But in the villages of Harif, Khosrova, and Mekhlem adjacent to Dilman, only at the night of February 14 from 15, 1917, 707 Armenians and Assyrians were killed.⁷³ Turks strung up forty Assyrians in the yard of the French Roman Catholic Mission of Fateh Ali Khan Kyol in Urmia.⁷⁴

Organizing a resistance

In February 1917 the Turkish consul of Urmia, taking the opportunity, squeezed money out of the Assyrian settlements as a ransom. He even sent there soldiers “to ensure the people’s security,” who in their turn plundered and destroyed the villages, taking the Assyrian women to Turkish harems. In those days rumors started to circulate in the town that Persians were planning slaughters of the Christian population. The Assyrians called a meeting and decided to attack first. However, the decision was late: as early as on

66 Helen Schwarten, *My Story: Persia to America* (Chicago: Assyrian Universal Alliance Foundation, 1998).

67 Vasil Shoumanov, *Assyrians in Chicago* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2001), 64.

68 Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?*, 272.

69 Armenian National Archive, file 57, list 5, no. 103, 38.

70 H. Melkonyan, *Vochiri burger [Pyramids of Crime]* (Yerevan, 2001), 133.

71 Kloian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 139.

72 National Archive of Republic of Georgia, file 13, list 27, no. 4278, 21.

73 M.G. Nersisyan (Ed.), *Genotsid armanyan v Osmanskoy imperii [The Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire]* (Yerevan: Izdatel'stvo Aiastan, 1966), 246.

74 Johannes Lepsius, *Deutschland und Armenien: Sammlung Diplomatischer Aktunstucke* (Potsdam, Germany: Tempelverlag, 1919), 115.

February 22 a crowd of Muslims attacked the house of the Assyrian leader Agha Petros to steal the weapons and ammunition there.⁷⁵

In December 1917 the Russian army left the territory of Persia, leaving the Assyrians a fair amount of weapons and ammunition. Learning about it the Persian government tried to take the opportunity to get back at Assyrians. The Assyrians hurried to reassure the Persians that they had nothing against their country, and their aim was to stay there until they obtained some “land” in Kurdistan. The Persian government issued an order about disarmament of Assyrians. Many Assyrians were killed for insubordination in Salamas and some other regions of Urmia. Then Mar Shimun interfered in the issue; disarmament took place, but the Assyrians did not forget this episode concerning the murders for a long time.⁷⁶ Agha Petros and representatives of the Entente Powers met in Urmia, where the Assyrians were promised weapons, ammunition, and money to establish Assyrian autonomy.⁷⁷

The attitude of the English towards the Assyrians entirely coincided with the interests of Kurdish leader Ismail Agha Simko, who had once pinned great hopes on the Tsarist Russia and then got disappointed. In early 1918, being in a great need of money, Simko decided to get it by plundering the Assyrian settlements and especially the patriarch’s building. In order to implement his plan he sent a delegation to Mar Shimun in Salamas several times as if to cooperate. The patriarch was more than once advised not to cooperate with the Kurdish leader; nevertheless, in March 1918, at the suggestion of English captain Gracey, a decision was made to come to an agreement with Kurds and act together. But on March 3, Agha Simko invited an Assyrian delegation of 100–150 people headed by Mar Shimun to his castle Kyohna-Shahar and trapped them. At the end of the luxurious reception Mar Shimun along with his brother David and forty other people were

75 Ara Sarafian, *United States Official Documents on the Armenian Genocide, Volume II, The Peripheries* (Watertown, MA: Armenian Review, 1994), 147.

76 *Ibid.*, 146–147.

77 John Fisher, “Man on the Spot: Captain George Gracey and British Policy towards the Assyrians, 1917–1945,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 2 (2008): 215–235, 218–219, 225–226, citing F.O. 371/15316/E4039/75/93, minute by W.J. Childs, Clerk of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, 13 June 1931, “Extract From a Report by the Assyrian Refugee Commission at Tehran, at the End of 1918”; F.O. 371/15316/E3791, minute by G.W. Rendel, Head of the Eastern Department, Foreign Office, 17 June 1931; U.S. National Archives, Record Group 59/891.00/1400, “Confidential Political Report,” Report No. 5, Ferrin, 18 Dec. 1918; RG 59/891.00/1396, Ferrin to Secretary of State, 6 Nov. 1926, No. 10; F.O. 371/16891/E5653, Sterndale Bennett, “The Responsibility of His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom for the Future of the Assyrians” (Sept. 22, 1933); see also, Basil Nikitine, “Letter of 15 March 1922,” in Bejtullah Destani (Ed.), *Minorities in the Middle East, Volume 10: Christian Minorities 1838–1967* (Cambridge: Archive Editions, 2007), 159; Basil Nikitine, “Letter of Jan. 31, 1934,” in Annemasse, *The Assyrian Tragedy* (Chicago: n.p., 1934), ch. 2, www.aina.org/books/tat.htm; Lt. Col. Ronald Stafford, “Iraq and the Problem of the Assyrians,” *International Affairs* (1934): 159–184, 183 (comment of William Wigram).

murdered.⁷⁸ In another source, “the number of murdered Assyrians is 75,” which may be more accurate.⁷⁹

People living in that region, having heard it from the contemporaries of those events, still tell that during the supper with Agha Simko, while serving tea, a Kurdish servant managed to notify Mar Shimun about the plot but it was too late. The corpses of the members of the Assyrian delegation remained on the floor for seven days. On the seventh day, when the corpses were gathered, it turned out that two of them were alive.

After that Agha Petros decided to take revenge and, coming from Urmia with 7,000 mountain-dwellers, after three days of battles, razed Agha Semko’s castle to the ground. He then encircled Agha Semko’s other castle located to the south of Diliman – Chara-Kalu. After a 36-hour struggle, the castle passed into the Assyrians’ hands. The Kurdish leader along with twenty-eight other Kurds managed to escape and take his revenge upon 3,800 Armenian and Assyrian women and children living in Khoi. Many of them forcibly adopted Islam.

The final massacre in Urmia

After Mar Shimun’s death 16,000 Assyrians were killed in Urmia, including famous doctors, physicians, teachers, scientists, and clergymen.⁸⁰ The struggle against Turkish, Persian, and Kurdish forces was reborn. On April 16, 1918, a battle between Agha Petros and Turkish troops took place in Diliman with losses on both sides.⁸¹ Mar Shimun XXI Benyamin’s death, which was a heavy blow to the people, did not break the spirit of all Assyrians. The day of elections of a new leader was determined and on March 8, 1918, in the Nestorian church of St. Mary, in the presence of Metropolitans Mar Elia and Mar Khnanisha, the people unanimously demanded that by tradition the slain patriarch’s elder brother Poulos be elected patriarch in turn. On April 15, 1918, Poulos was elected patriarch as Mar Shimun XXII.⁸²

The encirclement of Urmia by Kurds and Turks began on June 18, 1918 and lasted for two months. The help promised by the Entente Powers did not reach the Assyrians, hemmed in by the enemy. The painful exodus from

78 Sarafian, *United States Official Documents*, II, 148–149.

79 Armenian National Archive, file 121, list 2, No. 96, 5.

80 Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?*, 287, 290.

81 Sarafian, *United States Official Documents*, vol. II, 151.

82 However, the Mar Shimun XXII Poulos was sick and therefore his sister, Surma Khanum, actually assumed his role. Her blind trust in the British had grave consequences for the future of the Assyrians. After the early death of Mar Shimun XXII, according to the law, the 12-year-old Ishaya, who later became Mar Shimun XXIII, was to take up this position. But at that time he left for Britain with his family and Surma Khanum continued to manage the religious affairs. Shlimon Gilliana, *Assyrians in the Wilderness: Memoirs* (Chicago: Assyrian Universal Alliance Foundation, 2000), 53.

Urmia to the near-deserts of Mesopotamia, accompanied by severe human losses, began. A British captain wrote that the Assyrians paid a high price for a broken promise.⁸³

Aftermath in Khoi

In summer 1918, the conditions for Assyrians became unbearable in Persia; because of the heat, hunger, and epidemics the number of Assyrian refugees fell drastically. One of the few who survived was Rev. John Eshoo. After escaping, he stated:

You have undoubtedly heard of the Assyrian massacre of Khoi, but I am certain you do not know the details.

These Assyrians were assembled into one caravansary, and shot to death by guns and revolvers. Blood literally flowed in little streams, and the entire open space within the caravansary became a pool of crimson liquid. The place was too small to hold all the living victims waiting for execution. They were brought in groups, and each new group was compelled to stand over the heap of the still bleeding bodies and shot to death. The fearful place became literally a human slaughter house, receiving its speechless victims, in groups of ten and twenty at a time, for execution.

At the same time, the Assyrians, who were residing in the suburb of the city, were brought together and driven into the spacious courtyard of house. . . . The Assyrian refugees, were kept under guard for eight days, without anything to eat. At last they were removed from their place of confinement and taken to a spot prepared for their brutal killing. These helpless Assyrians marched like lambs to their slaughter, and they opened not their mouth, save by sayings "Lord, into thy hands we commit our spirits." . . .

The executioners began by cutting first the fingers of their victims; joint by joint, till the two hands were entirely amputated. Then they were stretched on the ground, after the manner of the animals that are slain in the East, but these with their faces turned upward, and their heads resting upon the stones or blocks of wood. Then their throats were half cut, so as to prolong their torture of dying, and while struggling in the agony of death, the victims were kicked and clubbed by heavy poles the murderers carried. Many of them, while still laboring under the pain of death, were thrown into ditches and buried before their souls had expired.

The young men and the able-bodied men were separated from among the very young and the old. They were taken some distance from the

83 Joseph Alichoran, *Du génocide à la Diaspora: Les Assyro-Chaldéens au XX siècle* (Paris: Revue Istina, 1994), 382.

city and used as targets by the shooters. They all fell, a few not mortally wounded. One of the leaders went to the heaps of the fallen and shouted aloud, swearing by the names of Islam's prophets that those who had not received mortal wounds should rise and depart, as they would not be harmed any more. A few, thus deceived, stood up, but only to fall this time killed by another volley from the guns of the murderers.

Some of the younger and good looking women, together with a few little girls of attractive appearance, pleaded to be killed. Against their will were forced into Islam's harems. Others were subjected to such fiendish insults that I cannot possibly describe. Death, however, came to their rescue and saved them from the vile passions of the demons. The death toll of Assyrians totaled 2,770 men, women and children.⁸⁴

There were only about 20,000 Assyrians remaining after the war, a reduction of more than two-thirds.⁸⁵

The surviving refugees got to Hamadan, where they met the occasionally inhospitable treatment of the British.⁸⁶ A soldier of the 5th Armenian rifle regiment wrote in his report: "We did our best to save the people [Assyrians] who survived slaughters, getting them to the British [in Hamadan], but here they were also doomed to death."⁸⁷ In Mesopotamia, the Assyrians were recruited in the Mandate army as "Assyrian levies." In 1919 they participated in the suppression of anti-British revolts of the Arabs and Kurds in Mesopotamia.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Turks perpetrated the genocide of the Assyrians not only in the territory of the Ottoman Empire but also in the territory of Persia, which proclaimed itself neutral during the war. The Assyrians of Persia perished from direct violence, starvation, illness, or exposure in the tens of thousands. The Persian government protested, but other Persians participated in the violence on the ground. The harms inflicted by this genocide were and are considerable. People were killed, tortured, and died as a result of conditions imposed to cause their deaths, such as denial of food or water. Sexualized violence against Assyrian females of every age was common. Assyrian children and women were forcibly Islamized and conscripted into Turkish and Kurdish households. Many properties, agriculture

84 Joel Werda, *The Flickering Light of Asia, Or, the Assyrian Nation and Church* (New York: The Author, 1924), ch. 26.

85 Ferydoon Firoozi, "Tehran: A Demographic and Economic Analysis," *Middle Eastern Studies* 10, no. 1 (1974): 64.

86 *Etnograficheskiye ocherki, Narodi mira* [Ethnographical Studies, Nations of the World], vol. *Narodi Peredney Azii* [Nations of Western Asia] (Moscow, 1957), 295.

87 Armenian National Archive, file 121, list 2, no. 96, 20.

lands, and other material resources of the Assyrians were lost, driving tens of thousands of survivors into destitution and subsistence rations.

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5 Abduction, rape, and genocide

Urmia's Assyrian girls and women

Eden Naby

Introduction

Twenty-six years would pass between the time that the League of Nations recognized the need to act on behalf of abducted women in 1922, and the drafting of the Genocide Convention in 1948. Although rape was not specifically mentioned in the UN definition of genocide, article II of the Convention speaks indirectly to the issue of abduction and rape in article II(b) (inflicting serious bodily or mental harm on members of the group), II(d) (preventing births within the group), and II(e) (forcibly transferring children out of the group).¹ By 1998, after the systematic and documented rape during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, rape is acknowledged as a method of genocide commission.² For purposes of genocide prosecutions, rape was defined as “a physical invasion of a sexual nature under circumstances which are coercive,” with sexual violence being defined more broadly to include any coercive “act of a sexual nature.”³

1 Article 2 of the Genocide Convention defines genocide, inter alia, as: “(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group” and “(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.” Article II(e) describes forcible transfer of children from one group to another as a potentially genocidal tactic. Sonja Grover, *Child Soldier Victims of Genocidal Forcible Transfer* (London: Springer, 2012), 36–37, 139–140, 153–157, 173–174, 201–202. See also, Kathleen Cavanaugh, “Forced Impregnation and Rape as a Means of Genocide,” *New England Journal International & Comparative Law* 8, no. 2 (2002): 1–21, 11; Karen Engle, “Feminism and Its (Dis)Contents: Criminalizing Wartime Rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *American Journal of International Law* 99 (2005): 778–816; Catharine MacKinnon, “Rape, Genocide, and Women’s Human Rights,” *Harvard Women’s Law Journal* 17 (1994): 5–16; Catherine MacKinnon, “The ICTR’s Legacy on Sexual Violence,” *New England Journal International & Comparative Law* 14, no. 2 (2008): 211–220; Catherine MacKinnon, “Defining Rape Internationally: A Comment on *Akayesu*,” *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* 44, no. 3 (2006): 940–958.

2 Press Release, Human Rights Watch World Report, *Human Rights Watch Applauds Rwanda Rape Verdict; Sets International Precedent for Punishing Sexual Violence as a War Crime* (Sept. 1998), www.hrw.org/press98/sept/trape902.htm; Women’s Caucus for Gender Justice, *Summary of Recommendations, Elements of Crimes* (June 12–30, 2000), ICC Women, www.iccwomen.org/icc/pc200006.

3 *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Case No. ICTR-96–4-T, Judgment (Sept. 2, 1998), para. 598.

Whether or not the Genocide Convention comes to be applied retrospectively to the genocide of the First World War committed by the Ottoman Turks, documenting the role that abduction and rape played in traumatizing the Assyrian community remains a task both painful and difficult. Abduction and rape affected Assyrian girls and women dramatically, humiliated them and their helpless families, and reduced the ability of the Assyrian ethnic group to reproduce itself and pass on its unique culture and history.

The League of Nations program of reclamation of girls and women only dealt with getting back survivors from captivity among Turks, Arabs and Kurds: it did not address the problem of aiding rape victims who survived and remained within their own communities – that is a contemporary issue that emerges in situations of genocide, for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴ During the immediate aftermath of genocide in World War I, the Assyrian community treated surviving rape victims in three ways: denial of the event, ostracism of the women, or acceptance of the women back into the family and community. In this chapter, I will look at the few sources we have for the incidence of rape in the context of war and genocide and show the following:

- rape has been endemic among some Turkic communities as a custom associated with bride-snatching;
- rape was a factor in the exercise of Muslim power over religious minorities;
- rape of Assyrian women during the genocide was so widespread as to alter Assyrian social mores, as families protected and helped to rehabilitate women who had been thus treated, if they survived and could be returned to the family, while typically no blame was projected onto the victim girl or her family's honor, as might have been the case in a strictly patriarchal society; and
- unsafe conditions for women, especially in rural areas, partially accounts for the abandonment of formerly Assyrian villages and limited women's activities in the public sphere after 1914 outside of urban settings.

Official reclamation efforts in the aftermath of World War I

Initially funded by Christian missionary-related charities, Armenian charities, and some international funding through the League of Nations, reclamation efforts offer some interesting records. The work of Neutral House

⁴ Charles Levermore, *Yearbook of the League of Nations* 2 (New York: The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1922), 160. This book covers the period from January 1, 1921 to February 6, 1922, and was compiled by the secretary of the League of Nations Union and of the New York Peace Society. Amnesty International has been publicizing the need for reparations for wartime rape and sexual violence victims only during the late twentieth century as in the Balkan war between 1992–1995. Amnesty International, *World Report 2013 The State of the World's Human Rights*, 41, http://files.amnesty.org/air13/AmnestyInternational_AnnualReport2013_complete_en.pdf. In cases of non-wartime rape, individual countries have been adopting the legal framework for compensation as in Australia, England and Wales, and elsewhere.

in Constantinople and Rescue House in Aleppo, having received the imprimatur of the League, operated under a committee whose ex officio members included the high commissioners in Turkey of France, Great Britain, and Italy, and worked in cooperation with the Greek and Armenian patriarchs in Constantinople.⁵ From the emerging studies of the operation in Aleppo, run by the Danish former missionary teacher, Karen Jeppe (1876–1935), it is clear that some Assyrian women as well as hundreds of Armenians made their way to the Commission for the Protection of Women and Children in the Near East.⁶ Jeppe, with a successful history as an educator with the German Orient Mission since arriving in Urfa in 1903, is credited with rescuing up to 2,000 women and girls. She kept a record of each person who came under her care, a record that includes names of family members, original home, and some thing about the conditions of captivity.⁷ Among

5 “Neutral House” was a place “where British officials and Near East Relief care for terror-stricken little children without a country, youngsters who dare not tell their nationality because of their fear of the Turk.” “Matching Human Samples,” *World Outlook* 6 (1920): 44. In her final report, Karen Jeppe, the head of a branch of the League of Nations Commission for the Protection of Women and Children in the Near East, reported that the League had “reclaimed” 1,600 Armenians from Turkish, Arab, or Kurdish households, with 1,400 having taken shelter for at least a time in the Neutral House. Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 33–35. Jeppe reported that the Armenians had been denationalized, “people in rags, dirty and of a savage bearing” but “soon ‘the Armenian’ within begins to reappear [b]efore they leave us.” *Ibid.*, 33. Six percent of the women and children elected to return to Muslim families, *ibid.*, 35, while an estimated 30,000 Christian women suffered rape or coercive exploitation and were infected with venereal disease after being sold or “promiscuously violated.” Maj. Gen. James. G. Harbord, U.S. Army, *Conditions in the Near East, Report of the American Military Mission to Armenia, Presented by Mr. Lodge* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 7–9. Article 142 of the Treaty of Sèvres provided that all persons who were Christian or Jewish as of November 1, 1914 should have the opportunity to return to the faith, and that “the Turkish government undertakes to afford all the assistance in its power or in that of the Turkish authorities in the search for and deliverance of all persons, of whatever race or religion, who have disappeared, been carried off, interned, or placed in captivity” as of that date. Quoted in Vartkes Yeghiayan, *British Reports on Ethnic Cleansing in Anatolia, 1919–1922: The Armenian-Greek Section* (Glendale, CA: Center for Armenian Remembrance, 2007), xxix. In 1919, the British High Commission formed the Armenian-Greek Section in Constantinople in order “to rescue Armenian and Greek women and children . . . from the Turkish houses and institutions into which they have been taken.” *Ibid.*, xxvi. In 1921, the League of Nations became involved, and resolved “to rescue the women and children . . . and give them a proper start in the new life.” Matthias Bjørnlund, “The Aleppo Protocols: Histories of the Armenian Genocide,” in Dicle Akar Bilgin, Matthias Bjørnlund and Taner Akçam (Eds.), *The League of Nations in Aleppo: Armenian Women and Children Survivors 1921–1927* (2014), www.armenocide.de/armenocide/orphan-children.nsf!OpenDatabase.

6 Keith David Watenpaugh, “The League of Nations’ Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920–1927,” *American Historical Review* 115, no. 5 (2010): 1315–1339.

7 Dicle Akar Bilgin, Matthias Bjørnlund and Taner Akçam (Eds.), *The League of Nations in Aleppo: Armenian Women and Children Survivors 1921–1927* (2014), www.armenocide.de/armenocide/orphan-children.nsf!OpenDatabase.

these records, apparently, there are accounts of a few Assyrian women.⁸ Finding Assyrians rescued in this effort geared toward Armenians is difficult, because the League employed Armenians rather than Assyrians on the ground, and many times Assyrians were subsumed under the category of Armenian during the genocide and its aftermath. These factors make the League of Nations records only partially helpful in determining the quantity of Assyrian women from southeastern Anatolia who were abducted in the genocide.⁹ However, because the Jeppe records, visual and written, provide concrete information, they ought to be explored for their Assyrian content as well as the general condition of women and girls who were abducted, often taken along the death march route and sold into Turkish, Kurdish, and Arab households. Some chose to escape and others could not, because it would have been necessary to abandon the children they had borne. Such information is critical to understanding the fate of Assyrian women during the genocide.

In addition to Jeppe's Rescue House in Aleppo, its satellites, and Armenian Diaspora-funded orphanages, there were many Turkish orphanages throughout southeast Turkey that brought in Christian children who were Islamicized, with new Muslim names.¹⁰ Armenian rescue missions, funded by the Armenian Diaspora, actively sought out Armenian women and girls and regarded confronting this aspect of the genocide as critical to the moral unification of the new nation.¹¹ Records of formal rescue operations for Assyrian women still have to be sought and explored. We know that in the Mosul area, after the departure of the Ottoman Army and the arrival of the British Indian army in November 14, 1918, conditions improved and both Assyrians and Armenians took action to establish orphanages and

8 Keith David Watenpaugh, "Finding the Lost: The Rescue of Trafficked Women and Children After the Armenian Genocide," *Lecture at the National Association for Armenian Study and Research* (Oct. 28, 2010).

9 For example, in the Nubarian Library of the Armenian Greater Benevolent Union in Paris, there is a photograph of a woman named "Khatoun" at 17 years of age. The name stands out as one commonly used among Assyrians rather than Armenians. This image may be found at the Genocide Museum (Yerevan) site among photographs of women with Armenian names. *Armenian Genocide Museum* (2013), www.genocide-museum.am/eng/online_exhibition_2.php.

10 Halide Edip (1884–1964), the leading Turkish feminist of the time, was active in the Ottoman orphanage network; she disputed the de-Islamization and renaming of Christian children in Istanbul and elsewhere. Halide Edip Adivar, *Memoirs of Halid  Edib* (New York: The Century Co., 1926), 429. Of note, too, are the orphan girls (and one boy) that Mustafa Kemal "Atat rk," the Turkish republic's first president, adopted. It is often assumed that one, Sahiba G k en (1913–2001) was Kurdish or Armenian. She became the first female military pilot in Turkey and made strafing runs on Kurdish villages during the 1937 Dersim rebellion's suppression. Laure Marchand and Guillaume Perrier, *Turkey and the Armenian Ghost: On the Trail of the Genocide* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 66.

11 Vah  Tachjian, "Gender, Nationalism, Exclusion: The Reintegration Process of Female Survivors of the Armenian Genocide," *Nations and Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (2009): 60–80.

means of rescuing exploited women or prostitutes.¹² And we also know that orphanage schools functioned through church organizations.¹³ But where the record is unclear is as to the volume of abductions (nearly always entailing rape) that occurred, and the methods of rescue or the numbers rescued. We do have some individual accounts, if not studies that have scoured all available records for precise information. We can also hazard some guesses based on the numbers of Armenian women (including Assyrians as well) who are estimated to have been abducted: that figure runs to 200,000.¹⁴ As the stories of the Armenian grandmothers of a number of Turks living today emerge, the likelihood of Assyrian grandmothers arises, especially in places such as Mardin and Diyarbakir, and among Kurds living in regions adjoining the borders of Turkey with Iraq, Iran, and Syria.¹⁵

Abduction and rape in Turkic Muslim societies

Bride kidnapping is even now widespread among some Turkic peoples, especially in Central Asia (now called Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Azerbaijanis, and by various Caucasian names), and especially at times of economic

- 12 Zaven Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, trans. Ared Misirliyan (Barrington, RI: Mayreni, 2002), 154–155. As one report noted:

During World War I many Assyrians were persecuted and left homeless. They were driven from their cities and home towns and became refugees in strange lands. At this time many of the Assyrian children were left destitute and became orphans without the advantages of some definite, organized charitable institution to aid them. . . . His Holiness Mar Ignatius Elias, III, then Patriarch, . . . was contemplating the opening of an orphanage and school.

American Friends of the Middle East, *Proceedings of the Annual Conference* (Washington, DC: The Author, 1953), 83.

- 13 The Assyrian Orphanage and School organization, the very first Assyrian charitable institution to form in the United States (1897), was formed to provide aid to Assyrian children from Tur Abdin whose numbers multiplied as a result of the massacres of 1895–1896. Eden Naby, “The Assyrian Diaspora: Cultural Survival in the Absence of State Structure,” in Touraj Atabaki and Sanjyot Mehendale (Eds.), *Central Asia and the Caucasus: Transnationalism and Diaspora* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2005), 214–230, 223. There were reports of 50,000 primarily Armenian orphans in the aftermath of these massacres. Nazan Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 120.
- 14 C.A. McCartney, “Refugees,” *Manchester Guardian* (Oct. 8, 1926), 127. That Assyrian women appear in Armenian records is discussed briefly above, in a footnote.
- 15 *Grandma’s Tattoos*, a film by Suzanne Khardalian (2011), speaks to the practice of tattooing women being held by Arab captors, and the studies of Ayşe Gül Altınay and Lerna Ekmekçioglu (MIT) on the issue of Christian grandmothers of Turks and Kurds are groundbreaking in this regard. Ayşe Gul Altınay and Fethiye Çetin, *The Grandchildren: The Hidden Legacy of ‘Lost’ Armenians in Turkey*, trans. Maureen Freely (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2014); Lerna Ekmekçioglu, *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016); Lerna Ekmekçioglu, “A Climate for Abduction, a Climate for Redemption: The Politics of Inclusion during and After the Armenian Genocide,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 3 (2013): 522–553.

difficulty.¹⁶ These societies distinguish between elopement and bride-snatching with special vocabularies: the object in bride-snatching is to avoid paying for the costs of the bride-price as well as the consent of the girl's family. Once the girl is taken to the prospective groom's home, whether she is raped or not, she is considered impure.¹⁷ It is not at all clear that the girl's family, no matter how incensed or disapproving, will want to claim her back again.¹⁸ The necessity of guarding the girl initially, therefore, is built into such societies, as is the practice of veiling, honor-killing, and other customs related to the seclusion of women and girls.¹⁹ Most cases of bride-snatching do not cross religious lines; that is, the issue is not taking advantage of a stronger political position of one ethnic or religious group over another group in a weaker position from the standpoint of law and military power.²⁰ Rather the issue is overpowering the girl herself and assuming that because she will be considered defiled, her family will have no recourse but to negotiate a tenable situation short of a blood feud.²¹

But where there was an unequal status growing out of a religious or ethnic majority/minority situation, then even in peaceful times, a young minority female's position was precarious. Perhaps the best-known case of glamorized girl-snatching in Turkic history is that of Roxolana, the Ukrainian/Polish daughter of an Orthodox priest who was kidnapped (as were many Christian girls) by Crimean Tatars and presented to the Sultan's court in Istanbul during the 1520s.²² Like the Crimean Tatars to the west of the Caspian Sea,

16 "We are mountain people, proud of our traditions, and this custom has been going on for centuries," a Chechen businessman said in 2010 as the government announced fines for bride theft. Lucy Ash, "Can Chechen President Kadyrov Stamp Out Bride-stealing?" *BBC News* (Oct. 9, 2010), <http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11495177>. "According to human rights ombudsman Tursunbek Akun, as rural migrants flood into [Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan], young men too poor to afford the pageantry of a traditional wedding opt instead to kidnap a bride – a method that anecdotal evidence suggests has increased throughout the country in the penurious post-Soviet period." Asel Kalybekova, "Kyrgyzstan: Bride Kidnapping Not Just a Rural Phenomenon," *Eurasianet* (May 10, 2013), <http://eurasianet.org/node/66952>. In 1867, the Ottoman government estimated that there were 150,000 slaves living among about 600,000 Circassians in the empire. Ehud Toledo, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and Its Suppression: 1840–1890* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 151. See also, Douglas Taylor Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), <https://books.google.com/books?id=pUqGCwAAQBAJ&pg=PT101> & <https://books.google.com/books?id=pUqGCwAAQBAJ&pg=PT80>.

17 It has been reported that women in the North Caucasus may decline to report a kidnapping out of a desire not to bring "dishonor" to their families, Jessica Buchleitner, "The Truth about Bride Kidnapping: An Insider Interview on Chechnya," *Women's News Network* (Jan. 14, 2015), <http://womennewsnetwork.net/2015/01/14/truth-about-bride-kidnapping>.

18 Cf. *ibid.*

19 Cf. *ibid.*

20 Cf. *ibid.*

21 Cf. *ibid.*

22 Much of the story of Sultan Soleyman I (1494–1566) as presented in the Turkish TV series *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* (The Magnificent Century) revolves around the accession of this woman to the top echelons of the harem and her mothering of the future sultan.

the Turkmens of the Khiva region, east of the Caspian Sea, had acquired a notorious habit of snatching Russian women, perhaps in the hundreds during the nineteenth century, a problem that afforded the Tsarist army a reason to invade and conquer the region in 1873.²³

How Urmia's Assyrians dealt with rape in the context of genocide

Given that abduction and rape, with the intent of marriage, was a not unknown practice in the societies where Assyrians lived, the great caution exercised by Assyrians to guard their girls and women becomes a matter of historical and societal fact. Even before the genocide of World War I, in memoirs and novels, we read expressions of anxiety that a bride would be abducted, even on the wedding eve, before the consummation of marriage. In 1910, the year before the Tsarist entry into Iranian territory, Mariam Yohannan, the future mother of Prof. John Yohannan (City College of New York) recorded how she and her groom, Dr. David Yohannan, rode from Urmia to Salamas in a carriage guarded by a troop of armed Armenian horsemen to forestall Mariam's abduction by a local Azeri Turk.²⁴ Likewise, after the genocide, when survivors huddled in Tabriz waiting for Tehran's permission to return to their villages in the Urmia region (see Figure 5.1 for a portrait of the conditions faced), they feared the abduction of young girls, who would be heiresses to vineyards and fields, due to their being the sole survivors of their prosperous Assyrian families. Once abducted (and raped), they would be forced to marry their Muslim captors.²⁵ The Muslim husband and children would inherit all the girl's property. She would be forced to accept Islam, raise Muslim children, and be cut off from the

23 Ella Robertson Christie, *Through Khiva to Golden Samarkand: The Remarkable Story of a Women's Adventurous Journey Alone through the Deserts of Central Asia to the Heart of Turkestan* (London: Seeley, Service & Company, 1925), 100; "Hostilities between Persia and Russia," *The Oriental Herald and Colonial Review* 11 (1826): 204–205. The Russian Empire purported to outlaw slavery in Khiva after 1873, freeing 29,300 "slaves" who were Persian subjects, as well as 6,500 other slaves such as Kizil-bashes. John Thomas Bealby and Sir Charles N.E. Eliot, "Khiva," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 25 (New York, Encyclopedia Britannica Co., 11th ed., 1911), 778.

24 Youel A. Baaba (Ed.), *An Assyrian Odyssey: Covering the Journey of Kasha Yacoub Yauvre and His Wife Mourassa From Urmia to the Court of Queen Victoria 1879–1881 and the Exodus of Assyrians From their Ancestral Home in 1918* (Alamo, CA: Youel A Baaba Library, 1998), 82–83. See also, Thomas Yohannan and John D. Yohannan (1911–1997), *Atour.com* (2001), www.atour.com/people/20010702e.html.

25 Forcing a raped woman to marry her rapist continues in many Muslim societies, as a case in Pakistan in 2010 illustrated. Since Muslim society everywhere in the Middle East allowed multiple wives in the period under discussion, the raped Christian woman would likely become the second, third, or fourth wife or concubine, especially in a tribal elite household where the first wife would be acquired through arranged cousin marriage.



Figure 5.1 Refugee girls from Urmia

Source: Abraham Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation, or the Ever Persecuted Nestorians or Assyrian Christians* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 126.

Assyrian community. The marriage of girls as young as fifteen to equally young Assyrian men occurred under such circumstances, as the story of Maryam and Youkhanna (Odishoo) of Golpashan illustrates.²⁶

Records of graduations from Fiske Seminary, the American school for girls established in 1843 in Urmia, show clearly the basis for the fears of the Christian families. On average, of twenty potential graduates in a particular year, twelve might graduate, four might marry and drop out of school before graduation, and four would have been abducted. This is the general breakdown from about 1896 to 1914. After 1914, war conditions deteriorated order: regular graduation from this school did not resume until the school reconvened in Tabriz (1923–1927), with a much reduced student population. The graduating class of 1925 had four young women, survivors from Urmia, rather than the larger numbers prior to the war.²⁷

In his novel *The Well of Ararat*, based on his youth in the Urmia village of Alvach (Assyrian and Armenian population), the author explores the pre-war life of a family with an adolescent daughter and, among other things, demonstrates her ever-diminishing ability to enjoy the freedom of her village

26 Maryam Odishoo related how she could not finish her studies at Fiske Seminary in 1923 because of just such a fear on the part of her distant relatives. Personal communication to Eden Naby in San Jose, CA, June 1994.

27 Lillie Yohannan (Naby) of Digala and Bertha Amrikhas of Ada were two of the girls in this class where the photograph shows three times as many faculty as students. (Picture is in the possession of the author.)

life because she is being stalked by a rich young Muslim of the neighboring village. The author implies that once the war began, life for this girl entailed terrible events.²⁸

The rumblings of war combined with the constitutional turmoil that weakened government authority in Tehran meant that northwest Persia became even more subject to Kurdish rampage than it had been before. The presence of the Tsarist army in Persia increased tension between Muslims and local Christians. The foreign Christian missions that had functioned in Urmia since 1835 had succeeded in mitigating the severity of *dhimmi* laws applied to Assyrians through diplomacy rather than military power. The entry of Tsarist armies introduced a different dimension: the power of advanced weaponry and a history of seemingly inevitable colonial advancement southward. The Russian army behaved arrogantly toward local Muslim Azeri elites while elevating the status of local Christians. The seeds of resentment against Assyrians and Armenians took root even if the influx of semi-independent Assyrian tribes from Ottoman Hakkari had not led to friction by mountain Assyrians unaccustomed to urban life. Together with the fact that the goals of Persia's Constitutional Revolution were threatened by the Russian military and were strongly supported by much of the Azari elites of Tabriz especially, Tsarist entry translated into increased resentment of local Christians who were observed to benefit from the Russian presence, during which the customary level of abusing local Christians diminished.

This situation, confined though it was to the three years between 1911 and 1914, resembles a period in Azarbaijani history in the thirteenth century when the Il-Khanid descendants of Chengiz Khan settled on Maragha, south of Urmia, as their capital and showed no particular favor to any religious group, thus making Muslim, Jew, and Christian equal.²⁹ Once the Il-Khanids converted to Islam (Ghazan Khan in 1295) the customarily intolerant practices toward Christians and Jews resumed, the poll tax returned, and the Christian abandonment of large communities with shrines, churches, and monasteries resumed.³⁰

In January 1915, when Tsarist armies moved westward out of Urmia to fight the Ottoman army advancing in eastern Anatolia (toward Baku) the repressed resentment among local Muslims returned with genocidal vengeance on Christians. During those five months to May 1915 when the Russians returned after successfully halting Ottoman forces at Kara Killisse and Sarikamiş, merciless attacks on villages took place.³¹ After October 1917,

28 Emmanuel Varandyan, *The Well of Ararat* (Belmont, MA: Armenian Heritage Press/National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, 2005 [1938]).

29 Walter Fischel, "Azerbaijan in Jewish History," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 22 (1953): 1–21.

30 Robert Bedrosian, "Armenia during the Seljuk and Mongol Periods," in *The Armenian People From Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 1, ed. Richard Hovannisian (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, paperback ed., 2004), 259–271.

31 Empire du Perse, *Neutralité Persane*, 138–139, 155.

when the Tsarist army began to melt northward in the aftermath of the success of the Bolshevik Revolution. The local Azeri population, together with Kurdish tribes, though not always in concert, moved against the Christian population. After 1917, the Ottoman army took advantage of the military vacuum and, often with the support of local Muslims, rampaged through the Assyrian and Armenian villages.³² The stage was thus set in the summer of 1918 for a mass attack on civilian populations, wholesale abductions, and rape of girls and women, especially young virginal maidens as well as married women with young children. The fears of abduction with which the community had lived for long periods turned into savagery marked by the intent to destroy the Christian population.

Golpashan in 1915

A village in which memory of this period between 1914 and 1918 is relatively well preserved is Golpashan; a large, prosperous, and solely Assyrian village located six kilometers northeast of Urmia, the market and administrative center of the area of Iran that lay between Lake Urmia and the Zagros border with Ottoman Turkey. What transpired in the countryside around Urmia is documented in four sources: 1) Paul Shimmon, the U.S.-educated Assyrian (Bard College) whose testimony was collected with the intention of publishing it in the book edited by Arnold Toynbee that later came to be called the “Blue Book”; 2) the accounts of American missionaries; 3) eyewitness accounts of survivors; and 4) interviews of leading persons from Golpashan taken during the 1990s.

Paul Shimmon’s general account of events in northwest Iran expresses his outrage at the massacres and abductions in 1915 even before the final massacres of the Assyrians that took place in 1918 as they fled the region. He discusses the abduction of women and girls, the attempt by Western missionaries to rescue them, and how some had already become pregnant and so found it hard to return to their families. In every attack on villages south, west, north of Urmia, the attackers were Kurds of different tribes and clans aided by what Shimmon calls “Persian Muslims,” by which he probably meant local Azeri Muslims.

Golpashan had come under the protection of a (well-compensated) Kurdish chief, and so at first was not attacked. But a large gang of Azeri “fadais” (by which he means fanatical riff raff) attacked the village on February 24. They gathered all the men of the village, tied them together, marched them to the cemetery, and hacked them to death.³³ Then they raped the women. But Paul Shimmon, despite his graphic description of the plunder and destruction, puts the fate of the women more delicately: “Then the men, still wild

32 Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 263.

33 The author’s grandfather, Shimun Nwiya (ca. 1860–1915) was one of these men.

with blood, turned on the women, and after treating them in an unseemly manner, put some of them to death.”³⁴ Missionary accounts, written anonymously, cite one Mr. Allen, who reported from Golpashan that “the looters left unviolated hardly a woman or girl of those left in the village, and a number of girls were carried off.”³⁵

Eyewitnesses retold the story more graphically, although not in print. The twin daughters of the local (female) schoolteacher were raped and one of the twins died. Other girls were carried off, one at least to a rape camp near Khoi. This camp served Turkish soldiers and contained many women and girls as well as old men. During the day they were sent to work in the confiscated agricultural fields and at night they were set upon by the soldiers. Stories circulated about how the women would cry out for help from the old men, “Uncle (“*Mam*” short for “*mamuna*” or paternal uncle) Ishoo help us!”³⁶

The remaining girls and women who had successfully hidden on that Saturday in February 1915 descended from the roofs when they heard Mr. Hugo Miller, an American missionary stationed in Urmia, calling for them at the village square. He gathered the girls and women together (as told by then 8-year-old Suria David) and walked with them toward the town of Urmia. When they were beset by angry Muslim raiders who heard the girls were being rescued, Mr. Miller wrapped himself in an American flag and as the entire party linked arms with him, the fear of the authority of the American flag forced the men to allow them to move on into the then-walled town of Urmia.³⁷

Recalling rape and genocide

As may be observed from the details of the description of events in Golpashan, the written sources from missionaries and from Assyrian men do not detail conditions for rape and abduction (as do the brief but detailed records from Rescue House). Delicacy in description renders the accounts a bit tame to readers who by the early twenty-first century have become inured to violence following accounts of the Rwanda genocide and others.

34 Paul Shimon, “Urmia, Salmas, and Hakkari,” in Sir James Bryce, Arnold Toynbee and Ara Sarafian (Eds.), *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon* (London: H.M.S.O., 1916), 164–171, 577–586, <https://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/1915/bryce/a16.htm>.

35 Mary Platt (Ed.), “Urmia during the Turco-Kurdish Occupation: Diary of a Missionary,” in *op cit.*, <http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/1915/bryce/a05.htm>.

36 The situation in the rape camp is not as well known as are the details of the rapes and abductions. My mother told me this part of wartime history with regard to my paternal aunt, a girl of sixteen, who was one of the Golpashan girls taken away. She was ransomed by the American missionaries due to her brother’s persistence. The medical treatment she received for the sexually transmitted disease she had contracted fortunately did not prevent her from later marrying and bearing two children.

37 Ron David, “1914: Mrs. Suria David – Gulpashan, Urmia,” *Atour.com* (1989), www.atour.com/history/1900/20041016a.html.

Male memoirists exercise self-censorship to spare the reader the horrors of rape and abduction. Little information has escaped from the rape camps. Relatives, even when all Assyrian girls thus violated have already died, are reluctant to discuss these situations, or did not know much. It is still a whispered shame, a sign of Assyrian communal helplessness to protect themselves from either the murder of the men and boys or the attacks on the girls and women. Three Assyrian men, however, have written fictionalized or memoir accounts of what happened to the girls and how the community dealt with the aftermath of so many women being abducted and lost into Kurdish and Azeri households. Acknowledgement of the events has begun to emerge even as the Assyrian community has begun to move toward redeeming the memory of these women and acknowledging this mass crime against them. The redemption, both physically and societally, underlies the references to rape of Assyrian women in three accounts: Mirza, Kakovitch, and Beblis.

The most detailed story of abduction and rape comes from the pen of William Mirza (1905–1995), the second from Ivan Kakovitch (1933–2006), and the third from Dr. Ishoona Beblis (b. 1920?). Of Mirza's two novels, only the first deals with World War I.³⁸ In *The Girl from Odda*, a low-ranking Turkish officer abducts the heroine sometime in 1917 as the Russian army has withdrawn and the Ottoman army has returned to the Urmia plain. Mariam is 17 years old, the only child left to her widowed mother. The father has been shot dead in the public square by a Turkish sergeant (Mustafa) for not giving up his prize horse when the Turks have come to the village of Odda [*sic*: Ada] to commandeer animals. The girl and her mother move to Abajaloo, another Assyrian village on the same Nazli river system. There, Yonan, the protagonist, meets Mariam when she enrolls at the local Assyrian school. Soon Mustafa, her father's murderer, strides into the classroom in search for girls.

