

SYRIAN ARMENIANS DURING THE LAST DECADES OF THE NINETEENTH
AND THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURIES

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

ŞERİFE (EROĞLU) MEMİŞ

IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

DECEMBER 2007

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ABSTRACT

SYRIAN ARMENIANS DURING THE LAST DECADES OF THE NINETEENTH AND THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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December 2007, 161 pages

This thesis analyses the situation of the Syrian Armenians during the last decades of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries. The central position of the Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus, parts of today's Syria, for both the Armenian communities of Aleppo and Damascus and the Ottoman Empire are the main incentives that determine the focus of this study as Syrian Armenians. Apart from the representation of the social, economic, political, religious, cultural and educational life of the Armenian communities in the Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus, the thesis also includes information about the situation of them during the relocation process. Within this context, the thesis also includes information representing the issue of Armenian Question in a different aspect since untouched fields of research, the cases of Aleppine and Damascene Armenians provide some similarities and differences with the Armenian community's situation in the Ottoman Empire before World War I and during the relocation process.

Keywords: Armenians, Syrian Armenians, Aleppo, Damascus, Armenian Question

ÖZ

19. YÜZYILIN SONU VE 20. YÜZYILIN İLK ÇEYREĞİNDE SURIYE ERMENİLERİ

Memiş, Şerife (Eroğlu)

Yüksek Lisans , Orta Doğu Araştırmaları Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Ömer Turan

Aralık 2007, 161 sayfa

Bu çalışma, 19. Yüzyılın son yılları ile 20. yüzyılın ilk çeyreğinde Suriye Ermenilerini incelemiştir. Günümüzde büyük ölçüde Suriye sınırları içerisinde bulunan, Halep ve Şam vilayetlerinin, Halep ve Şam'da bulunan Ermeni milletleri ve Osmanlı Devleti açısından sahip olduğu merkezi önem, tez konusunun Suriye Ermenileri olmasında belirleyici olmuştur. Bu tez, Halep ve Şam vilayetlerinde bulunan Ermenilerin sosyal, ekonomik, politik, dini, kültürel ve eğitim hayatlarını sunmanın yanı sıra, tehcir sürecinde bu bölgedeki Ermeni toplumlarının durumları ile ilgili bilgiler de içermektedir. Bu bağlamda tez, Ermeni sorununa, Halep ve Şam'da bulunan Ermeni toplumları örneğinden hareketle farklı bir açıdan yaklaşan bilgiler sunmaktadır ki bu örnekler, I. Dünya Savaşı öncesinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğundaki Ermeni toplumunun durumu ve tehcir sürecindeki Ermenilerin durumu ile bazı benzerlik ve farklılıklar arz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ermeniler, Suriye Ermenileri, Halep, Şam, Ermeni Sorunu

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I want to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Dr. Ömer Turan for his guidance, advice, criticism, encouragements and insight throughout the research. Without his unwavering support, I could not have completed this work.

I would like to thank to Prof. Dr. Yasin Ceylan and Prof. Dr. Kemal Çiçek. They took part in my thesis committee and made valuable contributions.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to my husband, Mehmet Akif Memiş, for his faith in my success in this research. He continuously supported and encouraged me throughout the work.

I would not have gotten through this process without support of my family. They have always supported me throughout my education. They are always there whenever I need them.

To Seyit Ahmet Arslan and Şerife Arslan, who are the Turkish Culture and Tourism Consultant in Syria and his wife, I offer my sincere thanks for their support during my official visit to Damascus on October 2006, during which I could be able to reach some sources from the archives of Syrian Arab Republic. I also offer my sincere thanks to Mahir Koçyiğit, Mustafa İren and Murat Budak for their support during my research in the National Library of Turkey.

Last but not least, I would like to thank to my friends; Beyza Günaydın, Hilal Kabacıoğlu, Adem Günaydın, Tuğba Benzer, Hatice Ergin and Fazilet Çöplüoğlu and to my colleague Şevkiye Tükenmez. Their academic and morale support was precious.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOA	: Bařbakanlık Osmanlı Arřivi
CUP	: Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Partisi)
DTCF	: Dil, Tarih ve Coęrafya Fakóltesi
H.	: Hicrî
nr.	: Numara (number)
No	: Number
METU	: Middle East Technical University
p.	: Page
pp.	: Paper pages
TTK	: Türk Tarih Kurumu
Yay.	: Yayını

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Armenians In The Ottoman Empire During The Last Decades Of The Nineteenth And The First Quarter Of The Twentieth Centuries (1885-1914)

1.1.1. A Historical Background: Ottoman-Armenian Relations

The Armenians in the very early days of the conquest of Constantinople were treated by the Ottomans in a friendly way and were granted all the privileges proper to a religious community within the framework of the “millet system” in the Ottoman Empire.¹ Especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when many Armenian notables served the Ottoman Court as bankers, mint masters, superintendents of powder mills and architects, the Armenian community was regarded and called by the Turks as *millet-i sadika* (the loyal community).² Nevertheless, during the second half of the nineteenth century, as the Tanzimat and the new provincial organization gave the Armenians the chance of participating in Ottoman public affairs on a large scale, this situation descended to a new period of relations. Then, on the eve of the First