The story develops from there with much detail about the conditions of war and its effects on Assyrians. Eventually, Mustafa succeeds in abducting Mariam, the girl from Odda. Yonan is taken prisoner by the Ottoman military. As the Ottoman army is dispatched to Mesopotamia to stop the advance of the British Indian army northward from Basra to Baghdad, Mustafa settles as a small-time grocer in Baghdad with his "slave" Mariam. But Yonan escapes from his Turkish prison keepers, helped by an Ottoman soldier whose Greek mother had been abducted two decades earlier. Yonan travels to Baghdad in search of Mariam and, with the help of a local Chaldean priest, rescues Mariam from the Turk. He and his fiancé, now no longer a virgin, but not pregnant (though that possibility is discussed) are reunited and return to Iran for their wedding. Mirza stresses the chaste relationship of the couple in respect for the traditions of the ideals of married conjugal relationship.

38 The second novel, *Passport* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1995), with Thom Lemmons, focused on describing the effects of Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979 on a Jewish Iranian family. The book also appeared as William Mirza and Thom Lemmons, *The Moving Prison: A Novel [Kindle Edition]* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2012).

The author provides much detail on conditions in his own village of Abajaloo and in Baghdad but whether this novel is a pastiche of other people's stories that Mirza has heard during his long years within the Assyrian community in Iran or whether he has greater intimacy with a woman who was thus rescued is not clear. Suffice it to say that religious hatred is freely expressed by the Turkish characters, whose main derogatory expression in Turkish for Assyrians is *eet agli*, "son of a dog."

The fact that Mirza wants to see love conquer the shame of rape and abduction possibly speaks for his generation: the abduction of girls was so common that their return, when it occurred, was accepted, no matter what their condition. Some were married to outsider Christians, sometimes to Russians fleeing the Bolshevik Revolution. At other times, they may have emigrated to the United States where so many of the men had gone to work and had been unable to return for marriage due to the war. But all in all, the Assyrian community needed to survive the attempt to exterminate it. Its members worked hard to return to Urmia, and its families apparently were glad to recover the girls who could be brought back to the community. This appears to be the prevailing sentiment, although rather than expressing it widely, the community appears to have preferred public amnesia.³⁹

Mount Semele, the first of Ivan Kakovitch's intended trilogy on Assyrians in the twentieth century, richly details the life of his relative, one Michel, a man whose family's journey began in Mar Bisho, an Assyrian village set among Kurdish neighbors. As the story evolves, Michel finds his way back among the same Kurds as an accomplished adult and a military man. In the incident relating to the abduction and rape of Assyrian girls, Kakovitch describes how, when offered the hospitality of a brothel located in a Kurdish village between Dohuk and Mosul (Iraq), Michel declines the "comfort" of the beautiful women serving there. "You refused my offer of a beautiful woman last night," the Sheikh said, smiling. "You will never know what you missed – maybe even an Assyrian beauty."⁴⁰

The obvious implication in this episode is that Assyrian (and Armenian) women, even if not captured and forced into brothels, succumbed to such desperate choices due to their utter destitution when they survived the forced removal from their homes in villages in what is now southeastern Turkey.

Dr. Ishoona Beblis's memoir vignette, *From the Garden of Life*, is of a darker hue.⁴¹ He describes his terror at having to drive his car through southeast Turkey during the late 1940s when returning to the Urmia plain

39 For example, my mother refrained from telling me about my paternal aunt's trauma at the rape camp until I was in my thirties and married. The fate of the Golpashan schoolteacher's twin daughters has not appeared in print, although the story was told to me by the son of the surviving twin girl.

40 *Mount Semele* (Alexandria, VA: Mandrill, 2002).

41 *From the Garden of Life* (Haverford, PA: Infinity Press, 2002). More of a memoir than a novelette, the parts pertinent to this discussion, according to my interview with the author (2004, Chicago) were not witnessed but, as he said, were "commonly known."

from Europe. Throughout the book, Dr. Beblis is haunted by dreams of the Christian struggle to survive during World War I, because of the indelible effect of family stories of pillage, death, rape, and possible castration of boys. In a chapter titled “Without a Name,” his Moslem host, whose ethnicity he cannot decide (Turk or Kurd?), forces a poverty-stricken Assyrian father to give up his 15-year-old daughter to his guest Beblis for the night. Beblis does not touch her: he suspects that she is Assyrian and eventually arranges to save her and her family from the extremely “*najis*” (ritually unclean) status to which they have been subjected. The girl, Laila, may have been offered to other men for sex. Dr. Beblis eventually rescues the family from southeastern Turkey, brings them to the United States, and makes sure her children are educated.⁴² That Assyrian women even into the period long after the genocide could not be protected by their fathers and community from degrading use by Turkish or Kurdish neighbors speaks to the continued fear of Assyrians living in northern Iraq in more recent years, where Assyrian girls have become tools for terrorizing the general Assyrian community in remote rural northern regions, as part of intimidation over land ownership issues in particular.⁴³

The figures for how many Assyrian women disappeared into Kurdish households and bore the Kurdish children they might have borne with an Assyrian husband and father can only be surmised. Dr. I. Lincoln Mado (1929–2005), a prominent physician in Urmia for nearly forty years, spoke of having a young Kurdish man come to his clinic in 1975 for an appointment. He was not ill, but his mother needed medical attention. “Why bring her to me when she can go to a Muslim doctor?” Mado inquired. To this, the young Kurd replied, “She is Assyrian.”

Local histories and Assyrian rape documentation

The World War I period in Iranian historiography has become one of the best-studied periods of modern Iranian history, particularly by Iranian historians who regard the constitutional struggle in Iran that began in 1906 as a crucible for the domestic confrontation among political forces of autocracy, secularism, and Islamism. Internationally, Iran’s regional standing stabilized following the struggle to throw off Russian and British interference in the country’s internal politics. Although minorities receive some attention is the histories of the wartime period, most accounts draw upon the work of Ahmad Kasravi (1890–1946), a Tabriz-based historian with much to say

42 *Ibid.*, 6–9.

43 Information coming from Assyrians in northern Iraq since the 1990s (when Kurdish increased efforts to homogenize northern Iran in preparation for independence following the establishment of the Iraq no-fly zone in 1991) indicated a rise in incidents of rape as a means of forcing the departure of Assyrian families from villages into which Kurds were moving. Assyrian International News Agency, *Editorial: Recent Kurdish Attacks* (1997), www.aina.org/releases/northmeso.htm.

about Assyrians, much of it unsympathetic. What official Persian archives have become available thus far appear to make no mention of the abhorrent treatment of women and girls.⁴⁴

Of the non-Assyrian Iranian sources that do take into account the fate of Assyrian women, the Jewish community of Urmia stands out. In a novel based on the life of a Jewish girl, Almoz, in the town of Urmia, the author, Ora Jacobi, details the fate of an Assyrian girl, Ishtar, Almoz's best friend in childhood.⁴⁵ Ishtar and Almoz are separated in their mid-teens as they become parts of their husbands' households as part of arranged marriages, which were common in their respective communities. The girls shared much, including the common spoken Aramaic of Urmia, their native language.

Jacobi provides the view of the fate of Assyrian girls through the eyes of Almoz, who emigrates with her extended family to Israel after 1948. But Ishtar dies during the war, in which her daughter is abducted as a child, serves as a sex slave to several Muslim masters, and eventually ends up in a Tehran brothel. She has lost her identity as an Assyrian. She teaches her daughter the only word she recalls from her childhood, "yimma" (mother). Ishtar's son, Sargon, ends up in an orphanage in Yerevan from which he is adopted by an American family as a replacement for their own son, on the condition that he accept their family name and an American first name: Sargon is de-Assyrianized completely, but grows up educated and secure. Jacobi understands the fate of many Assyrians. This Jewish perspective on Assyrian women and genocide illustrates the chief elements of the effects of genocide on an ethnic group: loss of ability to reproduce, loss of identity, and diminished population.

The profound effects of abduction and rape on non-Muslim minorities

World War I did not initiate the abuse of Assyrian and Armenian girls, and the profound threat of such crimes did not end with its conclusion. The threat to their women and the despair of preventing such crimes continues into the present whenever chaos creates conditions for abuse of non-Muslim minorities to emerge. Urbanization provided partial relief and protection, at least in Iran, Iraq, and Syria, although rape can be a religiously-condoned weapon and a politically potent one, as may be observed in Iraq during the post-Saddam period and during the Syrian civil war. Because so much of

44 Moavenod-Dowieh, "Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Ottoman Ambassador to Persia (Mar. 5, 1915)," in *Empire de Perse, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* (Ed.), *Neutralité Persane* (Paris: Imprimerie Georges Cadet, 1919), 138; Caldwell, "Minister of the United States to the Foreign Minister of Persia," in *op cit.*, 155.

45 Orah Ya'akov, *Almos: Roman* (Ramat Gan: The Author, 2006); in English, the title is Ora Jacobi, *Urmiah in the Shadow of the Owl* (Charleston, SC: Createspace, 2012).

Assyrian life in southeastern Turkey, northwestern Iran, and northern Iraq (the knot of Mesopotamia) had been rurally based, cultural adjustment to urban life has taken a toll on language retention and communal cohesion. Immigration from the Middle East in general throws Assyrians into an even wider geographic dispersion where communal survival, not threatened by abduction of their women and girls, is endangered nonetheless.

During the genocide, the continual abduction of Assyrian women escalated due in part to the chaos that revived the predatory patterns of behavior utilized by Kurdish tribes, which descended from their mountain enclaves to kill and plunder, as they did periodically even without the confusion of war. Added to this was the presence of Ottoman Turkish troops who emboldened the local Azeri population to exercise what they perceived to be their rights over non-Muslim minorities, and the apparently long history of abduction as marriage.

Ottoman law discounted the testimony of Christian crime victims and reduced the maximum punishment in such cases.⁴⁶ As the Assyrian representative to the Majlis of the Islamic Republic of Iran has reiterated many times, the laws of “*qassas*” as interpreted in Shiite “*Shari’a*” favor Muslims in any dispute over any Christian, Jew, or Zoroastrian. These laws not only affect critical issues such as inheritance (hence the fear of the abduction of rich Assyrian girls), but they create impunity in crimes against Assyrians because punishment for the most egregious crime, murder, is only monetary, even when the criminal is convicted.⁴⁷ In the case of the abduction, rape, and forced marriage of Assyrians, no records of any punishment can be found. The effects of the World War I genocide of Assyrians need to be measured not only by the loss of two-thirds of the overall population by means of outright murder, disease, and starvation, but also by the fear for loss of a societal building block – the family. The terror and loss of personal security

46 Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict From the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995), 4–5, 50, 180; F.O. 424/40 (No. 27), Inclosure in No. 136, Francis to Derby; Albert Hyamson, *The British Consulate in Jerusalem in Relation to the Jews of Palestine, 1838–1914*, vol. 1 (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1939), 171, 261; Aryeh Shmuelevitz, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the Late Fifteenth and the Sixteenth Centuries: Administrative, Economic, Legal and Social Relations as Reflected in the Responsa* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 44; *Parliamentary Papers* 92 (1877), 554. See also, Muhammad el-Bokhari, *Les Traditions Islamiques*, vol. 2, trans. Octave Houdas and William Marçais (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1903–1914), ch. 29; Salih Muslim, *Being Traditions of the Sayings and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title al-Jami’-Us-Sahih*, vol. 4 (Lahore, Pakistan: Hafeez Press, 1976), ch. 1149.

47 Radio Farda, *Iranian Ashuri MP Criticises Policies towards Religious Minorities*, www.radiofarda.com/content/f11-iranian-ashuri-mp-criticises-policies-toward-religious-minorities/24802602.html. The full speech by Mr. Yonathan Bet Kolia on November 26, 2012 was carried on the Iranian IRIB network, <http://assyrian.irib.ir/>, while a summary also was broadcast on BBC/Persian.

were profound as girls disappeared, rape camp victims were traumatized, and the community was robbed of mothers and wives. The decline of Assyrian populations in all parts of the Middle East continues to be accelerated by targeted abduction and rape.

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6 Genocide/Seyfo – and how resistance became a way of life

Sait Çetinoğlu (Abdulmesih BarAbraham, trans.)

Resistance during the genocide

The Assyrians did not have a chance to defend themselves in towns such as Savur and Nisibin/Nusaybin in the Tur Abdin region, due to the sudden and bloody raids of the notorious gangs “*el Xamsin*” (Fifties) of the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (the Special Organization), which the governor of Diyarbakır, Reşid Bey formed along with his key partner in crime Ibrahim Bedreddin, an official in Mardin.¹ These irregular gangs consisted of convicted criminals, Kurds, and Mahallamis.²

Today, the descendants of the Kurds and irregular forces of 1915 live among the richest and most influential families in the Tur Abdin region. In ܟܘܝܢ [Gzirā] (al-Jazirah, Gziro, or Cizre), the deputy of the Ottoman Council (*Osmanlı Meclisi*) Zülfü Tigrel³ was *Qaymakam*, and in Seert, where Serfiçeli Hilmi was governing and where the Assyro-Chaldeans had dense residential areas, Assyrians were killed along with other Christians and had no chance to defend themselves or resist. The survivors of the initial resistance were driven out of the city in convoys and killed on the roads.⁴

1 Merve Erol, “*One Hundred Years of Sorrow*”: *Remembrance of 1915 in Diyarbakır*, *Heinrich Boell Foundation* (2015), <https://tr.boell.org/en/2015/07/15/one-hundred-years-sorrow-remembrance-1915-diyarbakir>. A *Qaymakam* was an Ottoman official charged with governing a provincial district.

2 Mahallamis have been called Arabic-speaking Sunni Muslims, converts from Syriac Christianity 350 years ago; see Mark Sykes, *Caliph's Last Heritage: A Short History of the Turkish Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1915), 578.

3 Zülfü Tigrel was, as deputy of Diyarbakır, a member of the last Ottoman Parliament (1920). He was appointed by Mustafa Kemal as deputy of Diyarbakır for the first Turkish Parliament and served as representative of Diyarbakır until his death in 1930. He was the elder brother of the former MP Ihsan Hamit Tigrel.

4 As the Lepsius documents describe this process: “The Turkish government has driven its Armenian subjects, the innocent ones, . . . into the desert in thousands upon thousands, . . . exempting neither the sick nor pregnant women . . ., has given them both food and water in insufficient quantities and irregularly, . . . has left them to the mercy of their guards and therefore to dishonour, an escort which dragged away the girls and sold them.” Wolfgang Gust, *The Armenian Genocide: Evidence From the German Foreign Archives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 268.

The Nestorians of the Hakkari mountains

During the *Seyfo*, resistance took place in various regions settled by the Assyrians. The Nestorians of the Hakkari mountains had a special situation; the “Assyrian tribes” were, like other Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire, regarded by the CUP as being untrustworthy – like the Armenians. The ethnic cleansing in Hakkari partially resulted from a series of government decrees issued in prewar times. Erasing the roots of the autonomous Assyrian tribes may have been an attractive option because they inhabited an almost inaccessible, significantly strategic border region, regarded as a non-Muslim “eagle’s nest.”⁵ As war approached, ethnic cleansing began on a small scale, and grew over a few months into a full-size operation.

As the Assyrian Nestorian leader Malik Qambar realized that he could not resist the Ottoman forces in the region, he led his people southeast to safer places north of the Persian city of Urmia, in order to protect them and establish a line of defense there. He was successful in reaching Urmia, but the Ottomans sought revenge against the Assyrians. They were betrayed many times, and their patriarch was ultimately killed in an ambush by the Kurdish Agha, Simko.⁶ The course of the war progressed at the expense of the Nestorians. After the Nestorians lost their safe region, they embarked on to Caucasus, and started a painful journey into the unknown.⁷ Today, they are scattered all over the world.

In 1917, the Assyrians seized some correspondence of the tribal leaders with Ottoman officials in a raid. Among them was a letter of the Agha of Oramar, Suto, to Haydar Bey, Mosul’s governor and the commander in highest ranks of the forces fighting against Assyrians. “Your Holiness Pasha, I had the honor to meet you last spring when during the Great Jihad the soldiers marched on Tiyyari and Tkhuma.”⁸ The event mentioned here was the military operation undertaken against the key center of the Assyrian tribes in June 1915.⁹

The ordeal of those in the Hakkari mountains surviving the sword did not end there. In one of the first military operations in 1924 of the Unionists in

5 David Gaunt, “The Ottoman Treatment of the Assyrians,” in Ronald Suny et al. (Eds.), *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 248; Joachim Jacob, *Ostsyrische Christen und Kurden im Osmanischen Reich des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts* (Wien: LIT Verlag, 2014), 221–222.

6 Martin van Bruinessen 20. Yüzyıl Başında Türk-İran Sınırında Bir Kürt Müttegallibe: Simko İsmail Ağa, 5 Jan. 2015 (last visited July 7, 2015), <http://www.kovarabir.com/martin-van-bruinessen-20-yuzuil-basinda-turk-iran-sinirinda-bir-kurt-mutegallibe-simko-ismail-aga1>.

7 Sam Parhad and Vedii Ilman, *Görevin Ötesinde [Beyond the Call of Duty: The Autobiography of Malik Kambar of Jeelu]* (İstanbul: Yaba Yayinlari, 2009), 29–37.

8 Quoted in Jacques Rhétoré, “*Les Chrétiens aux bêtes*”: *Souvenirs de la guerre sainte proclamée par les Turcs contre les chrétiens en 1915* (Paris: Cerf, 2005), 279; see also Gaunt, *Katliamlar*, 184.

9 David Gaunt, *Katliamlar, Direniş, Koruyucular: Birinci Dünya Savaşında Doğu Anadolu’da Müslüman Hıristiyan İlişkileri*, trans. Ali Çakıroğlu (İstanbul: Belge Yayinlari, 2007), 184.

the new Turkish Republic, called the “Nestorian Operation,” Assyrians were driven southward into Iraq.¹⁰

This exile operation began in November 1924 and continued until 1933, accompanied by violence in what was known as the *Hat alti* [“down of the border”] operation. It is not wrong to say that, with the so-called Settlement Act (*İskan Kanunu*) of 1934, the Assyrians were declared hostile; Article 11 of the law banned Assyrian-speaking villages, although not necessarily all speaking of Assyrian dialects.¹¹ The voluntary and involuntary migration of the Assyrians remaining in the region continues until today, nearly uninterrupted.

Resistance in the Tur Abdin region

Assyrians who densely populated the Tur Abdin region resisted to varying degrees, according to their local organization and strength. However, the Assyrians in this region did not capitulate easily.

The attacks on villages in Tur Abdin took place in two waves. The first attack occurred in the spring of 1915. Resistance was organized in few areas, although it became more successful in two areas, which became oases of protection.¹² This is confirmed by Rev. Armalto’s writings on the resistance, which tell the story of a dozen villages in 1915. As the news about massacres reached the surrounding villages of west Assyrians in Mardin, large groups of people from the region around Tur Abdin took refuge in Midyat (see Figure 6.1).¹³

Resistance in Midyat

The *Qaymakam* of Midyat learned on Sunday, June 6 that Christians had killed the commander of the *حصن كيفو* [*Hişn Kayfā*] (Hesno-d Kifo) (Turkish: *Hasankeyf*) fortress. An investigation confirmed the incident. Thereupon the Qaymakam ordered the protection of the Christians. On June 11, he sent his soldiers to Hapisnas or Habsis/*Hapsdnäs* (Turkish: *Mercimekli*). This village was taken over by Kurds even though soldiers were supposed to protect the Christians. But at dawn on June 21, soldiers entered Christian

10 See Chapter 7 for references.

11 Erol Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 8 (2008): 7, <http://ejts.revues.org/2123>.

12 Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 371–380. One of the two major places of resistance during the *Seyfo* was ‘Aynwardo’ [Turkish: *Gülgöze*] at a distance of 9–10 km to the east of Midyat. Hazakh (*İdil*) was another scene of resistance.

13 The information about the massacre and resistance in Tur Abdin is based on the study of Yves Ternon, *Mardin 1915, Bir Yıkımın Patolojik Anatomisi*, trans. N. Tateosyan (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2013).

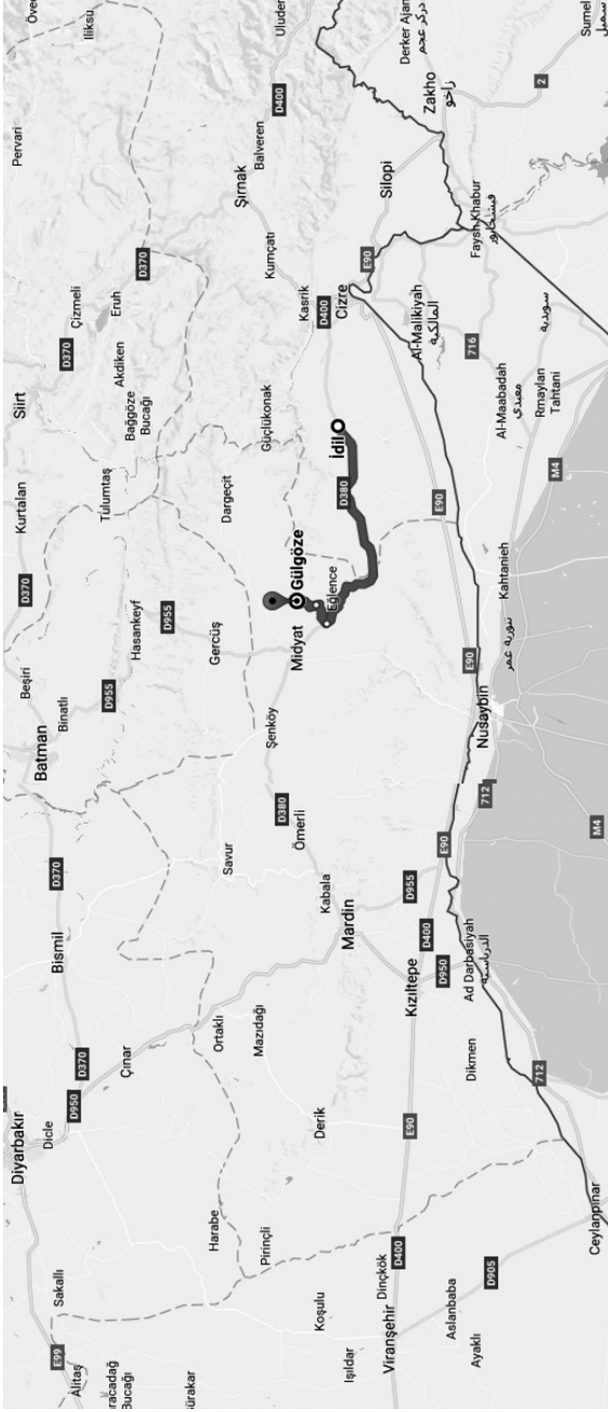


Figure 6.1 Southeastern Turkey

Source: Google Maps.

homes and started searching for weapons. The gendarmerie commander Rauf Bey used force to open the heavy doors of those houses to permit the soldiers to enter. He arrested 100 people from the Armenian Catholic and Protestant communities and kept them in jail for a week. Despite the mediation of the priest Ephrem and Hanna Safar, the governor ordered that the prisoners were to be taken out of the city at the night of June 28, all chained together. Meanwhile, the barkers announced a curfew. Prisoners were taken to the well of Saita, tortured, robbed, strangled, and thrown into the well.

On Friday, July 2, the governor sent a messenger to Saleh; there, Kurdish tribes were gathered and told to kill the Christians. Saleh was attacked the next day and its men were killed, women were raped, houses were pillaged, and livestock was stolen. Saleh had eighty Muslim and thirty Jacobite Assyrian houses and was seat of a diocese. It was the home of the famous monastery of Mar Jacob.

As the Assyrians of Midyat learned what happened in Saleh, they decided to organize a resistance. They tried to find weapons. As the Qaymakam learned about their intention, he resorted to deception. He promised them that he was ready to assign a soldier to each house for their protection. The Assyrians rejected the offer and pulled back to their homes. On July 16, the Qaymakam ordered the attack on the houses of the Assyrians. As resistance continued, the Qaymakam called for the Kurds from the entire province – and even people from Seert at some distance away heeded the call. The clash lasted a week and the Christians were outnumbered, defeated, and slaughtered.

According to Rev. Armalto, there were 10,000 victims of this massacre and Father Hermoz Danho was among them.¹⁴ However, approximately 1,000 men, among them the priest Boutros Hammal, escaped. Arriving in Aynwardo, they joined the resistance there against a siege for more than fifty days. Kurds and soldiers searched the houses in Midyat and found an additional 500 people. They took them into a caravansary, separated the children younger than five years, and brought them to the Jacobite village of Enhel. “Those are yours, take and raise them,” they told the villagers.

Priest Andrus’s report differs from Armalto’s report. It is based on a narration of eyewitness and researchers. The people of Midyat acted quickly, resisted the assault, and withstood the siege:

After the deportation of two convoys of men in Mardin, the government starts with arrests in Midyat. [Seventy] notables are put behind bars. Ten days later they are taken out from prison, chained in groups of four. They are told that they will be taken to Diyarbakir and arraigned before a court martial. But instead they were taken by foot to the mountains and brutally massacred.¹⁵

14 Ternon, *Mardin*, 340.

15 *Ibid.*, 341.

Few people from Midyat were trying to help the prisoners. Those who saw the barbaric act returned immediately to Midyat and reported to others about the massacre; panic broke out. The families of the victims said that “tomorrow it is our turn; do we want them to slaughter us like sheep? Let us do something.” That same night the men gathered and went to the government’s armory, took weapons and ammunition, attacked official buildings, and stormed the gendarmerie and military garrison. They expelled 200 people from the village, set up checkpoints at strategic locations in the city, and prepared for a siege.

The government immediately sent troops from Mardin, called upon the Kurdish *aghas* from Savur for aid, and informed all other officials from around the region that a unit commander would soon invade Midyat, ordering them to help. The town was large and rich; Kurds followed the call immediately and willingly as they realized that the booty would be copious. Midyat’s people resisted hordes of soldiers and Kurds for 10 days. They killed or wounded approximately 100 Kurds.¹⁶

The defense of the town was a task larger than the Assyrians of Midyat could accomplish by themselves. As the Kurdish pressure became strong and irresistible and the ammunition decreased, they contacted neighboring villages. A withdrawal operation was put into place. Breaking through the Kurdish ring encircling Midyat, they tried to create a new front in Aynwardo. Aynwardo was a smaller settlement, but rich in water and food stores, so it seemed like a natural fortress. Taking advantage of the darkness, many people from Midyat were able to escape. For more than a month, the hardy highlanders would resist. They killed a sufficient number of Kurdish attackers that the latter began to withdraw. After the government realized that they could not depend on the Kurds anymore, they approached the people of Midyat with a truce including a secure retreat.

Two families are said to have played an important role in the resistance: the Hirmiz family, to which the head of the municipality of Midyat belonged, was Protestant and not native to Midyat while the Safar family was Orthodox and native to Midyat. According to the common narrative, the Protestants were initially arrested. In order to frighten and terrorize the others, the Protestants were marched throughout the city and murdered. In the following days the Orthodox community started to resist, but facing strong forces and lacking ammunition, the resistance of the Assyrians broke due to heavy losses. The remaining Assyrians pulled back to Aynwardo and continued there to organize resistance. Among those Assyrian Orthodox families who played a leading role during the resistance were the Grigos, Rhawis, Bahdis, and Chalmas.

16 Ishaq Armalto, *De kristnas hemska katastrofer: Osmanernas och ung-turkarnas folk mord i norra Mestopotamien 1895/1914–1918*, ed. Jan Beṭ-Şawoçe, trans. Ingvar Rydberg (Södertälje: Nisibin, 2005) [1919], 377–398.

Resistance of Hazakh

The village of ھازک [Āzak] (Hazakh) (Turkish: *İdil*) is perched on a hill at 1,000 meters' altitude; it is a village in which the Assyrians performed a remarkable feat of resistance during the genocide of 1915. Hazakh is located close to the eastern border of Tur Abdin, near Cizre. The first attack on the village was conducted in August 1915 by the Kurdish clans who came from Cizre. The villagers demonstrated a heroic resistance against the attack. Hazakh's people, organized in an armed resistance movement called "the Volunteers of Christ," were able for many weeks to resist the siege and the attacks of Kurdish tribes.

As the militia of the Kurdish tribes could not break the resistance of Hazakh's people, a leading man of the CUP, Ömer Naji Bey, was sent in order to suppress the armed resistance of Hazakh. Ömer Naji entered the area in October 1915, bringing 2,000–4,000 Ottoman soldiers. Joining him were units of the nearly 8,000 criminals released from prison who formed gangs and militia forces of the Special Organization. Among them were also Ethem Bey and his militias.¹⁷ Hazakh could withstand the attacks for weeks and did not surrender despite the secret order of Enver Pasha that it was to be destroyed, because the location of the village was suitable for defense and prevented a rapid invasion.

During the twenty-four days of the siege Omar Naji Bey's forces suffered losses. In an unexpected attack that the "Volunteers of Christ" organized in one night, some of the beseiging men were killed from among a force of 500 irregulars. Horses were released, and some soldiers and horses escaped towards Nusaybin and barely saved their own lives in doing so. Ömer Naji Bey was forced to declare a truce. The military operation was brought to an end and troops withdrawn; a few months later they came back again with additional forces being sent from Diyarbakir. All kitchen appliances in the village, copper buckets, etc. were melted in order to produce ammunition, while gunpowder had been made from sumac roots. Hazakh was able to resist various attacks until the end of World War I. It was in 1927 that the villagers delivered their weapons to the Kemalist forces, after demanding guarantees of their security.¹⁸

The leader of Hazakh's "National Assembly" who organized the resistance was Işo Hanna Gabre. Other members of the National Assembly

17 Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 184; Selçuk Uzun, Çerkes Ethem, 1915/16 ve Çerkesler, Marmara Yerelhaber, May 25, 2012, www.marmarayelhaber.com/Selcuk-Uzun/8276-Cerkes-Ethem-191516-ve-Cerkesler.

18 Later the Kemalists wanted revenge for their resistance. Some resistance leaders were killed by the light cavalry battalions and others on the road when being taken to the so-called Independence Courts. The remaining leaders lost their lives due to torture in Diyarbakir's prison. The elderly archbishop Behnam was killed in Aqrawi.

were: Tumá AbdeKette, Béhnañ Isko, Murad Hannuše [Hannuše], Andërawos Hanna Eliya, Ya'qub Hanna Gabre, and Behnam Aqrawi.¹⁹

After the cease-fire with the state, some members of the National Assembly were eliminated by state intelligence and the Kemalists, while the others were killed at the prison of the Independence Courts in Diyarbakir.

The resistance's fifty-two days in Aynwardo²⁰

The Jacobites of Kfar-Boran'da (Kerboran, Turkish: *Dargeçit*) were able to resist for four days only. In the great town of Kfarjos (Kfar-Gawze, Turkish: *Gercüş*) the Assyro-Chaldeans could not resist; they were deceived by the local Kurdish Ağa, Hasan Şemdin. Those who survived the massacres escaped to Midyat.

Except for a few that escaped to Aynwardo, the Christians of Boté (Turkish: *Bardakçı*) were not able to survive the attacks of Nedim and Cemil, the sons of Osman Ağa.²¹ Qıllit [Qelith, Turkish: *Dereiçi*], near Mardin and Savur, was an Assyrian Christian village, being one-third Protestant and two-thirds Orthodox by Christian denomination. Kurds from Rajdiye, Miğajniye, and Deraveriye attacked the village early in the morning.²² The Pastor Hannuş İbrahim was killed on the threshold of his house. The villagers who owned guns were able to protect their homes, but most others were killed.

Many women and children were abducted and very few survived. Some Kurds apparently did not obey government decrees to deport the people, but killed them and plundered the village. More than two hundred homes had been completely devastated. Kurds took Christian homes and lands into their possession. In Hesno d-Kifo, the majority of those who took refuge in the castle were Jacobites and Protestant Assyrians along with Armenians. Ramon Amaro (Ömer), the son of Aliye Ramo, in collaboration with Ottoman soldiers, killed all Christians there within four hours. Kafarbé

19 For a comprehensive information on Hazak during the Kemalist era see Devrimci Karadeniz, *Turabdin'de Bir Asur Köyü Azah'ın (Idil) Akıbeti* [The Fate of an Assyrian Village Hazakh (Idil) in Tur Abdin] (Feb. 27, 2015), <http://devrimcikaradeniz.com/turabdinde-bir-asur-koyu-azahin-idil-akibeti/>.

20 Today's Gülgöze is a village east of Midyat. İshak Armalé, *Al-quşara fi nakabat al-naşara* (Beirut: EL Shafi Monastery, 1970 [1919]), 405–409. This important source was translated into French in 1923. During the Lausanne negotiations, it was presented as a key evidence to punish crimes of massacre. Ternon, *Mardin*, 347–350.

21 İshaq Armalto, *Al-quşara fi nakabat al-naşara* (Beirut: Al-Sharfe Monastery, 2nd ed., 1970 [1919]), 410.

22 Rajdiye, Miğajniye ve Deraveriye tribes were originally Syriac Christians; after forced to Islamization they adapted Kurdization and Arabization. For more information see Altan Tan, *Turabdin'den Berriyéye, Aşiretler, Dinler, Diller ve Kültürler* [From Turabdin to Beriye. Tribes, Religions, Languages and Cultures] (Istanbul: Nübihar Yayınları, 2011).

(Turkish: *Güngören*) and Basıbrina (Turkish: *Haberli*) were located south-east of Midyat, south of Aynwardo, and west of Hazakh; except for a minority of Catholics, these three villages were inhabited by Jacobites. Like Hesno d-Kifo, Kafarbé and Basıbrina were attacked in 1915, but these attacks failed. A second attack on them was arranged in 1917, in which most of the survivors of 1915 were killed. This indicates that the plateau of Tur Abdin was in a continuous state of war between Kurds and Christians. The proximity of Bnebil [Turkish: *Benabil*] to the “Saffron Monastery” near Mardin, ܩܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ (Dayro d-Mor Hananyo or Dairu ‘l-Za‘farān/Deir al-Záfarān) [Turkish: *Daryülzafaran Manastırı*], gave it lasting influence.

The village of Aynwardo, 10 kilometers east of Midyat, was located at the foot of a mountain chain and was completely inhabited by Jacobite Assyrians; it was able to resist for fifty-two days. Those mountains surround Tur Abdin to the north and separate it from the Tigris valley. When the news of the massacres of the Christians arrived, Mesut, the leader of the Assyrians in the Aynwardo, gathered the villagers and began preparations for a defense against the Kurds. Meanwhile, Christian survivors escaping from Midyat, Boté [Turkish: *Bardakci*], Kefr Salah, Kefr Zeh, Zaz, and Hapisnas were arriving in Aynwardo.²³ They informed the other Assyrians about the horrible massacres that had taken place. A total combined force of 6,000 people was formed, with 3,000 guns.²⁴

The *Qaymakam* of Midyat gathered the Kurdish villagers and advised them to split their men into two groups. One group was supposed to attack Enhel [Turkish: *Yemişli*], a village to the south of Midyat, while the other group would attack Aynwardo. Aziz Ağa, one of the Kurdish chiefs, suggested that it would be better to keep the force together to eliminate Aynwardo first.²⁵ The *Qaymakam* endorsed this strategy. The men under the Ağas Ahmet and Salim gathered their tribes in Midyat. All Kurdish tribes from Mardin joined them as well. A total of 13,000 men advanced towards Aynwardo.²⁶ The *Qaymakam* armed them and paid them. The Kurdish army, along with women and children from the men’s families, proceeded towards Aynwardo. They set up a camp on a hill overlooking the village from where they continuously fired at the village. As the ammunition of the besieging forces was reduced, they informed Diyarbakir and Mardin of this. Reşid, the governor, and Bedreddin sent them

23 William Dalrymple, *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium* (New York: Penguin Group USA, 1997), 119.

24 Ibid.

25 Aziz Agha was the grandfather of Ziver Midyat, the major of Midyat and member of the Mahmado clan. According to the oral tradition, Aziz Agha was arrested in 1916 along with the Assyrian leader Isa Zatte, the Kurd İsaye Hımo, and the Muhallemler Xalaf Beg. On the way to Mardin, he was shot on the road in the village of Dengizan near Savur. For more information see Tan, *Turabdin*, 203.

26 Dalrymple, *From the Holy Mountain*, 120.

ammunition and a cannon. Şevket Bey, Mohammed Said Ağa's son, took over the command and the clash continued. About 200 attackers and 300 villagers were killed in the first phase. Meanwhile, an Assyrian Catholic family, Nano-Mahdese, escaped and tried to reach Aynwardo in order seek refuge. They were captured by Kurds and killed. Only a small child survived, Nasir; he would remain for the next two years with Şeyh Sıdki until Bishop Gabriel Tappuni paid a bounty for him and sent him to Aleppo, to his uncle.

During this siege the Assyrians melted iron and all kinds of goods that could be utilized for producing ammunition. Meanwhile, the *Qaymakam* of Midyat proposed that the Sheikh of Dara act as a mediator between the government and the besieged people. The Sheikh called for three leading villagers from Aynwardo and swore – according to the tradition of Islam – “to divorce his wife if he would cheat them!” He promised that they would remain alive if they delivered their weapons. The three envoys rejected the offer and the conflict continued. This resistance enraged the Kurds, who increased their pressure on the village. The siege went on for thirty more days. The besieging forces notified Bedreddin, who sent two Jacobite clerics, Yakub and Hanna, to Aynwardo. They were supposed to convince those who were still resisting to surrender. But they failed.²⁷ However, as the village ran out of food, and all the animals that could be eaten were finished, people were faced with starvation. The arsenal finished too. The dead began to reek.

After the fifty-two-day siege, the Kurds informed the villagers of Aynwardo that the population of ‘Arnas converted to Islam and that an agreement had been achieved. They announced a negotiator of their own in order to come to a deal and end the conflict. The Christians wanted them to call Sheikh Fethullah from ‘Aynkaf [Turkish: *Kayapınar*], son of Sheikh İbrahim. This man spoke in person with the elders of Aynwardo. Fethullah consulted with the government officials; after the removal of the Kurds he was able to make promises to the Christians. As a result, the Christians gathered their weapons and handed them over to the Sheikh. He then ended the siege and ordered that the Christians were not to be harmed.²⁸

27 Bedreddin sent bishop of Mardin Circis and the priest Hanna to Aynwardo. Arriving in Aynwardo, the clergy tried to persuade the rebels from outside the village to hand out their weapons and to surrender to the government. The insurgents responded with bullets to the call. The clergy fled the same day to Midyat, saving their lives. They returned to Mardin empty-handed.

28 Şeyh Fethullah ordered the Muslims not to harm a single Christian. Despite the amnesty guarantees, most of the Assyrians stayed there and did not return to their villages. Some courageous people trying to return to ‘Arnas, Ahlah, and Mzizah were shot on the road. After the cease-fire, Mas’ud wanted to go to Anhel but the Christian leaders advised him to go elsewhere because the government was after him. Mas’ud went to Rayite, the lower Kafro. There he lived a short time in a tent on the roof of a local church. He was easy prey for the government and was quickly killed. The number of murdered Assyrians returning to their villages was higher than those killed during the siege. Gaunt, *Katliamlar, Direniş, Koriyucular*, 292–293.

This siege lasted for fifty-two days, recalling the “40 days of Musa Dağ,” which actually lasted fifty-three days.²⁹ Later on, the Christians did set up barricades in their villages, knowing that Kurds of the neighboring village were waiting to kill them. Despite the promises given after the siege was lifted, a majority of the villagers were slain.³⁰ Instead, the promises were flouted, and that the *el-Xamsin* units of the notorious *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* troops, who conducted the massacres, eventually murdered the Christians. Indeed, many eastern and western Assyrians were brutally murdered later on while attempting to travel between the villages and towns to make a living. Some Muslims waylaid and attacked them.³¹

The leader of the National Assembly that organized the resistance in Aynwardo was Mas’ud Be-Şlemën or Be-Şabo; the other members of the National Assembly were: Gallo Be-Şabo, Jërjo Be-Qašo Asmar, and Tuma Be-Grigo.

Conclusion

The life of the Christians in the region and of the Assyrian-Syriac people (along with other non-Mulim peoples) became a desperate struggle against death, which was closing in on them from all directions. Therefore, for these ancient peoples, resistance evolved into a way of life.

This tradition, and the remarkable resistance demonstrated during the Genocide/*Seyfo* of 1915 in different regions – along with the demand for justice extending to the present day – are the cornerstones of an attitude that does not forget the historical injustices of the past several hundred years. While in search for justice, the voices of the children and grandchildren of the genocide victims are emerging all over the world. The tradition of resistance of the Christian people of Turkey provides hope for policies to make amends in the future for a century-old historical injustice, the *Seyfo* of 1915.

29 Franz Werfel, *Musa Dağ'da 40 Gün [The Forty Days of Musa Dagh]*, trans. Saliha Nazlı (Istanbul: Belge Uluslararası Y., 2007).

30 Ternon, *Mardin 1915*, 347.

31 After the peace accord, established in Aynwardo by the Mahellemi Şeyh Fethullah, father 'İsa Polos reported: “Look, my son, I’m telling you in this in advance: Yes there was peace, but still I want us not to trust [fully] to that. You should never trust these Muslims. When you are on the road, go in groups of one-two-three people, but not alone. They will kill you!” He remarked: “After Sayfo, on the roads, more Assyrians were slaughtered than those during Sayfo. There was no pity!” Jan Beṭ-Şawoce and Abdulmesih BarAbraham, “Doğu-Batı Asurlulara Karşı – Baskı, Zulüm, Asimile, Kovulma,” in Fikret Başkaya (Ed.), *Türkiyede Azınlıklar [Resmî Tarih Tartışmaları-8]* (Istanbul/Beyoğlu: Özgür üniversite Y, 2009), 152–251.

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190 *Sait Çetinođlu (Abdulmesih BarAbraham, trans.)*

Turabdin'de Bir Asur Köyü Azah'ın (İdil) Akibeti (Feb. 27, 2015), <http://devrimcikaradeniz.com/turabdinde-bir-asur-koyu-azahin-idil-akibeti/>.

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7 Lady Surma

The pillar of the Assyrian nation,
1883–1975¹

Stavros Stavridis

The early years and Assyrian socio-political and economic life

Surma Khanum was the eldest of eight children, which included her two brothers Patriarchs Mar Shimun XXI Benyamin (1887–1918) and Mar Shimun XXII Poulos (1895–1920). She lived in Qudshanis, Hakkari and was educated by W.H. Browne, a missionary of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s mission to the Assyrians, who died in an accident in 1910. Browne spent many hours with Surma and they ate meals alone together, which gave rise to gossip. At one point, Browne – aged 50 – considered marrying Surma – who was 13 – but the archbishop of Canterbury persuaded him to abandon the idea. The fear was that Browne would have led Surma to Anglicanism or that Browne “would lose all his independence and become just another member of Mar Shimun’s clan.” In 1896, Surma made a religious vow of celibacy and “devoted her life to her family and people.”²

Surma was recognized as an expert on all the rites and authority of the Church of the East and also was a nun.³ This gave her the authority to speak on issues of the church, which she expounded in her book titled *Assyrian Church Customs and the Murder of Mar Shimun*, published in 1920. The first chapter provides a very brief history, with the author claiming that her people were descendants of the ancient Assyrians. Chapters 2 through 7 outline the rites and authority in the Assyrian Church such as baptism and its ornaments, fasting and its customs, Easter and the Eucharist, festivals

1 This is an expanded version of a paper presented at the Return to Anatolia Conference, entitled “The Women of Anatolia: Keepers of Traditions, Holders of Memory, Stalwarts of Family,” held at Victoria, Australia on May 3, 2008. I would also like to acknowledge Hannibal Travis in alerting me to additional sources that made this expanded version possible.

2 Solomon (Sawa) Solomon, “Surma D’Mar Shimun (1883–1975),” *Nineveh* (First/Second Quarter 1993), 7, <http://marshimun.com/news/pdfs/RK-SK01.pdf>; Rev. Joel E. Werda, *The Flickering Light of Asia, or The Assyrian Nation and Church* (Chicago: The Author, 1924), 51; William Wigram, *The Cradle of Mankind* (London: A&C Black Ltd., 2nd ed., 1922), 270–271; J.F. Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1992), 197–198.

3 Solomon, “Surma,” 7; Wigram, *The Cradle*, 270.

and pilgrimages, monks and nuns, and marriages and funerals.⁴ The book describes dress, handicrafts, and laws.⁵ Surma's description has provided important information as to how particular Assyrian men and women of different clans dressed just before and after the Great War.

Another important piece of information is how Assyrians earned a living before the war. In the villages, wool and cotton were woven, and some individuals maintained beehives and sold honey. The regions of ܓܘܪ [Gāwar] (Gawar) (Turkish: *Yüksekova*), Liwan, and Albaq had rich soils where wheat, barley and vegetables were grown. Men from the ܒܙ [Bāz] Baz (Turkish: *Çanakli*) tribe were excellent builders and blacksmiths, whereas ܛܝܪܝ [Tyārē] (Tiyari) (Turkish: *Çukurca*) men were known for their fine weaving and knitting. The Mosul and Amadia regions were noted for their fine gold and silver work. Urmia and Salamas with their very fertile soil boasted vineyards, with raisins and wine sold in the local market.⁶

Surma provides brief educational and occupational information about Urmia before World War I. There were two printing presses at the American and English missions in Urmia publishing materials in Syriac. This helped the Assyrians to read and write in their native language. Urmia had excellent carpenters and tailors who learned their crafts in Russia and England. There were doctors, dentists, and chemists who studied in England and America who returned to help their fellow Assyrians in Urmia. It is interesting to note that a few women were fortunate to study medicine and nursing in America. Some women who read taught their children and Urmia women set up "sewing societies to help the poor."⁷ It is clear that Assyrian males from Urmia greatly benefited from European and American education and ideas, and a few women became professionals at a time when most societies were male dominated.

Mar Shimun was the spiritual and temporal leader of the Assyrian nation. "For 400 years these powers have been hereditary in our family, going from uncle to nephew; although always the new Patriarch has been chosen and consecrated by general approval," Surma stated. The patriarch approved the appointment of maliks (the dominant chief of a district among the Christian tribes, usually an honorary title) who had been chosen by the village headmen and priests. When headmen or village priest could not resolve a dispute, the matter was then referred to a malik. ܛܝܫܘܡܐ [Tkhumā] (Tkuma) (Turkish: *Kaynak*) and ܐܫܝܬܐ (Ashita) [Ashithā] (Turkish: *Çiğli*) were two places approved by the patriarch to settle such matters. The Mar Shimun was the final arbiter in very important cases involving the buying and selling of land

4 Surma D'Bait Mar Shimun, *Assyrian Church Customs and the Murder of Mar Shimun* (London: Faith Press, 1920). The author thanks, for providing a copy of this book as a pdf, the Assyrian International News Agency.

5 Ibid., ch. 8.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

or houses. He had the power to fine and imprison any individual who broke the law. Surma mentions that there was a prison located in her house in Qudshanis.⁸

Sometimes the Mar Shimun adjudicated disputes between Christians and Kurds and invited the warring parties to a conference to air their grievances. He allowed each party to state its case and then rendered his final verdict as to whether compensation would be paid or not. After this both parties would give assurances of peace and reconciliation and then exchange pleasantries by drinking coffee and swapping cigarettes. Details of the dispute were recorded in a book with the date, the name of each tribe, and the relevant documents “being sealed with the Patriarchal seal, and with those of the chiefs of both parties.” On occasion, the Kurdish clans invited the Mar Shimun to resolve their disputes or to provide counsel, for instance between “two hostile sects of Julamerk Kurds in his reception room.”⁹

The First World War and the murder of the Mar Shimun Benyamin

Before the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War, the Turks promised that nothing would happen to the Assyrians if they remained neutral. The Assyrians did not believe them, seeing what was happening to the Armenians when they decided to cast their lot with the Triple Entente powers: Great Britain, France, and Russia. This decision infuriated the Turks, who moved their troops to attack Assyrians in the Hakkari region. Mar Shimun Benyamin was driven from his home in Qudshanis, escaping to Tiyari with all members of his household.¹⁰ His photograph as he might have appeared at that time is reproduced as Figure 7.1.

In late August 1915, 35,000 mountaineers fled to Salamas (Persia) and a large number remained in the Hakkari mountains with no food or relief. Paul Shimmon described the difficulties encountered by Surma after fleeing from Qudshanis. He states “there was no food but almost no water, and none at all could be spared for washing or bathing.”¹¹

As a refugee from Hakkari, Surma wrote an interesting letter from Dili-man (Persia) to Mrs. D.S. Margoliouth in Oxford, England in April 1916 describing the progress of the war. She mentioned that Russia, England,

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., ch. 9.

10 David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 53–149; Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2nd ed., 2010), ch. 4.

11 Paul Shimmon, “Urmia, Salamas, and Hakkiari,” in Sir James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee (Eds.), *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents Presented to the Viscount Grey of Fallodon* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1916), 584–585.



Figure 7.1 Mar Shimun XXI Benjamin

Source: Abraham Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation: Or, The Ever Persecuted Nestorians or Assyrian Christians* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), front matter.

and America had provided some humanitarian assistance for her people and particularly praised Russia for the provision of hospitals.¹² The Russian government wanted all Assyrians to move to Bashkala where oxen and arable land for wheat would be provided for them.¹³ It is interesting the Mar Shimun favored this plan but Surma doubted its efficacy. Two reasons were cited: “first the difficulty of finding enough oxen and corn, and secondly it is getting too late for sowing” and the scheme would not work.¹⁴

Living in Diliman, Surma was isolated from the outside world with no news on the progress of the war. As an educated woman she missed reading the *London Times* and *Church Times*, which would have provided her with

12 Lady Surma d'Bait Mar Shimun, “Letter From Hakkari,” in *op cit.*, 177.

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*

lots of details on the war and political, social, and religious developments taking place in British society.¹⁵ She hoped that Great Britain would win the war. Perhaps her correspondent was in a position to provide her with the reading materials she needed. Posting reading material to Diliman may have been very difficult during the conflict.

Another interesting aspect of her letter outlines where she played with ten children in a small courtyard who appeared to be contented as could be despite the terrible circumstances around them. This gave Surma some joy and pleasure in momentarily drawing her attention away from the horrors of war. Moreover she used her valuable time to educate some of the young children. “I teach the four boys for two hours a day; they are promising pupils if properly taught. The little girls read their alphabet too,” she said.¹⁶ It was important for both boys and girls to learn the Syriac language and Assyrian customs.

The murder of Mar Shimun Benyamin on March 16, 1918 was the most tragic event that occurred to the Assyrian nation during the Great War. A meeting convened between Kurdish chieftain Agha Simko and Mar Shimun Benyamin was arranged to resolve differences between the Assyrians and Kurds. The meeting was nothing but a ruse to lure the Mar Shimun into a trap. Simko’s treachery resulted in the Mar Shimun being shot from behind as he was departing with his party. The Assyrians had lost their spiritual and political leader and took their revenge by attacking Kurdish villages in the surrounding Kohin Shahir region. An Assyrian force led by Agha Petros attacked Simko’s stronghold at Chira and found documents that implicated the governor of Khoi in ordering the assassination of the Mar Shimun. Simko escaped and ended up in Khoi.¹⁷ Wigram mentions that Benyamin’s body was “treated with the grossest indignity – stripped, and flung out into the street.” The Armenians buried him in their village church.¹⁸

Many Assyrians had counseled the patriarch not to make the journey to Chira, as they implicitly distrusted the Kurds. When Surma received the news of her brother’s death, she wrote, “at first we refused to believe it, until one of the Russian officers (Major Kondriatoff who had himself been wounded)

15 Ibid., 177–178.

16 Ibid., 82–83.

17 Dr. Mar Aprem, *The History of the Assyrian Church of the East in the 20th Century With Special Reference to the Syriac Literature in Kerala*, Ph.D. Dissertation, St Ephrem Ecumenical Research, Kottayam, Kerala, India, 2000, 129–130; Martin Van Bruinessen, “A Kurdish Warlord on the Turkish-Persian Frontier in Early Twentieth Century: Isma’il Aqa Simko,” in Touraj Atabaki (Ed.), *Iran and the First World War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 87; Werda, *Flickering Light*, 44–45; Gabriele Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust: Die Vernichtung der christlichen Assyrer in der Türkei* (Göttingen: Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, 1989), 374–377 (quoting Yaqob d-Malik Ismail (Ed.), *Die Assyrer und die beiden Weltkriege 1914–1945: Kriegstagebuch seines Bruders Schlemon d-Malik Ismail [The Assyrians and the Two World Wars 1914–1945: War Diary of His Brother Shlemon d-Malik Ismail]* (Teheran, 1964)).

18 Wigram, *The Cradle*, 381.

brought us the details, and told us how this fearful crime had been accomplished.” The positioning of many men with rifles on the roofs of houses should have alerted the patriarch’s party that something was wrong.¹⁹ This assassination paved the way for a new patriarch and for Surma to assume the leadership of her people.

The new Mar Shimun Poulos and Baqubah refugee camp

On April 23, 1918, Surma’s brother Poulos was elected Assyrian patriarch in Salamas and ordained as Mar Shimun six days later by four bishops in Urmia.²⁰ Poulos, aged twenty-three, was entrusted with the spiritual and political leadership of his people, but lacked experience to make important decisions. Surma was the real leader of the Assyrians and “conducted the affairs of her nation . . . with the personality of an empress.”²¹ With no available strong male to guide young Poulos, Surma was entrusted with the survival of her people. This is an important moment in Assyrian history, when a woman ran the political affairs of her people in such a turbulent time in an otherwise male-dominated society.

In August 1918, 70,000 Assyrians in Urmia were determined to make the journey to Sain Kala to meet with the English in order to escape the clutches of the Turkish and Persian forces. The Persians, Kurds, and Turks pursued the Assyrians, killing many women and children and taking many captive. Surma stated some 20,000 of her compatriots perished at the hands of their enemies. The British came to the Assyrians’ aid by providing them with some of their own food. Surma mentions that she never forgot the kindness shown by the British officers and soldiers towards her people. The Assyrians finally reached Hamadan before commencing the long hazardous journey to the Baqubah refugee camp situated just outside Baghdad.²²

Some 40,000–50,000 men, women, and children ended up in Baqubah under the care of the British. The commandant of Baqubah, Brigadier-General H.H. Austin, mentioned that the camp was divided into three separate groups composed of Assyrians and Armenians. Each refugee group came from a particular region of the Ottoman Empire or Persia. The Armenians from Lake Van made up half of the camp population, whereas the Assyrians from the Ottoman mountains composed another third of the population. The Assyrians and Armenians who came from Urmia and Salamas made up the final third.

Austin points out that the Assyrians were divided on religious lines, making unity among them very difficult. Those from the mountains were known

19 Surma, *Assyrian Church Customs*, ch. 10; see also, Wigram, *The Cradle*, 379–381; Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust*, 376.

20 J.F. Coakley, “The Church of the East since 1914,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 78, no. 3 (1996): 181; Surma, *Assyrian Church Customs*, ch. 10.

21 Werda, *Flickering Light*, 51.

22 Surma, *Assyrian Church Customs*, ch. 10.

as Nestorians and loyal to the Mar Shimun whereas those from Mosul were identified as Chaldeans due to the proselytizing of French Catholic priests. However, those from Persia were better educated due to the American missionary schools and belonged to the Presbyterian Church.²³

Austin established a very close and harmonious relationship with Mar Shimun Poulos and Surma during his time as camp commandant. He stated that Surma spoke very good English and was a “highly cultivated and exceptionally intelligent lady, which is all the more remarkable seeing that she had never left the mountains of Kurdistan, and lived all her life amongst wild lawless surroundings, until the recent tragedies descended upon her people.”²⁴ Surma was very thankful to Austin and his staff for their sympathy and kindness that they had shown towards her people. She lauded the British Empire for rendering assistance to the Assyrians when their very survival as a nation was at stake.²⁵ Surma was a remarkable woman who, despite living in a remote region, guided her compatriots through the storms of the First World War and helped them reach Baqubah.

The Paris Peace Conference 1919 and death of Poulos

On December 20, 1918, Brigadier-General W.H. Beach interviewed Mar Shimun Poulos and Lady Surma, on which occasion both of them raised the issue of Assyrian representation at the Paris Peace Conference. They preferred British protection to being placed under Armenian control. The British civil commissioner and chief political adviser in Baghdad, A.T. Wilson, supported Assyrian representation at the forthcoming Paris Conference and relayed this information to London.²⁶ He received a reply from the secretary of state for India, Edwin Montagu, that the Assyrians would not be granted representation in Paris. Any official Assyrian requests or questions would have to be submitted through the civil commissioner in Baghdad. However, Britain would do its best to protect Assyrian interests.²⁷

The Mar Shimun and Surma would have felt aggrieved by the British refusal. To complicate matters, other Assyrian delegations – the Assyrians of Persia and the Caucasus, the National Assyrian Council of the Trans-Caucasus, and the Assyrian National Association of America – presented petitions at the Paris Conference, with each group having its own agenda.

23 Brigadier-General H.H. Austin, *The Baqubah Refugee Camp: An Account of Work on Behalf of the Persecuted Assyrian Christians* (Manchester: The Faith Press, 1920), 4–6.

24 *Ibid.*, 63.

25 Surma, *Assyrian Church Customs*, ch. 10.

26 National Archives of United Kingdom, AIR 20/270 Representation of Assyrians at Peace Conference, Dec. 1918–Dec. 1919: Brig-General W.H Beach to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, Dec. 20, 1918; Tel no.11559 Political Baghdad to Sec of State for India, London, Dec. 25, 1918.

27 AIR 20/270 Sec of State for India tel. to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, Jan. 26, 1919.

For example, Forbes Adam, a member of the British Peace Delegation to the Paris Conference, informed the British foreign secretary, George Nathaniel Curzon, or Lord Curzon, that the Assyro-Chaldean National Council petition represented only Catholics and excluded other Assyrians. According to Admiral Webb, the assistant British high commissioner in Constantinople, the Nestorians of Hakkari also did not support the Assyro-Chaldean position.²⁸

It is worth noting that the Assyro-Chaldeans of Trans-Caucasia and Persia desired British assistance and protection from their Muslim neighbors.²⁹ Such rival claims did not help the Assyrian cause and appeared to constitute evidence of disunity within the nation's ranks.

Finally, Surma became representative of the Assyrian nation. In this capacity, she left Mesopotamia with Major Scott in September 1919 and arrived a month later in London. Gerald Spicer, writing on behalf of Lord Curzon, informed Sir Eyre Crowe that Surma possessed

the confidence of the majority of the Assyrians . . . who were originally Turkish subjects, whether they are present in Mesopotamia or in Trans-Caucasia, but she is not at present recognized as representing those of the Assyrian community who are Persian subjects.³⁰

The American press was favorable towards Surma's visit to England by describing the privations, massacres, and destruction of villages suffered by the Assyrians during the First World War. It also quoted Surma stating that "we are a people without a country."³¹ In the end, she never went to Versailles to present her nation's case.

While in England, Surma met many of the leading British political figures including Edwin Montagu, Lord Curzon, and the Queen. Surma reminded

28 National Archives of United Kingdom, F.O. 608 series. Peace Conference, British Delegation, Paris, 1919–20: F.O. 608/82/6266. Richard Webb for British High Commission, Constantinople, Dec. 30, 1918, with enclosure of Assyro-Chaldean National Council, Constantinople; F.O. 608/82/2696, Admiral Webb, Constantinople, February 16, 1919; FO 608/83/5705 Formation of a new Assyrian State, Mar. 29, 1919.

29 F.O. 608/82/4759, Mar. 20, 1919; F.O. 608/83/17492, Delegates and Representatives of the Assyrians of Persia & Caucasus to Mr. Forbes Adam, British Delegation, Hotel Majestic, Paris, Aug. 6, 1919; F.O. 608/83, Memo of the Assyrian Delegation to the Peace Conference, National Assyrian Council of the Trans-Caucasus, March ?, 1919; F.O. 608/83/17492, Petition of the Persian Assyrians to the Peace Conference, Aug. 6, 1919.

30 AIR 20/270 Tel no: 11049, Political Baghdad to India Office, Sept. 19, 1919; F.O. 608/83/20046 Gerald Spicer (for Earl Curzon) to Sir Eyre Crowe, Foreign Office, Oct. 28, 1919.

31 "Assyrian Woman Goes 8,000 Miles to Get Aid for Her People," *St Louis Post-Dispatch* (Nov. 30, 1919), 9; "Goes Forth to Plead Assyrians' Cause," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Dec. 1, 1919), 10; "Eve's Scion Asks Return of Lands," *San Bernardino County Sun* (Dec. 5, 1919), 9; "Woman Comes to Plead for Her People," *Charleston Daily Mail* (Dec. 8, 1919), 13; "Minstrels Lose Rare Chance," *Weekly Journal-Miner* (Dec. 24, 1919), 2.

Curzon not to ignore Assyrian aspirations. All were captivated by her “personality, character and charm.”³² She attended a reception by the Archbishop of Canterbury on March 14, 1920, which included important dignitaries such as Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, a Serbian minister, representatives from the Republics of Armenia and Georgia, and Viscount Finlay, the lord chancellor under Lloyd George.³³

Poulos died of tuberculosis on May 9, 1920 in Baqubah and Surma’s 12-year-old nephew, Eshai, was consecrated as the new Assyrian patriarch. H. H. Austin mentions that frail Poulos was given temporary accommodation at the Jacobite Monastery, Mar Mattai, northeast of Mosul. Obviously such a young boy needed the guidance of his aunt during his formative years.³⁴

On April 25, 1920, the *Washington Post* described Surma as “the first woman with the title of minister plenipotentiary” and an accredited representative of the Assyrians to the Court of St. James in London. She desired her people to be under British protection rather than governed by the Kurds and Turks as during the war. Surma remarked that Assyrian women were adopting European clothes and that some “were given a voice in the councils of the tribe.”³⁵ In her book, she describes the Turks as bad rulers who oppressed and used the Kurds against her people. She had no objections to living with her old neighbors the Kurds, so long as both peoples were under British control. It might be possible for the Kurds to be separated, possibly by an Armenian state, from Turkish propaganda and intrigues.³⁶ Surma’s appointment as the first woman ambassador is an important and unnoticed historical event that deserves recognition from historians. Her photograph from a postwar publication is provided as Figure 7.2.

The resettlement of Assyrians, Lausanne Conference, and the Julamerk incident

Surma’s long absence in England and the death of Poulos left the Assyrians leaderless, with Agha Petros the only possible candidate to assume the leadership of his people. Agha Petros’s background is an interesting one. He sold carpets in the United States prior to the Great War, was “a confidence

32 “First Fair Envoy Appears in London. She Comes to Plead for British Protection for Her Tribe,” *Washington Post* (Apr. 25, 1920), 11; Austin, *Baqubah*, 64; Salah Sonyel, *The Assyrians of Turkey: Victims of Major Power Policy* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2001), 143; Lt-Col. Ronald Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1935), 62, www.aina.org/books/tota.pdf; Werda, *Flickering Light*, 52. On Surma meeting the Queen, see “Court Circular,” *The Telegraph* (Nov. 7, 1919), 13; “The Court,” *The Scotsman* (Nov. 7, 1919), 6.

33 “Reception at Lambeth Palace,” *The Times* (Mar. 15, 1920), 19.

34 Austin, *Baqubah*, 60; Werda, *The Cradle*, 51; Wigram, *Flickering Light*, 396–397.

35 “First Fair Envoy,” 11.

36 Surma, *Assyrian Church Customs*, ch. 10.



Figure 7.2 Surma d'Bait Mar Shimun

Source: Surma D'Bait Mar Shimun, *Assyrian Church Customs*, front matter.

trickster” and was rumored “to have killed a man in America.” Lt.-Gen. Aylmer Haldane, the general officer commanding forces in Mesopotamia in 1920–1922, described Agha Petros as a strong-willed individual but “not overburdened with scruples.” He was once a longtime resident and appointed as a consular official for the Ottoman Empire in Urmia.³⁷ Agha Petros was unfriendly to the Mar Shimun and disliked the patriarch’s temporal power.³⁸

Differences amongst the Assyrians did not assist their cause when the British government sought to resettle them in northern Mesopotamia (Iraq). Agha Petros saw this as an excellent opportunity for the creation of an Assyrian state stretching from the Hakkari mountains down to northern Mesopotamia and across to Urmia – under his leadership. He envisaged the Urmians and the Hakkari mountaineers returning home to their former villages and uniting to form an Assyrian state. It appears that all the Urmians and two-thirds of the mountaineers agreed to this plan, which had British support. In October 1920 Agha Petros with 6,000 men, including two British officers who went along as observers, proceeded north, reaching Barzan country, with the Zibari and Surchi Kurds opposing the Assyrian advance. Matters got out of hand, with some of the mountaineers going westwards close to their former territory pillaging and looting a Kurdish village. His resettlement plan failed due to a lack of unity. Promises made to everyone could not be fulfilled, which led to suspicion and mistrust within the Assyrian ranks.³⁹

Meanwhile, the British started relocating some of the Baqubah refugees to a new camp at Mindan (some thirty miles northeast of Mosul) by the end of April 1920. The Assyrians requested the provision of weapons so that they could defend themselves against their neighbors. Otherwise they faced a bleak future. An Arab revolt broke out in the summer of 1920 that threatened Britain’s military position in Iraq. Some Arab forces attacked Baqubah and Mindan, where the Assyrians repulsed their attacks.⁴⁰ During the Cairo Conference in March 1921, Britain discussed reducing its troop numbers in Mesopotamia as part of the government’s economic retrenchment program. It was proposed that Assyrians be recruited under the command of British officers to protect the settlement of small Assyrian communities being expanded

37 Lt-General Sir Aylmer L. Haldane, *The Insurrection in Mesopotamia 1920* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1922), 237; RS Stafford, *op cit.*, 30; Werda, *op cit.*, 36–37.

38 Stafford, *Tragedy*, 30; Wigram, *The Cradle*, 398.

39 Lt.-Col. Frederick Cunliffe-Owen, *British Policy in Assyrian Settlement* (n.p.), 7 and 12–14, www.aina.org/books/bpinas.pdf; David McDowell, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2nd ed., 2007), 153; Wigram, *Flickering Light*, 397–398; Stafford, *Tragedy*, 31–32.

40 Stafford, *Tragedy*, 31–32, 34–35; National Archives of United Kingdom Cab 24/108, CP.1570, The Assyrian and Armenian Refugees in Mesopotamia, Memo by Sec. of State for India, ESM, India Office, July 5, 1920.

around Mosul. Finally, the Baqubah and Mindan camps were closed down in September 1920 and in the summer of 1921 by the British government, resulting in some Assyrians joining the British levies.⁴¹

On December 11, 1922, Agha Petros submitted a memorandum to Lord Curzon at the Lausanne peace conference outlining Assyro-Chaldean claims that they ought to be granted an autonomous region around Mosul under British protection. He pointed out that his people wished to live “in peace in [their] own country” and that they also had assisted the Allies during the Great War. Agha Petros concluded that “by granting this you will have a Christian and warrior nation as a buffer state, separating the Turkish Empire from Persia, Kurdistan and Mesopotamia, A NATION DEVOTED TO YOUR CAUSE.”⁴² This was a repetition of past Assyrian demands conveniently ignored by Britain.

In case they did not attain autonomy, Agha Petros hoped that his people might be resettled in Europe, Canada, Australia, or South America. He alluded to the fact that Assyrians were “intelligent, hardworking, good agriculturists and expert vine growers.” Such skills would prove a great benefit “to fill up [the] vast empty spaces” in Australia.⁴³ The resettlement of Assyrians to other countries, including Australia, would be taken up by the League of Nations during the 1930s.

Agha Petros was negotiating a deal with the Turks behind the backs of the British. He proposed that all his compatriots be permitted to live all together in Turkey.⁴⁴ If Ankara accepted this condition, his delegation would not claim any Turkish territory and would even be prepared to see Mosul “annexed to Turkey.”⁴⁵ Agha Petros wanted to see his compatriots “live freely . . . like other Turkish citizens” and was ready to send a representative to Ankara “to declare this.”⁴⁶ İsmet İnönü Pasha head of the Turkish delegation, telegraphed Ankara for instructions and received the following response: “we would not approve the settlement of Assyrians and Chaldeans in our country,” and “if it is beneficial to send Agha Petros away from Lausanne he could be sent to Ankara.”⁴⁷

41 Cab 24/126 CP.3123, Report on Middle Eastern Conference Held in Cairo and Jerusalem, Memo by the Sec of State for Colonies, WSC, Colonial Office, July 11, 1921; Stafford, *Tragedy*, 35.

42 National Archives of United Kingdom, Foreign Office, F.O. 839/23 Autonomy for Assyrian Christians (claims of Assyro-Chaldeans), no. 87993, General Agha Petros to Lord Curzon, December 11, 1922.

43 F.O. 839/23 87993, Agha Petros to Lord Curzon, December 21, 1922; for a discussion of Curzon’s presentation at Lausanne on December 12, 1922. On the issue of minorities, see also National Archives of Australia, A981 TUR25, Territorial and Military Commission, Draft Minutes of 13th meeting on Dec. 12, 1922, 1–4.

44 *Racho Donef*, 1923: *Agha Petros and the Lausanne Telegraphs* (Sept. 2003), www.atour.com/history/1900/20030929a.html.

45 *Ibid.*

46 *Ibid.*

47 Hüseyin Rauf Bey to İsmet İnönü, Telegram No. 278 (368), Jan. 18, 1923, in Bilâl Şimşir (Ed.), *Lozan telgrafları: Türk diplomatik belgelerinde Lozan Barış Konferansı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1990), 399.

On January 23, 1923, Forbes Adam, a British delegate to Lausanne, interviewed Agha Petros regarding the latter's discussion with İsmet Pasha. The British wanted to learn the details of these talks to see what impact it might have on their strategic interests in Iraq. Agha Petros handed over a document outlining what transpired between him and the Turks. Adam thought that it was an extraordinary document indicating that the Turks and Assyro-Chaldeans "had always been the best of friends." Furthermore, there was reference to the northern frontier of the Mosul Vilayet and that the Assyrians would "surrender to the Turkish Government . . . all of their guns, machine guns and aeroplanes." In fact, the Assyrians possessed no airplanes and these were likely "the guns and machine guns" that had been given to them by the British. Lord Curzon was disappointed by Agha Petros's action, and the League of Nations rather than the Agha Petros plan would decide the future Turco-Iraqi frontier.⁴⁸

There was talk of Agha Petros returning to Iraq, an event with which the British and even Surma would have been most displeased. His return would have disturbed the "policy regarding Assyrian levies" during "attempts to bolster up the shattered prestige of the Assyrian patriarchal family." There was a report that Agha Petros had some support for his scheme inside Iraq with the possibility of seeking an accommodation with the Soviet Union after his failed attempts with France, Britain, and Turkey.⁴⁹ On May 5, 1923, Sir Percy Cox, the British High Commissioner in Baghdad, telegraphed the colonial secretary in London stating that the presence of Agha Petros would cause dissension with the ranks of the Assyrian Levies due to his enmity towards the Mar Shimun. Furthermore, the Iraqi government would have disapproved of his plans for the creation of an independent state in the north, which also included the future settlement of Mosul frontier by the League of Nations. It was hoped that his entry into Iraq would be restricted to Basra. The Colonial Office replied that Agha Petros had been given no assurances at Lausanne and could return as a private individual to present his case in Baghdad.⁵⁰

After the Lausanne Conference, Surma wrote to William Wigram that she and the Mar Shimun had met with Assyrian bishops and chiefs in Bebadyi, Amadia to discuss their future in Iraq. Their main concern focused on the Anglo-Iraq Treaty coming to an end in four years' time. It was unacceptable being placed under Turkey or the Arabs. However, there was no problem cooperating with the Arabs so long as they remained under the British. A petition was forwarded to the high commissioner, Sir Henry Dobbs, with an explanatory letter requesting that

if they are not to have all their lands, but they ask to have the district of Gawar, Shamisdan, Lewar to be under British Government: that all

48 B. Destani (Ed.), *Minorities in the Middle East: Christian Minorities 1838–1967, Part 1* (Cambridge: Archive Editions, 2007), 171–174.

49 *Ibid.*, 192–193.

50 *Ibid.*, 195–196.

Assyrians who are unsettled, may get there and be settled, and also they are willing to work with Arabs through British officials.

Surma “personally hate[d] the name of emigration, still I can’t see much any other way.”⁵¹

Dobbs replied, going over the usual position that Britain understood the plight of the Assyrians and would do her best to protect Assyrian interests. He stated:

I trust, however, that your people will not prejudice their cause by asking too much. It is evident for instance that in present circumstances there is little prospect of the Turks giving up the districts of Shamisdinan, Marbishu, Gawar and Lewan, and it is useless for your people to delude themselves with hopes regarding these districts which can never be fulfilled. What is possible to do will be done.⁵²

Whatever aspiration the Assyrians had of regaining their lost districts in their petition was dashed by Dobbs.

At the Constantinople Conference (May 19–June 5, 1924), Turkey and Britain discussed the Turkish-Iraq border issue. The whole issue rested on the boundary north of Mosul which spanned from Julamerk to Shamisdinan and Beytussebab in Hakkari. Without going into the details of the Constantinople meeting, Hakkari attracted more attention than Mosul. There were remnants of Nestorians domiciled in Hakkari.⁵³ In August 1924, Assyrians of the Tkhuma tribe clashed with the Turkish *vali* of Julamerk, who was on a revenue-collection tour. The tribesmen took his luggage and finally returned it after discussions between the two parties. Seizing the opportunity, the Turks were determined to eject the Assyrians from their territory, and did so. The Assyrians were ill equipped to fight the Turkish army, with many of them fleeing onto Iraqi territory.⁵⁴ A large number of Assyrians belonging to the levies supported by Assyrian irregulars who had been raised by

51 *Ibid.*, 206–207.

52 *Ibid.*, 208.

53 Yonca Anzerlioglu, “The Revolts of Nestorian Christians against the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey,” *The Muslim World* 100, no. 1 (2010): 55; Yulug Tekin Kurat, “Anglo-Turkish Relations during Kemal Ataturk’s Presidency of the Turkish Republic,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 4 (1984): 115–116.

54 Kurat, “Anglo-Turkish Relations,” 116; Anzerlioglu, “The Revolts,” 56–57; Stafford, *Tragedy*, 35–36. For a detailed account of Turkish military operations against the Nestorians in Hakkari region and resultant massacres in 1924–1925, see Racho Donef, *Massacres and Deportations of Assyrians in Northern Mesopotamia Ethnic Cleansing by Turkey 1924–25* (Stockholm: Bet-Froso & Bet-Prasa, 2009). For Turkish and British accusations and counter-accusations over violations of the proposed Turco-Iraq frontier, see League of Nations Documents, C. 521 1924 V11, Geneva, September 25, 1924 & C. 603 1924 V11 Geneva, October 1924.

Surma and Bishop Yuwallaha repulsed a number of Turkish attacks.⁵⁵ It is worth noting that Surma saw advantages in the levies, as it taught them “self-discipline and self-protection.” Surma received an MBE for her services in 1926.⁵⁶

In September 1923, the Council of the League of Nations established a commission to aid it in fixing the frontier between Turkey and Iraq pursuant to the Treaty of Lausanne.⁵⁷ Britain had promised to adhere to “the promises which it had made to the Arab people,” which had joined the Allies, by “establishing a national government in Iraq.”⁵⁸ Britain expressed to the commission that the Arabs, Nestorian Christians, Jews, and Yezidis of Mosul vilayet desired to remain in Iraq, while the Turkomans wished to join Turkey, and the Kurds were split, at a time when their opinions were difficult to assess in a plebiscite or other survey.⁵⁹ Turkey proposed to govern the “population which is mainly Turko-Kurdish” north of the Diyala River and Jebel Sinjar.⁶⁰ Many Kurds expressed the wish to be part of Turkey, although Kurdish chiefs seemed to be in favor of Iraq, which had promised or allowed Kurdish areas some autonomy.⁶¹ Christians, Jews, and Yezidis were in favor of an Iraq under a European League of Nations mandate.⁶²

The commission had occasion to inquire into the historic names for Mosul vilayet. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, European historical cartographers divided the proposed territory of Iraq into three regions: Assyria to the east of the Tigris River, Mesopotamia to the west of it, and Babylonia in southern Iraq.⁶³ Arab geographers referred to Assyria as Dzezira or Al’Jazirah to the north of where the Tigris and Euphrates meet, to Al’Irak south of that point, and to Kurdistan in the northwest of Assyria.⁶⁴ A key Ottoman map divided the territory into “Diarbekr” in the north and Iraq Arabi in the south.⁶⁵

The commission concluded that the population along the northern border of Iraq with Turkey had been the “original habitat” and “territory of the Assyrians” but that they had been “decimated” by the war, leaving mainly Kurds.⁶⁶ The patriarch of the Church of the East departed Baghdad during

55 Stafford, *Tragedy*, 36; Destani, *Minorities in the Middle East*, 226.

56 Stafford, *Tragedy*, 36. For the actual document showing the award of the MBE, see <http://marshimun.com/new/pdfs/SK02.pdf>.

57 League of Nations, Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq: Report Submitted to the Council by the Commission Instituted by the Council Resolution of September 30, 1924, 5.

58 *Ibid.*, 6, 84.

59 *Ibid.*, 16.

60 *Ibid.* 22.

61 *Ibid.*, 77.

62 *Ibid.*, 78.

63 *Ibid.*, 27.

64 *Ibid.*, 26.

65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*, 39, 51.

the invasions of the Timurids for Alqosh, which was close to Mosul and modern Turkey.⁶⁷ Church of the East Christians joined the Roman Catholic Church in the 1700s for “protection.”⁶⁸ Under the Timurids, Mosul was “pillaged and laid waste,” and subsequently fell under Turkish rule.⁶⁹ The Turkish delegation based its argument against Mosul joining Iraq, and against Assyrians being independent of Turkish rule, on the small numbers of Assyrians surviving the Ottomans and the war.⁷⁰ The commission concluded that it was too late in 1925 to consider the homes of the Assyrians, or their repatriation.⁷¹ It recommended that Mosul join Iraq under a twenty-five-year League of Nations mandate, but that due regard should be paid to governance by the “Kurdish race.”⁷² The Assyrians should also regain their ancient privilege of limited autonomy and officials under the patriarch of their choosing.⁷³

In 1925, the British delegate to the League of Nations informed that body that Turkey was not allowing any Christians to live in the mountainous regions close to Iraq.⁷⁴ Christian children of the deportees were bought and sold by the Kemalist forces, one document stated.⁷⁵ The cruelty of the deportation claimed 300 lives of children and old people, as well as those of 40 men.⁷⁶ The British representative described Turkey’s strategy as involving the “systematic removal of Christian populations.”⁷⁷ The Kemalists had forced the Syrian Orthodox Church to dissolve and relocate, its patriarch being exiled to Jerusalem and thence to India.⁷⁸ The British ensured that the League Council received the report of a Chaldean priest in Iraq, who confirmed that “the Kemalist troops spread in the area, surrounded our Christian mountain villages, and deported en masse until the last inhabitant. . . . The refugees . . . [are] destitute, dying from hunger and cold,

67 *Ibid.*, 52.

68 *Ibid.*

69 *Ibid.*, 59.

70 *Ibid.*, 79, 81.

71 *Ibid.*, 88.

72 *Ibid.*

73 *Ibid.*, 90.

74 Leo Amery, “Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq,” *League of Nations Official Journal* 6 (1925): 1440–1441, 1440; League Council Doc. No. C.799.1925.VII (Dec. 11, 1925), in Racho Donef (Ed.), *Massacres and Deportations of Assyrians in Northern Mesopotamia: Ethnic Cleansing by Turkey, 1924–1925* (Stockholm, Sweden: Nsibin, 2009), 159–163.

75 League Council Doc. No. C.799.1925.VII (Dec. 11, 1925), 162–163.

76 Associated Press, “Mosul Awarded to British; More Turk Killings Alleged,” *The Washington Post* (Dec. 16, 1925), 1; George Seldes, “300 Chaldeans Die at Hands of Turks; 8,000 Go to Exile,” *The Washington Post* (Oct. 25, 1925), 1, 18.

77 Amery, “Question of the Frontier,” 1440–1441, 1440.

78 Naures Atto, *Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora: Identity Discourses among the Assyrian/Syriac Elites in the European Diaspora* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011), 99.

without clothes.”⁷⁹ The report blamed the Kemalist guards of the Assyrians and Chaldeans for having “lined us up, exhibiting us, displaying us plainly as merchandise . . . [until] children were sold for one *mejidiye* each (five francs). Some were sold for a basket of grapes or a chicken.”⁸⁰ The refugees reported that Turkey had razed their homes and communities, prompting 6,000 persons to flee to Iraq.⁸¹ Some of the Assyrian refugees reported that in Turkish concentration camps, no food was provided and the population was reduced to surviving on acorns. The Turkish forces massacred forty men on a single occasion and, in driving the deportees onward, shot dead those children or elderly persons who fell to the ground from hunger, exhaustion, or the cold.⁸² The number massacred during one march reached 300 children and elderly people.⁸³ The entire period during which Britain and Turkey contested control over the Mosul region and historic Assyria witnessed attacks and plundering of Assyrian villages and the mass flight of refugees who, “desperate and starving,” carried “blood-curdling tales of Turkish cruelties.”⁸⁴

1926: the year of travel

The Council of the League of Nations handed over question of the Turkish-Iraq frontier to the Permanent Court of International Justice for its adjudication in September 1925.⁸⁵ Leo Amery, the British colonial secretary, invited Sir Henry Lunn to discuss the involvement of the churches in helping the Assyrian refugees. Mr. Lunn advocated the creation of a committee charged with the duty of raising £5,000 together with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson as president. Mr. Amery thought that the Turks had contempt for the League of Nations, and considered it to be a British organization.

The Archbishop of Canterbury invited Lunn to dinner with the archbishop of York and other prominent clergy in attendance. What emerged was the bishops of Winchester and Manchester, and archbishop of York signing the appeal. The most important aspect of the appeal was “[to] secure Lady Surma.” However, Cardinal Bourne of the Catholic Church refused to sign the appeal, but appointed Lady Sykes and Mr. Ward to be on the committee.⁸⁶

79 League Council Doc. No. C.799.1925.VII (Dec. 11, 1925), in Donef, *Massacres and Deportations*, 159–162.

80 *Ibid.*, 162–163.

81 “Britain’s Smallest Ally: The Deeds and Needs of the Assyrians,” *Manchester Guardian* (U.K.) (Nov. 12, 1924), 11.

82 Associated Press, “Mosul Awarded to British,” 1.

83 Seldes, “300 Chaldeans Die,” 1, 18.

84 Marguerite Harrison, *Asia Reborn* (London: Harrap, 2007), 177.

85 C.549(1).M.187. 1925 V11, League of Nations, Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq, Geneva, Sept. 19, 1925.

86 Henry Lunn, *Nearing Harbours: The Log of Sir Henry S. Lunn* (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1934), 212–215.

In 1926, Lady Surma visited Britain, the United States, and Canada to raise funds for her people. On February 1 she addressed a meeting arranged by the Assyrian and Iraq Christian Committee at the Mansion House in London.⁸⁷ The *Western Daily Press* article described her as “dressed as [an] English lady” compared with previously wearing “the rough woolen habit and veil of the religious order to which she belongs.” Surma appealed for funds to assist her destitute people in Iraq. According to the article, £20,000 had been raised but an additional £5,000 was required for food and clothing “to survive the winter.” She wanted her people to be self-supporting by making the point that King Feisal had “offered land . . . but they [needed] . . . rudimentary materials for their existence on the land[:] corn, seed, cattle, horses, and farm implements.” The meeting was presided over by Lunn, the bishop of London, and Willoughby Dickinson, founder of the League of Nations Society.⁸⁸ *The Times* and *The Telegraph* gave great prominence to the bishop of London’s speech, compared to that of Lady Surma.⁸⁹

After Surma’s first address, the Archbishop of Canterbury raised the question of Lady Surma going to the United States to plead the cause of her people. It was also noted that British officials and the U.S. Assyrians should be notified that any visit of Surma that “she has not gone to America for her own interest.”⁹⁰ Surma also proposed south Russia as a place of resettlement so long as Britain and the Soviet Union resolved their differences, but the Archbishop of Canterbury considered Surma’s solution a most difficult one.⁹¹

Another meeting held at the Guildhall in Gloucester was chaired by the bishop of Gloucester. The bishop explained that “the large attendance showed that there was a real sympathy in the city for the sufferings and persecutions to which our fellow Christians in Mosul have been exposed.” He outlined the sufferings of the Assyrians at the hands of the Turks and Kurds and their contribution to the allies during the war. Lady Surma repeated some of her Mansion House address and also thanked the British people for their assistance with “money and food.” Dickinson mentioned that £20,000 raised had already been sent, but “£100,000 that had been asked for would barely suffice to meet the needs of that suffering people, 9,000 of whom were in dire need.” A sum of £36 had been collected during this meeting.⁹²

87 “Lectures and Meetings. Assyrians and Iraq Christians Committee,” *The Times* (Jan. 26, 1926), 12.