¹ The term “millet” should be considered as a community defined not on the basis of ethnicity in the modern sense, but on the basis of religion. That is, the belief of the people determined their nationality in the Empire. Apart from its reference to a religious community, *millet* system also refers to the administrative commune which conducts their educational, social, economic and private (such as marriage, divorce) affairs within the community. Within this context, the religious communities in the Ottoman Empire were free in their language, internal affairs, economic affairs, educational practices and cultural activities. Ottoman state also did not destroy the existing socio-economic tradition of the units. In turn, Ottoman State had only political claims on their subjects such as loyalty to the state, payment of the taxes, and the preservation of peace and order. See for the *millet* system in the Ottoman Empire, Cevdet Küçük, “Osmanlı Devleti’nde Millet Sistemi”, *Osmanlı*, eds., Güler Eren, Kemal Çiçek, Cem Oğuz, vol. 4, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999), pp. 210-211; Salahi Sonyel, *Minorities and the Destruction of The Ottoman Empire*, (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Printing House, 1993); Kemal H. Karpat, “Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, vol. I, (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers Inc., 1982): 141-170.

² E. Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol.VIII, 2nd ed., (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1983), p. 127.

World War, this situation turned into an Armenian-Turkish conflict and reached a climax during the difficult war conditions. The Armenians were relocated to the provinces of Aleppo, Damascus or Mossul in such a way that they would not form large communities, minimizing the chance of a rebellion.

The present study confines itself to examine how this transformation did occur within the context of the Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus during the last decades of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, before moving into our main issue, in this introduction part of our study, we want to give some general information about the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before World War I with respect to their social, economic, political, religious, cultural and educational life and then, the emergence and transformation of the “Armenian Question”. With this, we aimed at drawing a general picture of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire at a macro level. Then, with the following two parts, we targeted to investigate the Armenians in the centres of the Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus in this context at a micro level. While doing this, we will, of course, highlight the distinctive characteristics of the Armenians of Aleppo and Damascus together with the similarities of them with the Armenians in the Empire. The Aleppine and Damascene Armenian community’s structure, way of life, and efficiency in many branches of Ottoman life will be situated within this framework. And then, in the end, we will try to reach from such micro level case studies of Armenians of Aleppo and Damascus to more macro conclusions about the Armenian Question in general.

At this stage, after giving background information about the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before World War I, and before moving into our main task, we want to add that although hundreds of books have been written on the Armenian Question and its development, yet very little is known about the Armenian communities in the centres in the Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus during the Ottoman reign and its aftermath. Syrian Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus are untouched fields of research with respect to socio-economic, political, religious, cultural and educational situations of Ottoman Armenians. Therefore, this study is an investigation to fill this gap as long as the sources permit. The study also focuses on how the relocation process affected

the Armenian community in these centres in terms of demographic, social and economic matters.

The area of study is limited to the centres in the Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus, some parts of today's Syria, which neighboured the historical Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia and where, especially in and round Aleppo, old Armenian communities had settled as early as twelfth century. Syria also included the important See of Aleppo of the Armenian Cilician Catholicate beginning from the fourteenth century which contributes the significance of Syria for the Armenian community. This region also had a centrality for the Ottoman Empire. The proximity of Syria to the "Six Provinces" namely Diyarbakır, Mamuratü'l-Aziz (Elazığ), Bitlis, Van, Erzurum, and Sivas as well as its central position during the relocation process are the main incentives that determine the focus of this study as Syrian provinces.

Although the historical presence of Armenians in Syria dated back as early as first century B.C., this study will concentrate on the last decades of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries. From this historical perspective, this study tries to describe and analyze the changes in the Armenian social and economic lives in Syria during that time.

The study mainly confines itself into three processes. Firstly, the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire before World War I is focused on. Then, the changing Ottoman-Armenian relations and relocation process are studied. After building such a general background, we concentrate on the Armenians of Aleppo and Damascus during the same periods in the second part of the present study. In the same part, socio-economic, political, religious, cultural and educational situations of Aleppine and Damascene Armenians are touched upon widely. Then, in the third part, the process of relocation itself is assessed at the levels of Aleppo and Damascus, that is, we try to answer the questions of how did the relocation process affected the Armenians of these centres and under which circumstances did they continue their lives. In other words, the demographic, social and economic changes of the indigenous Armenians in these centres after the relocation process are highlighted. The question of how did they maintain their lives in Syria is also explored.

Furthermore, their relations with each other as well as the Syrian government are held shortly in conclusion part.

The material for this study is based on original documentation from Ottoman, American, and European consular, diplomatic and private archives and memoirs. Ottoman archival materials are the prime source for discussion of the relocations. The Ottoman archives have a rich collection of official, archival state documentation in the world; they also permit the historian in his/her research to descend to the provincial level without any shortage of documentation.³ Especially, the second part of the study is necessarily grounded on the Ottoman provincial year-books or *salnames* which record the names, ranks and functions of the paid officials and unpaid community representatives and private citizens who served in numerous local bodies as well as the geographic, demographic and socio-economic situations of the provinces. Although these are printed or lithographed books, the fact that they are scarce and not much explored gives them the character of unedited materials. In 1263 H/ 1846-7 the Ottoman Empire began to publish imperial year-books (*Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye Salnamesi*), listing the officials of the central and provincial governments.⁴ In 1284H/ 1867-8 the chief secretary (“*mektubcu*”) of the Province of Aleppo, İbrahim Halet Bey⁵ published a statistical annual of the province. Soon after that, other provinces followed the example of Aleppo and thus they created provincial year-books.⁶ In order to study a sufficient number of these provincial year-books of the provinces of Aleppo and Damascus for comparative purposes, we worked in the National Library of Turkey and Syrian National Archives in Damascus. Then, we decided to focus on

³ Standford J. Shaw, “Ottoman Archival Materials for the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: The Archives of İstanbul”, in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 6 (1975), pp. 94-114.