88 “Oppressed Assyrians. Most Battered Bulwark of Christianity,” *Western Daily Press* (Feb. 2, 1926), 10.

89 “Iraq Christians’ Plight. Mansion House Appeal,” *The Telegraph* (Feb. 2, 1926), 13; “Christians in the Near East. Bishop of London’s Appeal,” *The Times* (Feb. 2, 1926), 11; “Iraq Christians’ Plight. Duchess of Atholl’s Appeal,” *The Scotsman* (Feb. 2, 1926), 8.

90 Lunn, *Nearing Harbour*, 216–217.

91 *Ibid.*, 217–218.

92 “Eastern Atrocities. The Sufferings of Syrian Christians. Addresses at Influential Meeting in Gloucester,” *The Gloucester Journal* (Feb. 6, 1926), 19; *Citizen* (Feb. 4, 1926), 8.

Lady Surma traveled to the United States on the *Aquitania* to raise funds for her distressed people. The *New York Times* commented that “her visit here is in interests of the Assyrians and Iraqi Christian relief committee which is working to repatriate the Assyrians in that part of their mountainous homeland ceded to them where the new boundary was fixed.” The American committee who sponsored her visit was known as the Assyrian and Iraq Christian Relief Committee.⁹³

After New York, she went to Montreal, Canada to continue her solicitation of funds. On April 5, the *Montreal Gazette* reported that Surma would give a public speech at the Mount Royal Hotel.⁹⁴ Surma gave a speech at a reception hosted by Lady Drummond in her home, and in her address focused on the Assyrians’ adoption of Christianity, their missionary work in China, being surrounded by Muslims for centuries, the murder of her brother by Simko, fighting alongside the Russians, and being abandoned by them towards the end of the Great War. There were 30,000 Assyrians and 3,000 Chaldean Catholics in Iraq who had no home, she said. She pleaded for assistance in Canada. It is strange that Lunn, who sponsored Surma’s visit to North America, made no mention of her visit to Canada in his book.⁹⁵

Surma’s next stop was Chicago, which had several thousand Assyrians domiciled in that city. Bishop Charles Anderson and the Rev. George Thomas of the Episcopalian Church along with a Presbyterian leader welcomed her to Chicago, where she spent several days in public meetings. On May 6, a banquet in her honor was put on at the Webster Hotel by the Assyrian Church of the East. She planned to address her compatriots at a mass meeting in Turner Hall. Surma visited the White House, where President Calvin Coolidge “expressed interest in her mission and belief that the American people would heartily respond to her cause.”⁹⁶

In late May and June, she visited Los Angeles and Oakland, Fresno, Turlock, San Francisco, Sacramento, Portland, Minneapolis, and New York, giving public lectures and raising money.⁹⁷ For many Assyrian Americans, her visit represented an important connection with their ancestral homelands and allowed them to assist their distressed compatriots financially.

93 “Lady Surma on Visit to Aid Countrymen. Princess Regent of the Assyrians Nation Arrives Today on the *Acquitania*,” *The New York Times* (Mar. 17, 1926), 9.

94 “Lady Surma Will Address Meeting,” *Montreal Gazette* (Apr. 5, 1926), 9.

95 Lunn, *Nearing Harbour*, 232–234.

96 “Lady Surma of Assyria Comes to City Today,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (May 2, 1926), 27; Vasili Shoumanov, *Assyrians in Chicago* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 36; Lady Surma D’Beth Mar Shimun, *Marshimun.com*, <http://marshimun.com/lady-surma-dbeth-mar-shimun/>; “Assyrian Regent to Speak at High School,” *Modesto News-Herald*, June 6, 1926, 7.

97 “Aid for Ancient People Sought,” *Los Angeles Times* (May 30, 1926), 9; “Assyrian Princess Asks \$500,000 Here,” *Oakland Tribune* (May 29, 1926), 9; *Oakland Tribune* (June 6, 1926), 48; *Modesto News-Herald* (June 10, 1926), 6.

The Mar Shimun, the League of Nations, and the Simele Massacre

When Britain signaled its intention in 1930 to end its mandate of Iraq by 1932, Mar Shimun Eshai took charge from Surma of proceedings regarding the future of his people. In October 1931, Eshai forwarded a letter enclosing a petition to the chairman of the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva explaining that it would be impossible for the Assyrians to live in Iraq and that emigration to another country offered the best solution. However, if a suitable place couldn't be found, then Syria would be a desirable abode under the French mandate. The British commented that the meeting had been conducted in secrecy without the prior knowledge of the administrative inspector in Mosul. On the other hand, the *mutasarrif* (district head) instructed his officials in Dohuk and Zakho to do their utmost to persuade the Assyrians of the good intentions of the Iraq government towards them. The administrative inspector believed that Eshai's action wouldn't help his cause. No state would open its doors to Assyrian emigration en masse. Once the Assyrians considered the impossibility of an autonomous zone or emigration, they might realize their future lay in Iraq.⁹⁸

In 1932, Assyrians addressed petitions to the League of Nations regarding their future in Iraq. On September 22, Eshai's petition outlined that the only manner in which the racial, linguistic, and religious interests of the Assyrians could be protected and safeguarded in Iraq was recognition as a nation (*millet*), which had been accorded to them in the former Ottoman Empire. He waited on the League of Nations to make a final determination on the future status of his people. There was an unrealistic expectation that the Hakkari region in Turkey where the Assyrians once lived would be returned to them. The extension of Iraqi territory could allow them to settle in special administrative areas such as Zakho, Dohuk, Aqra, and Amadia or alternatively in an autonomous zone. Eshai alluded to a June 17 petition submitted to the British High Commissioner in Iraq, Sir Francis Humphrys, which recognized his religious and temporal power.⁹⁹

Another petition signed by fifty-six Assyrian maliks including Bishop Yuwalala opposed the schemes of Eshai. They claimed that Eshai did not represent them and that they were content, feeling safe and secure with their lot in Iraq. Moreover they considered Eshai's demands as unsound and only

98 League of Nations, CPM,1282 Permanent Mandates Commission Iraq, Geneva, Mar. 11, 1932, enclosing Mar Shimun Eshai, Mosul, Letter to Chairman of Mandates Commission, Geneva, Oct. 23, 1931 & Petition October 20, 1931 1–5, www.marshimun.com/new/pdfs/ME24.pdf; British Memorandum, 7–8; Sami Zubaida, "Contested Nations: Iraq and the Assyrians," *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 3 (2000): 363–382.

99 League of Nations Documents, CPM 1300, Eshai Shimun to Chairman of Permanent Mandates Commission, Geneva, September 22, 1932 (Annex) Extract of a Petition Addressed to Sir Francis Humphrys by certain Assyrian Chiefs, June 17, 1932, www.marshimun.com/new/pdfs/ME.32.pdf.

advancing the interests of himself and his family. “We represent the communities and people mentioned against our respective signatures,” Bishop Yuwalala said.¹⁰⁰ This showed the divisions existing amongst the Assyrians.

The temporal and ecclesiastical authority of the Mar Shimun Eshai created problems between him and the Iraqi government. Eshai argued that his temporal leadership should officially be recognized by the government as this was based on laws and customs handed down through the centuries. The Iraqi regime saw no problem with Eshai exercising religious power over his flock, but his administrative leadership challenged the authority of Baghdad. Everyone was equal irrespective of creed according to the Iraqi state. Eshai was summoned to Baghdad and told he must stop his anti-government agitation and to give assurances recognizing the temporal power of the government. He refused to comply with the order, and was detained in Baghdad.¹⁰¹

Some 1,500 of his followers led by Yacu crossed over into Syria, with the French authorities demanding they hand over their weapons. Negotiations occurred between Baghdad and the French, in which the French made it very clear that the Assyrians would not be permitted to remain in Syria and had to surrender their weapons before entering Iraq. A small Iraqi force was dispatched to the frontier to ensure the returning Assyrians surrendered their weapons. Due to suspicion and mistrust, fighting broke out between Assyrian and Iraqi forces, with both sides sustaining losses.¹⁰² The most dastardly act was the attack by Iraqi troops at Simele on August 11, resulting in around 600 Assyrians killed, according to British officials, although “Assyrian sources put it at several thousand.” Surveying multiple locations and sources may result in a toll of up to 6,000.¹⁰³ More than 100 villages were plundered, ruined, and/or deserted.¹⁰⁴ According to Stafford, the massacres had been organized at the highest levels of the Iraqi military with Bekir Sidqi, who was in command at Mosul, being “acclaimed by the Baghdad mob as conquering hero.”¹⁰⁵

100 League of Nations Documents, CPM 1298, Permanent Mandates Commission, Sept. 26, 1932.

101 League of Nations Documents, C544.1933 V1 Geneva, September 28, 1933 including Correspondence Relating to Assyrian settlement from 8 July 1932–5 August 1933, Royal Government of Iraq, Printed at the Government Press, Baghdad, 1933, 18–21 and 56; Daniel Silverfarb, *Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 40–41.

102 League of Nations Documents, C544.1933 V1 Geneva, September 28, 1933, including Correspondence relating to Assyrian settlement from 8 July 1932–5 August 1933, Royal Government of Iraq, Baghdad, Government Press, 1933, 50–52, 56–59; Reeva Spector Simon, *Iraq between the Two World Wars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 111–112; Silverfarb, *op cit.*, 41–42; Zubaida, *op cit.*, 368; For the Yacu affair & Syrian adventure, see Stafford, *Tragedy of the Assyrians*, ch. 9–10.

103 Sargon Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History: Iraq and the Assyrians in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1st paperback ed., 2016), 134.

104 *Ibid.*, 111–116.

105 Stafford, *Tragedy of the Assyrians*, 147; see also, Silverfarb, *Britain's Informal Empire*, 42; Simon, *Iraq*, 112–113; Zubaida, “Contested Nations,” 370.

Humphrys appears to have blocked efforts to send a League of Nations commission of inquiry in the summer of 1933.¹⁰⁶ The following summer, however, the League took up the resettlement of 40,000 Assyrians.¹⁰⁷ By 1939, close to 9,000 Assyrians living in Iraq had been resettled in Syria with the League's assistance.¹⁰⁸ Several thousand more may have resettled elsewhere after fleeing to Syria.¹⁰⁹

The position of Eshai and Surma became untenable with the Iraqi authorities who deported them to Cyprus in August 1933.¹¹⁰ Stafford blamed Surma for some of the "anti-government propaganda" and complained that "circumstances have made her a fanatic." He acknowledged that she was "capable and strong-minded" individual.¹¹¹ Other British sources on Surma's personal traits and character border on the hagiographic, however, stated that she provided her nephew with advice and looked after the interest of her people.¹¹²

The twilight years

The information on Surma's life in Cyprus and later years is very difficult to obtain and appears to constitute a gap which needs filling. Surma arrived in San Francisco in 1964 and spent her remaining years in Turlock, California, where she died aged 92 in 1975. Her grave is located at Turlock Memorial Park. The Archbishop of Canterbury awarded Surma "the Cross of the Order of St. Augustine of Canterbury . . . in recognition of her many years of service in fostering closer relations between her church and the Church of England." She was to be presented with her award in San Francisco "by the Bishop of Western New York (Dr. Lauriston L. Scaife)."¹¹³

In conclusion, Surma was a remarkable woman traveling the world telling major governments such as Great Britain and United States of the problems faced by her people. She used her position to raise funds to assist her compatriots in the Middle East. Like any individual she had her weaknesses, but she served her people with honesty and integrity. Surma was the person who provided strength and resoluteness to the Assyrian nation during the

106 Donabed, *Reforging*, 123.

107 E.g., Albin Johnson, "Council Finds that League's Big Problems Are Behind Scene," *Syracuse Herald* (May 13, 1934), 1.

108 Donabed, *Reforging*, 124, citing "Assyrian Villages on the Khabur: Results of Latest Census," *Athra* (Jan. 5, 1939); League of Nations, *The Settlement of the Assyrians: A Work of Humanity and Appeasement* (Geneva: The Author, 1935).

109 Frederic Norwood, *Strangers and Exiles: A History of Religious Refugees*, vol. 2 (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1969), 270. Thus, between 1924 and 1938, 15,000 Iraqi Christians are said to have gone to Syria, but only 9,000 remained in 1943. *Ibid.*

110 Donabed, *Reforging*, 122.

111 Stafford, *Tragedy of the Assyrians*, 166.

112 "Lady Surma on Visit," 9.

113 Solomon (Sawa) Solomon, *op cit.*, 7; 'Award by Archbishop of Canterbury', *The Times* (Jan. 24, 1966), 12.

turbulent years of the Great War and beyond. There is a possibility that without her direction, the fate of the Assyrian nation might have been even worse after 1918. After her deportation to Cyprus from Iraq, there is very little information about her life. A biography about this woman is long overdue in the English language, as information about her life is scattered over a number of older works.

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8 The Assyrian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference

Racho Donef

Introduction

After World War I ended, a conference was held at Versailles to negotiate the terms of the peace. Representatives of the Assyrians participated in this process, but failed to secure a meaningful outcome. The Assyrians neither managed to persuade the great powers to restore to them some form of suzerainty under a mandate or compensation for the atrocities committed, which amounted to genocide. They failed to persuade the powers to allow Assyrians who were deported or displaced during the war to resettle in Turkey. The reason for this failure is twofold: the first is the inability to articulate a single message for all Assyrians, whatever their confessional identity may be, and the second was the unwillingness of the French and the British, which carved up the Ottoman Empire through the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916, to accommodate the Assyrians. This chapter reviews the Assyrian intervention at Paris, the divisions within Assyrian delegations, obstacles confronting Assyrian efforts to seek equitable treatment, and the outcome of the conference at Paris.

Background

The Assyrian delegation in the Paris Peace Conference was not a single cohesive entity that worked in unison. It would have been unrealistic to have expected it to be. The geographical fragmentation of the Assyrian communities, which was worsened by the brutality and the displacement brought out by the war, sectarian differences owing to centuries of divisions and the ever-present issues with the Assyrian nomenclature, have made it difficult to operate as one committee.

The delegates themselves were painfully aware of this reality. Captain Abraham Yoosuf, one of the most active delegates who spent two years in Paris, arranged a meeting of all delegates on June 16, 1919 in an effort to co-ordinate strategy:

[t]o make the meetings regular, I proposed to form a real organisation, with a President, Secretary and Treasurer, but no one seconded my motion and everybody said “What is the difference? We are all without

an organisation or without a bureau.” On such an occasion every one will call upon the members of the Peace Conference telling them they are Delegates and presenting something different than the others. This is surely a folly and worse, it is an insane idea and not a business way. I made a motion that Assyro-Chaldean Delegates have a place, which shall be recognized by the Peace Conference and by Allied Governments. I did not succeed in doing so as we could not decide who was the legitimate Delegate. A case happened in recognizing Prof. Yohannan. How could we refuse to let him attend the meeting when all the others had not shown their credentials, and to whom will they show their credentials and who are representing?¹

Attending delegates

The delegates were numerous. It is difficult to make a definitive list of attendants, as the conference lasted a year and many Assyrian notables visited Paris during 1919 and 1920 to make a case for the Assyrians.² As far as the Assyrians are concerned, the Paris process was longer than the duration of the conference itself. During this process many Assyrian leaders visited Paris, and indeed London, in an effort to persuade Great Britain and France for a mandated state for the Assyrians.

The team of delegates can be grouped in at least distinct three ways. At one level, the committee was divided along confessional lines: Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic, “Nestorian,” “Chaldean.” Individual delegates represented those sees. Yves Ternon consolidates the delegates into three groups: the Jacobites represented by the Bishop of Syria, Severius Aphrem Barsoum, the man who later became Mor Ignatius Severius Aphrem I Barsaum, the Syrian Catholics represented by the Patriarch Ephrem Rahmani, and the Assyro-Chaldean delegation represented by the Chaldean patriarch of Babylon.³ Although the official representative of the patriarch of the East was not present, there were also “Nestorians” on the committee.

- 1 Thomas Beth-Avdalla, *An Anthology of A. K. Yoosuf's Writings on Assyrians* (unpublished manuscript, 2016), 71. I would like to thank MARA (Modern Assyrian Research Archive) for providing an unpublished copy of a compilation of Captain Yoosuf's writings.
- 2 E.g., National Archives of United Kingdom, AIR 20/270, Representation of Assyrians at Peace Conference, Dec. 1918–Dec. 1919: National Archives of United Kingdom, F.O. 608 series. Peace Conference, British Delegation, Paris, 1919–20; F.O. 608/82/6266. Richard Webb for British High Commission, Constantinople, Dec. 30, 1918, with enclosure of Assyro-Chaldean National Council, Constantinople; F.O. 608/82/2696, Admiral Webb, Constantinople, February 16, 1919; FO 608/83/5705, Formation of a New Assyrian State, Mar. 29, 1919; F.O. 608/82/4759 (Mar. 20, 1919); F.O. 608/83/17492, Delegates and Representatives of the Assyrians of Persia & Caucasus to Mr. Forbes Adam, British Delegation, Hotel Majestic, Paris, Aug. 6, 1919; F.O. 608/83, Memo of the Assyrian Delegation to the Peace Conference, National Assyrian Council of the Trans-Caucasus, March ?, 1919; F.O. 608/83/17492, Petition of the Persian Assyrians to the Peace Conference, Aug. 6, 1919.
- 3 Yves Ternon, *Mardin 1915: Anatomie pathologique d'une destruction* (Paris: Centre d'Histoire Arménienne Contemporaine, 2002), 253–254.

Indeed, there were also Presbyterians (which were originally from families belonging to the Church of the East, i.e., so called Nestorians) among the delegates. Mar Shimun had authorized Reverend Joel E. Werda, president of the National Association of America, as well as delegates representing Assyrians in Persia, the Caucasus, and Kurdistan to submit to the conference a memorandum entitled “The claims of the Assyrians before the preliminaries of peace at Paris.”⁴ Dr. Werda notes that

[s]hortly after it became known that the Peace Conference would be held in Paris, the writer, as the President of the ‘Assyrian National Associations of America’ . . . sent a cable through the courtesy of the Department of State to the American consul in Bagdad, requesting of the latter to ascertain the wishes of the Assyrian national leaders with reference to their national claims, to be presented at Peace Conference in Paris. Of the three sectarian groups, into which the Assyrian people are divided, the Nestorian element, because of the great and courageous role it played in the war had the first right to speak. And yet, for the sake of the Assyrian national unity, it was deemed advisable by the writer to ascertain the wishes of the other two Assyrian Patriarchs as well. The American Consul, through the Department of State, replied that the Jacobite Patriarch, being then in the territory still occupied by the Turks, could not be communicated with; that the Roman Catholic Patriarch has a desire to go to Paris in person; but the wish of the Nestorian Patriarch is, “All Assyrians united, and under the protectorate of Great Britain!”

At another level, the delegates could be divided along geographical lines, as they represented Assyrian people from the United States, Iran, Turkey/Ottoman Empire, Iraq, and Trans-Caucasia. The Assyrians reported the 1914 population estimates to the conference as shown in Table 8.1:

Table 8.1 Worldwide Assyro-Chaldean population, 1914

<i>Region</i>	<i>Population estimate for 1914</i>
Ottoman Empire	811,000
Persia	100,000
India	750,000
Egypt and Sudan	5,000
The Caucasus	54,000
North and South America	30,000
Europe and elsewhere	20,000
Total	1,770,000

Source: Adapted from Malik Cambar, *La Question Assyro-Chaldéenne et la Société des Nations: Rapports et documents* (Jerusalem: Ratisbonne Printing Press 1933), 15. The estimate includes figures for the Syrian Orthodox and the Church of the East in India.

4 Salahi Sonyel, *The Assyrians of Turkey: Victims of Major Power Policy* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2001), 134.

There is yet another way of looking at the composition of delegates: by their aspirations and expectations. The Chaldean patriarch's representatives looked to France as their potential protector. Mar Shimoun, whose representative Lady Surma was not at the conference, expressly preferred the British. Syrian Catholics also thought the French would deliver the justice the Assyrians hoped for. The Syrian Orthodox metropolitan tried to lobby both governments. When in England, Barsaum told *Morning Post* on February 4, 1920:

I have been sent here by the Patriarch of Antioch, who resides at Mardin in Mesopotamia, to draw the attention of the Allies to what my half million co-religionists have suffered under the Turk. I have seen M. Poincaré in Paris, and I hope, during my stay in London to lay my case before the heads of the Foreign and India Offices.⁵

William Henry Taylor also notes that Barsaum requested an audience with the King, which was rejected and that in general he sought British support and protection.⁶ It appears that when in London Barsaum gave the impression to the British that he favored them. Ternon notes that the

Jacobite's (Syrian Orthodox) representative arrived in Paris in November 1919. He believed effective action by managing both English and French. The French diplomats were sceptical about his agenda; they considered that it is the Syrian Catholics and not the Syrian Orthodox who were loyal to France. This was not an unreasonable assumption. The Syrian Catholic Patriarch Rahmani openly played the French card and asked for the protection of France in Syria against the Arab power that moved to Damascus.⁷

In 1920 and again in 1921, the Syrian Orthodox Church wrote the British Prime Minister that "the ancient assyrian nation" suffered a calamity including 100,000 dead and thousands made widows or orphans, and should be granted a "tolerable future" free from "Kurdish barbarism" and "Criminal Turkey."⁸ In a meeting that took place in the Kurdish Agha's house in Mardin, in April 1919, the Syrian Catholics, represented by Bishop Tappuni who later succeeded Rahmani as the patriarch of the Catholics, had also expressed the wish to see an Allied Protectorate.⁹

5 William Henry Taylor, *Antioch and Canterbury: The Syrian Orthodox Church and the Church of England 1874–1928* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005), 104.

6 *Ibid.*, 105.

7 Ternon, *Mardin*, 254.

8 F.O. 371/5130, E 1221, Severius A. Barsoum to David Lloyd George (Mar. 8, 1920), enclosed memorandum; F.O. 371/6356, XC 4360, E 2540, Ignatius Elias III to British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George (Feb. 16, 1921).

9 Taylor, *Antioch and Canterbury*, 106.

Even though the United States was not a player in the Middle Eastern theater, the Assyrian delegates from the United States expected the Americans to come to their aid in some form or another. President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed “the rights of small nations and of nationalities . . . to make good their claim to determine their own allegiances and their own forms of political life.”¹⁰ Dr. Werda articulated that wish: “it was the desire of the Assyrian National Associations of America that, if America decided to enter into the League of Nations, we should ask at Peace Conference for the mandate of America.” In an article entitled, “Yank Army must rebuild France,” originally published in *Izgedda – Persian American Courier*, Captain Yoosuf also expressed that yearning.¹¹

In sum, the delegates were divided into distinct groups, which sometimes overlapped. This degree of fluidity was inevitable given the complex background of the communities the delegates represented. There is also some lack of clarity in relation to some documents as to which regions dispatched them. For instance, Lazar George in some publications appears as the representative from Kurdistan,¹² and elsewhere as being from Trans-Caucasia.¹³ Captain Yoosuf was a member of the Assyrian Committee from the United States, though he also acted as secretary to the Syrian Orthodox metropolitan.

During the Paris Process the following Assyrians went to Paris to participate. Those highlighted in bold are pictured in Figure 8.1:

- Dr. Jesse [Yassa] Malek Yonan, representing Assyrians in Urmia, Salamas, and Solduz;
- Professor Abraham Yohannan, Columbia University, representing Assyrians in the United States;
- **Reverend Joel E. Werda**;
- Metropolitan Aphrem (Afrem) Barsoum (later Patriarch Barsoum I);
- The Chaldean Patriarch, Joseph Emmanuel II Thomas;
- The Syrian Catholic patriarch, Ephrem Rahmani;
- Captain **Abraham K. Yousuf**;
- **Rustam Nejib (Najib) Nédjib**, arrived from Constantinople but originally from Āmid [Diyarbakir];
- **Saïd Anṭun (Anthony) Namëk**, arrived from Constantinople but originally from Āmid;

10 Woodrow Wilson, “Speech, 11 February 1918,” quoted in HWV Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1920–1924), 438. See also, John Joseph, *The Nestorians and their Muslim Neighbors: A Study of Western Influence on their Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 152–153; Thio Li-Ann, “Resurgent Nationalism and the Minorities Problem: The United Nations and Post Cold War Developments,” *Singapore Journal of International and Comparative Law* 4 (2000): 300–303.

11 Beth-Avdalla, *An Anthology*, 24.

12 “Les Revendication Assyro-Chaldéennes,” *L’Action Assyro-Chaldéenne* 1, no. 26 (1920): 26.

13 *Den Assyro-Kaldeiska Aktionen – II* (Stockholm: Beṭ-Froso & Beṭ-Prasa Nsibin, 2012), 158.



Figure 8.1 Composite portrait of Assyro-Chaldean delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. Standing left to right – Saïd Radji, Moussa Shukur, Metran Afrem Barsoum, Pierre Pacus, and Brother Aram Ablahad. Sitting left to right – Major A. K. Yoosuf, Rustem Najib, Dr. Jean Zabony, Rev. Joel E. Werda, and Saïd Anthony Namik.

Source: *Babylon*, vol. 2, no. 14 (3 Feb. 1921).

- Saïd Radje;
- Dr. Ḥanna Zebuni (Jean Zabony), from Mosul;
- Ârâm Abdulâḥad (Ablahad), from Constantinople;
- Pierre Pacus;
- Mousa Šukur (Shukur), from Baghdad;
- Shimun Ganja, from Persia;
- Father Lazar George [Gorgis], from Tiflis;
- Lazar Yacoboff, from Kurdistan;
- B. Bakous; and
- Dr. Cabdalla Barsoum¹⁴

Two other delegates, appointed by the Chaldean National Council (Conseil National Chaldeen), Abduljebbar Pasha and Saïd Roumi, were reportedly

¹⁴ *A Catalogue of Paris Peace Conference Delegation Propaganda in the Hoover War Library* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1926), 80.

unable to travel to Paris, owing to personal reasons.¹⁵ Also, the Chaldean National Council informed the Swedish Legation in Constantinople on September 11, 1919 that Father Tomas Barjani, representative of the Chaldean patriarch, was removed from that post.¹⁶ It is not clear whether Father Bajari was in Paris during this period in question.

Backgrounds of the delegates

Evidently, members of clergy were well represented, the notable absence of the Mar Shimun line notwithstanding. Although the Syrian Orthodox patriarch did not attend, the office of the metropolitan of Syria, which was occupied by Severius Aphrem, was sufficiently important in the ecclesiastic hierarchy. There were physicians such as Captain Yoosuf, who served both in the Ottoman military and the United States Army, as well lawyers from Constantinople, such as Rustam Nédjib and Saïd Anṭun Namëk. Abraham Yohannan, a cleric educated by American Presbyterian missionaries at Urmia, was approved by the State Department and first went to England to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury and then to Paris to represent Assyrians.¹⁷ Dr. Jesse Yonan, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Chicago and a medical missionary in Persia, represented Assyrians of Persia in Paris.¹⁸ Dr. Abraham Yoosouf, born in Harput, also served in both the Ottoman military and the U.S. Army, in which he rose to the rank of major.¹⁹ Dr. Joel Werda was born in Persia and worked to translate the Bible, having studied at the Urmia College run by Presbyterian missionaries.²⁰ Metropolitan Aphrem (1887–1957) studied at the seminary of the Dominican fathers at Mosul, where he learned French, but left Catholicism to become a monk at the Orthodox monastery of Deir al-Záfarān, which he managed starting in 1911.²¹ The Syrian Catholic Patriarch Rahmani, a native of Mosul, had also studied under the Dominican fathers in that city.²²

Joseph Emmanuale II, the Chaldean patriarch of Babylon with his seat at Mosul, was appointed to this office in 1899.²³ He was born in the Chaldean

15 P. Bero, "La Vitalité Assyro-Chaldéenne," *L'Action Assyro-Chaldéenne* 1, no. 11 (1920): 220.
16 Conseil National Chaldéen, Letter to the Swedish Legation in Constantinople, 15 September 1919.

17 Yonca Anzerlioğlu, *Nasturiler* (Ankara: Tamga Yayıncılık, 2000), 98.

18 Vasili Shoumanov, *Assyrians in Chicago* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 31.

19 Sargon Donabed, *Remnants of Heroes: The Assyrian Experience* (Chicago: Assyrian Academic Society Press, 2003), 93–94.

20 *The New York Times* (Dec. 8, 1910).

21 "Patriarch Mor Aphrem I Barsoum (1887–1957)," *Syrian Orthodox Resources* (2001), <http://sor.cua.edu/personage/PAphrem1/index.html>.

22 Sebastien de Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide: Eastern Christians, the Last Arameans* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004), 205–206.

23 John Healey, "The Church Across the Border: The Church of the East and Its Chaldaean Branch," in Anthony O'Mahony and Emma Loosley (Eds.), *Eastern Christianity in the Modern Middle East* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge), 41–55, 41, 46.

town of Alqoš. He studied at the Jesuit college in Ghazir, Mount Lebanon and continued his theological studies at another Jesuit college in Beirut, St François Xavier.²⁴

Non-attendance

Just as important as the list of delegates who attended is the list of those who were not able, or were not permitted, to attend. Lady Surma, the sister of the Assyrian patriarch, was to represent him in Paris and traveled for this purpose to London. Lady Surma was well informed and, given that her brother was ill, she acted as a *de facto* leader of the church.²⁵ Lady Surma would have made a valuable contribution to the committee, but she was prevented by the British from attending, despite the Mar Shimun camp favoring a British protectorate. Fred Aprim notes that “she was allowed to address Assyrian demands but only in Britain.”²⁶ Certainly, Assyrian delegates from Paris visited her in London.

The Assyro-Chaldean Committee, in their memorandum to the conference, expressed their dissatisfaction over the absence of important military and tribal chiefs:

We have learned that the commander of the Assyro-Chaldean army, Agha Petros Eliya, and Malik Xořaba, leader of the Tiyyari tribe – the most important of the Nestorian tribes, wish to come to Paris as delegates. These honourable people have difficulty in securing the necessary authorization. . . .

Is this in accordance with the principal of people’s rights? Our delegates have abstained from disclosing the names of those blocking Agha Petros’ trip, perhaps in order not to compromise their countrymen in Lower Mesopotamia. However, they will present these acts as unbiased evidence that the Assyro-Chaldean demands are being blocked in Europe.²⁷

Undoubtedly Agha Petros was the most influential Assyrian military leader. Malik Qambar of Jilu, of Chaldean background, was another important military leader who was absent; he had acted as Commander of the Assyro-Chaldean Battalion in Syria (1919–1922). While he should have been a

24 Racho Donef and Jan Beṭ-Şawoce, *The Struggle for a Free Assyria: Documents on the Assyro-Chaldean Delegation’s Political and Diplomatic Efforts, 1920–1921*, trans. Lennart Simonsson (Sydney, Australia: Tatavla Publishing, 2015), 30.

25 Mar Aprem Mooken, *The History of the Assyrian Church of the East in the 20th Century With Special Reference to the Syriac Literature in Kerala*, Ph.D. Diss., Kottayam, Kerala, India, St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research, 2000, 136.

26 Fred Aprim, “Assyrians in the World War I Treaties: Paris, Sèvres and Lausanne,” *Assyrian Star* (Spring 2006), 14–16.

27 Donef and Beṭ-Şawoce, *The Struggle for a Free Assyria*, 51.

delegate at the conference, he was preoccupied with his responsibilities in regards to the settlement of the Assyrians scattered around Mesopotamia after the *Seyfo*. While in Beirut, he met General Gouraud, the French high commissioner for Syria and Cilicia and commander in chief of the army of the Levant, who told him

that at the senate meeting in Remo, France, they had delegated some parts of the old country of Assyria to be under French Mandate. . . . France had decided to give the Assyrians the western part of Bethnahrain, which is called today the Jazeera. . . . This will be your country and under French protection and will be built with French money.²⁸

General Gouraud then asked Malik Qambar to go to Tiflis and enlist Assyrian men to constitute a division of Assyrians “to be established in the upper Jazeera for guarding the borders.”²⁹ Malik Qambar undertook this task with enthusiasm and traveled to Tiflis to enlist soldiers. In Beirut, Malik Qambar also met with Mor Ephrem Rahmani, the Syrian Catholic Patriarch who told him that all the people of the Upper Gozarto were very happy with the administration to be established.³⁰

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that although some the delegates who attended were accomplished men in their fields, the absence of hardened military leaders with detailed knowledge of military logistics and the physical terrain may have altered the course of the conference for the Assyrians. The Assyrian and Syrian Orthodox patriarchs might also have brought gravitas to the Assyro-Chaldean delegation and reassured interlocutors that the delegation had many followers.

Nomenclature, group dynamics, and disagreements

Notwithstanding the title of this chapter, in the official documentation the delegation is cited as “Assyro-Chaldean.” This is an appellation which gained currency during the period leading up to the conference. In 1870, the Chaldean archbishop of Amadia, Georgius Ebedjesu Khayyath, used the term “Assyrio-Chaldeo” to describe his office. This seems to be the earliest reference to the appellation, although some scholars used it in reference to the Assyrian and Chaldean peoples in antiquity.³¹

28 Sam Parhad, *Beyond the Call of Duty: The Autobiography of Malik Kambar of Jeelu* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1986), 27.

29 Ibid.

30 *Malik Qambar'ın kalemi ile Jilo Aşireti ve Kendi Yaşamöyküsü*, trans. Kuroş Hürmez Nazlu (Çeviren: Hürmez Nazlu, 1962), 16; see also, Malik Qambar, *Khayye d Malik Qambar b karyuta* (1962).

31 Racho Donef, *Assyrians Post-Nineveh: Identity, Fragmentation, Conflict and Survival (672 BC-1920); A Study of Assyrogenous Communities* (Sydney, Australia: Tatavla Publishing, 2012), 56.

Giwargis (n.d.) notes that Assyrians first made use of the term Assyro-Chaldeans in 1919–1920 at French insistence.³² In his letters to the British, however, Agha Petros used the national term “Assyrian.”

Professor Dawud, Professor of English in the Ottoman University Dar ul-Khelafeh, has argued that it was the French who insisted on the use of the appellation:

Sometime after the Ottoman Armistice, an “Assyro-Chaldean Committee” was formed under the auspices of the French Authorities and took (held) its sessions in their Embassy. It may be interesting to remark here that by the term “Chaldeo-Assyrian,” both sections of the so-called Eastern Syrians, viz: the Uniates and the Nestorians are understood. . . . The members . . . therefore of the above mentioned Committee are composed entirely of the Uniates, i.e. the Catholic Chaldeans, and of half a dozen Assyrian refugees from Jilu in Kurdistan. The head of these refugees is Malik Qambar, an Assyrian chief of Jilu.³³

It is safe to conclude that the appellation was a construct which aimed to forge unity among the diverse Assyrian groups with competing agendas. Captain A.K. Yoosuf expressed this sentiment in strong terms:

It has been my wish to see Assyrians all united under one flag, under one name, under one purpose and work for the salvation of our nation, regardless of personal benefits and personal ambitions. It shall not be a union until every Assyrian leader works faithfully for the cause, until the leaders give up their habit of filling their pockets with almighty dollar, under the cover of a nation, and her sufferings. It is a crime unpardonable.³⁴

On April 6, 1919 the president of the French Republic received the Assyrian delegation, under the name “Assyro-Chaldean.”³⁵ In his report to Assyrian National Association, Captain Yoosof noted that on April 8 an informal meeting took place to discuss the name of the committee:

We agreed upon the name of Assyro-Chaldean, though a little later on Mr. Werda refused to be called Assyro-Chaldean. I have tried to convince him of the necessity of adopting this name, for the sake of union, which will not hurt our cause.³⁶

32 Ashur Giwargis, “The Assyrian Liberation Movement and the French Intervention (1919–1922),” *Assyrian International News Agency* (2015), www.aina.org/articles/almatfi.htm.

33 *Den Assyro-Kaldeiska Aktionen* (Stockholm: Beṭ-Froso & Beṭ-Prasa Nsibin, 2011), 160.

34 Beth-Abdalla, *An Anthology*, 32.

35 “Ephéméride de la Paix coloniale,” *Revue des Question Coloniales et maritimes* (Jan.–Mar. 1919), 63.

36 Beth-Abdalla, *An Anthology*, 67.

The appellation must have caused considerable consternation to Reverend Werda, as Captain Yoosuf made an additional notation for April 30, 1919:

Mr. Werda is suspicious of the name of Assyro-Chaldean and not anxious to meet them. He thought of writing a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury regarding Assyro-Chaldean name and asking his influence in this respect when the Assyrians' fate is decided. This caused the first break of working together. No union, and no harmony.

And on June 12, 1919, the issue came to the fore again:

The name Assyro-Chaldean was again brought up. It seems to me that our Jacobite brothers accepted this name in the beginning at Constantinople. "It is a pitiful thing indeed," said one of the Delegates "that you think this is a religious movement." I said emphatically "No."

Jean Gorek, also known as Gorek de Kerboran, who was the head of the Assyrian delegation in Lausanne in 1923, in his reflections provides context about Dr. Werda's hesitation in relation to the use of "Assyro-Chaldeans" as the name of the nationality.³⁷ Gorek commented that the Assyrian name was adopted by the Werda faction only to avoid displeasing English opinion, and that it was not good politics to use the name Chaldean. In essence, what Gorek argues is that the appellation Assyrian was favored by the British, while the compound "Assyro-Chaldeans" was preferred by the French, presumably because the Catholic connection of the appellation Chaldean. Incidentally, Gorek described himself as "Assyro-Chaldean of Jebel Tour [Tur Abdin] of the Syrian rite."³⁸

The Metropolitan Severius Aphrem Barsoum, the eventual leader of the Syriac Orthodox Church, also acknowledged that "[t]he syrian people who belong to the syro-orthodox Church . . . are descendants of the Assyrian race." In other letters, Aphrem referred to "our nation (the assyro Chaldeans [*sic*]) . . . residing in upper Mesopotamia chiefly" and called "for unity among the Assyrian factions, organizational and out among the people."³⁹

Naturally, there were disagreements about the claims and the course of action, but some of these clashes seem to have been on the basis of personal animosities and perhaps parochial ambitions. Captain Yoosuf's personal account of events sheds light to these quarrels; on July 21, 1919, he noted:

Our published claims are ready this morning and I received a letter from Mr. [?] in the Assyrian language, after its publication delayed as

37 J. Gorek, "Nouvelle Réflexion," *L'Action Assyro-Chaldéenne* 1, no. 10 (1920): 225–226.

38 J. Gorek, "Réflexions . . . sur la constitution de l'État Assyro-chaldéen," *L'Action assyro-chaldéenne* 1, no. 10 (1920): 200.

39 Donef, *Assyrians Post-Nineveh*, 145.

it required approving and signing by all the seven delegates including Prof. Yohannan. There was some difficulty, but I undertook the charge if they could agree. Dr. Jessie Yonan and Mr. George objected about the numbers and the exaggerated statements as “laying down the foundations of Universities and schools and National Treasury etc.” To this last question I answered that it was not a question of how much money the Treasury has at present. I tried to bring these gentlemen to some understanding with Mr. Werda, but the terrible personal dislikes were playing such a great roll that it was injuring the National Cause. The Presbyterian question was again brought out, really this and other unimportant questions have no room in a National crisis like this.

Divisions among the Assyrian delegates may have impaired their ability to achieve an outcome beneficial to the Assyrian people and acceptable to all of the delegation’s constituent members. Captain Yoosuf reported “disputes,” “troublemakers in both parties,” and threats. There were also disagreements and clashes within the Chaldean camp. Dr. Išoc K. Gorgis, president of the Chaldean National Council, wrote to the Royal Swedish Embassy in Constantinople on September 11, 1919, and stated that it had “revoke[d] the powers” of those “who have named themselves people’s delegates without the National Assembly’s approval.” The long period in which these negotiations took place, lack of adequate resources, and the frustration concerning the lack of progress on the delegation’s demands may have aggravated these clashes.

Claims of the Assyrians

Joseph Yacoub notes that six memoranda were submitted to the Conference Secretariat and five delegations were present, which without exception demanded an Assyro-Chaldean State. However, the claims were not necessarily the same.⁴⁰

In the summer of 1919, the Assyrian patriarch had asked British representatives for a united national community under British protection in the regions of Mosul, al-Jazirah (Gozarto), Bashkala, and Urmia.⁴¹ The British had promised as much, together with their allies the Russians, in a crucial meeting in December 1917 in which the forces of Agha Petros and Mar Shimun were persuaded to fill the gap left by the Russian forces in the Caucasus, and help prevent an advance by tens of thousands of Ottoman, Kurdish, and Persian forces into Persia en route to Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, and

40 Joseph Yacoub, “Au lendemain du génocide, les traités de paix et les Assyro-Chaldéens,” *Bulletin d’information de la J.A.C.* (Apr. 2004), www.imprescriptible.fr/seifo/traites-paix/ (last visited Feb. 4, 2015).

41 Joseph, *The Nestorians*, 158.

India, as well as Mesopotamia.⁴² In the document entitled “The claims of the Assyrians before the preliminaries of peace at Paris,” Dr. Werda stated that the Assyrians “are better known by their three Ecclesiastical designations,” namely, the Nestorians, the Chaldeans, and the Jacobites. Dr. Werda added the Maronites, the Persian Assyrians, and the Assyrian in Russia to his picture of the geographical dispersion of the Assyrians, although he omitted mentioning the Syrian Catholics.

The Assyro-Chaldean Delegation demanded

the formation of a self-ruling Assyro-Chaldean state that aims to be independent, to comprise the Mosul vilayet⁴³ in its entirety, parts of the Diarbékir (Omid) vilayet, the Aleppo and Urhoy sandjaks (in Aleppo vilayet) and the territories of Urmia and Salamas west of Lake Urmia in Persia. . . . of them could easily be raised with the help of Agha Petros Eliya, Malik Xořaba and Nestorian tribal leaders.⁴⁴

The ethnic and religious breakdown of the proposed state is set forth in Table 8.2.

In these documents the “Assyro-Chaldean” delegation made it clear that “if the choice were between England and France they would prefer France.

Table 8.2 Ethno-religious composition of population of proposed Assyro-Chaldean region

Region	Population estimate for 1914
Assyro-Chaldeans	563,000
Armenians, Greeks, and Latins	155,000
Jews, Yezidis, Shabaks, Kizil-Bachs, and others	113,500
Turks and Turkmens	201,000
Kurds	278,700
Arabs	151,000
Chechens and Circassians	13,500
Persians	11,800
Non-Muslim total	857,000
Muslim total	656,500
Total	1,513,500

Source: Adapted from Malik Cambar, *La Question Assyro-Chaldéenne et la Société des Nations* (Jerusalem: Ratisbonne Printing Press 1933), 14–15. The table purported to set forth figures for Mosul, Aleppo, Deir ez-zor, Diyarbakir, Séert, Hakkari, Urfa, Urmia, and Salamas, as of 1914.

42 Joseph Alichoran, “Assyro-Chaldeans in the 20th Century: From Genocide to Diaspora,” *Journal of the Assyrian Academic Society* 1, no. 2 (1994): 30–55, 56–62. See also Chapter 4, above.

43 *Vilayets* in the Ottoman Administration were provinces administered by a *vali* (governor), while *sancaks* (sub-provinces) were administered by *mutasarrifs* (sub-governors).

44 “La Délégation Assyro-Chaldéenne,” *L’Action Assyro-chaldéenne*, Fascicule I (1920): 18–19, 23.

And in order to live in peace we call with a loud voice – and will always demand – the right to self-rule under French protection.” Although documents submitted by the delegates referred to an Assyro-Chaldean nation, the name of the state to be formed was not stated (i.e., was it to be Assyria or Assyro-Chaldea?).⁴⁵

Gorek de Kerboran commented that the two delegations (i.e. the Assyro-Chaldean and the committee from the United States) pursued the same goals and employed the same means to reach those goals. Both committees envisaged that a mandatory power would supervise an Assyro-Chaldean state for an undefined period, possibly for twenty-five years as the memorandum of the Werda faction stated. Gorek argues that contrary to the criticisms of the Werda faction by Dr. Yonan, a Chaldean by faith and co-publisher of the *L’Action Assyro-Chaldeen* journal, the program of Werda’s group was much less extensive than the delegation, which had as its head the Chaldean Patriarch Emmanuel II Thomas. Kerboran added that the Werda program claimed only the Assyrian mountains and the plains of Upper Mesopotamia.⁴⁶

De Courtois notes that the Syrian Orthodox and Catholics were more pragmatic in their claim by focusing on the recognition of the crimes perpetrated during the War.⁴⁷ The official demands by the Syrian Orthodox may well be described as modest. Barsaum appeared to be pro-French when interacting with the French. However, the French were not convinced and they requested information from the Patriarch Elias III. He, in turn, informed them that the metropolitan’s mandate was:

- 1) to solicit the protection of France for his nationals;
- 2) to give an account of the losses and damages incurred by the deportations and massacres and to ask for legitimate indemnities and reparations;
- 3) to solicit for his community the same material assistance that has been accorded to the Armenians.⁴⁸

The Syrian Orthodox submitted claims for *inter alia* “the emancipation of the villayets of Diarbekir, Bitlis, Kharpout and Ourfa from the Turkish Yoke,” indemnities in compensation for damages, and assurance of his denomination’s religious future. In this document, the Metropolitan Aphrem described the Syrian Orthodox as a “Nation which sighs for a tolerable future in which she can play her ancient role of Assyro-Chaldean civilization.”⁴⁹

45 Agha Petros apparently called it Assyro-Chaldea. F.O. 839/23, Eastern Conference Lausanne, Autonomy for Assyrian Christians (Claims of Assyro-Chaldeans), <http://gomidas.org/uploads/submissions/Agha%20Petros%20Map.pdf>.

46 Gorek, “Nouvelle Réflexion,” 225.

47 De Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide*, 211.

48 *Ibid.*, 206.

49 *The Struggle for a Free Assyria*, 154.

Perhaps as a result of his involvement in this process, Barsaum's language appeared to be more radical in later periods. In a letter he wrote on February 4, 1920, while in London, Aphrem stated:

[a]fter my arrival at London I visited the office of the Interior and Foreign departments. I fully explained our needs for both the present and the future our purpose based upon two important factors. One is purely politic which is *Independency for Assyria*.

The language in this letter left no doubt that Aphrem's agenda changed to incorporate the objective of statehood for the Assyrians. When Lady Surma visited him, Aphrem observed that they spoke about the needs of their common country and their "hopes of centuries are transforming into reality, that 'Assyria Must Be Free.'"⁵⁰ In contrast, Patriarch Elias III, in a letter he sent to the British Foreign Minister on February 16, 1921, expressed very limited claims:

Now we apply to you and ask your kind help and meditation by the London Conference

1st to protest our rights and have an indemnity taken for us from those who caused us unlegally such a great loss and damage.

2nd to restore our churches and convents with all belonging to it.

3rd to assure, for the future, our security in the Turkish territory.⁵¹

It is a matter of historical record that none of the Assyrian claims were granted and more suffering and calamities were to come to the Assyrians.⁵² David Perley expressed this frustration that the delegation

did not get all they asked for, nor indeed any part of it! The tinselled gangsters of empires laughed at their claims. And the fact that the British authorities in the Middle East actively prevented LADY SURMA from attending that Conference conclusively proves that the greatest staggering blows to our national aspirations have originated from British sources.⁵³

Perhaps the British had some intention to deliver, but as Baumer argues, they promised statehood on "overlapping territories" to the Assyrians, Armenians,

50 *The Struggle for a Free Assyria*, 166.

51 *Ibid.*, 140.

52 Notably in Hakkari, Turkey in 1924, and in and about Simele, Iraq in 1933. E.g., Sargon Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History: Iraq and the Assyrians in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1st paperback ed., 2016); Racho Donef, *Massacres and Deportations of Assyrians in Northern Mesopotamia: Ethnic Cleansing by Turkey 1924–25* (Stockholm: Bet-Froso & Bet-Prasa, 2009).

53 David Perley, "The Case for the Assyrians," *The New Beth-Nahreen* 7, no. 2 (1946): 9–11.

and Kurds.⁵⁴ As noted, the British may have prevented some Assyrian notables, such as Lady Surma and Agha Petros, from traveling to Paris. The British High Commission in Constantinople opposed the departure of the Assyro-Chaldean Delegation, which only attended with the intervention of the French High Commission.⁵⁵ Matfiyef [Bar Mattay] argues that England did not want Assyrians to resettle in Turkey; instead, it wanted to use the Assyrians as a military force in Iraq to protect the oil industry and, in September 1919, an Assyrian military unit was used against the Kurds in Amadia.⁵⁶

As far as the French were concerned, they seemed to be distracting the Assyrians with no intention of fulfilling their dreams of statehood. Somewhat harshly, but with justification, Ashur Giwargis notes: “[a]ll they wanted, as stated by General Gouraud was: ‘To enlist an effective military force to protect the borders by the Assyro-Chaldeans who are willing to give their lives for sake of France.’”⁵⁷ Effectively, both the French and the British used the Assyrians to advance their own national interests.

Undoubtedly, well-meaning British and French officials operating in Mesopotamia felt sympathy for the Assyrians, but their national governments found it to be against their own national interests to carve out a territory for them. They also betrayed the aspirations of the Alawites and the Druzes, though at least initially they created autonomous zones within Syria for these groups. No such consideration was extended to the Assyrians.

Even the United States, from which both Werda and Yoosuf expected backing, was not forthcoming with support for the Assyrian cause:

Joseph C. Grew, the American representative at the peace conference, refers only once to the Assyrians in his memoirs of the proceedings. . . . “Next came the Assyrians and Chaldeans . . . asking for a home land or some little trifle like that.”⁵⁸

The question arises then as to whether their claims were realistic. The majority of the delegates were requesting some form of independence. Given that the British and the French created new states where there were none before (Iraq, Syria, Transjordan, and Lebanon), and that the Assyrians were allies during the war with the British, French and Russians, their expectations were justified. As Captain Yoosuf remarked: “[t]he Assyrians in Turkey

54 Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2006), 264.

55 Bero, “La Vitalité,” 220.

56 K.P. Matfiyef [Bar Mattay], *Asurlar ve Moder Çağda Asur Sorunu* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1989), 109.

57 Giwargis, “The Assyrian Liberation Movement.”

58 Dawn Renee Coleman, *Millet or Nation? Assyrian Autonomy following World War I*, M.A. diss., The Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, 1999, 55.

and Persia have fought the Allied battle sacrificing everything, saturating the earth with their blood for the sake of emancipation and liberty, and for the sake of the land in which they live.”⁵⁹

Even the most modest calls for the punishment of those responsible for *Seyfo*, and requests for reparations fell on deaf ears. Barsaum noted that despite his description of the massacres and the photographs he had shown to the conference delegates, no one shed a tear, and the Western delegates did not take pity on the people he represented.⁶⁰

It should also be borne in mind, some Assyrian delegations faced logistical and financial constraints. The Assyrian Patriarch, Mar Shimun Poulos, suffered from tuberculosis and could not always lead effectively.⁶¹ The British “considered” but apparently did not grant the request of Lady Surma to travel to the Paris Peace Conference.⁶² There were also diplomatic hurdles to surmount just to get to Paris. For instance, Rahmani had to deceive the British in Syria by asking the Pontiff to invite him to Rome. Otherwise, he would not have been able to attend.⁶³

Outcomes

The Paris Peace Conference culminated in the Treaty of Sèvres, among other instruments. This treaty rejected Armenian and Assyrian claims to nationality and autonomy in Cilicia, Van, Hakkari, the Mardin-Midyat area, northwestern Persia, and Mosul, and instead recognized the governments of Iraq and Turkey with a mountainous border, along with “predominantly Kurdish areas” with an “Assyro-Chaldean . . . minorit[y].”⁶⁴ As Stafford remarked:

The Treaty of Sèvres, which was signed on August 10, 1920, between the Allies and the Turks, but which never came into effect [*sic*], allowed for the independence of all these peoples. The most important of these were the Arabs, the Armenians, and the Kurds. *The least important were the Assyrians*, and they were not accorded autonomy.⁶⁵

59 A.K. Yoosuf, “A Remark or Two Concerning the Near East,” *The New Assyria* 3, no. 34 (1919): 2.

60 Ignatius Afrem Bet-Baršawmo, *Tur-Abdin Tarihi* [The History of Tur Abdin] (Södertälje: Nsibin, 1996), 5.

61 Mooken, *The History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 114–115; Joseph, *The Nestorians*, 160.

62 *Ibid.*, 158 n. 17.

63 de Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide*, 209.

64 Treaty of Peace between the Allied Powers and Turkey (Treaty of Sèvres), 10 August 1920, arts. 140–141, 142, 144, 145, 147–150, reprinted in *American Journal of International Law* 15 (1921): 179, 182–184, 208–212.

65 Stafford, *Tragedy of the Assyrians*, 81 (emphasis added).

The Treaty of Lausanne in 1922 then purported to divest Assyrians of the minimal minority-rights safeguards set forth in the Treaty of Sèvres.⁶⁶ Although Chaldeans in particular fared somewhat better in Iraq, Arnold Wilson remarked after the Iraq mandate had expired: “It was our duty to settle the Assyrians before we gave up the mandate. Our efforts were half-hearted and had no result.”⁶⁷ As detailed in Chapter 8, the massacres in the Simele region exceeded in severity even the Turkish deportations from and massacres in Hakkari and the Turkish-Iraqi border in 1924–1925 and were “the worst, flagrant, direct, and gross violations of the minority safeguards.”⁶⁸

While the diplomatic efforts in Paris failed to achieve any favorable outcome for the Assyrians, both Malik Qambar and Agha Petros attempted to salvage the dream of self-determination through military means, irrespective of the difficulties in achieving such a goal. Agha Petros sent a request for a national home to the United States, based on the principle of national autonomy as applied to the Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, Jews, Georgians, and Azeris, as well as the wartime promises by the Entente powers to the Assyrians and the likelihood of further slaughters of the Assyrians absent national rights.⁶⁹ Not all Assyrians were in favor of Malik Qambar’s venture, and Abdulahad Dawud severely criticized him:

Now Malik Qambar has been commissioned by the Committee and under the French protection, has gone to Caucasus for the purpose of transporting the dispersed Assyrian families from Russia into Syria (?) or Mosul (?). A French officer accompanied him there. The first group of Assyrians transported into Constantinople a few days ago consisted of 110 persons. All the male adults of this party have been cruelly snatched from their families which live in a house in the Sarkis Street not very far from the British Embassy – and conveyed into a boat for the destination of Alexandria (!) whence they are to be transported into

66 Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 139–141; Stafford, *Tragedy*, 82. See also, Anzerlioglu, “The Revolts,” 57, stating that “absolutely nothing” was done in the area of Assyrian minority or national rights.

67 Lt.-Col. Arnold Wilson, *The Crisis in Iraq, 19th Century and After* (London: Constable and Co., 1933), 411–422, quoted in Yūsuf Malik, *The British Betrayal of the Assyrians* (Warren, NJ: The Kimball Press, 1935), ch. 19.

68 David Lloyd George, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), 904–905.

69 U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, M 722, Roll 19, Internal Affairs of Asia, 1910–1929; See also, National Archives of United Kingdom, F.O. 839/23/217627; Bülent Özdemir, *Assyrian Identity and the Great War: Nestorian, Chaldean, and Syrian Christians in the Twentieth Century* (Caithness, Scotland: Whittles Publishing, 2012), 108–110. See also, National Archives of United Kingdom, F.O. 839/23/87993, Autonomy for Assyrian Christians (Claims of Assyro-Chaldeans), General Agha Petros to Lord Curzon, Dec. 11, 1922.

Mosul or Syria. My informant who visited these families – who is also an Assyrian – tells me, that in Tiflis, Malik Qambar and his French Assistant [Captain Gauchet Dominique-Marie] promised each head a sum of 200 roubles daily and a second class voyage. But now, they live on dry bread, and that there men have been cruelly snatched from them and carried away by a ship to an unknown destination. Only six men have escaped and are hiding themselves in a house; and are vigorously being searched by the French Agents. This is too cruel! It is a wanton act of injustice and fraud!⁷⁰

Despite problems encountered on the ground, Malik Qambar had established an Assyrian community in al-Jazirah district in Syria under French protection, but the British did not support it and it was incorporated into the French system.⁷¹ Agha Petros, who was involved in a similar venture, also failed.

He made an attempt to establish an Assyrian Protectorate in Iraq in somewhat the same fashion as Malik Qambar of the Jelu tribe did across the border in Syria. Unfortunately Agha Petros developed a difference of opinion with Lady Surma, sister of Patriarchs Mar Benyamin Shimun and Mar Poulos Shimun. The English government began to doubt the intentions of Agha Petros. Finally Agha Petros severed his contact with the British and spent his last days in France. He was decorated by the French government.⁷²

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70 *The Struggle for a Free Assyria*, 161.

71 Malik Cambar, *Vie et Coutumes des Maliks* (Marseille: Imprimerie L. Goiran, 1924), 14, 27; Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History*, 71.

72 Mooken, *The History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 137–138.

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9 The Assyrian “concept of unity” after *Seyfo*

Aryo Makko

Introduction

When reference is made to the Assyrians in the English language, politicians, writers, and scholars use, in addition to more traditional labels such as “Assyrian,” “Chaldean,” and “Syrian” (lately evolved into *Syriac*),¹ such emic² terms as “*Suroye*,” “*Suryoye*,” “*Süryânî*,” and “*Suryaye*,” and a number of combined designations such as “Assyo-Chaldean,” “ChaldoAssyrian,” or “Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac.”³ Over the last few decades, debates on differing perceptions of ethnic origin and national identity have dominated the community’s internal discourse.⁴ This has expressed itself in the establishment of numerous social, cultural, and political organizations in the Western diaspora.⁵

1 In 2000, the Holy Synod of the Syrian Orthodox Church approved to change its English name from “Syrian Orthodox” to “Syriac Orthodox.” Despite this official transition, the old designation is widely being used by church bodies themselves; see for example the official websites of the archdioceses of the Eastern United States (<http://syrianorthodoxchurch.org>) and Canada (www.syrianorthodoxchurch.com) or that of the patriarchate itself (www.syrian-orthodox.com), both viewed on 2 February 2016.

2 “Emic” is a term widely used in anthropology to designate accounts coming from within a culture. Here, it refers to self-designation.

3 Heidi Armbruster, “Raum und Erinnerung: Überlegungen zu Rand und Kern im Leben Syrisch-Orthodoxer Christen aus der Türkei,” in Gerdien Jonker (Ed.), *Kern und Rand: Religiöse Minderheiten aus der Türkei in Deutschland, Zentrum Moderner Orient*, vol. 11 (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1999), 31–49; Öner Cetrez, “Psykologiska effekter av folk-mord i flera generationer: Exempel från judisk och armenisk forskning,” *Unpublished Lecture*, 2005; Mark Levene, “Book Review,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 10, no. 1 (2008): 158–162; Thomas W. Smith, “Civic Nationalism and Ethnocultural Justice in Turkey,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2005): 436–470; Martin Tamcke and Andreas Heinz, *Die Suryoye und ihre Umwelt, Deutsches Syrologen-Symposium in Trier 2004* (Frankfurt am Main: Lembeck, 2009); Benjamin Trigona-Harany, *The Ottoman Süryânî From 1908 to 1914* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009).

4 The majority of the Assyrians belong to three churches: the Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, the Chaldean Catholic Church, and the Syriac Orthodox Church. Other denominations of significance to be noted are Syrian Catholic, Russian Orthodox, and Protestant. For a wider introduction to Assyrian Christianity, see Aziz Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (London: Methuen, 1968).

5 Gabriele Yonan, *Assyrer Heute* (Hamburg: Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, 1978); Knut Bengtsson, *Assur eller aram: språklig, religiös och nationell identifikation hos Sveriges*

Originally limited to printed periodicals as platforms of debate, the rise of new communication technologies such as websites and online communities in the 1990s has made the rivalry among identity perceptions more visible and inflammatory than ever. For the most part, individuals or groups participating in the identity controversy refer to scholarly works on history and culture in order to legitimize their respective claims. One of the major themes in this respect has concerned the debate on the relation of the terms “Syria” and “Assyria.”⁶ This chapter suggests that we look for alternative ways to reflect upon the current Assyrian “identity crisis,” or “failed identity” as David Gaunt has labeled it, by tracing the process from which historically rooted denominational divisions and pluralism of names evolved into the current competition between national identities.⁷ I argue that the above-mentioned “crisis of identity” should be understood as the consequence of an uncompleted social process, namely the failure of Assyrian nationalism to evolve into a “mass national movement.” The approach used here is based on the periodization of Miroslav Hroch’s “Stage Theory of National Awakening.”⁸

In his classic book entitled *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*, which is a comparative study of nationalist movements in nineteenth-century Europe, the Czech historian argued that the national awakening of oppressed nations has to be considered as a formative process of three stages (phases “A-B-C”). According to Hroch, national revivals take off in a period of “scholarly interest” (phase A), grow stronger during a “period of patriotic agitation” (phase B), and finally culminate in the “rise of a mass national movement” (phase C).⁹

The theoretical point of departure is the constructivist theory of a nation as an “imagined community” (or “collective construction”) that forms national

assyrier och syrianer (Norrköping, Sweden: Statens Invandrarverk, 1982). In the case of the largest Diaspora communities (United States, Sweden, and Germany) Assyrian organizations were the first to be established, later countered by rivals that preferred to apply Syrian/Syriac, Aramean, or Chaldean identities. See below.

6 Robert Rollinger, “The Terms ‘Assyria’ and ‘Syria’ Again,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 65 no. 4 (2006): 283–287.

7 David Gaunt, “Failed Identity and the Assyrian Genocide,” in Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (Eds.), *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 317–333.

8 Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Hroch’s study is based on Marxist historical materialism and uses quantitative data not available in the Assyrian case. Nevertheless, it is the view of this author that Hroch’s periodization itself offers innovative perspectives on Assyrian nationalism. Hroch remains popular among scholars of nationalism. E.g., Alexander Maxwell (Ed.), *The Comparative Approach to National Movements: Miroslav Hroch and Nationalism Studies* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012).

9 *Ibid.*

identity through the embedding of historical myths.¹⁰ Ernst Haas defines a nation as “a socially mobilized body of individuals, believing themselves to be united by some set of characteristics that differentiate them (in their own minds) from outsiders.”¹¹ Walker Connor suggests that we consider it “a group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related.”¹² Both concepts are highly valuable to the study of Assyrian nationalism.¹³

Clearly, the early years of the twentieth century marked the beginning of a remarkable process among Assyrians from all three major denominations. The beginning of the “national revival,” as Hroch would put it, expressed itself in the emergence of secular intellectuals, criticism of the clergy, the establishment of secular schools and presses, and a rising interest in history, culture and language. As shown by Naby and Trigona-Harany, the original aim of the nationalist circles in Urmia and Diyarbakır was the restoration of their respective millet only.¹⁴

Trigona-Harany concludes that “It [the term *millet*] certainly did not refer to the ‘Assyrian nation,’” but “meant only *Süryânî-i Kadîm* as well as the members of the break-away Catholic and Protestant *Süryânî* churches.” However, anything *Süryânî* was considered to be Assyrian by the “*Süryânîs*” themselves. Thus, more than twenty organizations established by members of this group in the American diaspora from 1897 onwards translated *süryânî* into “Assyrian” in the English language.¹⁵ *Süryânîs* from Diyarbakır or Kharput not only considered *Süryânîs* to be Assyrians, but also translated *Süryânî kîlîsesî* as the “Assyrian (Apostolic) Church” (established in 1909) and, indeed, the *Süryânî* millet (rightly or wrongly) as “Assyrian [Jacobite] Nation” prior to the genocide. Although studying individuals from the above-mentioned communities during the period of 1908–1914, Trigona-Harany chooses to ignore the Diaspora communities formed by *Süryânî* immigrants in circumstances of freedom of speech and belief. Among these early immigrants were close friends and relatives of both Naûm Fâik and Ashur Yûsuf, which adds an important dimension to the Ottoman context.

10 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

11 Ernst Haas, *Nationalism, Liberalism, and Progress: The Rise and Decline of Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 23.

12 Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 202.

13 From the materialist perspective on the other hand, as an ideology nationalism is not merely a myth; the superstructure is always grounded on the infrastructure such as class position, territory, language, etc. as *raison d'être* of consciousness.

14 Benjamin Trigona-Harany, *İntibâh or Hâb-ı Gafllet: Âşûr Yûsuf, Naum Faikand the Ottoman Süryânî*, M.A. Thesis, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, 2008, 86.

15 U.S. Department of Commerce, *Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1936* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1941), 74–75. See also, Sargon Donabed and Ninos Donabed, *Assyrians of Eastern Massachusetts* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2006), 11–71, 77–79; Vasili Shoumanov, *Assyrians in Chicago* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2001), 23–51.

In conclusion, since *Süryânî* was Assyrian to the people themselves, Trigona-Harany's subtitle "Ottomans, Assyrians or *Süryânî*?" is misleading,¹⁶

Accordingly, the application of Assyrian identity and the usage of the Assyrian name did not constitute a stringent and cohesive national concept initiated by a unified group of intellectuals. In the vernacular dialects, "Assyrian" could refer to Nestorian unity (*aturāyā*) or a nation comprised of all groups (*othurōyō*); in Turkish (*süryânî*) to Jacobite unity; in Armenian (*asouri*) to historical descent. What many have considered Assyrian nationalism from the very beginning really started out as Nestorian and Jacobite "milletism" under the Assyrian name. With nationalistic dynamics unleashed, Assyrianism quickly became the common denominator of "millet-nationalists" from all denominations within less than a decade. Hence, Ottoman and Persian Assyrians were able to unite under the Assyrian umbrella when they met in the American diaspora. This unity was the result of the concept designed by the early nationalists such as the physician Freyduñ Bet-Oraham (d. 1926, often called "Aturāyā"), the Chaldean Archbishop of Urmia and Salamas Touma Audo (d. 1918), the journalist Naûm Fâik (1868–1930), or the college professor Ashur Yûsuf (d. 1914). It is therefore incorrect to assert that "Assyrian nationalism among the *süryânî* derives primarily from the experience of the First World War."¹⁷ It rather derived from significant commonalities between several nationalist groups from different areas in present-day Iran, Iraq, and Syria: the reference to a common (Assyrian) myth and the inclusive nature of the concept of unity. Only eventually would a shared sense of victimization add to these features. During this first phase, no controversy on the national identity or name occurred in either the Middle East or the diaspora.¹⁸

Irreparable damage: repercussions of war, genocide, and politics on national identity

Miroslav Hroch writes:

Between the manifestations of scholarly interest, on the one hand, and the mass diffusion of patriotic attitudes, on the other, there lies an epoch which was decisive for the actual formation of the small nation, an epoch characterized by active patriotic agitation: the fermentation-process of national consciousness.¹⁹

16 Trigona-Harany, *Intibâh.*, 95.

17 *Ibid.*, 137.

18 Sargon Donabed, *Remnants of Heroes: The Assyrian Experience* (Chicago: Assyrian Academic Society Press, 2003); Sargon Donabed and Shamiran Mako, "Ethno-cultural and Religious Identity of Syrian Orthodox Christians," *Chronos: Revue d'Histoire de l'Université de Balamand*, 19 (2009): 71–113, 80; Aryo Makko, *The Generation After: Assyrian American Identity and Daily Life, 1932–38*, Unpublished Lecture at Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in Boston, MA, 2009.

19 Hroch, *Social Preconditions*, 23.

We have seen that during the earliest phase of the national revival treated here, at the turn of the twentieth century, the normative foundations for the groundbreaking social process of nationalizing and uniting the ancient millets had been laid. Ideas and thoughts picked up and developed by Western-style educated (or -influenced) intellectuals were forerunners of a discourse that would allow the overcoming of traditional barriers. According to Hroch’s theory, this early development needs to be followed up by a period of “patriotic agitation” aiming at the transformation of thought into action and the establishment of reformed social practice through spreading ideas and visions of the nation from the elite to the masses.

In the case of Assyrian nationalism, instead of achieving nationhood, a large portion of the population fell victim to genocide. In the years 1914 and 1915, at least 275,000 Assyrians of all denominations were killed at the orders of the Ottoman leadership, supported by local Kurdish clans.²⁰ This had manifold consequences for the nationalist movement and the hoped-for unity. The Assyrians lost much of their social and intellectual leadership; tribal leaders in villages and towns, learned clergymen such as Bishop Audo, and secular intellectuals such as Ashur Yûsuf, Beshar Hilmî (d. 1914),²¹ and Youkhanan Mooshe (d. 1918).²²

As an early reaction to the horrible events and the political aftermath of the war, Assyrian nationalism experienced significant politicization. Earlier ideas of integrative identity conceptions were dismissed; instead, the focus would exclusively be on one Assyrian nation comprising three millets. This is valid for both the Urmia Assyrians and the Jacobite Assyrians. Demographically, they lost much of their earlier significance in their ancient areas of settlement. The large-scale massacres also left psychological scars. Research has revealed cases of collective depression, selective amnesia, and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.²³ In summary, I argue that to the national revival of the Assyrians (Chaldeans, Jacobites, and Nestorians alike), the genocide meant a substantial setback to the achievements of the early or infant stages of Assyrian nationalism. It is in this light that we understand one of the earliest definitions of purely secular ambitions and concrete

20 David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006); Hannibal Travis, “Native Christians Massacred: The Ottoman Genocide of the Assyrians during World War I,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 1, no. 3 (2006): 315–333; Hannibal Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East: the Ottoman Empire, Iraq, and Sudan* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2010), 237–279; Yonan, *Assyrer Heute*.

21 Beshar Hilmî (Borucu) was the editor of the periodical *Şifûro* [Trumpet], published in Diyarbakır 1910–1914, see Trigona-Harany, *The Ottoman Süryânî*.

22 Youkhanan Mooshe was the founder and editor of the periodical *Kokhva* [Star], published in Urmia between 1905 and the year of his death. He had a degree in journalism from Colgate College; see Rudolf Macuch, *Geschichte der spät- und neusyrischen Literatur* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1976), 217–218.

23 Cetrez, “Psykologiska”; Noriko Sato, “Selective Amnesia: Memory and History of the Urfali Syrian Orthodox Christians,” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 12, no. 3 (2005): 315–333.

political goals in the Urmia Manifesto of the United Free Assyria of Freyduñ Aturāyā published in April 1917:

The aim and the aspiration of the Union of Free Assyria is the establishment in the future of national government in the regions of Urmia, Mosul, Turabdin, Nisibin, Jazira, and Jularmeg, and the partnership with the great and free Russia in the areas of trade and industry, and in military as well, so that to form an alliance with Russia.²⁴

One year before this, in 1916, Nāum Fâik, having escaped the fate of Ashur Yūsuf by emigrating from the Ottoman Empire four years earlier and settling in New Jersey, pointed out that:

Our goal is not to show how learned we are, but to serve our *vatan* [homeland] . . . for all brothers of the Sürÿânî to come together under a single umbrella. These brothers are Nestorians, Chaldeans, Maronites, Catholics, Protestants. . . . I remind these groups that their past, their race, their blood and flesh, their tongue, their vatan are all that of the Sürÿânî . . . We must work to exalt the name of the Assyrians [Asuriler] . . . Our primary goal is to secure the rights of the Assyrians.²⁵

On February 26, 1918, five delegates of local Assyrian communities in the United States met in New York City and founded a national federation under the name “Assyrian National Association.” According to the minutes of meeting, among the goals of this new organization were:

Unification of the Assyrian Nation, . . . to start a propaganda for the purpose of making known the name of the Assyrian Nation, . . . instill love for the nation in the hearts of the Assyrian people, [and] . . . present the political condition of our nation to the nations of Europe.²⁶

The “nationalist” idea had become more secular and political, both features controversial to the existing leadership, the clergy. Unsurprisingly, difficulties arose within a short time. On May 15, 1917, the Nestorian Patriarch Mar Shimun XXI Benyamin (d. 1918) condemned the works of Freyduñ Aturāyā and his Assyrian Socialist Party as “anarchist” in an official complaint to the Russian Vice-Consul Basil Nikitine.²⁷ The concept of a greater

24 Quoted in Vahram Petrosian, “Assyrians in Iraq,” *Iran and the Caucasus* 10, no. 1 (2006): 113–148, 130.

25 Quoted in Trigona-Harany *İntibâh*, 100. However, both *Sürÿânî* and *Asuri* were translated to English as “Assyrian” by the Jacobite Assyrians.

26 “Constitution and By-Laws of Assyrian National Association,” *The New Assyria* 2 no. 19 (Mar. 15, 1918), 4–8.

27 Robert De Kelaita, “On the Road to Nineveh: A Brief History of Assyrian Nationalism,” *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 8, no. 1 (1994): 6–30, 12. The Assyrian Socialist

Assyrian nation led by intellectuals or military men such as Petros Elia of Baz (d. 1932), commonly known as Agha Petros, was regarded a serious threat to the Nestorian patriarch’s temporal authority. The secularization of the Nestorian millet would ultimately fail, and during the time between the World Wars, Patriarch Mar Shimun XXIII Eshai (d. 1975) succeeded in reasserting the dual (temporal and spiritual) authority of the patriarchate:

Therefore, as the concepts of “nation” and “national identity” came to be common parlance among a larger segment of the societies in which they lived, the Assyrians were moving from a self-conception as a millet to that of a “nation” [. . .], but with their identity still more or less entirely contained within the boundaries of the Church of the East and with the Church continuing to determine the course of the “nation.”²⁸

Thus, two rivaling concepts of an Assyrian “nation” can be distinguished by the time the Paris Peace Conference was convened: the *Huyodo/Khuyada* (the “concept of unity”) in the tradition of the pioneers of phase A, and the concept of the Nestorian millet under the Assyrian name. This distinction allows a better understanding of Assyrian policies in the aftermath of World War I.²⁹ Disillusioned by major power politics and pressured by the Turkish government, the leadership of the Jacobite Church slowly but steadily turned away from the idea of belonging to the Assyrian Nation.³⁰ Having served as a member of the “Assyro-Chaldean” delegation to the Peace Conference and consecrated the Jacobite Churches of West New York and Worcester under the name “Assyrian Apostolic” in 1927 when still a bishop, the Jacobite Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem I Barsoum (1887–1957) started to carry out a new policy, starting with the period between the death of his predecessor Mor Ignatius Elias III in 1932 and his own consecration in 1933. The patriarchate moved from Deir al-Záfarān to Homs in Syria in 1932 and adopted policies of the Syrian Arab nationalist movement within a short time. This would eventually be followed by a campaign to erase all

Party was the first Assyrian political party. It was founded by Benjamin Bet-Arsanis, Dr. Baba Bet-Parhad, and Dr. Freydon Aturāyā in February 1917 in response to the February Revolution in Russia, and campaigned for an alliance between an anticipated Assyrian state and Russia. Petrosian, “Assyrians in Iraq,” 130.

28 Andrea Laing-Marshall, *Modern Assyrian Identity and the Church of the East: An Exploration of their Relationship and the Rise of Assyrian Nationalism, From the World Wars to 1980*, M.A. Thesis, St. Michael’s College, Toronto, 2001, 67.

29 It also explains the more recent frustration of many Jacobite Assyrians who, not aware of the existing difference between nationalist and sectarian “*atūrāyē*,” complain about the Nestorians refusing them Assyrian fellowship or even the right to use the Assyrian name.

30 Wilhelm Baum, *Die christlichen Minderheiten der Türkei in den Pariser Friedensverhandlungen (1919–1923: Kemal Atatürk und der Genozid)* (Klagenfurt, Wien: Kitab, 2007); Martin Tamcke, *Die Christen vom Tur Abdin: Hinführung zur Syrischen Orthodoxen Kirche* (Frankfurt am Main: Lembeck, 2009), 71–76.

signs of Assyrian identity within the Jacobite Church in the United States, where it had previously established itself under the name “Assyrian Apostolic Church.”³¹ Subsequently, nationalism according to the concept of unity would mainly be maintained in the American diaspora. There, Jacobites, Nestorians, and Chaldeans united their efforts, shared national identity and co-operated. Meanwhile, these unifying accomplishments were undermined in the Arab Middle East, where traditional denominationalism was re-fostered. The above-mentioned distancing of the Jacobite patriarchate from Assyrianism intensified shortly after Syria’s independence was finalized in 1946. On June 13, 1947, Mor Aphrem Barsoum sent a handwritten letter entitled “Declaration of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch about the Nestorians” to the United States. Concluding his summary of Nestorian history, the patriarch made clear that “All these formalities are absolutely against the christian law!!” Thereafter, he took a clear stand on the unity that had been established under the Assyrian name in the United States by arguing that:

The people called assyrians by the british government for political aims in 1919 actually does not exist except few poor and miserables most of them staying in villages are about 40–50 thousands excepting Malabar and few in U.S.A. . . . The Nestorians are followers of a heretic sect excommunicated by all christian communities of the East and the West and all avoid from them, specially the syrian orthodox church that excommunicate Nestor and his patrones, Diodorus Teodorus, Hiba of Edessa and Barsoma of Nissibin, and still keeps on. During the ordination of an orth. priest or bishop, Nestor and his partners are excommunicated. All orth. are absolutely forbidden to mix with them spiritually, namely to attend their mass and participate in their prayer meetings [original spelling and grammar].³²

Allegedly only refusing spiritual unity at that point, Barsoum would continue his course with dedication. During the following years, all official signs designating the Jacobite Church as “Assyrian Orthodox” in Syria were changed into “Syrian Orthodox.” This was a general trend as witnessed by the renowned Assyrian composer Gabriel Asaad:

We started educating our people about its identity and the Assyrian question in the 1930s and 40s. Conditions for our activities worsened when the Frenchmen left Syria in 1946. The Arabs took over and smashed

31 Donabed and Mako, “Ethno-cultural and Religious Identity,” 77–81. Eventually, this resulted in the transformation of its name into “Assyrian Orthodox” and later “Syrian Orthodox” during the period of 1952–1961, see Donabed and Mako, 2009, 109.

32 Mor Ignatius Aphrem I Barsoum, *Declaration of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch about the Nestorians* (Homs, Syria: The Author, 1947), 4.

all resistance movements. We were not allowed to use the designation “Assyrian” anymore because it was considered to have National connotations. Since then, our resources have always been scarce. My hymn-book of 1953 was censored and everything that was named “Assyrian” was replaced with “Syrian”. Only thirteen out of about thirty songs of mine could be published. All Assyrian schools were closed. Attempts to close our churches were made as well but failed.³³

With increasing regularity, any Jacobite intellectual or priest following in the footsteps of the early nationalists met the opposition of the clergy. Opponents to patriarchal anti-nationalism stand in the United States and South America such as the journalist Farid Nuzha or Reverend Elias Sugar of the Assyrian Apostolic Church of Virgin Mary in western New York were excommunicated.³⁴ Clearly, one cannot speak of a successful “fermentation-process of national consciousness” as defined in Hroch’s periodization. During the second phase, roughly speaking between World War I and the early 1960s, Assyrian nationalism and the vision of unity suffered a major blow in the Middle East. While the Assyrian Diaspora aimed at cross-denominational national unity as envisaged by nationalistic pioneers such as Freyduun Aturāyā and Nāum Fâik during all of the interwar period, the clergy would turn its back on the concept of unity. The Jacobite Church adopted Syrian Arab nationalism and the Nestorian Church identified with its own traditional Assyrian millet.

Thus, instead of a single national identity based on the early Nationalist concept from Urmia and Diyarbakır, at least two rival concepts had emerged by the 1950s: Syrian (-Orthodox) identity or “Syrianism” referring to Aramean ancestry, and Nestorian millet-based Assyrianism. Whether these policy changes within the above-mentioned churches were caused by state pressure of Arab governments or an opportunistic attitude of the patriarchate remains a question for future research.

Visions, realities, identities: absent national unity

In the concluding phase of development of the national revival we meet with a situation in which national consciousness has become the concern of the broad masses (even if still by no means the whole of the nation’s members) and the national movement has a firm organizational structure extending over the whole territory.³⁵

Despite the developments among the Jacobite clergy, Jacobite intellectuals succeeded in passing on the original message of “unity.” In 1957, the

33 “Gabriel Asaad – Skaparen av modern assyrisk Musik,” *Hujādā* 5, no. 3 (1982): 10.

34 Aprim Shapera, “A Great Message From a Great Assyrian Man,” *Zinda Magazine* 8, no. 22 (2002), www.zindamagazine.com; *op cit.*, Appendices 7 and 8.

35 Hroch, *Social Preconditions*, 23.

“Assyrian Democratic Organization” (Mtakasto), with the acronym ADO, was founded in Syria. The ideology of ADO was based upon the principles of Huyodo/Khuyada, unity, and within a short time, it gained a foothold among much of the Jacobite youth. The party came to play a pivotal role in the establishment of the Assyrian Diaspora in Europe. Its activities initiated a socio-cultural revival once again aiming at the secularization of the Jacobites who had remained in denominationalism rooted in the ancient *Sûryânî* millet.³⁶ After initial success in the 1960s and 1970s, the clergy again adopted a confrontational position towards Assyrianism and secular thought. It substituted an alternative identity based on sectarianism, traditional values, and loyalties as well as on a different historical myth (Aramean heritage). As a result, the counter concept of “Syrian” (or “Syrian-Aramean”) identity constructed by the Jacobite clergy sometime between 1946 and 1949 would develop into a fully formed rival to Assyrian unity by the mid-1980s, laying the foundation for the Jacobite side of the controversy addressed in this chapter.³⁷ Today, a majority of Jacobites identify with Syriac/Aramean identity and traditions rather than with an Assyrian identity and its broader concept of unity. According to David Gaunt, the conflict is really about power rather than historical accuracy because

the conflict over the Assyrian identity is on one level a result of power play within the immigrant community, and if the name issue did not exist, a similar conflict might have emerged in its place. In some ways the fight between Assyrianism and Syriacism is an opposition between modernity and tradition.³⁸

This is certainly accurate for the holders of power while we need to add to Gaunt’s notion that at the grassroots-level “Syriacism” (or “Arameanism”) today is merely regarded as a “national” identity. Thus, what appeared in opposition to (Assyrian) nationalist ideology due to clerical power interests came to evolve on the grassroots-level into both lasting divisions and, more recently, the emergence of secular trends among younger Syriac/Aramean nationalists. In the case of Chaldeans and Nestorians, the Assyrians of Iraq suffered from violence and disillusionment throughout the 1930s.³⁹

Due to external (state authorities) and internal (Nestorian patriarchate) pressure, nationalist visions of all-embracing unity as defined by Freydon

36 Yonan, *Assyrer Heute*.

37 Ibid.; see also, Stefan Andersson, *Assyrierna: En bok om präster och lekmän, om politik och diplomati kring den assyriska invandringen till Sverige* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1983); Donabed and Mako, “Ethno-cultural and Religious Identity,” 98–99. Despite a decision of the Holy Synod to remain neutral being made in 1981, the vast majority of the Syrian Orthodox clergy participated vigorously in the promotion of Aramean identity.

38 David Gaunt, “Identity Conflicts among Oriental Christians in Sweden,” *Sens Public: Revue Web* (2010), www.sens-public.org/spip.php?article767.