⁴ R. Server İskit, *Türkiye’de Neşriyat Hareketleri Tarihine Bir Bakış*, (İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1939), pp. 34-6 and 356-61 and *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, First Edition, iv, p. 83; For detailed information about both the year-books and specifically the year-books of Aleppo and Damascus see: Hasan Duman, *Osmanlı Salnameleri ve Nevsalleri Bibliografyası ve Toplu Kataloğu (A Bibliography and Union Catalogue of Ottoman Year-Books)*, Vol. II, (Ankara: Enformasyon ve Dokümentasyon Hizmetleri Vakfı, 2000), pp. 101-105, 125-129.

⁵ A biography of who can be seen in: *Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, (Ankara, iii, 1956), p. 133.

⁶ İskit, pp. 96-7.

totally 3 year-books of each province out of 31 provincial year-books which cover the period between 1885 and 1908. We tried to choose the most valuable and least repeated ones with respect to the information they provided. Furthermore, to be able to reflect the changes in the situation of the Armenians in public life of Aleppo and Damascus, we tried to choose the year-books published in decades.⁷

In addition to official documents, memoirs of survivors, bystanders or government officials are very useful in drawing local pictures and furnish details on the cities, towns, or villages of Aleppo and Damascus.

Although we believe the significance of oral history for rural communities with no written traditions, we did little use of them. Furthermore, we tried to reach Aleppine and Damascene newspapers and periodicals of that time, which we think would probably supply good contribution.⁸ Although there are references for the newspapers of the region in Duman's study, unfortunately, we could not reach these newspapers from the National Library of Turkey.⁹

We also added from the selected published Turkish and English sources in our study. A literature examination about the issue was also carried out. Apart from the books and articles, theses and dissertations were also examined. Besides, during various steps of this study, computer and internet technology was used. Because, the complexity of Ottoman society and relative paucity of detailed, micro-level material regarding our topic requires this multidimensional approach.

⁷ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308 H / [1890]; Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319 H / [1901]*, p. 213; *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326 H / [1908]; Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1306 [1888-9]; Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H / [1891]; Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H / [1900]*.

⁸ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H / [1900]*, pp. 82-3.

⁹ Hasan Duman, *Osmanlı Salnameleri ve Nesalları Bibliyografyası ve Toplu Kataloğu*, vol. II, (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1999), p. 328. (It was stated that while *Fırat* (Aleppo, 1867) and *Gadirü'l-Fırat* (Aleppo, 1867) were the Aleppo based newspapers, *Al-Şahba* (1877), *Trablus-Şam* (1893), *Al-ravza* (1894), and *Al-arz* (1895) were Damascus based newspapers. Although the official *Fırat* newspaper was cited as can be found in the National Library of Turkey, we could not reach any of the number of the newspaper. Moreover, these newspapers were also indicated and well informed in the provincial year-book of Damascus, see: *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H / [1900]*, pp. 82-83.

1.1.2. Social, Economic and Political Life of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire Before World War I

The Armenian community which was an independent body in its internal affairs was formed by five classes in the Ottoman Empire. The first and the most influential class composed of the rich and effective men serving in the government and in the civil service. The second class consisted of merchants, financiers, and industrialists living in Istanbul and in the other cities in Anatolia. The third one was the peasantry which dispersed all around the Empire. The fourth class was the mountaineers and the last one was the priesthood and the clergy.¹⁰

As to the first class of the Armenian community which was composed of rich and effective men serving in the government and in the civil service, they were active participants of government offices. Because of the Armenian willingness to serve for the Ottoman Empire and their intelligence, hard work, and lack of aspirations for independence before 1877, they were employed in all levels of the civil service, with prospects, and were promoted to the highest statuses. The opening of the Sublime Porte for them with the Reform Edict in 1856 also contributed greatly to this process. While there were representatives of the non-Muslim communities in local administrative councils in 1840's, the main development for the Ottoman administration came to the fore with the Reform Edict in 1856.¹¹ With this imperial edict non-Muslims were admitted in greater numbers than before to employment in the Ottoman public administration.

Secondly, from 1857-8 onwards, the Armenians and other non-Muslim students were also allowed to attend the Ottoman State's high schools. Through this new arrangement Armenians enjoyed the opportunity of learning advanced Turkish and various professions and skills and were thus fitted to engage in public affairs.

Then, in October 1864 the Ottoman Empire was itself reorganized and divided into reconstituted provinces (*vilayets*) under designated governors (*valis*). This

¹⁰ Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*", p. 119.