39 Most notably, they suffered from the Simele Massacre between August 2–16, 1933.

Aturāyā in 1917 basically disappeared. In some cities, the clear majority of Chaldeans preferred to adopt Arab identity, leaving the Nestorians in their “nationalistic” struggle. Patriotic agitation left the public space, and went underground during the following decades, in cultural disguise. Early politicization and re-connection with a wider definition of national identity would only express itself by the late 1960s through the foundation of the Assyrian Universal Alliance, or AUA.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, political authority was held by the Mar Shimun Eshai at least until the establishment of the Assyrian Democratic Movement, ADM, in 1979, as shown by political negotiations between the patriarch and the Iraqi government in April 1970.⁴¹

To sum up, from the very beginning of its phase B, the Assyrian nationalist movement suffered from two major obstacles, namely the consequences of genocide and the restructuring of the Middle East. The concept of unity was maintained in the American diaspora, but gained no greater influence in the Middle East, where it had to face contending majority identities and the refusal of its secular element by both the Jacobite and Nestorian clergy who had to deal with pressure from state authorities. During phase C, the political institutionalization of the concept of Huyodo/Khuyada in the Middle East, marked by the foundation of political parties in Syria in 1957 and Iraq in 1979, indeed reinforced hopes for a “mass-implementation” and the completion of the nationalist project that had started with the “awakening” of intellectuals in Urmia, Diyarbakır, and Kharput. As the course of events of the past decades has shown, these hopes were elusive. Today, division prevails over unity in respect of national identity. Syriac (Syriac/Aramean) and Chaldean identity conceptions, on their part, remain the opposite of what the national pioneers had hoped to achieve for their people through the concept of Huyodo/Khuyada; instead of Assyrian unity, there are dual exclusive, denominational, and outspoken anti-Assyrianisms.⁴²

40 Yonan, *Assyrer Heute*, 216 ff.

41 De Kelaita, “On the Road to Nineveh,” 23–30.

42 Gaunt, “Identity Conflicts among Oriental Christians.” For other examples, consult the statements of Chaldean Patriarch Emmanuel III Delly regarding “ethnic” Chaldean identity, including on May 5, 2009, and the official statements of the Syriac/Aramean federations in Germany (www.oromoye.de) and in Sweden (www.syrianska-riks.org). See also, Naures Atto, *Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora: Identity Discourses among the Assyrian/Syriac Elites in the European Diaspora* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011), 282–292, 326–392, 411–424, 557–563; Sebastian Brock and D.G.K. Taylor (Eds.), *The Hidden Pearl: The Syrian Orthodox Church and its Ancient Aramaic Heritage*, vols. 1–2 (Rome: Trans World Film Italia, 2001); Herman Teule, “Who Are the Syriacs?” in Markus Tozman and Andrea Tyndall (Eds.), *The Slow Disappearance of the Syriacs From Turkey and of [sic] the Grounds of the Mor Gabriel Monastery* (Münster, Germany: LIT Verlag, 2012), 47–56; Renate Sommer, “The Role of Religious Freedom in the Context of the Accession Negotiations between the European Union and Turkey – The Example of the Arameans,” in *op cit.*, 157–170; Naures Atto, “United for the Sake of the Mor Gabriel Monastery,” in *op cit.*, 231–240; Soner Onder Barthoma, “The Transformation of Social Capital among Assyrians in the Migration Context,” in Maria Hämmerli and Jean-François Mayer (Eds.), *Orthodox Identities in Western Europe: Migration, Settlement and Innovation*

Conclusion

Historically, the Assyrian Nationalist movement should not be confounded with the simple usage of the name “Assyrian,” but should rather be identified with the formation and circulation of the secular concept of unity (Huyodo/Khuyada) under the Assyrian name. Although not entirely secular or nationalist from the beginning but addressing each respective millet only, early pioneers of Assyrian nationalism such as Ashur Yusuf, Freyduṅ Aturāyā, or Nāum Faik took revolutionary steps in what is defined as a formative process in Hroch’s Stage Theory of National Awakening of the oppressed nation. Their actions have to be understood in their correct social, cultural, and political context; that is, the millet system of the late nineteenth century and later on the changing environment caused by war and postwar political restructuring. Nationalist thought appeared in that very specific environment, not in a vacuum. Thus, initially identifying as part of the Ottoman society was not in contradiction to developing Assyrian nationalistic thoughts. Also, the Armenian national quest at the turn of the twentieth century greatly influenced the Assyrian nationalist aspirations and ideology. The concept of unity suffered substantial damage at the beginning of phase B due to genocide and postwar restructuring of the Middle East. This resulted in the Assyrians becoming a demographically heterogeneous minority group exposed to a number of majority ideologies and policies. Despite continued agitation based on the ideology of the early nationalists, fragmentation replaced the anticipated “fermentation-process of national consciousness.”⁴³ Modern counter-concepts under the labels “Chaldean,” “Syriac,” or “Aramean” lacked the inclusive and all-embracing character of the Assyrian concept of unity. Thus, they could not be considered as a part of a new strategy for national unity between Chaldeans, Jacobites, and Nestorians as envisaged by the early nationalists. Taking up the thesis proposed in my introduction, I suggest that the contemporary controversy on the identity and names of the Assyrians (i.e., Chaldeans, Jacobites, and Nestorians) should be understood as a result of an unaccomplished Assyrian national revival rather of the complexities of their history. Their history is by no means more complicated or richer in historical names than that of many other modern nations.

(London: Ashgate, 2016), 67–89; Marta Wozniak, “From Religious to Ethno-Religious: Identity Change among Assyrians/Syriacs in Sweden,” *Paper Presented to the Defining and Identifying Middle Eastern Christians in Europe Project, University of St. Andrews* (2015), <http://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/7b35bf3b-ddc6-47b6-8bb6-f5bb1a9c236a.pdf>; Marta Wozniak, “The Identity of the Assyrian Diaspora in the United States of America,” *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* 3 (2009): 205–219; Marta Wozniak, “National and Social Identity Construction among the Modern Assyrians/Syrians,” *Parole de l’Orient* 36 (2011): 569–583; Marta Wozniak, *Modern Assyrians and Arameans: Middle Eastern Christians in Search of their National Identity* [Współcześni Asyryjczycy i Aramejczycy. Bliskowschodni chrześcijanie w poszukiwaniu tożsamości narodowej], Ph.D. Diss., University of Lodz, Poland [Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź], 2014.

43 Hroch, *Social Preconditions*, 23.

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10 Exile or extinction

The Assyrian genocide from 1915 to 2015

Hannibal Travis

A threatened people

So thorough has been the cultural and physical dissolution of Assyrian communities that even the memory of this people and its rich history is at risk. Assyrians are a culturally threatened and politically unrepresented people, according to human rights advocates and scholars.¹ They were largely ignored by scholars of Middle Eastern history, with the exceptions of the Simele massacres of 1933 and, more recently, the Assyrian genocide.²

The Assyrian people is so small that some non-Assyrian scholars writing on Iran, Iraq, and Turkey doubt whether any such group exists any longer. The numbers of Assyrians in Iran and Turkey fell to the low tens of thousands.³ Documenting a “zone of genocide” in Turkey and Iraq since the nineteenth century, Mark Levene remarks that “Assyrian nationalism” is “moot.”⁴ A prominent scholar on Iranian ethnicities and minorities describes the Assyrians as a “dwindling population,”⁵ lacking even the indicia of an ethnic

1 E.g., Nicholas al-Jeloo, “Post-Withdrawal Prospects for Iraq’s ‘Ultra-Minorities,’” in Benjamin Isakhan (Ed.), *The Legacy of Iraq: From the 2003 War to the “Islamic State”* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 110–122; Sargon Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History: Iraq and the Assyrians in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1st paperback ed., 2016), 1–3; James Minahan (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations: Ethnic and National Groups Around the World A-Z* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2016), 209–210; Assyria, UNPO: Unrepresented Nations and Peoples (Mar. 25, 2008), www.unpo.org/content/view/full/7859/93. There is Assyrian representation in the Iranian, Iraqi, Syrian, and Turkish parliaments and other councils, but there are constitutional and political impediments to its being effective.

2 Aryo Makko, “Between Integration and Exclusion: Reflections on Contemporary Assyrian Historiography,” *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 25, nos. 1–2 (2011): 25–32.

3 Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between the Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 12; U.S. Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report 2007* (2008), <http://web.archive.org/web/20151014042644/www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2007/90204.htm> and <http://web.archive.org/web/20151014042644/www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2007/90210.htm>.

4 Mark Levene, “Creating a Modern ‘Zone of Genocide’: The Impact of Nation- and State-Formation on Eastern Anatolia, 1878–1923,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12 (1998): 398–411, 400.

5 Eliz Sansarian, *Religious Minorities in Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 177.

group.⁶ Similarly, a prominent book by experts on ethnicity and regionalism in Iraq contends that Iraq has three “main” or “dominant” ethnicities and that Assyrians do not rank among them.⁷ As transitional justice experts told the United Nations, “victims tend to disappear from public awareness and discourse, and [rights] violations and conflict are often discussed as if they affected primarily infrastructure and the economic interests of elites,” after ethnic or religious violence that is followed by denial.⁸

The lack of attention accorded the Assyrian genocide must, in part, be due to the fact that historians are less likely to publish works on a remnant or a “dwindling population.” There is also pressure to conform works on Arab and Ottoman history to images of peaceful and harmonious relations. Bruce Masters, who writes on Ottoman and Turkish history, blames this phenomenon on “fear of the potential for contributing to ongoing polemics,” the pejorative term “polemics” being his characterization of historical writing that recognizes the distinctiveness of Christian peoples from Arabs and Turks and the persecution of Christians at the hands of Arab and Turkish leaders. Masters argues that historians have avoided the question of the “existence of separate religious communities” in order to suppress remembrance of “the politics of sectarianism in the region” when it comes to Christians.⁹ This is remarkable, in his view, because there is abundant literature on the existence of a separate Jewish community in the Middle East.¹⁰ Ussama Makdisi argues that there is a recognized imperative in the field of Middle East Studies not to draw Western attention to “hostility between Christian and Muslim minorities.”¹¹ Laura Robson argues that the works that “simply do not acknowledge the existence of Christian communities as distinct groups within the nation” result from “[p]ressure on Middle Eastern historians to emphasize themes of national or regional loyalty over religious identity.”¹² This leads historians and Middle East Studies specialists to view

6 Eliz Sansarian, “Babi-Bahais, Christians, and Jews in Iran,” *Iranian Studies* 31 (1998): 619–620.

7 Reidar Visser, “Back Cover,” in Reidar Visser and Gareth R.V. Stansfield (Eds.), *An Iraq of Its Regions: Cornerstones of a Federal Democracy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 278; Reidar Visser, “Introduction,” in *op cit.*, 1.

8 U.N. Doc. No. A/67/150, Report of Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-recurrence, Pablo de Greiff, in Accordance with Human Rights Council Resolution 18/7 (2012), para. 32.

9 Bruce Masters, “Introduction,” in Bruce Masters (Ed.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3–5.

10 Masters wrote that scholarship on the Jews living in present-day Arab nations came to a consensus that the Jews had a “history distinct from that of their Muslim and Christian neighbors” and that there was abundant evidence of a “darker side” of Jewish history in the Middle East “in order to justify” the establishment of the state of Israel “as a haven for Jews” fleeing Arab nations. *Ibid.*, 4.

11 *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 8.

12 “Recent Perspectives on Christianity in the Modern Arab World,” *History Compass* 9, no. 4 (2011): 313. I am also indebted to Professor Robson for drawing my attention to the quotations from Masters and Makdisi above.

the study of the existence and threats to indigenous Christians of the Middle East as an “egregious” violation of the tacit norms governing these fields of study.¹³

Experts on Middle East Studies arguably have an incentive to undermine Assyria and Assyrians as conceptual and political entities. Assyrians and their experiences are embarrassing reminders of breaches of the legendary Arab and Ottoman tolerance for minorities. Assyrian Studies also represents a dangerous rival for money and prestige that could go to Arab, Kurdish, Persian, and Turkish Studies. Since the 1990s, the consensus at journals such as the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* is that the future of Middle East Studies is to downplay persecution and emphasize minority “agency.”¹⁴ As one scholar remarks, scholars of Middle East Studies deconstruct historical and ethnic identities such as “Copt,” “Maronite,” and “Assyro-Chaldean” in order to reveal their shared identity with Arabs and Turks and break down “reified representations of sectarian identity, tied to the legacy of Ottoman ‘millets.’”¹⁵ The idea is to ban “massacres” from historical writing or teaching.¹⁶ Thus, Middle East Studies is holding important “events at a distance, . . . rendering them harmless by building a . . . vision of the past that will be acceptable to everyone.”¹⁷

Scholars of the Ottoman Empire, the Arab states, and other societies frequently attempt to praise the enlightenment, progressiveness, and toleration of the leaders about whom they write. The improbable assertions minimizing the Armenian genocide in such works by renowned experts on Turkey have occasioned impassioned retorts in leading journals, often written by Armenian and Armenian-American scholars.¹⁸

While denial of the Armenian genocide is less common in genocide studies, some scholars in this field persist in denying the Assyrian genocide. As discussed in Chapter 1, some write of an “Armenian Genocide” that affected

13 *Ibid.*, 314, 321.

14 Paul Rowe, “The Middle Eastern Christian as Agent,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42 (2010): 472–474.

15 Bernard Heyberger, “Eastern Christians, Islam, and the West: A Connected History,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42 (2010): 475–478.

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*

18 E.g., Vahakn Dadrian, “The Armenian Question and the Wartime Fate of the Armenians as Documented by the Officials of the Ottoman Empire’s World War I Allies: Germany and Austria-Hungary,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34 (2002): 59–85; Richard Falk, “Foreword: The Armenian Genocide in Official Turkish Records,” *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 22, no. 1 (1994): 1–2; Richard Hovannisian, “The Critic’s View: Beyond Revisionism,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9 (1978): 337–386. See also John Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations and Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Middle East* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 96–98 (arguing that although Stanford and Ezel Shaw contend that only the Armenians were transported to safer areas, in fact “about a million and a half Christians were massacred in upper Mesopotamia ‘without distinction of confession,’” including “Syrians” and “Chaldeans”).

Armenians only. This Armenian Genocide is viewed as discontinuous from prior events in the region, particularly the numerous nineteenth-century massacres of Christians in the peripheral regions of the Ottoman Empire, and as discontinuous from the experience of victims of anti-Christian massacres in historic Assyria, Pontic Greece, Smyrna, and Thrace.¹⁹ Even when I attempted in 2006–2013 to reintegrate the Assyrian and Greek genocides into Ottoman history and Genocide Studies, Uğur Ümit Üngör asserted that there was a “reciprocal” genocide of Christians and Turks, Assyrians and Kurds, without mentioning the specific death tolls credited by the British and the Americans for the Assyrians and Greeks, or the massive numerical predominance of Turks or Kurds over Christians and particularly Assyrians in post-1919 Turkey.²⁰ Üngör even falsely claimed that Greece has never recognized the Ottoman Greek genocide, which it did in 1994 for the Pontus region and in 2001 for the Greeks of Asia Minor as a whole.²¹ He argued that there are “differences” between the Armenian and Assyrian/Greek cases, without acknowledging that there were more Armenians than Assyrians or Greeks remaining in Turkey (and in Western Asia) in 1927.²²

There is very little evidence to support Üngör’s “reciprocal genocide” thesis. The Kurdish memorandum setting forth the Kurds’ Wilsonian right of self-determination at the Paris Peace Conference said nothing about any massacres of Kurds by Christians, even as the Armenian and Assyrian massacres were being emphasized.²³ Mustafa Kemal did not mention a large number of Turkish victims in his memorandum to the Harbord commission in 1919, five months after the alleged Greek massacres of Turks, to which Kemal alluded.²⁴ Arnold Toynbee also did not cite a high number of Turkish or Kurdish dead in his study of Greco-Turkish conflicts; he mentioned figures of forty, 200, and 315 Turks.²⁵ The worst incident on the Greek side

19 Afram Barryakoub, “Academic Conference on Seyfo Held in Sweden,” *Zinda Magazine* (Nov. 19, 2005), www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2005/11.19.05/index_sat.php.

For citations, see Hannibal Travis, “The Construction of the ‘Armenian Genocide’: How Genocide Scholars Unremembered the Ottoman Assyrians and Greeks,” in Douglas Irvin-Erickson, Thomas LaPointe and Alex Hinton (Eds.), *Hidden Genocides: Power, Knowledge, and Memory* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 170–193, 174–174, 186.

20 Uğur Ümit Üngör, “Book Review: Hidden Genocides: Power, Knowledge, Memory,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 8, no. 3 (2014): 101–102.

21 Artemis Pippinelli and Ani Kalayjian, “Gender and Genocide: Armenian and Greek Women Finding Positive Meaning in the Horror,” in Ani Kalayjian and Dominique Eugene (Eds.), *Mass Trauma and Emotional Healing Around the World* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 311.

22 Üngör, “Book Review,” 102.

23 Şerif Paşa, *Memorandum on the Claims of the Kurd People* (Paris: Imprimerie A.-G. L’Hoir, 1919), www.scribd.com/document/312808326/Memorandum-on-the-Claims-of-the-Kurd-People-1919.

24 American Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord Commission), *Conditions in the Near East* (1919), 29–38; Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, ch. X.

25 Arnold Toynbee, *The Western Question The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilisation* (London: Constable, 1923), 35, 106, 269–271.

involved Greek forces opening fire on the persons in a crowd, hitting Christians as well as Muslims.²⁶ By way of contrast, Greek leaders mentioned hundreds of thousands of deaths and disappearances among their brethren in Smyrna, Pontus, and Thrace.²⁷ British Intelligence estimated 750,000 Greeks perished as a result and British politicians referred to 500,000 to one million slain Greeks.²⁸ As noted previously, the Assyrians wrote of 250,000 victims after the war; a representative of the Armenian National Delegation wrote of more than 800,000 Armenian deaths.²⁹ Of course, there was nothing in Turkey in 1918–1925 to rival the Allies’ deportation of up to 15 million Germans (or other suspect populations in 1944–1951, resulting in more than 1.8 million deaths, alongside the rapes of possibly two million German women.³⁰

Contemporary legal implications of the Assyrian genocide

Although the Assyrian genocide had mostly been completed more than a century ago, it could have legal aftereffects in our time. As Chapter 3 has already mentioned, the International Military Tribunal is a precedent for retroactive justice on a natural law theory, with its procedures being applied *ex post facto* to German war criminals (along with the definitions of some of the crimes in its Charter). The tribunal saw itself as an “expression of international law existing at the time of its creation,” but also as advancing the law.³¹ Similarly, the District Court of Jerusalem retroactively applied a statute of the State of Israel to Nazi crimes that predated both the statute and that government.³² The Attorney General of the State of Israel successfully

26 *Ibid.*

27 John Freely, *Children of Achilles: The Greeks in Asia Minor Since the Days of Troy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 206 (“At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 the Greek prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos announced that 300,000 Greeks had been killed in Thrace and Anatolia.”); Travis, *Genocide*, 287; Travis, “The Construction,” 180.

28 E.g., John Freely, *Children of Achilles: The Greeks in Asia Minor Since the Days of Troy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 206; ‘Full Text of Premier’s Speech,’ *The New York Times* (Oct. 15, 1922), 20; ‘Turks Proclaim Banishment Edict to 1,000,000 Greeks,’ *The New York Times* (Dec. 2, 1922), 1. See also Travis, *Genocide*, 286–287.

29 Fuat Dunder, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question (1878–1918)* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 155.

30 Hannibal Travis, “The Assyrian Genocide: A Tale of Oblivion and Denial,” in René Lemarchand (Ed.), *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Genocide, and Denial* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 123–136, 176.

31 International Military Tribunal, Judgment and Sentences (1946), *reprinted in American Journal of International Law* 41 (1947): 1–248, 216, quoted in *Attorney General v. Eichmann*. www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Sessions/Session-002-03.html. See also, “The Nuremberg Tribunal,” 6 F.R.D. 69.(1948); United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, “In the Matter of the Extradition of John Demjanjuk,” *West’s Federal Supplement*, 612 (1985): 544, 554–558.

32 *Attorney General v. Eichmann*. Criminal Case No. 40/61, Judgment (District Court of Jerusalem, December 11, 1961), paras. 30–34, www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Judgment/Judgment-006.html.gz.

argued that most of Europe had enacted retroactive laws to punish Nazi crimes, some having extraterritorial effect as well.³³

Nearly all of the participants in World War II created military tribunals or mobilized their civilian courts to try Nazis, Nazi collaborators, and other fascists, some of them being tried for “genocide.” Many of these officials were convicted under laws applying the Genocide Convention to events occurring prior to 1951.³⁴ The United Nations repeatedly endorsed the jurisdiction exercised by the Nuremberg tribunal over crimes committed prior to the entry into force of the Genocide Convention in 1951.³⁵ While the tribunal’s jurisdiction was not retroactive in the sense that some of the crimes were based on treaties and other agreements between nations, those treaties did not refer to international crimes or establish war-crimes tribunals. Thus, from the time of its invention, the crime of genocide was applied to events prior to its conceptualization and codification, and a government’s consent was not needed for criminals within its territory to be prosecuted.³⁶

Courts and jurists continue to invoke universal principles that transcend national frameworks. In 1995, an accused was charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Yugoslavia in the summer, fall, and winter of 1992.³⁷ He argued that he was entitled to a “fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law.”³⁸ Instead, the Security Council created a new court, overseen by a judge from Italy, a member state of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which had gone to war against Yugoslavia.³⁹ The new tribunal concluded that it could exercise criminal jurisdiction under the principles applied at Nuremberg and in postwar Germany. Among other things, the tribunal could apply “minimum standards of customary law” that are “ethical” in character,⁴⁰ as well

33 *Attorney General v. Eichmann*, Transcript, www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Sessions/Session-002-04.html.gz.

34 Travis, *Genocide*, chs. 2–3.

35 U.N. General Assembly Resolution 95(I), 21 Nov. 1947, <http://umn.edu/humanrts/instree/1946a.htm>.

36 Occupied Germany did not sign the agreement creating the Nuremberg tribunal, and West Germany did not join the United Nations until 1973. E.g., *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 14 November 1945–1 October 1946*, vol. 1 (New York: Willam S. Hein & Co., 1946), <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/imtconst.asp>; U.N. Office of Legal Affairs, Treaty Section, Status of Treaties – United Nations Treaty Collection (2015), https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsq_no=I-1&chapter=1&clang=_en.

37 *Prosecutor v. Tadić*, Case No. IT-94-1-T, Indictment (Amended) (1994), paras. 1–3.5, www.icty.org/x/cases/tadic/ind/en/tad-2ai951214e.pdf.

38 *Prosecutor v. Tadić*, Case No. IT-94-1-T, Decision on the Defence Motion on Jurisdiction (Aug. 10, 1995), para. 8, www.icty.org/x/cases/tadic/tdec/en/100895.htm.

39 “Antonio Cassese,” *The Telegraph* (U.K.) (Nov. 3, 2011), www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/law-obituaries/8868208/Antonio-Cassese.html.

40 *Ibid.*, para. 67, citing Theodor Meron, *Human Rights and Humanitarian Norms as Customary Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 35.

as the “international customary law.”⁴¹ Also in 1995, a U.S. court applied evolving notions of customary international law, as informed by the books of public-law jurists, the conduct of nations, and judicial decisions of various courts, to conclude that persons who suffered from the Bosnian Muslim genocide could sue the Bosnian Serb leader.⁴²

A central focus of the international community after the proclamation of a Bosnian genocide was the return of homes, properties, and religious institutions to Bosnian Muslim refugees and internally displaced persons.⁴³ Turkey strongly supported this process, demanding as early as 1992 that there be a “safe, unconditional and honourable repatriation of the refugees and deportees to their homes in Bosnia and Herzegovina” as well as respect for the “right [of the displaced] to receive reparation for their losses.”⁴⁴

Although the perpetrators of the Ottoman Christian genocide are long dead, there is a strong case for returning properties that were stolen or destroyed, and undoing other unjust consequences of the policy.⁴⁵ In 2000, the German parliament and German industry came to the table with billions of dollars to settle U.S. federal litigation based on legal theories that probably did not exist in the 1940s.⁴⁶ Prior to that, the Allies had simply

41 *Prosecutor v. Tadić*, Case No. IT-94-1-T, Separate Opinion of Judge Sidhwa on Defence Motion for Interlocutory Appeal on Jurisdiction (Oct. 2, 1995), para. 118, citing Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 2 of Security Council Resolution 808 (1993), U.N. Doc. No. 5/25704 (May 3, 1993).

42 United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, “Kadic v. Karadzic,” *Federal Reporter*, Third 70 (1995): 232, 238–239.

43 E.g., “Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” in Wolfgang Benedek (Ed.), *Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina after Dayton: From Theory to Practice* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1999), 207; Andrzej Jakubowski, *State Succession in Cultural Property* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 272–273; U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, *U.S. Policy towards Bosnia: Hearing before the Committee on International Relations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996), 171; see also, Antoine Buyse, “Home Sweet Home—Restitution in Post-Conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Netherlands Quarterly on Human Rights* 27, no. 1 (2009): 9–26; Antoine Buyse, *Post-Conflict Housing Restitution: The European Human Rights Perspective, With a Case Study on Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Antwerpen: Intersentia, Mortsels, 2008); Huma Haider, “The Politicisation of Humanitarian Assistance: Refugee and IDP Policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* 2, no. 7 (2010), <http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/700>; Charles Philpott, “‘Though the dog is dead, the pig must be killed’: Finishing with Property Restitution to Bosnia-Herzegovina’s IDPs and Refugees,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 18, no. 1 (2005): 1–24; Deniz Sert, “Reversing Segregation? The Property Restitution Process in Post-war Bosnia,” *Ethnopolitics* 10, no. 2 (2011): 219–233.

44 U.N. Doc. No. A/46/L.76 (24 Aug. 1992), Draft Resolution of the U.N. General Assembly on the Situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Afghanistan et al.), para. 10.

45 Raphael Lemkin, “Genocide,” *American Scholar* 15 (1946): 227–230; Raphael Lemkin, “Genocide – A Modern Crime,” *Free World* 4 (1945): 39–43.

46 Bert Neuborne, “A Tale of Two Cities,” in Michael Bazylar and Roger Alford (Eds.), *Holocaust Restitution: Perspectives on the Litigation and Its Legacy* (New York: New York University Press), 60–79, 60, 65–66, 68. On theories, see Bert Neuborne, “Preliminary

taken German assets and transferred them to victims of Nazis, despite the absence of any treaty or international custom to justify such decisions.⁴⁷ Germany had also agreed to pay what turned out to be 60 billion dollars in “Holocaust-related restitution” in exchange for joining the European Coal and Steel Community, among other things.⁴⁸ A key treaty has recognized that statutes of limitation are inappropriate in the context of genocide.⁴⁹ The state of California, most notably, extended the statute of limitations for certain claims by Armenian genocide survivors until after 2009.⁵⁰ However, California’s steps towards guaranteeing reparations for the Armenian genocide suffered a setback from Supreme Court rulings on federal power to enact foreign policy, and Bush and Obama administration decisions to deny the genocide so as to appease Turkish elites.⁵¹ A resolution demanding the return of Christian churches in Turkey – for estimates of Assyrian churches in Iran and Turkey by region, see Table 10.1 – died in the U.S. Congress.⁵² The restitution issue may be pending for decades to come, as the trend towards atrocity reparations encounters political resistance.

Turkish diplomats or their supporters argue that parliaments are not competent to comment on history, and when they do, this will “constitute

Reflections on Aspects of Holocaust-Era Litigation in American Courts,” *Washington University Law Quarterly* 80, no. 3 (2002): 795–836, 798, 806, 816, 819–820, citing United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, “In re Nazi Era Cases against German Defendants Litigation (Frumkin),” *Federal Supplement, Second* 129 (2001): 370, and United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, “Iwanowa v. Ford Motor Co.,” *Federal Supplement, Second* 67 (1999): 424. The legal theories used were based on the federal court decisions in United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, “Filar-tiga v. Peña-Irala,” *Federal Reporter, Second* 630 (1980): 876, and United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, “Kadic v. Karadzic,” *Federal Reporter, Second* 70 (1995): 232, 236–239, which were handed down long after the 1940s. *Iwanowa v. Ford Motor Co.*, 67 F. Supp.2d at 439–444. On the novelty of these theories, see Nehemiah Robinson, *Ten Years of German Indemnification* (New York: Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, 1964), 8.

47 Hannibal Travis, “On the Original Understanding of the Crime of Genocide,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 7, no. 1 (2012): 30–55, 40.

48 Nicholas Balabkins, *West German Reparations to Israel* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1971); David Masci, “Reparations Movement: Should Payments Be Made for Historical Wrongs?” in CQ Researcher (Ed.), *Issues in Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2010), 104.

49 Travis, “Original Understanding,” 40.

50 Ibid.

51 U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, “Movsesian v. Victoria Versicherung AG,” *Federal Reporter, Third* 629 (2010): 903–904; U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, “Deirmenjian v. Deutsche Bank, AG,” *Federal Supplement, Second* 526 (2007): 1073–1076; Amir Tikriti, “Beyond the Executive Agreement: The Foreign Policy Preference under *Movsesian* and the Return of the Dormant Foreign Affairs Power in *Norton Simon*,” *Pepperdine Law Review* 38 (2011): 755, 782–783.

52 GovTrack, S.Res. 392: A resolution urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties (2012), www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/sres392.

Table 10.1 Churches of Syrian Orthodox and Assyrian Church of the East ruined or converted to other uses by the genocide

<i>Geographic area</i>	<i>Estimate</i>
Hakkari	140+
Midyat	60
Gulpashan/Geogtapa/Mor Goriel(?)	36+
Urmia	23
Berwar/Kotranes	20+
Gawar	19
Jezireh	13
Nisibin	12
Siverek	12
Viranchehir	12
Diyarbakir	5
Lidyet	5
Silvan	5
Savur	2

Sources: *List des dommages que la nation syriaque, en Mesopotamie et en Armenia, a subis pendant la guerre de 1914–1918*; E.L. Cutts, *Christians Under the Crescent in Asia* (New York: Pott, Young & Co., 1878), 356–358.

Note: Smaller areas of possibly uncertain location have been omitted.

also a violation of the freedom of expression and of scientific research.”⁵³ This may or may not be true if denial of the Armenian genocide were to be criminalized in the European Union or in the United States, but there are many precedents for collective action against genocide denial at the diplomatic level, by withholding beneficial relations with the denier state.⁵⁴ In the 1950s, the Federal Republic of Germany was threatened with exclusion from the European Union’s predecessor, the coal and steel community with France and the Benelux countries, if it did not come to the table to repair some of the wrongs of the Holocaust.⁵⁵ Similarly, Austria was partially suspended from its ties with the European Union after some of its politicians

53 Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Questions* (2011), www.mfa.gov.tr/questions.en.mfa (last visited Nov. 4, 2012).

54 *Perinçek v. Switzerland*, European Court of Human Rights, Application No. 27510/08 (2013); Guibert and Sun, “Compensation,” 105–107; Raffi Kalfayan, “Reparations for the Armenian Genocide, between Daydreams and Realities,” *Repair Future* (Sept. 7, 2015), www.repairfuture.net/index.php/en/armenian-genocide-recognition-and-reparations-standpoint-of-armenian-diaspora/land-claims-of-dachnag-party-for-turkey-armenian.

55 Balabkins, *West German Reparations*, 140–144, citing Agreement between the State of Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany, signed at Luxembourg, September 10, 1952, entered into force March 27, 1953, 162 U.N.T.S. 205. The coal and steel agreement was signed two hours after the Luxemburg reparations pact of 1952, indicating that they were clearly connected.

expressed “sympathies” with Nazi leaders.⁵⁶ In order to pursue E.U. membership, Serbia and Montenegro had to turn over “genocide” suspects to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, even though said suspects had not been found guilty of anything yet.⁵⁷ The nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which Turkey helped create and whose genocide Turkey recognized in 1992 (before the Srebrenica massacre), arguably prohibited genocide denial by restricting speech that could lead to ethnic or religious hate, or that may be viewed as criticizing another person’s religion.⁵⁸ Likewise, Turkey’s president has endorsed European laws on Holocaust denial, and has urged their application to other crimes against religions.⁵⁹ Notably with respect to denial as hate speech, the European Union has linked the ongoing denial of the Ottoman Christian genocide to violence against Christians in Turkey, including a murder.⁶⁰ France and Switzerland have concluded that genocide denial has a tendency towards violence.⁶¹ Of course, it also distorts political discourse in Turkey, as it would in France and Germany were it not a crime.⁶²

The contribution of genocide studies to the survival of the Assyrian people

Denial of the Assyrians’ existence and history as an ethnic and religious minority of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey is inextricably tied to the legacy of *Seyfo*, which left behind a small Assyrian culture and little in the way of Assyrian politics. There are Armenian and Greek states, but no Assyrian national

56 Paul Marshall, *Religious Freedom in the World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 75.

57 Council of Europe, Serbia: Compliance with Obligations and Commitments and Implementation of the Post-Accession Co-operation Programme-Fourth Report (2008–2009), COE Doc. No. SG/Inf (2009).

58 Helena Mandić, “Regulation of Broadcasting in B-H,” in Mehmed Halilović and Amer Džihana (Eds.), *Media Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Sarajevo: Internews, 2012), 267–269.

59 “Turkey Presses EU to Protect Islam,” UPI, Mar. 13, 2006.

60 Turkish Daily News, “From 301 to Musharraf,” *Financial Times Information/Global News Wire – Asia Africa Intelligence Wire* (Nov. 9, 2007), <http://advance.lexis.com>; “EU/Turkey: Ankara Moves to Amend Infamous Article 301,” *EuroPolitics* (Nov. 28, 2007), 213338, <http://advance.lexis.com>. Article 301 is an amended and renumbered version of prior laws to similar effect from 1926, 1936, 1938, 1946, and 1961. *Türk Ceza Kanunu* (Turkish Penal Code), art. 301, Law No. 5237 (Sept. 26, 2004); *Türk Ceza Kanunu* (Turkish Penal Code), art. 159 (Jan. 3, 1926); Bülent Algan, “The Brand New Version of Article 301 of Turkish Penal Code,” *The German Law Journal* 9, no. 12 (2008): 2237–2251, 2251.

61 Nolween Guibert and Sun Kim, “Compensation for the Armenian Genocide: A Study of Recognition and Reparations,” in *The Armenian Genocide Legacy: The Armenian Question Revisited After 100 Years* (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 101–107.

62 Case of *Altuğ Taner Akçam v. Turkey*, Application no. 27520/07, European Court of Human Rights, Judgment of 25 October 2011.

government, and no local Assyrian government with real power. Many surviving Jews of Europe had Israel to flee to after 1945. Armenians, Greeks, and Hebrews have strengthened their linguistic, cultural, and religious traditions, while Assyrian traditions are endangered and their elimination is predicted. There is no well-funded institution devoted to preserving Assyrian identity.

Genocide scholars contend that denial creates a danger of a repetition. The U.N. Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide regards “[p]atterns of impunity and lack of accountability for past crimes committed against the targeted groups” as a key factor weakening the capacity within a state or a region to prevent a new genocide.⁶³ Denial vilifies the victim group, rendering prevention undesirable.⁶⁴ It celebrates, in some ways, the act whose criminality may be denied.⁶⁵ It may lead to emotional repetition with respect to the genocidal mentality of the original perpetrators.⁶⁶

Denial of the Ottoman Christian genocide may have contributed to delays in confronting the threat to Middle Eastern minorities, including Assyrians and Yezidis. In the Assyrian case, denial of genocide often takes the form of praising Seljuk, Timurid, and Ottoman tolerance. For example, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey implied in 2009 that only a Jew, Christian, or pagan could commit genocide, in defense of his policy of condemning “genocide” in Gaza, where he said that 1,500 had died, and not in Darfur, where scientific research indicated that 400,000 had died.⁶⁷ Turkey is part of a political bloc, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, that strongly influences the human-rights work of the United Nations, resulting in disproportionate targeting of Israel with condemnations and demands, and relative silence on Iraq, Turkey, Bahrain, Uzbekistan, etc.⁶⁸

63 U.N. Office of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, Analysis Framework [for Atrocity Crimes] (2016), www.un.org/en/prevent/genocide/adviser/pdf/osappg_analysis_framework.pdf.

64 Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), 245.

65 Aida Alayarian, *Consequences of Denial: The Armenian Genocide* (London: Karnac Books, 2008), 30, citing Israel Charny, “A Contribution to the Psychology of Denial of Genocide,” *Journal of Armenian Studies* 4 (1992): 289–306.

66 *Ibid.*

67 Armenian Weekly Staff, “Erdogan: We Should Not Confuse Gaza With Darfur,” *Armenian Weekly*, Nov. 11, 2009, <http://armenianweekly.com/2009/11/11/erdogan-we-should-not-confuse-gaza-with-darfur>; “Sudan’s Bashir to Miss OIC Summit after EU Objected,” *CBN News* (Aug. 9, 2011), www.abs-cbnnews.com/world/11/08/09/sudans-bashir-miss-oic-summit-after-eu-objected. See also, Seth Freedman, “Erdogan’s Blind Faith in Muslims,” *The Guardian* (Nov. 11, 2009), <http://theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/nov/11/erdogan>; John Hagan, Winona Rymond-Richmond and Patricia Parker, “The Criminology of Genocide: The Death and Rape of Darfur,” *Criminology* 43, no. 3 (2005): 525–561; “Turkish PM Suggests Israeli Jews Are Genocidal,” *Israel Today* (Nov. 2009), <http://israeltoday.co.il/News-Item/tabid/178/mid/19923/Default.aspx>.

68 Rosa Freedman, *Failing to Protect: The UN and the Politicization of Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 14, 52, 66, 84, 100, 110; Rosa Freedman, *The United Nations Human Rights Council: A Critique and Early Assessment* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013), 26, 31, 115, 140, 218, 273, 291.

Even resolutions on the Darfur genocide were weakened, compared to those on Israel.⁶⁹ There were no effective resolutions on post-2003 Iraq.⁷⁰ “During 2006, a critical year in the rise of ISIS (then ISI), the Human Rights Council issued six resolutions against Israel and none against al Qaeda in Iraq, which became the ISI and then Al-Nusra and ISIS.”⁷¹

An attitude somewhat similar to Erdoğan’s has proliferated at the highest echelons of European and Turkish academic elite opinion, and occasionally reached the point of denying that genocide could ever take place outside of the West or Christendom. Moreover, some academics suggest that random violence is a uniquely Western phenomenon, because the West rebels against God.⁷² The theory apparently is that the Ottoman Empire and other pre-colonial Middle Eastern empires were tolerant, so that any violence in the region was essentially Western or animalistic, having nothing to do with the culture or politics of the region.⁷³ In the publications of the state-supported Turkish Historical Society, as reviewed in Chapter 1, the destruction of memory is even more direct, and involves inverting the historical record to make the Ottoman Turkish civilization the victim of minority violence.⁷⁴ The inversion sometimes involves arguing that members of Christian ethnic communities are inherently incapable of being truthful witnesses, so that studies based on such testimonies must be thrown out.

As the Assyrian and Greek genocides fell into oblivion, and as Turkey removed protections for its own Christian minority, the country used the concept of genocide in its own foreign policy with respect to Cyprus, Iraq,

69 Freedman, *The United Nations Human Rights Council*, 200, 217–223, 239, 291. In the ten years from 2007 through 2016, there were no special sessions of the Human Rights Council on the situation in Darfur, Sudan, but four on the situation in occupied Palestinian territory. United Nations Human Rights Council, *Sessions* (2016), www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Sessions.aspx. At the close of its special session on Darfur, the Council welcomed the government of Sudan’s cooperation and commissioned a study, but at the close of its special session on the occupied Palestinian territory during the previous month, it condemned Israel for killing civilians and denounced it for destroying homes. Human Rights Council Decision S-4/101 (13 Dec. 2006); Human Rights Council, Resolution S-3/1 (15 Nov. 2006). About a year later, even more condemnations of Israel issued, but a special session on Iraq did not occur until 2014.

70 Hannibal Travis, “Why Was Benghazi ‘Saved,’ While Sinjar Was Allowed to Be Lost? New Failures of Genocide Prevention, 2007-2015,” *Genocide Studies International* 10, no. 2 (2016): 139-82, 139, 144, 149–152, 160.

71 *Ibid.*, 150.

72 Tariq Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity* (Leicester, UK: Islamic Foundation, 2001), 215–217, 249–250.

73 Tariq Ramadan, *Islam – A Path towards Peace* (2010), www.youtube.com/watch?v=nguKiOrvaU.

74 Abdulmesih BarAbraham, “Turkey’s Key Arguments in Denying the Assyrian Genocide: A Brief Review of Two Publications of the Turkish Historical Society,” *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 25, nos. 1–2 (2011): 77–88; Salahi Sonyel, *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 1993), 449–450; Salahi Sonyel, *The Assyrians of Turkey: Victims of Major Power Policy* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2001).

Yugoslavia, Israel, Russia, China, and Syria.⁷⁵ Phase one involved the claim of a Turkish Cypriot genocide, and the invasion and religious cleansing of the northern portion of Cyprus starting in 1974.⁷⁶ Phase two featured support for Bosnian Muslim forces in Yugoslavia, the dismemberment of that country, and the killing or ejection of the Serbian Orthodox population from Bosnia and Croatia in many instances starting in 1991–1992.⁷⁷ In 1999, Turkey’s Defense Minister indicated that Turkey was engaged in violent struggle in both Bosnia and Kosovo on behalf of its own Ottoman “culture, history, and faith.”⁷⁸ Phase three included efforts to insist that Israel, Russia, China, and Syria stand down in the face of terrorism by militant groups.⁷⁹

75 Hans-Jürgen Schlamp, Daniel Steinorth and Bernhard Zand, “The Eternal Candidate: Turkey Bets on Regional Influence as EU Hopes Fade,” *Der Spiegel* (Apr. 6, 2009), www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,628575,00.html; Yigal Schleifer, “Gaza Flotilla Raid: Will It Change Turkey’s Regional Role?” *Christian Science Monitor* (June 16, 2010), www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0616/Gaza-flotilla-raid-Will-it-change-Turkey-s-regional-role; Stephen Simpson, “Turkey: Islamism’s Consequences for the West,” *Global Politician* (Sept. 20, 2010), <http://globalpolitician.com/26594-turkey-islamism>.

76 Cyprus, Press and Information Office, *Flagellum Dei: The Destruction of the Cultural Heritage in the Turkish Occupied Part of Cyprus* (5th ed., 1997), 16, 24; Michael Jansen, *The Pillage by Turkey of the 12,000 Year Old Cultural Heritage of Cyprus, Europe’s World* (Spring 2007), www.europesworld.org/NewEnglish/Home_old/Article/tabid/191/Article-Type/articleview/ArticleID/20454/language/en-US/Default.aspx; United Press International (UPI), “Soviets Seek Air Link with Cyprus,” *Eugene Register-Guard* (Feb. 24, 1964), 2A; UPI, “Cyprus Cease Fire Announced,” *Bangor Daily News* (July 22, 1974), 1; “Russia Blames U.S. for Cyprus,” *Chicago Tribune* (Aug. 21, 1974), 20.