¹¹ Ilber Ortayli, *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Yerel Yönetim Geleneği*, (Istanbul, 1985), pp. 33-45.

territorial reorganization created employment for many new officials in public life, for which the Armenians together with other non-Muslim religious groups were now available.¹²

After these developments, during the reign of Abdülmecit (1839-1861), some of the Armenians were employed in the highest levels of the state such in the government, administration and diplomacy. Some of them became senior civil servants, governors, general inspectors, and even viziers. Twenty-nine Armenians achieved the highest governmental ranks as Pasha. There were twenty-two governmental ministries. Among these, Armenians held foreign affairs, finance, trade, and postal services and ministries.¹³ Apart from these, they became the head of some governmental departments and tasks, being responsible for a variety of functions including agriculture, census and economic development.¹⁴

In the last decades of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth centuries, despite Armenian's insurgence, the Ottoman Empire continued to employ the Armenians in the state service. Craftsmen, artisans, and merchants could access to the various services in the Palace easily. Especially, the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the coded communication of the State were dominated by the Armenian bureaucrats before and during Abdülhamit II's (1876-1908) reign.¹⁵ In 1879 there were 76 high-ranking Armenian officials in the Ottoman service, 13 judges in the capital, 6 professors at public colleges, 4 provincial functionaries, 4 secretaries and attachés and 5 consuls.¹⁶

¹² Mesrob K. Krikorian, *Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire 1860-1908*, (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 2.

¹³ Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*", p. 210-211.

¹⁴ Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*", p. 214.

¹⁵ Abdülhamit Kırmızı, "Son Dönem Osmanlı Bürokrasisinde Akraba Ermeniler" in *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, vol. 2 (2003), p. 137.

¹⁶ Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*" , pp. 304-305; See for the Armenian participation in government offices of the Six Provinces as well as the Provinces of Aleppo and Syria: Krikorian, pp. 3-5; Kırmızı, pp. 135-140.

It is clear from these figures that Ottoman State opened the governmental posts to all of its loyal subjects without any discrimination with the Reform Edict together with the new provincial organization during the second half of the nineteenth century. Following these developments, Armenians were appointed more in significant positions in both central and provincial administration of the Empire. Their employments in the state service also continued during the last decades of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries even during the Armenian activities did accelerate before World War I. On the other hand, the Armenians used the privileges that were given them for the improvement of their comfort and they had accepted the Ottoman administration, lifestyle and culture. Therefore, they had gained the Ottomans' trust and had been called as Loyal Nation [*Millet-i Sadika*]. They had both improved their situation financially and served in the governmental services.¹⁷

The members of the second class as well as the first class were the most prosperous notables in the Armenian community who were also called as *Amiras*.¹⁸ They played an important role in the economic life of the Empire. They lived mainly in the big cities and trade centres of the Ottoman Empire. They gained significant positions and pursued some professions in economic realm especially in finance and industry. The *Amiras* were sarrafs (usurers), moneychangers, goldsmiths, merchants, and entrepreneurs.¹⁹ The members of this class were also bankers and investors in the Empire. Armenians as in the other minorities continued their economic activities freely and could found small private banks. These banks were also able to serve as agents or employees of European banks, insurance companies, and broker houses and

¹⁷ Karal, p. 127.

¹⁸ See for detailed information about the Amira Class: Hagop Barsoumian, "The Dual Role of the Armenian Amira Class within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian Millet (1750-1850)", in *Christians and Jews...*, pp. 171- 184; Avedis K. Sanjian, *The Armenian Communities under Ottoman Dominion*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 36-37.

¹⁹ See for the examples of Armenians in these professions: Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*", p. 121; Krikorian, pp. 3-5; Kırmızı, pp. 135-140; Nejat Göyünç, *Osmanlı İdaresinde Ermeniler*, İstanbul, 1983, p. 51.

as other institutions.²⁰ In addition to these, *Amiras* were also active in commercial realm. They had established their monopoly over trade. They directed transit trade with Persia together with Istanbul, and there were also Armenian traders in many parts of the Empire like İstanbul, Bursa, Sivas and Tokat.²¹

Apart from their efficiency in economic realm, the *Amira* class was also influential over the Patriarch who was both the spiritual and temporal leader of all the Armenians living in the Empire and it was also the centre of Armenian community in Istanbul. From the seventeenth century onwards, *Amiras* took the absolute power from the Patriarch slowly. In the nineteenth century, *Amiras* began to appoint their own candidates to the patriarchal throne and dismissed the patriarch at their will. *Amiras* could not only control the Patriarchate but also guide the control of money institutions, and dealt with the people who challenged their authority within the Armenian community. They also had an important role in the revival of the Armenian people since they held important positions in journalism, translation activities and diplomatic realm.²²

Nevertheless, the number of this noteworthy class was limited. There were also wealthy Armenians as distinct from *Amiras* who were also dominant in rural bases. In larger towns, they worked as shopkeepers, revenues collectors, contractors, brokers, artisans, goldsmiths, businessmen, bankers, printers, health officials, industrialists, and as import and export merchants.

As for the situation of the peasantry and mountaineers who comprised the third and the fourth classes of the Armenian community, there is little information about the activities of them contrary to the first two classes of the community. In spite of the lack of information, we know that there were Armenians living in the villages of Eastern Anatolia who were engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry and were forming regional cottage industries and small trade. Apart from these, Göyünç cites

²⁰ Charles Issawi, "The Transformation of the Economic Position of the Millets in the Nineteenth Century" in *Christians and Jews...*, eds., Braude and Lewis, p. 272.

²¹ Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*", p. 210.

²² Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*", p. 123.

about only the Armenians in the Eastern and Southern Anatolian regions engaged in some services in the castles which are Gülek Castle, three castles of Karaisalı, and the castle of Van.²³

Lastly, the fifth group which consisted of numerous priesthood and high clergy were the most influential group in the Armenian community. Armenian Church and the head of it, the Patriarch, had an important place in the Armenian way of life which will be touched upon below under title of 'Religious, Cultural and Educational Life of the Armenians before World War I'.

As for the political life of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before World War I, Armenians established various nationalist parties during the nineteenth century. Among these Hunchak, Dashnaktsutiu and Ramgavar were the three major Armenian political parties. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, these parties aiming at imbuing all levels of the Armenian community with a desire for national emancipation²⁴ were founded at first in Ottoman territories and later abroad and at first as charitable organizations.²⁵

The Dashnak and Hunchak were the revolutionary committees of the Armenians before and during the war. Before the First World War, the Armenian revolutionary committees, Hintchakists and Dashnakists decided to cooperate with the Young Turks, with the hope that, in return for any assistance they might render in overthrowing the existing regime. They would gather such a measure of decentralization as would go far to establish one or two purely Armenian provinces. They expressed the desire to combine in working for the welfare and progress of the country and cooperate with the Young Turks. Nonetheless, this rapprochement was short lived since they were divided into two groups in socio-economic lines: the

²³ Göyünç, *Osmanlı İdaresinde...*, p. 35.

²⁴ Margaret J. Wyszomirski, "Communal Violence: The Armenians and the Copts as Case Studies", *World Politics*, Vol. 27 (1975), p. 449.

²⁵ Mim Kemal Öke, *Ermeni Sorunu*, (İstanbul: İz Yay., 1996) p. 114. For the details of such communities see: Yavuz Ercan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Gayri Müslimler: Kuruluştan Tanzimata Kadar Sosyal, Ekonomik ve Hukuki Durumları*, (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 2001), p. 88; Kamuran Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, 4th Edition, (Ankara: Bilgi Yay., 1988), pp. 167 -68.

Dashnakists who supported Unionists, spoke for petty bourgeois of Anatolian Armenians. The Patriarch, on the other side, spoke for wealthy class (*Amiras*) and clerks. Though the Dashnakists were cooperating with the Committee of Union and Progress (the CUP), The Hintchakists and the Reformist Hintchakists did not want to cooperate with the CUP; instead they wanted Russian protection and declared that Russian protection could be preferred to the Caliph. These groups did not want to dissolve their political organizations.

The Ramkavars (Democrats) were not mixed up with politics. They had their own paper, "Van-Dosp," and were busy with their own propaganda and their own trade and teaching. It was more moderate than the other two. Its aim was to maintain the powers and prerogatives of the Armenian Patriarchate until the claims of Armenians in the six provinces of Eastern Anatolia are recognized. The Dashnaks who had anti-clerical tendencies opposed its policy.²⁶

These revolutionary parties were effective in determining impetus for the political life of the Armenians before World War I. The rise of the desire and the ideal for establishing a nation is the most important motives for the activities of these parties.

With the promulgation of the second constitution in 1908, Armenians with other non-Muslims also took part in general elections of 1914 in the Ottoman Empire. For this election both Armenian patriarchate's candidates and Armenian parties' candidates could have taken place in the election. For instance, in 1914 elections, there were 6 candidates from Dashnaks and 2 candidates from Hunchaks and Ramgavars.²⁷

²⁶ Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*", p. 302.

²⁷ Münevver Güneş Eroğlu, *Armenians in the Ottoman Empire According to İkdâm 1914-1918*, METU Graduate School of Social Sciences, The Department of History, Unpublished MS Thesis, (Ankara, 2003), pp. 73-79.

1.1.3. Religious, Cultural and Educational Life of the Armenians Before World War I

In the nineteenth century there were five religious centres situated in both inside and outside the Ottoman territories, which were as follows: The Catholicosate of Echmiadzin in Russia, the Catholicosate of Sis, the Catholicosate of Aghtamar, the Patriarchate of Istanbul, and lastly the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.²⁸

Apart from these five religious centres, under the Ottoman rule, Armenians formed three millets, Armenian Orthodox Gregorians, Armenian Catholics and Armenian Protestants (the two latest ones were formed in the nineteenth century).²⁹

The priesthood and the clergy was one of the largest groups in Armenian community. The Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul was the just highest authority of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and he was the most influential man of the Armenian community especially up to the second half of the nineteenth century. Although his authority was taken in some parts by the Rules and Regulations of the Armenian community in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Patriarch continued to be the leader of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire until 1918.³⁰

As indicated above, while the *Amiras* first challenged the authority of the Patriarch, then, the Reform Edicts challenged the Patriarch's authority. In 1856, the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* promised equality for all Ottoman citizens irrespective of their ethnicity and confession, widening the scope of the 1839 *Hatt-ı Şerif* of Gülhane. In 1863, the Rules and Regulations of the Armenian community was approved by the

²⁸ Dündar Kılıç, *Osmanlı İdaresinde Ermeniler Arasındaki Dini ve Siyasi Mücadeleler*, (Ankara: ASAM Yay., 2000), pp. 44-185. While Gregorian Armenians accepted the Catholicosate of Echmiadzin as the highest religious authority in the Armenian community, the Patriarch of Istanbul was accepted as the Patriarch of all Armenians in the Ottoman Empire by the Ottoman government. The Patriarch of Istanbul was responsible from both the Armenian community in the Empire and the other non-Muslims, except for Orthodox and Jews. Although the Catholicosates of Aghtamar and Cilicia were upper than the Patriarch to religious position, the Patriarch was the most powerful religious leader in the Ottoman Empire. See also: Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: Belge Yay., 1987), p. 149; Gürün, p. 49.