77 Maud S. Beelman, “In Bosnia, Arms Embargo Looks Like a Sieve,” *Associated Press/The Daily Courier* (July 31, 1994), A12; Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan: Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist State, 1989–2000* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 142–143; Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, *Final Report on “Srebrenica, a ‘Safe’ Area – Reconstruction, Background, Consequences and Analyses of the Fall of a Safe Area”* (2002), quoted in Cees Wiebes, *Intelligence and the War in Bosnia, 1992–1995* (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2003), 196–197; Republic of Turkey, *Draft Resolution of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, E/CN.4/1992/S-2/L.2* (Nov. 30, 1992); Brian Glyn Williams, “Turkey’s Al-Qaeda Blowback,” *Terrorism Monitor* 2, no. 8 (May 19, 2005), <https://jamestown.org/program/turkeys-al-qaeda-blowback/>.

78 Ronald Dannreuther, “Perceptions in the Middle East,” in Mary Buckley and Sally Cummings (Eds.), *Kosovo: Perceptions of War and Its Aftermath* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 207.

79 Jonny Dymond, “Turkey Accuses Israel of Genocide,” *BBC News* (Apr. 4, 2002), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1911609.stm>; Associated Press, “IOC Rejects Call for Expulsion of Israel,” *Sports Illustrated* (May 22, 2002), http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/olympics/news/2002/05/22/ioc_meetings_ap/; see also, Associated Press, “Turkey Probes Israel on ‘War Crimes’ in Gaza,” *Jerusalem Post* (Feb. 6, 2009), www.jpost.com; “Ecevit Defends Bank Operation,” *Turkish Daily News* (Dec. 29, 1999), www.hurriyetdailynews.com/ecevit-defends-bank-operation.aspx?pageID=438&n=ecevit-defends-bank-operation-1999-12-29; Patrick McDonnell, “Syria Peace Plan Not Working, U.N. Envoy Kofi Annan Says,” *Los Angeles Times* (June 7, 2012), <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jun/07/world/la-fg-syria-violence-20120608>; Reuters Canada, “Ahmadinejad Condemns Israel again after UN Walk-Out,” *Reuters* (Apr. 22, 2009), <http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCA-TRE53L17B20090422>; Transcripts of Erdogan, Moussa, Peres (and Erdogan again . . .)

Thus, Turkey has used the rhetoric of genocide to support militants in Palestine, Bosnia, Kosovo, Russia, and the Kurdish regions of Iraq, while seeking to end Chinese and Russian repression of Muslims in East Turkestan.⁸⁰ Subsequently, these hotbeds of militancy became important contributors to the manpower of ISIS and al Qaeda in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere.⁸¹

In 2003–2004, Turkey strongly supported the restructuring of Iraq into a “democracy” with an “Islamic” constitution, although Turkey’s parliament blocked Turkish warplanes and troops from participating in the invasion directly.⁸² While “France and Germany made clear they were not going to support military action in Iraq,” President George W. Bush adopted the theories of “neoconservatives” in his employ such as Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz. The “neoconservatives . . . had been influenced by the ideas of Bernard Lewis” into believing that an appropriate response to September 11 was to attack Iraq rather than Saudi Arabia, whose nationals had financed the operation in part and whose nationals had largely carried it out.⁸³ Lewis believed in the myth of a secular democratic Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and wanted to install a similar strongman in Iraq, Ahmed Chalabi, because this would “seculariz[e]” Iraq as Turkey had been secularized, according to the mythology associated with Armenian genocide denial.⁸⁴ A disciple of Lewis proposed the daft plan that the United States prop up Chalabi and leave precipitously.⁸⁵ Although this was not done, something perhaps even worse transpired: a constitution for Iraq based on Ottoman and

at Davos Economic Forum (2009), <http://palestinethinktank.com/2009/01/31/transcripts-ferdogan-moussa-peres-and-erdogan-again-at-davos>; “Turkish PM Calls for Immediate Action against Gaza Tragedy,” *Xinhua News Service* (Dec. 12, 2008), http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-12/29/content_10577493.htm; Yigal Schleifer, “Turkey: PM Erdogan’s Criticism of Israel Could Damage Ankara’s Aspirations as Mid-East Peace Broker,” *Eurasianet* (Feb. 5, 2009), www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav020509.shtml; Travis, “The Assyrian Genocide,” 132; Turkey Attacks China “Genocide,” *BBC News* (July 10, 2009), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8145451.stm>.

80 E.g., Dan Arbell, “The U.S.-Turkey-Israel Triangle,” *Brookings Institution Analysis Paper No. 34* (Oct. 2014), 4–22, 38, www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/USTurkey-Israel-TriangleFINAL.pdf; Anatolia News Agency, “Turkey Becomes First State with Ambassador Recognized by Palestine,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Apr. 15, 2013), www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-becomes-first-state-with-ambassador-recognized-by-palestine-.aspx?PageID=238&NID=44925&NewsCatID=338; Bob Hepburn, “New Kurdistan: Growing Pains,” *The Toronto Star* (Nov. 15, 1992), F2; Hannibal Travis, “The United Nations and Genocide Prevention: The Problem of Racial and Religious Bias,” *Genocide Studies International* 8, no. 2 (2014): 122–152.

81 Travis, “Why Was Benghazi ‘Saved?’”, 147, 157; Williams, “Turkey’s Al-Qaeda Blowback.”

82 Hannibal Travis, “The Lessons of Late Ottoman Genocides for Contemporary Iraq and Syria,” *Armenian Weekly* (Oct. 2014), www.armenianweekly.com/2014/10/23/travis.

83 James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet* (New York: Penguin, 2004), <http://books.google.com/books?id=LhXlFku4bhoC&pg=PT320>.

84 Jacob Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy* (New York: Random House, 2008), 204.

85 *Ibid.*, 207.

Pakistani models, despite the Armenian and Bengali genocides, the purge of Hindus from Pakistan, and al Qaeda's base in Pakistan.⁸⁶

After regime change in Iraq, the territory of Turkey became a logistical waypoint for Sunni terrorists operating in Iraq, whose strategy was to target and eliminate non-Sunni communities.⁸⁷ As a result of al Qaeda's rise, the situation in Iraq and Syria has come to resemble the disappearance of Christian communities in Turkey. By the 1990s or mid-2000s, more than one million Christians lived in Iraq and two million in Syria, including more than 600,000 in Baghdad, 50,000–60,000 in Mosul, 12,000 in Kirkuk and 6,000 in Basra, more than 200,000 in Aleppo, 50,000 in Homs, and thousands or tens of thousands in the Hasakah province of Syria.⁸⁸ Starting in 2004, the Assyrian community in Basra was driven out by killings and intimidation under the new regime.⁸⁹ The process continued in Baghdad, Mosul, and

86 Noah Feldman, *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 12, 14, 127. This remarkable book does not mention these events even while apparently endorsing these Ottoman and Pakistani models for Iraq, as representing the rule of law as opposed to Iraq's "tyranny." *Ibid.*, 70–71, 90–91, 127, 147–148. The book concluded that the "West" must "support . . . Islamists" because they are legitimate heralds of "justice" and the "rule of law." *Ibid.*, 150. On the Bengali and Hindu cleansings from Pakistan, and al Qaeda's role there, see Travis, *Genocide*, 347–348, 376–378, 383–385, 503–504. For details as to how Iraq's new constitution led to a situation of discrimination, impunity, and religious cleansing in the 2003–2012 period, see al-Jeloo, "Post-withdrawal Prospects," 110–122; Travis, *Genocide*, 517–544; Travis, "Why Was Benghazi 'Saved'?", 147–159, 168, 169, 172.

87 Michael Emerson, Kristina Kausch, Richard Youngs and Omayma Abdel-Latif, *Islamist Radicalisation: The Challenge for Euro-Mediterranean Relations* (Brussels: Center for European Policy Studies, 2009), 98, <https://books.google.com/books?id=ispLE7TkP0wC>. See also, "AK Party Weaponizes Judiciary as Judges and Prosecutors Kowtow," *Today's Zaman* (Jan. 16, 2016), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>; "DOIU – The Seeds of Danger," *Today's Zaman* (Jan. 19, 2015), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>; "John Kerry Testifies on Anti-ISIS Strategy," *CNN's The Lead with Jake Tapper* (Sept. 17, 2014), a.next.westlaw.com (find "2014 WLNR 25802158"); "Turkey Now Vulnerable after Files of 10,000 Terrorist Suspects Closed following Graft Probes," *Today's Zaman* (Oct. 19, 2015), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>; Clarissa Ward, "In Afghanistan, the Taliban Funded Itself with Opium," *CBS News this Morning* (Sept. 9, 2015), a.next.westlaw.com (document no. 2015 WLNR 26975869).

88 Agencies, "France Offers Asylum to Iraqi Christians," *Al-Jazeera* (July 29, 2014), www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/07/france-offers-asylum-iraqi-christians-2014728125854650414.html; Dusan Stojanovic, "Too Afraid to Return," *Associated Press* (Oct. 28, 2013), <https://books.google.com/books?id=HuzkBwAAQBAJ&pg=PT84>; Timothy Phelps, "For Basra's Christians, Hussein Era the Good Old Days / Shiite-Dominated City's Minorities Say Repression on Rise," *San Francisco Chronicle* (Aug. 28, 2005), www.sfgate.com/politics/article/For-Basra-s-Christians-Hussein-era-the-good-old-2644850.php; U.S. Department of State, *Annual Report, International Religious Freedom: Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 575.

89 The Government of the United Kingdom, Home Office, Iraq Country Assessment (Oct. 2004), at ¶ 6.51, www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk; William Booth, "For Basra's Liquor Dealers, The Shots Turn Deadly," *The Washington Post* (June 1, 2003), D01. See also, Minority Rights Group, *State of the World's Minorities* (2008), 152, <http://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/old-site-downloads/download-470-Middle-East.pdf>, which stated

Kirkuk in particular, with church bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations.⁹⁰ While a census of Mosul in 1920 estimated that the city was about one-seventh Assyrian Christian, the city was only 1% Assyrian by 2008.⁹¹ As one Mosul resident stated: “The militants threaten Christian women. . . . We only have one choice, and that is to flee Mosul and the hell created by the militants.”⁹² In 2014, Mosul and the Christian neighborhoods of the Dora district of Baghdad were emptied of their Christian inhabitants.⁹³

The Pope warned in 2007 that Christians in Iraq were being wiped out, in a message echoed by the European Parliament and seventy-three members of the U.S. Congress.⁹⁴ By 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives declared that killings, abductions, and destruction of properties on religious grounds were acts taking place “in alarming numbers” in Iraq, and were a “grave threat” to Assyrians.⁹⁵

In 2013, the Melkite Greek Catholic patriarch in Syria warned that the “future of Christians in Syria is threatened not by Muslims but by . . . chaos . . . and the infiltration of uncontrollable fanatical, fundamentalist groups.”⁹⁶ One in four Syrian Christians suffered displacement within the

that “beneath the noses of the British and US troops in southern Iraq, including Basra, there has been a total cleansing of Mandaeans and Christians,” quoting Layla al Roomi, a Mandaean.

90 Robert Petit, Stuart Ford, and Neha Jain, “Exploring Critical Issues in Religious Genocide: Case Studies of Violence in Tibet, Iraq, and Gujarat,” *Case Western Reserve University Journal of International Law* 40 (2008): 163–200, 185–189; Ellen Massey, “Iraq’s Religious Minorities Hit From All Sides,” *Antiwar.com* (Aug. 1, 2007), www.antiwar.com/ips/massey.php?articleid=11378.

91 Christian Solidarity International, *Terror Reigns over Mosul’s Christians: CSI & Hamorabi Deliver Emergency Relief* (2008), www.aina.org/reports/csitromc.pdf (last visited Nov. 1, 2014); Daniel Gonzales, *Networked Forces in Stability Operations: 101st Airborne Division, 3/2 and 1/25 Stryker Brigades in Northern Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corp., 2007), 24.

92 Quoted in Sahar al-Haideri, “Mosul Christian Community Dwindles,” *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* (Aug. 13, 2007), www.alternet.org/story/59591/murdered_reporter%27s_final_dispatch%3A_mosul%27s_christian_community_dwindles/.

93 Matthew Bunson (Ed.), *2009 Catholic Almanac* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2008), 77; Patrick Murphy, *Taking the Hill: From Philly to Baghdad to the United States Congress* (New York: Macmillan, 2008), <https://books.google.com/books?id=G5TNwrOem8MC&pg=PT161>; Daniel Williams, *Forsaken: The Persecution of Christians in Today’s Middle East* (New York: OR Books, 2016), 62.

94 Howard Adelman, “The Refugee and IDP Problem in Iraq,” in Howard Adelman (Ed.), *Protracted Displacement in Asia: No Place to Call Home* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016), 181–209, 200; Anna Eshoo et al., *Letter to George W. Bush, President of the United States* (June 28, 2007), <https://web.archive.org/web/20130814073528/http://assyrianaid.co.uk/73%20members%20of%20congress%20to%20the%20president.pdf>.

95 GovTrack, H. Res. 944 (Feb. 24, 2010), 111th Congress, www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/hres944/.

96 John Pontifex, *Syria: Patriarch Gregorios III Makes Urgent Peace Appeal, Aid for the Church in Need UK* (Apr. 15, 2013), www.acnuk.org/news.php/422/syria-patriarch-gregorios-iii-makes-urgent-peace-appeal.

first two years of the fanatics' march.⁹⁷ Summarizing the complaints of Syrian Christian leaders, one journalist noted that

young Christian girls are being raped and murdered, while Christian churches, monasteries, homes, and workplaces are being systematically destroyed. Syrian Catholic bishops have warned that their country is becoming a "second Iraq" owing to similar patterns of Church attacks and forced expulsion and kidnapping of Christians.⁹⁸

What happened in Baghdad and Mosul was repeated in Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, and in al-Hasakah province.⁹⁹ In scenes that recalled the sieges of Christian villages with Ottoman artillery in 1915, militants were "deliberately targeting [Christian] neighborhoods," firing at least fifteen mortar rounds per day into them by late 2013.¹⁰⁰ A charity supported by the Vatican reported in 2015 that "we have had reports of . . . all evidence of Christian culture destroyed: [c]hurches, chapels, crosses," as well as widespread "persecution . . . being perpetrated not only by the so-called Islamic State, but also by other Islamist militant groups that have the objective of 'clearing the place of Christians.'"¹⁰¹

Turkey's territory played a key role in the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which drove much of the Assyrian displacement from the Mosul region. Human Rights Watch confirmed massive flows of men, weapons, and money between Turkey and ISIS territory.¹⁰² In July 2012, the "Free

97 Ibid.

98 George Marlin, "The Persecution of Christians in the Middle East," *Catholic Online* (Oct. 16, 2013), https://web.archive.org/web/20131017122031/www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=52764.

99 Jamie Dettmer, "Holy Land: Syria's Christians Flee Kidnappings, Rape, Executions," *The Daily Beast* (Nov. 19, 2013), www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/11/19/syria-s-christians-flee-kidnappings-rape-executions.html; Stojanovic, "Too Afraid"; Matthew Russell Lee, "Syria Report, Pre-Spun, Notes Rebels Shelling Homs & Aleppo," *Inner-City Press/LexisAdvance* (Aug. 28, 2014), <http://advance.lexis.com>; Nour Samaha, "Syria's Assyrians: 'No One Helped Us': ISIL's Abduction of Assyrians Raises Concerns over the Fate of Christians in the Middle East," *Al-Jazeera* (Mar. 1, 2015), www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/syria-assyrians-helped-150301053211418.html; Zenit, *Christmas in Syria: Between Fear and Hope* (Dec. 23, 2014), <https://zenit.org/en/articles/christmas-in-syria-between-fear-and-hope>.

100 Stojanovic, "Too Afraid."

101 Vatican Radio, *Christians in Syria Facing "Genocide"* (Apr. 11, 2015), http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/11/04/christians_in_syria_facing_genocide/1184371.

102 Human Rights Watch, *Syria: Executions, Hostage Taking by Rebels* (Oct. 11, 2013), www.hrw.org/news/2013/10/10/syria-executions-hostage-taking-rebels; International Crisis Group (ICG), "Blurring the Borders: Syrian Spillover Risks for Turkey," *Crisis Group Europe Report N°225* (Apr. 30, 2013), iv; ICG, "Tentative Jihad: Syria's Fundamentalist Opposition," *Crisis Group Middle East Report N°131* (Oct. 12, 2012), 10, 20; ICG, "The Rising Costs of Turkey's Syrian Quagmire," *Crisis Group Europe Report N°230* (Apr. 30, 2014), 13–31. These last three reports are available at www.crisisgroup.org.

Syrian Army” (FSA) operated across the Syrian-Turkish border, and some of its members proclaimed a holy war and an Islamic state.¹⁰³ Extremist organizations linked to al Qaeda, Jabhat al-Nusra, and ISIS operated across the border and enjoyed even more success, conquering eastern Syria and northwestern Iraq.¹⁰⁴ That same year, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency concluded that Turkey and its allies on the Syrian question shared an aim of “establishing a declared or undeclared Salafist principality in Eastern Syria (Hasaka and Der Zor), . . . in order to isolate the Syrian regime,” presumably to isolate it from its eastern allies Iran and Iraq.¹⁰⁵

Between 2011 and 2013, Turkish territory provided a staging-ground for al Qaeda and its allies in Syria.¹⁰⁶ It was clear that from 2012 through 2015, “jihadists were using Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul to make their way to the Turkish city of Gaziantep before heading into Syrian territory to take up the fight.”¹⁰⁷ CNN correspondents reported seeing jihadists from Libya and elsewhere crossing into Syria from Turkey in droves, dressed like commandos, in 2013.¹⁰⁸ By March 2015, ISIS exported oil from dozens of sites in Syria and seven sites in Iraq to the Turkish cities of Urfa, Hakkari, Siirt, Batman, Gaziantep, Adana, and Mardin, among others, according to a report by Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights.¹⁰⁹ To do this, ISIS imported oil production and refining equipment

103 ICG, *Turkey’s Syrian Quagmire*, 10, 20–22.

104 *Ibid.*, 13.

105 Quoted in Jeremy Salt, “A War of Two against One,” *Al Abram Weekly (Egypt)/WestlawNext* (June 12, 2015), a.next.westlaw.com. See also, “Russia Warns against Support for Arab Uprisings,” *The New York Times* (Jan. 19, 2012), www.nytimes.com/2012/01/19/world/europe/russia-warns-against-support-for-arab-uprisings.html?_r=3&ref=world.

106 ICG, *Tentative Jihad*, 10–20; ICG, *Turkey’s Syrian Quagmire*, 12–31; *Peace Association of Turkey and Lawyers for Justice, War Crimes Committed against the People of Syria: Report* (Dec. 2013/Jan. 9, 2014), § 1.1, http://pwlasowa.blogspot.fr/2014_01_09_archive.html; U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, “Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic: Implementation of Human Rights Council Resolution 19/22,” *U.N. Doc. No. A/HRC/20/37* (June 22, 2012), 5; see also, “Turkey, The Pretender; It Must Fight the Islamic State in Earnest,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (Oct. 12, 2014), a.next.westlaw.com; “Turkey Directly Supported al-Qaeda in Syria, Claims Former US Ambassador,” *The Daily Telegraph* (Sept. 13, 2014), a.next.westlaw.com; Reuters, “Turkish Reluctance Shows Difficulty Building US Alliance against Islamic State,” *WestlawNext* (Sept. 12, 2014), a.next.westlaw.com.

107 Steven Cook, “Is Turkey Really at the Table?” *Politico* (Nov. 27, 2015), www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/11/isis-strategy-turkey-213392#ixzz3sjVj2jeh.

108 *Conversation with CNN Senior International Correspondents*, PBS: *Charlie Rose* (Dec. 12, 2015), a.next.westlaw.com.

109 David Phillips et al., “Research Paper: Turkey-ISIS Oil Trade,” *The Huffington Post* (Dec. 15, 2015), www.huffingtonpost.com/david-l-phillips/research-paper-turkey-isi_b_8808024.html, citing George Kiourktsoglou and Alec Coutroubis, “ISIS Export Gateway to Global Crude Oil Markets,” *London Shipping Law Centre, Maritime Business Forum* (Mar. 12, 2015), www.marsecreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/PAPER-on-CRUDE-OIL-and-ISIS.pdf.

from Turkey.¹¹⁰ Syria responded with aerial bombardment, artillery, torture, and possible death squads, with tens of thousands being killed and millions being displaced, as in Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s, but under circumstances of a more urgent struggle for survival of the state, and with a much more balanced death toll between Syrian government and terrorist forces.¹¹¹

As Archdeacon Emanuel Youkhana of the Assyrian Church of the East told a U.S. former official in February 2013: “We are witnessing another Arab country losing its Christian Assyrian minority. When it happened in Iraq nobody believed Syria’s turn would come.”¹¹² Fiona Bruce, in a U.K. House of Commons genocide debate, stated that Syria’s “rebels” fired missiles and mortars at churches and civilian neighborhoods, used children as human shields, demanded that Christians flee or die, and opened slave markets in Raqqa. Ms. Bruce stated:

We heard from another woman, Yvette, who had come directly from Syria. . . . She spoke of Christians being killed and tortured, and of children being beheaded in front of their parents. She showed us recent film footage of herself talking with mothers – more than one – who had seen their own children crucified.¹¹³

According to one account, the number of Christians in Homs, a rebel bastion initially outside of the orbit of ISIS, fell from 80,000 to 400 between 2010 and 2012.¹¹⁴ Multiple leaders of the Christian churches of Syria, visiting Washington in June 2014, unsuccessfully called for the end of all

110 Ibid., citing Associated Press, *Despite U.S.-led Campaign, ISIS Rakes in Oil Revenue* (Oct. 23, 2015), <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/061e7a83299644868c920bed0667eb9c/despite-us-led-campaign-islamic-state-rakes-oil-earnings>.

111 U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of State, Syria – Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #15, Fiscal Year 2014, May 22, 2014, 1; see also, Associated Press, “UN Security Council Discusses Crisis in Syria, Reviews Arab-European Draft Resolution,” *The Washington Post*, www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/un-security-council-to-discuss-crisis-in-syria-review-arab-european-draft-resolution/2012/01/27/gIQAjA0QVQ_story.html; U.N. Secretary-General, Report on Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 3249 (2014) and 2165 (2014), U.N. Doc. No. S/2014/611 (21 Aug. 2014); RIA Novosti, “Human Rights Activists Put Syrian Death Toll at 162,000 – Report,” *World News* (May 19, 2014), http://article.wn.com/view/2014/05/19/Human_Rights_Activists_Put_Syrian_Death_Toll_at_162000_Report/; Barbara Surk, “Death Toll in Syria’s War Tops 160,000: Activists,” *Associated Press* (May 20, 2014), www.northjersey.com/news/activists-death-toll-in-syria-s-war-tops-160-000-1.1018995.

112 Quoted in Nina Shea, “The Silent Exodus of Syria’s Christians,” *National Review Corner Blog* (Feb. 8, 2013), www.nationalreview.com/corner/340216/silent-exodus-syrias-christians-nina-shea.

113 Quoted in “Barbaric ISIS Mangle 250 Children in Industrial Dough Kneader and Cooks Rest Alive in Oven,” *Express Online* (U.K./WestlawNext) (Oct. 26, 2016), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>.

114 Simon Adams, “The World’s Next Genocide,” *The International Herald Tribune* (Nov. 17, 2012), www.nytimes.com/2012/11/16/opinion/the-worlds-next-genocide.html.

military and financial aid to illegal armed groups in Syria, asked that persons in Turkey as well as Saudi Arabia and its Persian Gulf neighbors stop aiding terrorists in their country, and warned of cultural destruction.¹¹⁵

Denial of the Christian plight in Syria was the predominant stance, at least prior to 2016. It was typical to argue that there were “moderate rebels” in Syria, like the Free Syrian Army and its Yarmouk Brigade, supported by the moderate “allies” of the West, including Saudi Arabia and Turkey.¹¹⁶ However, journalists such as Patrick Cockburn, as well as parliamentarians and human-rights activists from Turkey and other places, have recognized that al Qaeda and the FSA, including the Yarmouk Brigade, fought together at times.¹¹⁷

In 2014–2015, ISIS occupied Mosul, Sinjar, the Nineveh Plains, and parts of the Kirkuk area in Iraq, and a swath from al-Hasakah province of Syria west to the gates of Aleppo and Damascus.¹¹⁸ The Syrian territories of ISIS happened to be virtually identical to the “safe zone” for the “opposition” envisaged by Turkey in a proposal to NATO in 2012.¹¹⁹ Non-Sunni places of worship were promptly destroyed or converted to other uses, and thousands of homes and businesses were seized from non-Sunnis.¹²⁰ During the

115 Harout Sassounian, “McCain Offends Visiting Church Leaders,” *The Armenian Weekly* (Feb. 24, 2014), www.armenianweekly.com. See also, “Turkey’s Steps towards Armenians in Syria . . . Continuation of Genocide: Karekin II,” *Armenpress* (June 11, 2014); “Commending American Christian Leaders for Standing in Solidarity with Christians and Other Small Religious Communities in Egypt, Iraq and Syria,” *Congressional Record* 160 (2014): E769–03.

116 E.g., “Mideast Region Reacts to Obama’s Speech With Skepticism,” *NPR Morning Edition* (Sept. 11, 2014), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>.

117 Patrick Cockburn, *ISIS: Battling the Menace* (London: Independent Print Ltd./Mango Media, 2016), <https://books.google.com/books?id=eZwQDQAAQBAJ>. See also Peace Association of Turkey & Lawyers for Human Rights, War Crimes, § 1.1.

118 Patrick Cockburn, “Iraq Crisis: How Saudi Arabia Helped ISIS Take Over the North of the Country; A Speech by an Ex-MI6 Boss Hints at a Plan Going Back Over a Decade,” *The Independent* (U.K.) (July 14, 2014), www.independent.co.uk. See also Peace Association of Turkey & Lawyers for Human Rights, War Crimes, § 1.1.

119 The safe zone was initially described as the territories where the “Free Syrian Army is gaining ground all along the Turkish border, from Aleppo in the west through ar-Raqqah in the center and towards al-Hasakah in the east.” Tom Clonan, “Turkey Well Equipped to Confront Assad Threat,” *The Irish Times* (Oct. 6, 2012), 11. A year later, it was said that ISIS was “mainly active” along the Turkish border – that is, in Syria’s “northern and eastern governorates” – because it “managed to control the local councils in Aleppo, Idlib, and Dayr al-Zawr.” “Report on Declining Role of Free Syrian Army,” *Al-Sharq al-Awsat/BBC Monitoring Middle East – Political/Lexis Advance* (Dec. 14, 2013), <http://advance.lexis.com>. Nine months later, a U.N. report stated that ISIS controlled an area from western Aleppo and central Homs over to southern Hasakeh, and was expanding in Aleppo, Hasakeh, and Raqqah governorates. U.N. Secretary-General, Report on Implementation; Lee, “Syria Report, Pre-Spun.” See also, Muhammad al-Najjar, “The State of Iraq and the Levant, the Most Prominent Party in the Syrian Scene,” *Al-Jazeera/BBC Monitoring Middle East – Political/Lexis Advance* (Oct. 15, 2013), <http://advance.lexis.com>.

120 Cockburn, “Iraq Crisis.”

assault on Sinjar, ISIS and its local Sunni allies massacred between 3,500 and 10,000 Yezidis, taking 6,000 women and girls as captives – many to be raped – and kidnapping thousands of young boys as well for slavery as child soldiers or worse.¹²¹ Christian Solidarity International, the Iraq Sustainable Democracy Project (ISDP), the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, members of Congress, journalists, and scholars had been warning of such an imminent genocide for some years, but necessary preventative measures were not taken, such as empowering local Assyrian and Yezidi police or security forces, sanctioning terror financiers, enforcing the Iraq-Syria border line, etc.¹²²

121 Nasir Ali and Yousif Ahmed, “Yezidi MP: 5,000 May Have Died in Shingal, Many Children,” *Rudaw* (Sept. 28, 2014), <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/260920142#sthash.YDOnsY96.dpuf>; Judit Neurink, “Yazidi Sex Slaves in ISIS Captivity Must Escape – or Hope to Be Purchased,” *Haaretz* (Aug. 6, 2015), [www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/11/03/yazidis-face-genocide-by-isis-after-u-s-turns-away.html](http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:Ff2973I8K-UJ:www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/premium-1.669690; Josh Rogin, “Disappearing Ally,” <i>The Daily Beast</i> (Nov. 3, 2014), <a href=); Stephen Schwartz and Christopher Bilardi, “Never Again? The ISIS Genocide of Yazidis,” *The Huffington Post* (June 10, 2015), www.huffingtonpost.com/stephen-schwartz/the-yezid-sect-isis-targe_b_7542484.html; Travis, “Why Was Benghazi ‘Saved?’,” 139–140, 172, 148, 155; United Religions Initiative, *Bay Area CCs Launch Genocide Awareness Campaign* (Apr. 9, 2015), http://uri.org/the_latest/2015/04/bay_area_ccs_launch_yezidi_genocide_awareness_campaign; “US Report: ISIS Still Kidnapping and Selling Women,” *Assyrian International News Agency* (Aug. 1, 2015), <http://aina.org/news/20150801142718.htm>.

122 Neha, Petit and Jain, “Critical Issues,” n. 103. Christian Solidarity International (CSI) collected numerous warnings to this effect spanning the period of January 2010 through January 2014. CSI, GENOCIDE ALERT: Defend Middle East Christians & Other Religious Minorities (2014), <http://campaigns.csi-usa.org/index.php?id=1Obama>. ISDP wrote of various waves of extremism that depopulated Assyrian areas, notably in 1977 and 2010. ISDP, *At the Tipping Point: A Nineveh Plain Province and Related Solutions to Iraq’s Indigenous Minority Crisis* (2011), www.iraqdemocracyproject.org; ISDP, “Cultural Rights and Democracy: Iraqi Assyrians a Case Study for Government Intervention,” *Paper Presented to the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting* (2006), www.iraqdemocracyproject.org. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom warned that Iraq’s “ancient communities, who include ChaldoAssyrian Christians, Sabeian Mandaean, Yazidis, and others, and that as a result of extremist violence and government harassment, they are facing extinction from lands they have occupied for over 2,000 years.” Michael Cromartie, Chairman, U.S. Commission on Int’l Religions Freedom, Letter to Condoleezza Rice, U.S. Secretary of State (Sept. 5, 2007), <http://web.archive.org/web/20071013110627/www.uscirf.gov/mediaroom/press/2007/september/20070906RiceLetterIraq.html>. Juan Mendez, the U.N. secretary-general’s special advisor on the prevention of genocide, recognized that Assyrians were being killed solely on the basis of their religion. Quoted in Neha, Jain and Petit, n. 121. For measures proposed, see al-Haideri, “Mosul Christian Community Dwindles”; Mardean Isaac, “The Desperate Plight of Iraq’s Assyrians and Other Minorities,” *The Guardian* (U.K.) (Dec. 24, 2011), www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/dec/24/iraq-minorities-assyrians; ISDP, “At the Tipping Point”; Jim Lobe, *Plight of Christians Provokes Calls for Special Protection*, *Inter Press Service* (Oct. 20, 2004), <http://ipsnews.org>; U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, *Annual Report 2005*, at 18, www.uscirf.gov.

In 2015, Iraq accused ISIS of committing genocide against minorities in northern Iraq, and the Russians, the Pope, the French, the British, the Canadians, and the Americans reached a similar conclusion.¹²³ Infiltrators from al Qaeda joined up with sleeper cells of the Baath Party in Baghdad, Fallujah, Mosul, Ramadi, Tikrit, and other cities to form a government the size of Jordan, and later the size of Great Britain, known as ISIS and later as the Islamic State.¹²⁴ Mass abductions of Yezidi and Assyrian women, not to mention Sunni women living in al Qaeda-held areas, might draw comparisons to abductions of Bosnian Muslim women, which were used as evidence of genocide in the U.N. General Assembly.¹²⁵ No international criminal tribunal was convened, however, and no U.N. force was dispatched to Mosul.¹²⁶

123 U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Consideration of Reports, Comments and Information Submitted by States Parties Under Article 9 of the Convention (Continued); Combined fifteenth to twenty-first periodic reports of Iraq (continued), Eighty-fifth Session, Summary Record of the 2308th meeting, U.N. Doc. No CERD/C/SR.2308 (Aug. 20, 2014), 3, para. 6; see also, Associated Press, “Kerry Says ISIL Behind Genocide in Iraq, Syria,” *Charleston Gazette-Mail* (Charleston, West Virginia) (Mar. 18, 2016), 8A; Megan Cornwell, “MPs Unanimously Declare Islamic State Treatment of Christians and Yazidis Genocide,” *The Tablet* (Apr. 21, 2016), www.thetablet.co.uk/news/5454/0/mps-unanimously-declare-islamic-state-treatment-of-christians-and-yazidis-genocide; John Hall, “Pope Francis Decries ‘Genocide’ of Christians in Middle East,” *The Daily Mail* (U.K.) (July 10, 2015), www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3156055/Pope-Francis-condemns-pursuit-money-dung-devil-decries-genocide-Christians-Middle-East-World-War.html; “Hollande Raises Issue of Christians of Middle East and Armenians,” *Armenpress* (Apr. 24, 2015), <http://armenpress.am/eng/news/803156/olandy-erevanum-bardzradzaynec-merdzavor-arevelqi-qristoryaneri.html>; Republic of France, “Intervention de la France, 28eme session du Conseil des droits de l’Homme,” *Dialogue interactif avec le Haut-Commissaire sur l’Iraq* (Mar. 25, 2015); Tass: Russian News Agency, “Terrorism in Mideast Was Triggered by Rash Actions of External Players – Russia’s UN Envoy” (Mar. 27, 2015), <http://tass.ru/en/russia/785494>; Olivia Ward, “Islamic State Attacks on Religious Minorities ‘Genocide,’ Canadian Ambassador Says,” *Toronto Star* (Sept. 8, 2014), www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/09/08/islamic_state_attacks_on_religious_minorities_genocide_canadian_ambassador_says.html.

124 “The Rise of Islamic State: Timeline,” *Telegraph Online* (U.K./*WestlawNext*) (July 6, 2014), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>.

125 Sam Webb and Khaleda Rahman, “The Price of a Slave . . . as Determined by ISIS Official Price List; Islamist Group Sets Prices for Yazidi and Christian Women,” *The Daily Mail* (Nov. 4, 2015), www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2820603; “Shocking: ISIS ‘Official Price List Shows Yazidi, Christian Girls Aged 1–9 Being Sold,’” *The Investor’s Business Times* (Nov. 4, 2015), www.ibtimes.co.in/shocking-isis-official-slave-price-list-shows-yazidi-christian-girls-aged-1-9-being-sold-613160; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on the Human Rights Situation in Iraq in the Light of Abuses Committed by the So-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Associated Groups, U.N. Human Rights Council, 28th Sess., Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General, U.N. Doc. No. A/HRC/28/18 (Mar. 13, 2015), 6, 10.

126 Hannibal Travis, “A Genocide Trial in Limbo: The Case of the Yezidis and their Neighbors,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs Online* (Apr. 3, 2017), tinyurl.com/GJIA2017; Travis, “Why Was Benghazi ‘Saved’?,” 140–146, 155.

In many ways, the campaigns to destroy the Assyrians and Yezidis are linked. In the nineteenth century, the Yezidis claimed to be descended from the ancient Assyrian race.¹²⁷ In the twentieth century, Yezidis still spoke of ancient Assyrian wall carvings in the central sanctuary of a Yezidi temple, and a researcher wrote that they mentioned to her the architectural significance of the cone within Assyrian religion, a Yezidi temple having a conical tower.¹²⁸ The name Yezidi is variously linked to *yezu* for Jesus, *yazd* for god in the Persian language, and the Caliph Yazid.¹²⁹ The Yezidi tradition was that Yezidis were once Christians, like the Assyrians of the Church of the East. Unlike Muslims, Yezidis traditionally worshiped Jesus or Isa as the “light of God.”¹³⁰ The valley of Shemidsen where the Yezidis are located, as well as nearby Tall ‘Afar, were originally Church of the East bishoprics.¹³¹ Sheikhan, the principal Yezidi homeland along with Sinjar, was the site of Iraqi army massacres, aided by Kurdish tribes, of Assyrian Christians in 1933.¹³² Yezidis engage in Christian rituals, some of which also have neo-Assyrian and Jewish origins, such as baptism, visiting churches on wedding days, the consumption of wine, and breaking bread on feast-days.¹³³ A revered figure in the Yezidi faith, Sheikh Shams, is linked with Jesus or “Sheikh Isa” in Yezidi works, and is hailed as “good news to the world,” a “creator,” and the “remedy” for “all ills.”¹³⁴

The Church of the East tradition states that a man named ‘Adi invaded the monastery of Mar Addai, the man credited with bringing Christianity to the Assyrians, and slaughtered the monks there. The connection with Mar Addai has led scholars to write of the Yezidis’ revered figure Sheikh ‘Adi, the Yezidis’ counterpart to Moses, as a reference to a Christian apostle.¹³⁵ Some Yezidis call themselves *Dasini* and were known to Arabs as *Dasnean*;

127 Isya Joseph, *Devil Worship: The Sacred Books and Traditions of the Yezidis* (Boston: Gorham Press, 1919), 92.

128 Eszter Spät, *The Yezidis* (London: Saqi, 1985), 40.

129 Zaïm Khenchelaoui, “The Yezidis: People of the Spoken Word in the Midst of People of the Book,” *Diogenes* 47, no. 3 (1999): 20–37, 31; “Yazidis,” in *Encyclopedia Iranica* (2014), www.iranicaonline.org/articles/yazidis-i-general-1.

130 Giuseppe Furlani, *Religious Texts of the Yezidis: Translation, Introduction, and Notes*, trans. Jamshedji Maneckji Unvala (Bombay: J.M. Unvala, 1940), 5.

131 Gerald Reitlinger, “Medieval Antiquities West of Mosul,” *Iraq* 5 (1938): 143–156, 148, 154. See also, Austen Henry Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (London: John Murray, 1853), 377–378.

132 E.g., Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History*, 112–114, 183, 289, 336–38; Anthony O’Mahony, *Eastern Christianity: Studies in Modern History, Religion and Politics* (London: Fox Communications & Publications – Melisende, 2004), 21.

133 Khenchelaoui, “The Yezidis,” 31. See also, Mark Smith, *God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. S. Erdmans Publishing, 2010), 59 (“Simo Parpola and Theodore J. Lewis have compared th[e] New Testament covenant meal with the Neo-Assyrian oracle of Ishtar of Arbela to Esarhaddon.”).

134 Victoria A. Arakelova, “Three Figures From the Yezidi Folk Pantheon,” *Iran and the Caucasus* 6, nos. 1–2 (2002): 57–74, 58–59; Dorothy Mills, *Beyond the Bosphorus* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1926), 207.

135 Khenchelaoui, “The Yezidis,” 23.

this resembles a name for the Church of the East diocese that was invaded according to Christian tradition.¹³⁶ “According to one eastern Christian tradition, *Dāseni* or *Dāsaniyat* is the name of one of the Church of the East dioceses, which disappeared when the Yezidis first appeared.”¹³⁷ The inhabitants of the rich agricultural plains of Nineveh, known as the Shaykhanli or Sheikhanli, identified themselves with the *Dasini*.¹³⁸

The Yezidis, like the ancient Assyrians, directed prayers to the sun, an Arab chronicler wrote.¹³⁹ In Yezidi literature, Sheikh Shams is called the “Lord of the Disc.” The ancient Assyrians often portrayed Shamash the Sun god as riding a winged disc.¹⁴⁰ In the temple of Sheikh ‘Adi, “above the door, there is a portrayal of the flaming disc of the sun, the disc enclosing a crescent moon and a five-rayed star.”¹⁴¹ Yezidi leaders probably used names and historical figures that were familiar to Muslims to hide the true objects of their devotion, and for purposes of self-preservation.¹⁴² This bolstered an apparent strategy of plausible deniability when it came to the Yezidis’ Christian and/or pagan roots, for they called the sun and the moon – *Shamash* and *Sinn* in the Assyrian paganism of what is now northern Iraq and southern Turkey – Sheikh Shams and Sheikh Sinn, which are easier to identify with Muslim saints.¹⁴³ The Yezidis devoted a sacrificial sheep to the goddess Ishtar, or Venus, who occupied the Assyrian trinity along with Shamash or Sin, or along with Assur and the kings of Assyria in another version.¹⁴⁴ They dedicated a sacrificial bull to Shamash, like the ancient Assyrians.¹⁴⁵ Arabic

136 Birgul Acikyildiz, *The Yezidis: The History of a Community, Culture and Religion* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 37.

137 Ibid.; see also, W. Francis Ainsworth, “The Assyrian Origin of the Izedis or Yezidis-the So-called ‘Devil Worshipers’ [sic],” *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 1 (1861): 11–44, www.logoi.com/notes/devil_worshippers/devil_worshippers_1.html.

138 Ainsworth, “The Assyrian Origin,” 11–44, www.logoi.com/notes/devil_worshippers/devil_worshippers_1.html. The Yezidis still occasionally refer to themselves as *Dasini*. WriteNet, *The Human Rights Situation of the Yezidi Minority in the Transcaucasus* (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan) (2008), 1.

139 Khenchelaoui, “The Yezidis,” 23.

140 Arakelova, “Three Figures,” 58–59.

141 Lady Ethel Drower, *The Peacock Angel: Being Some Account of the Votaries of a Secret Cult and their Sanctuaries* (London: John Murray, 1941), ch. 17, www.avesta.org/yezidi/peacock3.htm.

142 Cf. Joseph, *The Sacred Books*, 169–172. Warfield argues that: “Their creed has little of its pristine purity remaining, on account of the incessant persecution by Christians and Mohammedans.” *The Gate of Asia: A Journey From the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1916), 180–181.

143 Khenchelaoui, “The Yezidis,” 30–31.

144 Ibid., 29; see also Simo Parpola, “Sons of God – The Ideology of Assyrian Kingship,” *Archaeology Odyssey Archives* (Dec. 1999), www.gatewaystobabylon.com/introduction/sonsofgod.htm.