²⁹ İlber Ortaylı, *Son İmparatorluk Osmanlı*, (İstanbul: Timaş Yay., 2006), pp. 87-89.

³⁰ Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*", p. 44.

Ottoman Empire composed of 150 articles drafted by the "Armenian intelligentsia", defining the powers of Patriarch (position in Ottoman *Millet* System) and newly formed "Armenian National Assembly" was approved by the Ottoman Empire.³¹ The reformist period peaked with the Constitution, called the *Kanûn-ı Esâsî* (meaning "Basic Law" in Ottoman Turkish), written by members of the Young Ottomans, which was promulgated on 23 November 1876. It established freedom of belief and equality of all citizens before the law. "Firman of the Reforms" gave immense privileges to the Armenians, which formed a "governance in governance" to eliminate the aristocratic dominance of the Armenian nobles by development of the political strata in the society.³² This constitution of the Armenian nation brought about that the authority that was shared by the Patriarch and his followers would not be absolute, but all of the Armenian community would enjoy a different authority.³³ Significantly, the Constitution basically organized the Armenian community, stimulated learning among the people, and thus became one of the main factors which resulted in a renaissance of literature and education among the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire.³⁴

As for the cultural life of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, they continued to practice their language freely and also conducted their culture freely during the reign of the Ottoman Empire like other non-Muslim communities. In language, literature, music, and almost every branch of the arts, Turks and Armenians got closely affected from each other. To illustrate, most of the Armenians used Turkish in their daily life. Even one of their writers wrote his book in Turkish to be read by the Ottoman Armenians easily. (Vartan Paşa, *Akabi Hikayesi*).³⁵ From 1840

³¹ Richard G. Hovannisian, "The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire, 1876 -1914", in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times, Vol. II: Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to Twentieth Century*, ed., Richard G. Hovannisian, (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2004), p. 208.

³² İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete...*, p. 73. Besides, for detailed information about Armenian National Constitution see: Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*", pp. 205- 208.

³³ Gürün, p. 92.

³⁴ Krikorian, pp. 3-5.

³⁵ Nejat Göyünç, "Turkish -Armenian Cultural Relations" in *The Armenians in the Late Otoman Period*, ed., Türkkaya Ataöv, (Ankara: The Turkish Historical Society, 2001), p. 25.

onwards, 40 of 100 Armenian magazines were published with Armenian letters but with Turkish text.³⁶

On the other hand, numerous monastic institutions developed the culture of the Armenians. To illustrate, Armenian literature was mainly the work of the clergy and with the important exception of folk literature, was religious in nature. However, during the nineteenth century the ecclesiastical nature of the Armenian society departed for the growth of a more secular nature. This departure was made possible by an increasingly closer contact with Europe; by the growth and development of the Armenian printing industry, journalism and the national school system; and most importantly by the adoption, in the second half of the nineteenth century, of the spoken vernacular as a literary medium.³⁷ These developments triggered the religious zeal and patriotism of the Armenian people and raised their national consciousness in the nineteenth century.

In educational realm, from 1857-8 onwards, the Armenians and other non-Muslim students were allowed to attend the Ottoman State's high schools. Through this new arrangement, Armenians enjoyed the opportunity of learning advanced Turkish and various professions and skills. It must also be mentioned here that, apart from Turkish schools, the Armenians had their own secondary schools, as well as others run by French Catholic and American Protestant Missions which did much to develop popular education. Many Armenians, after leaving the local high schools, went abroad and especially to Paris and New York, and nearer home, to the two colleges, later universities, of Beirut in order to continue their education. One of these two universities is the Syrian Protestant College which was founded in 1866 by the American Presbyterian Mission and became the American University of Beirut in 1920; and the other is the Jesuit College founded in 1881, now the University of Saint-Joseph. Most of the student returned home and devoted themselves to public service and the private professions. These educational establishments influenced

³⁶ For more information see also the article of: Göyünç, "*Turkish -Armenian Cultural...*", pp. 23-43.

³⁷ See for gaining a clearer conspectus to the role of each of these multiple factors: Sanjian, pp. 71-78.

mainly the Armenians, whom began to study their own history and literature and learned more.³⁸

1.2. Armenian Question

1.2.1. The Emergence of the Armenian Question

The rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century largely affected the multi-national empires. This ideology spread firstly throughout the Europe and then accessed the Ottoman territories. The nationalist ideas firstly affected the non-Turkish elements of the empire which set their demands for self-government or building their own nation-states. And because of operating in the different social, political, and economic context in such a multi-national empire, nationalism brought about almost different outcomes to the Ottoman territories. Nationalism firstly penetrated into the cultural sphere as a factor in obtaining national consciousness and then penetrated into the political sphere as a force supporting the ideal of establishing the nation state. It fostered the separatist movements in the Ottoman Empire and led to the disunity among the communities which defined themselves as different from the others. Thus, with the impact of the new ideology, Christian subjects of the empire started to struggle to transform cultural nationalism into political sphere to the ideal of establishing their own nation states. To be able to bring this ideal into action, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was imperative. When this desire, the destruction of the empire, shared by the Great Powers, the nationalist movements came to the fore as the part of the “Eastern Question”. And of course as in the cases of Greek, Serbian, Romanian and Bulgarian, it brought the Armenian Question into the international realm.

In the Armenian case, like the others, nationalism first started in cultural field and this woke up the national feelings which triggered the political desires. Then, this was brought to political field with the support of the joint activities of Church, Armenian intelligentsia, missionaries and the Great Powers.

First of all, the Church had a special place for this awakening. According to the information given by Arberry, firstly the Gregorian Church leaders took the

³⁸ Sonyel, “*Minorities and the ...*”, p. 215.

initiative in national awakening through serving the nation on spiritual, educational and cultural grounds.³⁹ Actually there could not be an Armenian nation without Armenian Church.⁴⁰

Secondly, Catholic and Protestant missionary activities contributed to this process. Missionaries dealt with the religious, cultural and health problems of the Armenians and they opened churches, schools and hospitals to attract the Armenians to their Church. Öke mentions that, these missionaries even paid salaries to the members of the communities.⁴¹ While the penetration of the missionary ideas met the necessities of the age in the sense of education on the one hand; on the other hand, the education of the missionary schools caused the reconstruction of the ancient Armenian culture and prepared the background of Armenian nationalism.⁴² In addition to the activities in schools, the consulates were also effective in spreading the nationalism among the Armenians. The consulates gave books, magazines, and newspapers in which the separatist ideas were discussed.⁴³ Thus, the role of the missionary activities in both the emergence and the diffusion of the Armenian nationalism could not be rejected as long as the area they were acted considered.⁴⁴

³⁹ For the efforts of the Armenian Church leaders, see: *Religion in the Middle East*, ed., A. J. Arberry, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 482-520.

⁴⁰ Arberry, p. 45. Especially the efforts of Mıgırdıç Hırmıyan (1866-1873) can be explained briefly for their significance in the progress of Armenian Question. While he came to İstanbul he brought the Armenian Question into the Armenian National General Assembly. During his patriarchate the assembly became the arena in which the problems and complaints of the Armenians in all fields from the taxation system to the justice system were discussed, see: Uras, p. 176. Despite all these changes in the organization of the Armenian community, with taking the initiative, the parliament of the Armenians, under the leadership of patriarch Hırmıyan, claimed the sovereignty for Armenian provinces and stated the Armenian Question openly before the Berlin Congress. Moreover, in the following years the church leaders took the initiative in the national awakening and in making the Armenian Question part of the international politics.

⁴¹ Öke, p. 112.

⁴² Kılıç, p. 101.

⁴³ Uygur Kocabaşođlu, *Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadolu'daki Amerika: Ondokuzuncu Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları*, (İstanbul: Arba Press, 1989), pp. 35-45.

⁴⁴ Kocabaşođlu, p. 125. See also for more information about the activities of the American Protestant Missionaries and their schools.

Thirdly, Armenian intelligentsia in Caucasian region was effective in developing the Armenian nationalism. The first generation of the Caucasian Intelligentsia was grown up in the networks of the American schools, which were opened at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These youths, which were educated in different branches, affected from the nationalist ideas and to the end of the nineteenth century most of them became the members of the revolutionary organizations. They turned their eyes into the Ottoman territories for the independency of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and for the organization of the revolutionary movements in these lands. Armenian youths, especially the ones who went to the European states particularly France for education and turned back to Istanbul, were also effective in the rise of the Armenian nationalism.

Thus, whereas, on the one hand, internal national movements and Armenian achievements on social, economic, cultural and educational grounds affected the future of the Armenians and Turco-Armenian relations, the changes and developments in political and economic realms and international relations of the century on the other hand, further accelerated the process and changed the way of the situation in an undesirable way.

Apart from the internal ones, now we will cite the external events of the time that contributed to the advancement of the Armenian Question. Development of “Russia” as a new power in the nineteenth century was the most important external factor that contributed much to the Armenian Question. Russia’s expansion into Caucasus and Balkans changed the life of the Armenians and directed their national cause to a large extent. The first important relation with Russia did occur during the Russo-Persian War (1826). During the war, Russia seized the lands inhabited by Armenians including the plain of Ararat. The end of war also provided Russia an important foothold in the southern Caucasus. In the same year Russo-Ottoman War started and resulted in the Adrionaple Treaty in 1829. Russia obtained all the significant places on the coast of Black Sea and nearly 100.000 Armenians migrated into Russia from Erzurum and Alaşkirt.⁴⁵ After these developments the number of

⁴⁵ Gürün, p. 80.