145 Acikyildiz, *The Yezidis*, 106–118. See also, Ainsworth, “The Assyrian Origin,” 16–41; JoAnn Scurlock, “The Techniques of the Sacrifice of Animals in Ancient Israel and Ancient Mesopotamia: New Insights through Comparison, Part I,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 44, no.1 (2006): 13–49, 32–38.

and Kurdish specialists describe the Yezidis' Sheikh Sinn as the moon god Sin, the god of the "tablet" or of wisdom in Assyria.¹⁴⁶

One version of Yezidism involves a trinity of Melek Ta'us, Sultan Yezid, and Sheikh 'Adi.¹⁴⁷ Melek Ta'us is identified in one Yezidi work as Melek Azazil, the ruler of "all."¹⁴⁸ Another version of this trinity features Sheikh Shams, Sheikh Sinn, and Sheikh 'Adi, with the first two being counted among the seven heavenly bodies governed by Melek Ta'us.¹⁴⁹ The Yezidi religion has been identified by some as "the worship of Melek Ta'us, the 'Peacock Angel.'"¹⁵⁰ Peacocks are resplendent birds that were associated with the Assyro-Babylonian god Tammuz, or Mercury.¹⁵¹ In Semitic languages, *melek* means king or chief, as in Hebrew and modern Assyrian. In Kurdish, *melai-ke*t means angel. As King Peacock (*ta'us*, *taoos*, or *tawus* signifying peacock), this figure of Melek Ta'us symbolizes the high angel Lucifer, according to some studies.¹⁵² Yet Melek Ta'us has a deeper meaning, according to other experts. *Tawus* is simply *Tammuz* with an "m" replaced with a "w," as the Kurdish language routinely allows.¹⁵³ In fact, Melek Ta'us stood at the head of the seven gods, who rotated in ruling the universe over the seven millennia of history, which correspond to the "seven planetary deities" living under Jehovah, in an Assyro-Babylonian twist on Judaism.¹⁵⁴ According to Yezidi texts, Melek Ta'us "snatched away" the true Isa and fled to "the sun, which they call Sheikh Shems-ed-din, and before which they prostrate themselves every morning."¹⁵⁵ The seven gods might also be seven angels, headed by a figure similar to Lucifer who fell from grace but reconciled with God.¹⁵⁶

Moreover, the architecturally distinctive temples of Sin and Shamash were situated in the Lalish valley in Iraq, near Assyrian sacred springs.¹⁵⁷ Mount Lalish is the site of a new year's festival to celebrate the descent of a divine figure to earth, just as the Assyrians had a festival for Ishtar on

146 Khenchelaoui, "The Yezidis," 29–31.

147 Artur Roziewicz, "Tawus Protogonos: Parallels between Yezidi Theology and Some Ancient Greek Cosmogonies," *Iran and the Caucasus* 18 (2014): 27–45, 30.

148 Khenchelaoui, "The Yezidis," 39.

149 Jean Spiro, "Les Yezidi: Ou, les Adorateurs du Diable [sic]," *Bulletin de la Société neuchâtoise de géographie* 12 (1900): 275–301, 296–298. The seven heavenly bodies are Mercury to Saturn, minus the Earth, plus the Sun and Moon.

150 Langer, "Yezidism," 396.

151 Acikyildiz, *The Yezidis*, 74, 78.

152 Josiah W. Gibbs, "Melek Tāus of the Yezidīs," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 3 (1853): 502–503; see also, Gerard Russell, *Heirs to Forgotten Kingdoms: Journeys Into the Disappearing Religions of the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), ch. 2.

153 Khenchalaoui, "The Yezidis," 31.

154 *Ibid.*, 24; see also, Philip Carrington, *The Early Christian Church: Volume 1, The First Christian Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5–7. The earth is about 6,000 years old according to Babylonian astronomical science. Lewis Spence, *Myths and Legends of Babylonia and Assyria* (Cosimo, Inc., 2010), 18.

155 Warfield, *The Gate of Asia*, 181.

156 Khenchalaoui, "The Yezidis," 24.

157 *Ibid.*, 29–30.

the Akitu new year's day.¹⁵⁸ The veneration of sacred springs or wells of the Gomel river basin by the Yezidis is traceable to Assyrian rituals.¹⁵⁹ The Seven Sleepers which the Yezidis associate with these sacred waters resemble the Seven Sages of the Assyrians and Babylonians, who are "grown in the river" and "ensure the correct functioning of the plan of heaven."¹⁶⁰ The Assyro-Babylonian god of the fresh waters lived in rivers, an incarnation of Ea which "sent the Seven Sages to teach the arts and skills of civilization to men."¹⁶¹ Like those of the Mandaeans and the ancient Assyro-Babylonians, Yezidi religion is connected with sacred river and well waters that emanate from deep within the earth.¹⁶² The sanctuary of Sheikh 'Adi is said to be built on the size of a sacred spring in ancient times, and facilitates the Yezidi practice of baptism, which is shared with Christians and Mandaeans.¹⁶³ Dr. Eszter Spät writes of Yezidi devotees being sprinkled with holy water in the conical shrines of Shamash, Sin, and Lalish.¹⁶⁴ She notes that Yezidis spoke during her visit of ancient Assyrian wall carvings in the central sanctuary of a Yezidi temple, of the similarity between Melek Ta'us and Tammuz, and the architectural significance of the cone to Assyrian religion.¹⁶⁵

Although the Yezidi religion is often called Zoroastrian, there is not all that much that is Zoroastrian about it. According to Spät, a Hungarian scholar who spent time interviewing Yezidis in Iraq in 2002–2004, Yezidis claim thousands of years of history dating to Assyrian and even Sumerian (Bronze Age) times.¹⁶⁶ Originally Zoroastrianism was called Magianism or Mazdaism, the latter after the primary deity, Ahura Mazda.¹⁶⁷ But neither Spät nor most other books on Yezidi religion mention Ahura Mazda or any Magis.¹⁶⁸ Instead, the Yezidi origin story resembles the Adam and Eve

158 Ibid., 37. See also, Stephanie Dalley, *The Mystery of the Hanging Garden of Babylon: An Elusive World Wonder Traced* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 117.

159 Ainsworth, "The Assyrian Origin," 15–25.

160 Ainsworth, "The Assyrian Origin," 20–44. Compare, "Seven Sages," in Dr Gwendolyn Leick (Ed.), *A Dictionary of Ancient Near Eastern Mythology* (Abingdon and London: Routledge, 2002), 5, 151.

161 "Enuma Elish: The Epic of Creation," in Stephanie Dalley (Ed. and trans.) *Myths From Mesopotamia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), [https://archive.org/stream/TheEnumaElishTheEpicOfCreation/The%20Enuma%20Elish%20\(The%20Epic%20Of%20Creation\)_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/TheEnumaElishTheEpicOfCreation/The%20Enuma%20Elish%20(The%20Epic%20Of%20Creation)_djvu.txt).

162 Drower, *Peacock Angel*, ch. 17, www.avesta.org/yezidi/peacock3.htm.

163 Travis, "National Identity," 113–114.

164 Guest, *Survival among the Kurds*, 37, 42, 84; Spät, *The Yezidis*, 34–35; see also, Acikyildiz, *The Yezidis*, 100.

165 Spät, *The Yezidis*, 30, 46.

166 Esther Spät, *The Yezidis* (London: Saqi, 2nd ed., 2005), 19.

167 Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Eisenbrauns, 2002), 93–94, 551, 900–901.

168 Acikyildiz and her sources are exceptions, because they mention a theory that the Yezidi name comes from Yazd, a city in Persia where Ahura Mazda was worshiped by Zoroastrians, as well as the fact that in Zoroastrianism, the evil principle created a peacock in order to manifest a power to create beauty as well as ugliness or evil. Acikyildiz, *The Yezidis*, 74–75.

story with a mixture of elements of the Koranic paradise.¹⁶⁹ Yezidis venerate Sheikh Shams and Melek Ta'us rather than Ahura Mazda. These two divine names sound very similar to the Assyrian Semitic deities Shamash, the Sun, and Tammuz, or Mercury. In Assyrian times, the peacock was associated with Tammuz, who symbolized the sun, fertility, and the springtime, which comes in Nisan, the vernal equinox celebrated as the new year's emergence.¹⁷⁰ In one Yezidi account translated in the 1890s, it was said that Yezidis resisted Ottoman military service on the grounds that the men had to visit an image of Ta'us three times a year, including once in the month of Nisan.¹⁷¹ The Assyrian new year Akitu in Nisan, the lamentation of Tammuz, and the Christian Easter are linked by theologians to the ancient fertility rites of the vernal equinox, at which eggs were given as gifts.¹⁷² Some Yezidis use eggs for their new year rituals.¹⁷³ The reports of English scholars describe Melek Issa as standing close in prominence for the Yezidis to Melek Ta'us.¹⁷⁴

Another link to the events of 1915 is the role of undisciplined Kurdish forces in 2015. As in 1915, Kurdish extremists took part in the Turkish-backed massacres and plunders. One Kurdish extremist joined ISIS in 2013 and was killed fighting with them in 2015. Since then, many Kurds have joined ISIS, some invading Syria from the Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq.¹⁷⁵ Hundreds traveled to Syria to work with ISIS, stopping over in the Turkish city of Gaziantep.¹⁷⁶ "Turkey paved the way for us," ISIS admitted.¹⁷⁷ Meanwhile, Kurdish forces abandoned Christian villages to

169 Joseph, *Sacred Books*, 37–42, 90–93, 97–98; Spät, *The Yezidis*. This book, despite containing "sacred books . . . which give a great deal of information about the beliefs and customs of the Yezidis," does not mention Ahura Mazda or the Zoroastrian Magis. *Ibid.*, 15.

170 Açikyildiz, *The Yezidis*, 64; A.L. Frothingham, "Babylonian Origin of Hermes the Snake-God, and of the Cauceus," *American Journal of Archaeology* 20 (1916): 175–211, 191; "Tammuz-Adonis," in Johann Jakob Herzog, Philip Schaff, and Albert Hauck (Eds.), *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. 11 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1911), 270. The marriage of Tammuz and Ishtar (or of Mercury and Venus) took place in spring on New Year's Day, when the fates of men would be fixed for the following year. H.S. Versnel, *Triumphus: An Inquiry Into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 219–220.

171 Furlani, *Religious Texts*.

172 Richard Courtney, *The Birth of God: The Moses Play and Monotheism in Ancient Israel* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 9; Edwin Krupp, *Beyond the Blue Horizon: Myths and Legends of the Sun, Moon, Stars and Planets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 141; Versnel, *Triumphus*, 220–221.

173 *Ibid.*, 25–26, 37–38.

174 Gibbs, "Melek Taūs," 502–503; Warfield, *Gate of Asia*, 183.

175 Al-Jazeera English, "Young Kurds Fighting alongside Insurgents in Syria – Al Jazeera," *BBC Monitoring Middle East/Lexis Advance* (June 14, 2014), <http://advance.lexis.com>.

176 *Ibid.*

177 "Turkey, The Pretender; It Must Fight the Islamic State in Earnest," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/WestlawNext* (Oct. 12, 2014), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>.

ISIS, prompting one resident to exclaim: “The Peshmerga destroyed us.”¹⁷⁸ The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) had responded to minorities’ requests for their own protection forces, such as those Sunni Arab tribal leaders had used to eject al Qaeda from their communities just to the south of Ninewa province, with “intimidation, threats, and arbitrary arrests and detentions,” and on occasion “torture.”¹⁷⁹ Christians were warned of eviction from their homes if they did not vote for the Kurdish political parties that opposed further expansion of the Christian defense forces.¹⁸⁰ *The New York Times* called it a “Kurdish government that has sought to repress minorities . . . and sow rifts within the groups with bribes and patronage while suppressing dissent through violence, torture, arrests and killings.”¹⁸¹ The Minority Rights Group quoted Yezidis as blaming the KRG for intimidating them, seizing their homes, and denying them essential services, even prior to 2007.¹⁸² Having impeded the growth of non-Kurdish institutions, the KRG failed as ISIS advanced.¹⁸³ Ultimately, the KRG, Iraqi and Syrian governments, U.S.-led coalition to counter ISIS, Iran, and Russia retook much ISIS territory, a story that has often been told.¹⁸⁴

The international community knows how to aid communities affected by genocide when it desires to do so. Native Americans nearly went extinct before their treaties with the United States relating to their sovereignty and territorial rights began to be respected and their populations rebounded dramatically.¹⁸⁵ In the early 1990s, Europe and the United States insisted on the “right to self-determination” of the Croatian Catholics and Bosnian Muslims of Yugoslavia, arguing that they had been subjected to human rights

178 Quoted in Matthew Clayfield, “There Will Be No Christians in Iraq in Ten Years,” *SBS* (Australia) (Sept. 5, 2014), www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/08/29/there-will-be-no-christians-iraq-ten-years.

179 Human Rights Watch, *On Vulnerable Ground: Violence against Minority Communities in Nineveh Province’s Disputed Territories* (2009), 4, 9, 10, 29–30, 45–46, 49, www.hrw.org. On the requests for such forces in 2008, see Lawrence Butler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia and International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight, Regarding “Iraq’s Minority Communities” (Mar. 11, 2008), <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/but031108.htm>.

180 Human Rights Watch, *On Vulnerable Ground*, 47.

181 Dagher, “Minorities in Iraq’s North,” A12.

182 Minority Rights Group, *Assimilation, Exodus, Eradication: Iraq’s Minority Communities since 2003* (Feb. 2007), 14, www.minorityrights.org.

183 Clayfield, “There Will Be No Christians.”

184 E.g., “As ISIS Loses Ground in Syria and Iraq, Is It Turning to More Child Bombers?” *The Christian Science Monitor* (Aug. 23, 2016), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>; “ISIS Is Losing Territory, But Not Capacity for Carnage,” *The International New York Times* (July 5, 2016), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>; “Retreat and Resurgence: IS’s Never-Ending Cycle Unfolds in Mosul,” *The New Arab* (Oct. 26, 2016), a.next.westlaw.com.

185 E.g., Act of 1816, ch. 206; David Stannard, *American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 40–46, 294–295, 302–307.

violations and even genocide.¹⁸⁶ In the late 1990s, the United States urged autonomy or independence for East Timor and Kosovo, again stressing local massacres and widespread human rights violations and refugee flight.¹⁸⁷ The population of Bosnian Muslims has risen by almost 50% since 1995, from 1.3 to 1.9 million. The population of East Timor has grown markedly, rather than declining as with Assyrian populations.¹⁸⁸

In 2002, the U.S. president and Congress demanded that autonomous political institutions be developed for southern Sudan, which had lost two million persons to a genocide organized from Khartoum.¹⁸⁹ Under federal rule, life expectancy in the south was only 42 years,¹⁹⁰ worse than Syria's after several of its major cities were reduced to ruins and its economy was strangled by sanctions and terrorist plundering, and southern Sudanese children suffered some of the highest rates of preventable mortality in the world.¹⁹¹ By early 2003, the United States had successfully urged the Sudanese government to arrive at a peace deal with the southern Sudanese rebels,¹⁹² which indicated that the southern Sudanese had a right of self-determination.¹⁹³ "Peace in Sudan" was proclaimed.¹⁹⁴ Feeling hopeful,

186 E.g., S.C. Res. 827 (May 25, 1993); U.N. Doc. A/RES/47/121 (Dec. 18, 1992); U.N. Doc. A/RES/48/153 (Dec. 20, 1993); U.N. Doc. A/RES/49/205 (Dec. 23, 1994); U.N. Doc. A/RES/50/192 (Dec. 22, 1995); U.N. Doc. A/RES/51/115 (Dec. 12, 1996); "Center for Post-Soviet and East European Studies," *Yugoslavia Events Chronology*, Jan.–June 1992 (2008), www.uta.edu/cpsees/yec-192.txt; Marc Fisher, "Yugoslav Violence Puts Focus on Germany," *The Washington Post* (July 7, 1991), www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-1073601.html.

187 Madeline Albright, "Testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Washington, DC, Apr. 15, 1999 on International Affairs Budget, FY 2000," *U.S. Dep't of State Dispatch* (Apr. 1999), <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/hyper/1999/WF990415/epf404.htm>; Madeleine Albright, *Remarks on United States – Australia Relations* (Nov. 3, 1999), <http://usrsaustralia.state.gov/us-oz/1999/11/04/transcript.html>; "Day by Day Guide of the Conflict So Far," *The Times* (UK) (Apr. 3, 1999), <http://thetimes.co.uk>.

188 CIA, *World Factbook 2015*; CIA, *World Factbook 1993*.

189 Sudan Peace Act, 50 U.S.C. 1701 note, Public Law 107–245.

190 CARE, *South Sudan: Country Snapshot* (Nov. 2006), www.care.no/?module=files;action=file.getfile;id=2403; UNDP, *Human Development Report 2005*, 221. But see South Sudan – Life Expectancy at Birth (2014), <http://countryeconomy.com/demography/life-expectancy/south-sudan>.

191 International Rescue Committee, "Saving Children's Lives," *Reuters AlertNet* (Nov. 1, 2008), www.alertnet.org/thenews/fromthefield/4/122553031163.htm.

192 Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army, Landmark Sudanese Peace Agreement: Sudan Government Concludes with the SPLM/A "Machakos Protocol" and Issues a Joint Communiqué, *ReliefWeb* (July 20, 2002), www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/MHII-62275C?OpenDocument.

193 *Ibid.*

194 E.g., Jendayi E. Frazer, *Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Consolidating Peace in Sudan* (June 5, 2006), http://sudan.usembassy.gov/consolidating_peace_in_sudan.html; Michael Ranneberger, *Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Sudan: Prospects for Peace* (Dec. 9, 2004), www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/39751.htm; "Sudan Leaders Try to Carve Deal," *BBC News* (Dec. 6, 2003), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3296305.stm> (describing "U.S. pressure").

nearly 300,000 southern Sudanese refugees returned closer to their homes.¹⁹⁵ After considerable reforms and outreach to the international community for more aid, life expectancy in South Sudan rose to 55 years by 2013, and the population increased by two to three million.¹⁹⁶ Had the international community contributed a robust peacekeeping force for securing these gains, as in other regions, these South Sudanese refugees might enjoy safety and a stronger economy today.

At one point, self-rule for Assyrians in parts of the Nineveh plains, the Hakkari mountains, Tur Abdin, al-Hasaka province, and the Urmia region might have facilitated refugee return, the security of the inhabitants, and a more moderate political environment. Unfortunately, Assyrian communities did not receive international protection and have now been nearly emptied by Turkey, Iran, ISIS, and extremist rebels in Iraq and Syria. It is a distinct possibility that if the Assyrian genocide had been properly recognized and sanctioned, the threat of a repetition might have been averted. A forceful and proportionate response to one of the many warnings of an imminent repetition of the events of 1915, including massacre, abduction, and destruction of churches, may have contributed to the survival of Assyrian cultures in Iraq and Syria.

Dire warnings did not result in proportionate responses prior to 2015. In 2006, the European Parliament recognized the danger of Assyrians going extinct as an indigenous people.¹⁹⁷ That year, a U.S. army lawyer who had served as a special prosecutor in Iraq's criminal courts warned that Iraqi clerics were branding Christians as "unclean" and influencing Iraqi judges to release jihadist insurgents from government custody.¹⁹⁸ In 2009, Human Rights Watch documented that not only Christians but also Shabaks and Yezidis were the targets of insurgents' "talk about wiping out a whole community that has been there since antiquity."¹⁹⁹ The following year, France

195 Kazuhiko Shimizu, *UNHCR Resumes Refugee Returns From Kenya to South Sudan* (Dec. 12, 2008), www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2008/12/4942790e4/unhcr-resumes-refugee-returns-kenya-south-sudan.html.

196 CIA, *World Factbook*, 2015; CIA, *World Factbook*, 1993; Maggie Fick, "South Sudan Census Bureau Releases Official Results Amidst Ongoing Census Controversy," *The Enough Project to End Genocide and Crimes against Humanity* (June 8, 2009), www.enoughproject.org/blogs/s-sudan-census-bureau-releases-official-results-amidst-ongoing-census-controversy; Life Expectancy in South Sudan; Given Thompkins, "Ethnic Divisions Complicate Sudan's Census," *National Public Radio* (Apr. 15), www.npr.org; WHO, *South Sudan* (2015), who.int/country/ssd/en.

197 E.P. Doc. No. P6_TA(2006)0143, Iraq: the Assyrian Community, Situation in Iraqi Prisons (Apr. 6, 2006), para. E.

198 Michael J. Frank, "U.S. Military Courts and the War in Iraq," *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* 39 (2006): 645–778, 721–722, 726–737.

199 Quoted in Sam Dagher, "Minorities in Iraq's North Seen as Threatened," *The New York Times* (Nov. 11, 2009), A12. Shabaks are said to be ethnic Turkmens, two-thirds Shi'a Muslim, and 30,000 to 250,000 in number. Some Kurds say that Shabaks are Kurdish in origin. "Fading into Obscurity," *The Majallah/WestlawNext* (Oct. 30, 2013), a.next.westlaw.com.

asked the European Union to develop a policy for responding to the al Qaeda conspiracy to empty Iraq of Christians, citing the fact that “Al Qaeda has repeatedly threatened to kill the Christians of the Middle East,” for example in church bombings.²⁰⁰ However, when the Iraqi insurgency bled over into Syria, Britain, France, Germany, and the United States repeatedly called in 2012–2013 for the government of Syria to allow insurgents and jihadist forces to roam freely by withdrawing all government troops from their areas, even as these same countries asserted that they had the right to defend themselves by mounting airstrikes in Syria, Afghanistan, and other places thousands of miles away.²⁰¹ British opposition (Labour) leader Jeremy Corbyn wrote, in comments released to the press in November 2015, that since 2001, “Britain has been at the centre of a succession of disastrous wars that have brought devastation to large parts of the wider Middle East.”²⁰²

Although there were a variety of non-binding statements that Assyrians and other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria were threatened and in need of protection, nothing effective was done to prevent the situation becoming catastrophic in 2014–2015. Despite all the warnings, the United States and United Nations imposed harsher sanctions on officials of the Burundi and the Central African Republic (CAR) after hundreds of deaths, or a few thousand, than they imposed on Turkey after its aggressive Syria policy had contributed to tens of thousands of deaths, as well as a life expectancy decline in Syria of up to 20 years.²⁰³ The United States issued eloquent statements

200 Agence France Presse, *France Asks for Coordinated European Union Response to Threats against Christians in the Middle East* (Jan. 5, 2011), www.christiansofiraq.com/franceasksfor-coordinatedeuropeanunion-responsetothreats-againstchristiansin-m.e.html (translated to English from original Arabic).

201 Agence France Presse, “West Wants Tough Syria Warning in UN Resolution,” *WestlawNext* (Apr. 12, 2012), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>; Associated Press, “UN Security Council Discusses Crisis”; DPA International Services in English, “UN Vote on Observers,” *WestlawNext* (Apr. 14, 2012), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>; Hala Droubi and Rick Gladstone, “Syria Ceasefire Appears to Take Hold,” *The New York Times/Toronto Star* (Apr. 13, 2012), A12 (of Toronto Star version); Reuters, “Syria Says Envoy Can Only Succeed If Rebels Lose Outside Support,” *WestlawNext* (Sept. 3, 2012), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>. On the insurgents – actually “al-Qaeda-aligned jihadists” – entering Syria from Iraq, see Ruth Pollard, “Fighters, Weapons Flow Into Syrian War Zone,” *Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)/WestlawNext* (Feb. 18, 2012), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>.

202 “Cameron Says Case for Syria Airstrikes Strengthened by Paris Attacks – Politics Live; Rolling Coverage of the Day’s Political Developments as They Happen,” *The Guardian (UK)/WestlawNext* (Nov. 17, 2015), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>.

203 Travis, “Why Was Benghazi ‘Saved’?,” 140–146, 155; “United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East & States News Service, Syria: Dramatic Findings of New Syria Report Include Plummeting Life Expectancy and Looming Economic Collapse,” *WestlawNext* (Mar. 10, 2015), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>. See also, Amnesty International, “Central African Republic: Perpetrators of Atrocities Must Have Nowhere to Hide From Justice,” *Targeted News Service/WestlawNext* (July 10, 2014), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>; Kate Hixon, “Despite ‘Responsibility to Protect,’ the International Community Is Failing Burundi,” *Freedom House* (Dec. 15, 2015), <https://>

about cracking down on rebel militias that killed civilians in the CAR such as the anti-balaka.²⁰⁴ But there were fewer than 2,000 killings by the anti-balaka by then, far fewer than those killed by extremist militias in Syria that continued to receive weapons and other supplies from Turkey long after this was known.²⁰⁵ Sanctions on Russia for backing rebels in Ukraine resulted in the Russian economy being crippled and lying in “tatters” by early 2015, even as the Turkish economy thrived while Turkish traders imported oil from ISIS.²⁰⁶ Rather than sanctioning Turkey and other trading partners of ISIS, or punishing all those who incited the genocide of Christians and Yazidis online, the White House proposed targeting ordinary Americans and planning to take away their Second and Fourth Amendment rights without due process.²⁰⁷ For a long time, U.S. Cyber Command – responsible for offensive cyber operations as the Air Force is for airstrikes – did not take down ISIS websites or Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube accounts that were used to commit or incite war crimes and genocidal acts such as terror bombings, summary executions of government officials and civilians, and the rape and enslavement of non-Muslims.²⁰⁸ It was left to hacktivists with the Anonymous group to take on cyberspace fundraising and incitement by ISIS.²⁰⁹ Even U.S. recognition of the genocide of minorities under ISIS rule

freedomhouse.org/blog/despite-responsibility-protect-international-community-failing-burundi; Mark Toner, “Deputy Department Spokesperson, U.S. Department of State, United States Imposes New Sanctions, Calls for Immediate Burundi Talks,” *States News Service/WestlawNext* (Dec. 18, 2015), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>.

204 Ambassador Samantha Power, “U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Remarks at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum’s National Tribute Dinner (As Released by the U.S. Mission to the U.N.),” *WestlawNext* (Apr. 30, 2014), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>.

205 Agence France Presse, “French general Says No ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ in C. Africa,” *WestlawNext* (Feb. 24, 2014), a.next.westlaw.com; “New Study Indicates Higher Death Toll in CAR,” *Voice of America, English/WestlawNext* (July 18, 2014), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>. A figure of 2,000 would assume that the anti-balaka or anti-“machete” forces were responsible for 75% of conflict deaths, and their rivals in the Seleka coalition for only 25%. On weapons, see Hannibal Travis, “Defunding the Failed Policy of Regime Change in Syria,” *The Hill Congress Blog* (Oct. 2014), thehill.com.

206 The White House, *Remarks by the President in State of the Union Address* (Jan. 20, 2015), www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/20/remarks-president-state-union-address-january-20-2015.

207 Larry Downes, “Some Common Sense on Data Encryption,” *WashingtonPost.com/WestlawNext* (Nov. 18, 2015), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>; “Ex-NSA Chief Backs Apple on iPhone ‘Back Doors,’” *The Citizen-Times* (Asheville, NC) (Feb. 22, 2016), B2; Mike Masnick, “No Matter What You Think of Gun Control, Relying on the No Fly List for Anything Is Monumentally Stupid,” *Techdirt* (Dec. 7, 2015), techdirt.com; “Rep. Robert W. Goodlatte Holds a Hearing on FBI Oversight,” *CQ-Roll Call Political Transcriptions/WestlawNext* (Oct. 26, 2015), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>.

208 Jonathan Shaw, “The Watchers,” *Harvard Magazine* (Jan./Feb. 2017), <http://harvardmagazine.com/2017/01/the-watchers>.

209 “Anonymous Group Takes Down ISIS Website, Replaces It With Viagra Ad,” *Independent Online (UK)/WestlawNext* (Nov. 26, 2015), <http://a.next.westlaw.com>; *CNN Newsroom*

was delayed by many months and years.²¹⁰ After that recognition, simple measures such as legislative clarification were not taken that could have removed impediments to Assyrian and other Christian refugee resettlement from Syria and its neighbors; Christians were only 0.5% of Syrian refugees accepted.²¹¹

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- (Nov. 20, 2015), *CNN Transcripts/WestlawNext*, a.next.westlaw.com; “Cyber Ghost Group Foiling Plots by Feeding Feds Intel,” *The Boston Herald/WestlawNext* (Nov. 19, 2015), a.next.westlaw.com; “When All You Have Is a Hammer, ISIS Looks Like A Nail,” *The Guardian* (UK)/*WestlawNext* (Nov. 20, 2015), a.next.westlaw.com. See also, “Anonymous Cyber War on Islamic State,” *Breitbart.com* (Nov. 23, 2015), www.breitbart.com/tech/2015/11/23/anonymouss-cyber-war-on-islamic-state-comes-under-fire/; “Danish Intelligence Concerned about Islamists’ Increasing Use of Social Media,” *BBC International Reports* (Europe)/*WestlawNext* (Dec. 19, 2012), a.next.westlaw.com; “Pakistan: Cyberwar: Anonymous Takes Down Islamic State Websites, Social Media Accounts,” *Right Vision News* (Pakistan)/*WestlawNext* (Feb. 12, 2015), http://a.next.westlaw.com.
- 210 Iraq’s leaders have condemned the terrorists for genocide by mass bombings for many years; indeed some of them made such statements more than a decade ago. Edith Lederer, “Iraqi President Says Recent Attacks Have Reached Level of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity,” *Associated Press/The China Post* (Taiwan) (Sept. 25, 2009), www.chinapost.com.tw/international/americas/2009/09/25/226195/Iraq-say.htm; Travis, *Genocide*, 532. On November 18, 2014, Iraq’s Cabinet declared crimes against humanity against minorities to exist in Iraq’s north or northwest, particularly in Alqosh, Amerli, Bartella, Ba’shiqa, Bashir, Sinjar, Sheikhan, and Taza. Iraq Sustainable Democracy Project, Memo to UN Human Rights Comm’n, Mar. 2015, 2. The United States began considering the issue about a year later, and did not make a decision until nearly six months after that. Agence France Presse, “US Decries IS ‘Genocide’ of Christians, Shiites, Yazidis,” *WestlawNext* (Aug. 10, 2016), http://a.next.westlaw.com; Associated Press, “Kerry Says ISIL behind Genocide in Iraq, Syria,” *Charleston Gazette-Mail* (Charleston, West Virginia) (Mar. 18, 2016), 8A; Michael Isikoff, “U.S. Weighs ‘Genocide’ Label for IS in Iraq-and More Than a Word May Be at Stake,” *Yahoo! News* (Nov. 2015), www.yahoo.com/politics/u-s-weighs-genocide-label-1298023405674550.html; Rob Garver, “Is There Really a ‘Christian Genocide’ in Syria and Iraq?” *The Fiscal Times* (Nov. 25, 2015), www.thefiscaltimes.com/2015/11/25/ThereReallyChristianGenocideSyriaandIraq; “Lawmakers Say Killing Christians Is Religious Genocide,” *The Washington Times* (Sept. 10, 2015), www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/sep/10/lawmakers-say-killing-christians-is-religious-geno/?page=all; “Obama Won’t Call Islamic State Atrocities ‘Genocide’ against Christians,” *The Washington Examiner* (Nov. 12, 2015), washingtonexaminer.com; Nina Shea, “Fearing the ‘G’ Word, the State Department Turns Its Back on Middle Eastern Christians,” *National Review Online* (Feb. 16, 2016), www.nationalreview.com/article/431425/genocide-christians-iraq-syria-obama-administration-state-department. The initial declaration of genocide against the Yezidis at the start of renewed U.S. intervention in Iraq used the phrase “potential act of genocide.” “President of the United States Has Authorized Air Strikes in Iraq,” *CNN Tonight/WestlawNext* (Aug. 8, 2014), a.next.westlaw.com. An act of genocide may be short of genocide due to the added requirement of genocidal intent, as explained in Chapter 3. A potential act is even farther removed from an actual act of genocide.
- 211 E.g., Elliott Abrams, “The United States Bars Christian, Not Muslim, Refugees From Syria,” *Council on Foreign Relations Pressure Points Blog* (Sept. 9, 2016), http://blogs.cfr.org/abrams/2016/09/09/the-united-states-bars-christian-not-muslim-refugees-from-syria/. The figure was a little better, about 2%, in Britain, but that was well below the 10% of Syria’s pre-genocide population that was Christian, and 4% currently. Ruth Gledhill,

Cultural legacies of the Assyrian genocide

The final area of broader cultural impact involves changes to our understanding of the very nature of genocide. The Assyrian experience during 1914–1935 may become a new prism through which to define the crime of genocide, the nature of twentieth-century mass violence, the development of ethnic and national identities, and the “clash of civilizations.”²¹² A new generation of historical and interdisciplinary scholarship is questioning the traditional consensus on these issues after reviewing the Assyrian case, along with other hidden cases such as the Tasmanians, Yuki, Circassians, Hereros, Hutus, Roma and Sinti communities, Soviet minority nationalities, Tibetans, and others.²¹³ Due to these developments, cultural genocide and ethnic cleansing could return to the fore of concern about genocidal phenomena, where they were in Lemkin’s youth.²¹⁴ This would interrupt a long campaign to normalize cultural genocide and to deny that it is a crime.²¹⁵

“Exclusive: Why Are there So Few Christian Refugees From Syria in the UK?” *Christian Today* (Oct. 6, 2016), www.christiantoday.com/article/exclusive.why.are.there.so.few.christian.refugees.from.syria.in.the.uk/97283.htm.

212 E.g., Levene, “Zone of Genocide,” 397–400.

213 Sargon Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History: Iraq and the Assyrians in the 20th Century* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2015); Irvin-Erickson, LaPointe and Hinton (Eds.), *Hidden Genocides*; René Lemarchand. “Introduction,” in René Lemarchand (Ed.), *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial, and Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 9; Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2nd ed., 2010); Benjamin Madley, “California’s Yuki Indians: Defining Genocide in Native American History,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 39 (2008): 303–332; Alexander Laban Hinton, Andrew Woolford, and Jeff Benvenuto (Eds.), *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* (Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); see also, Robert Conquest, *The Nation Killers: The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (London: Macmillan, reprint ed., 1970); John Docker, “Are Settler-Colonies Inherently Genocidal? Re-reading Lemkin,” in A. Dirk Moses (Ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 89–106; Claude Levenson, “Tibet: A Neo-Colonial Genocide,” in Lemarchand (Ed.), *Forgotten Genocides*, ch. 5; Martin Shaw, “From Comparative to International Genocide Studies: The International Production of Genocide in Twentieth-Century Europe,” *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 4 (2011): 645–668.

214 Tanya Elder, “What You See before Your Eyes: Documenting Raphael Lemkin’s Life by Exploring His Archival Papers, 1900–1959,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 7, no. 4 (2005): 469–499; Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation – Analysis of Government – Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 92; Raphael Lemkin, “Genocide – A Modern Crime,” *Free World* 4 (1945): 39–43, www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/freeworld1945.htm.

215 For analyses of these efforts to see cultural genocide excluded from the legal crime of “genocide,” see Nanor Kebranian, “Cultural Heritage and the Denial of Genocide Law,” in Alexis Demirdjian (Ed.), *The Armenian Genocide Legacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 243–254; Shamiran Mako, “Cultural Genocide and Key International Instruments: Framing the Indigenous Experience,” *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights* 19, no. 2 (2012): 175–194.

With the growth of genocide studies, the sharp decline of ethnic and religious diversity in some parts of the world has received scholarly attention. All ethnic and religious groups whose languages and cultures are at risk have received much more study. To the extent that episodes such as the Assyrian genocide can transmit hope to future generations, it is because they inspire opponents of genocide to work to preserve a diversity of cultures.

Greater awareness of genocide and of indigenous peoples has led to legal frameworks that could halt and reverse the decline of diversity due to the dominance of a few cultures. The Convention on Biodiversity Convention requires nations to preserve the knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities, especially as relevant to the sustainable use of land and water resources.²¹⁶ The U.N. Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Convention on the Illicit Transfer of Cultural Property of 1970 obligates nations to provide legal remedies "for recovery of lost or stolen items of cultural property brought by or on behalf of the rightful owners."²¹⁷ Although only U.N. agencies or member states may invoke it, the World Court has provided a remedy for the destruction of villages on some occasions.²¹⁸ The European Union's Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia requires states to criminalize the incitement or condoning of genocide or crimes against humanity, and other European laws insist on the preservation of minority languages and traditions.²¹⁹ International human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, calls upon states to halt discrimination on the basis of religion or culture.²²⁰ More

216 Convention on Biological Diversity, art. 8(j), adopted during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, 1760 U.N.T.S. 79, 31 ILM 818 (1992).

217 The U.N. Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization Convention on the Illicit Transfer of Cultural Property of 1970, arts. 4, 13(b)–(c), 823 U.N.T.S. 231, <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/bytopic/intern/importing.html>.

218 *Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Dem. Rep. Congo v. Uganda)*, 2005 I.C.J. 168, ¶ 345 (Dec. 19, 2005). See also, *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, Advisory Opinion, 2004 I.C.J. 20 (July 9, 2004).

219 Council of the European Union, Framework decision on Racism and Xenophobia (2007), www.legislationline.org/legislation.php?tid=218&lid=7975&class=false.

220 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 26, U.N. Doc. No. A/6316, adopted on Dec. 19, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, arts. 1(1), 2(2), adopted on Dec. 21, 1965, 660 U.N.T.S. 195. See also, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension (1990), paras. 31–32.2; Council of Europe, "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities," in Arie Bloed (Ed.), *The Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe: Basic Documents* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1998), 866–874; OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, *The Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities* (1998); Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting 1986 of Representatives of the Participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (1989), 29–32, www.osce.org/mc/40881?download=true; Max van der Stoep, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, "The Protection of Minorities in the OSCE Region: Address at a Seminar at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly," in Wolfgang Zellner and Falk Lange (Eds.), *Peace and Stability through Human and Minority Rights* (Zurich: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2001), 5–7.

generally, the U.N. Charter and U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1546 and 1723 call for respect for minority rights.²²¹

A pressing question for the future is how these laws will be applied. Will the widespread pillaging of Assyrian cultural artifacts over the past two centuries be remedied in any way? Will Iraq or Syria file suit against other states for the damage caused by ISIS, which could have been prevented if the territories of Turkey and other states had been denied to the group's members, and if there had been compliance with the obligation to prevent attempts and conspiracies aimed at genocide? Will Iraq, Iran, or Turkey take concrete measures to ensure the survival of native cultures? Although there is reason to doubt that any of this will occur, the need for such reforms is felt ever more strongly.

Turkey might begin by altering its laws restricting the use of non-Turkish languages and names, non-Turkish and ethnic minority education and broadcasting, and political parties that prioritize and aim to redress the decline of Turkey's indigenous peoples. Iraq and its Kurdistan Regional Government could allow greater freedom among non-Kurdish minorities to advocate for their communities and seek greater protection, autonomy, inclusion, or other reforms. Iran, like Turkey, should prioritize the reconstruction and repair of Christian and other minority villages, religious sites, and educational institutions. All three of these countries must live up to their constitutional aspirations to equality of religion and belief, and to their legal obligation to respect the political independence and territorial integrity of Syria and other countries.

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221 E.g., S.C. Res. 1546, ¶ 7, U.N. Doc S/RES/1546 (June 8, 2004); S.C. Res. 1723, ¶ 1, U.N. Doc. S/RES/1723 (Nov. 28, 2006); S.C. Res. 1790, ¶ 1, U.N. Doc. S/RES/1790 (Dec. 18, 2007).

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11 Epilogue

Tombstones and inverted crosses

Nineb Lamassu

Introduction

This poem is based on a testimony of Assyrian *Seyfo* survivors. The poet documented the testimony in Batumi, Georgia. The poem uses word play and poetic manipulations of the Assyrian language, which have little impact in the English translation; however, the translation does convey much of the poem's meaning.

This poem is important because it demonstrates how the genocide continues to inflict suffering on the children and grandchildren of the victims, and how the absence of recognition adds to their pain and suffering. This poem is one example of how new generations of those *Seyfo* survivors continue to suffer the pains of the genocide through their collective memory.

People drink wine to escape their sorrows
As for my people, they drink wine with a sorrowful cup.

Joy and Sorrow are nothing but twins
As for sorrow among my people,
It was born deprived of its dead twin
Shall we drink because at least one has survived
Or for one has died?
I wonder if our sorrow is eternal
Knows no death
And if it were to die, new sorrows would be born to us
O my nation, fill your cup
Fill it to the rim
Drink it to the dregs
A deluge of sorrow in a
A formidable
An unequivocal cup
Full of sorrow.

Others drink to the health of the present
family, neighbours and colleagues

As for my people, they drink in memory of gravestones
Inverted crosses
And graves, which
As we were taking flight
We laid them along the trek
Gravestone after gravestone
Miles of gravestones
Cross after cross
Inverted

– Why inverted

– So that there is no trace
No tracks
And the Cross of our forebears would,
Maybe resurrect our dead.

Others struggle
On behalf of animal rights
And cry an ocean, when a cat dies
As for my people
They have no land for living
Don't have an opportunity to flee
To bury their dead
If they were to bury them
They bury them along the trek
Gravestone after gravestone
Cross after cross
Inverted

So that there is no trace
No tracks
And a small part would escape
The insanity of the stray canines
A small part full of grief
Grief that can not be smothered
Not even by a sorrow that is,
Pressed from grapes of sorrow
Served in a sorrowful cup
And able to transform our festivities to sorrow.

– How do we build a home?

– With cast stones
Mortar
Limestone
Slabs
Lintel-bars and Beams.

– Did you say Slabs?
We use them as gravestones

– As do we

– We, however, don't mark them with crosses
Then invert them upside down
Abandoning them along the trek

And are your people being hunted?
I wonder if they, like my people,
Don't have an opportunity
to settle in a land.

All other nations have a flag
As for my people's flag, it is a cross
Marked on inverted slabs
With hope to resurrect our dead
Our dead that we have no time to bury
They have no time to die, to die like human-beings
And my people that have no time to forget,
Remember their slabs
Even when merrymaking
Even in times of pleasure
This is why,
People drink wine to escape their sorrows
And my people drink their wine in a sorrowful cup.

To your health O dreamer
Scanning his eyes
Amidst my scribbles
lines, vowels and consonants
And in memory of inverted crosses
Of living dead
That have no homes nor graves
Scattered here and there
along the trek
The dead that await
To be resurrected by the inverted crosses
Or to rise
On the arms of the inebriated or the madmen, like us
That squeeze their brains to the last drop
To nurture hope
Planted in the heart of children.

– I wonder why
Graves, Hope, and Children
Are of the same rhyme and meter?
And why do we inscribe gravestones with
'Resting here in hope of resurrection'
I wonder what is the connection
between hope and graves?

– The connection is in children
Since even on forgotten graves,
Of my people,
My people that never forget
Blossoms do appear
Blossoms full of hopes and desires!

O my dreaming friend, what would you say?
Shall we drink our cup
To graves or to hopes
Long awaited hopes
Possibly idealistic hopes
Hopes that our children
May transform our graveyards into heaven.

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