Armenian population started to rise in the Caucasian territories under the rule of Russia. They experienced educational, cultural, intellectual and social renaissance in these lands. Crimean War (1856) in which Russian forces expanded as far as Kars together with the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 created favourable grounds for the Armenian nationalists to present their claims and created a hope for the Russian support to the Armenian cause.⁴⁶ After the end of the war the Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul, Nerses Varzhabedian, asked the tsar through Patriarchate in Echmiadzin, for not giving back of the seized eastern Anatolian territories to the Ottomans. He also went to St. Stephano with three alternative claims requested from the Grand Duke Nicholas: Russian annexation of eastern Anatolia, autonomous Armenia like Bulgaria, and application of the reforms in favour of the Armenians. However, Russia admitted the least favourable, the last one, for the Armenians which became the 16th article of St. Stefano Treaty. According to this article, the Ottoman government was responsible for the application of the reforms in eastern Anatolian Provinces inhabited by the Armenians and for the security of Armenians against the Kurds and Circassians and Russian withdrawal would be contingent upon the implementation of the reforms. The Russian initiative in the Armenian Question created great disturbance for England. Because she thought that with his initiative Russia could expand her sphere of influence into İskenderun and Mesopotamia which would be against the English interests in the region.⁴⁷ Soon in Berlin Conference (1878), in which St. Stefano was changed, also the Russian initiative in the Article 16 passed into the hands of all signatory powers with the changes on the article and this article became the Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty. And there would be no Russian army the withdrawal of which would be subject to the application of the reforms. The real failure of Russia in this

⁴⁶ Armenians saw in the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish war that the Bulgarian nation-state was established mostly through the support of Russia. This increased Armenian expectancy for Russian support. Moreover in the following years Armenians adopted the method of revolts used by the Bulgarians to be able to attract the attention of the Great Powers. Because the Bulgarian rebellion of 1876 created pro-Bulgarian feeling and then led to the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78 and finally led to the establishment of the Bulgarian State. See: Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria, 1878-1908*, (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1998), pp. 47-55.

⁴⁷ Öke, p. 84.

treaty was the establishment of independent states as Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania and an autonomous state, Bulgaria, in the Balkans out of its control. Thus, because she did not want another Bulgaria beyond its frontiers and she was not strong enough to secure her interests in the Eastern Question, she ceded from the Armenian Question and adopted the policy targeting the prevention of an autonomous Armenian region in eastern Anatolia.⁴⁸

On the other hand, the Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty brought about significant results for both the Ottoman and Armenian sides. First of all, the Armenian Question transformed into an international area. And while for the Ottoman side the entrance of Armenian Question into the agenda of the Great Powers was the failure, it was a success for the Armenian side. However, the Armenian side also regarded the result as a failure in Armenian cause because it did not give independence or autonomy.⁴⁹

Thus, these events taught the Armenians two things: firstly, the necessity of resort to the other ways beside diplomatic ones and secondly, the necessity of foreign intervention. For both of them the method of terrorist actions would be used.

1.2.2. The Armenian Revolutionary Organizations and Revolts

Armenians established various nationalist organizations to reach their final goal. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, these organizations aimed at imbuing all levels of the Armenian community with a desire for the establishment of a national state. These communities were founded at first in Turkey and later abroad and at first as charitable organizations.⁵⁰ Armenian rebellious activities started to be seen in 1890s and continued with the Adana events in 1909 and Van revolt in 1915 and these activities even continued till the end of the war.⁵¹

Among the revolutionary societies, as cited before, one of the most important ones was Revolutionary Hunchak, and the other one was Dashnaksutiun. Hunchak

⁴⁸ Öke, p. 85.

⁴⁹ Uras, pp. 256-66.

⁵⁰ Öke, p. 114. For the details of such communities see: Ercan, p. 88; Gürün, pp. 167 -68.

⁵¹ For detailed information about Adana events see: Gürün, pp. 225-231; Cemal Paşa, *Hatıralar*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yay., 2001), pp. 390-400.

organized the Erzurum Uprising (20 June 1890), the Kumkapı Incident (15 July 1890), the first Sasun Rebellion (August 1894) and the Zeytun uprising (24 October 1894- 28 January 1896) to focus European attention to Armenian cause. However, after the Zeytun Uprising, the party divided into two sections and the initiative passed to the Dashnaksutiun.⁵² Similar to Hunchak Party, Dashnaksutiun accepted terrorism as a way of action. The first action was the Van uprising on June 1896. Then, Dashnaks admitted raid of Ottoman Bank in 1896, Sasun Rebellion in 1904 and Yıldız Assassination in 1905.⁵³

The Armenian terrorist activities succeeded in supplying the foreign intervention on the Armenian issue for only a short time. Several joint actions came from the big powers for the application of the reforms in the eastern Anatolian provinces. Nonetheless, the coming of the Turco-Greek war in 1897, the Russian fear of the possible impact of the Ottoman reforms on the Armenians living in the Russian territories, French and German economic interests on the Ottoman lands, British plan for the survival of the Ottoman Empire as a barrier against the Russian advance put the Armenian Question aside.

Following these events occurred in both internal and external levels, one crucial change also affecting the Ottoman-Armenian relations was the advent of the Committee of Union and Progress. The preparatory stages for the committee dated back to the Young Turks' works in the time of Abdülhamit II. Their main objective was to save the empire. They believed that the solution could be possible through the restoration of the constitutional regime in which all subjects of the empire were represented. In fact, they wanted to bring together all religious and ethnic communities in Ottoman union. Being parallel with their aim, Young Turks began to cooperate with the organizations of the non-Turkish groups because all people living in the Ottoman territories suffered under the Abdülhamit's reign and these groups thought that any regime would be better than the old one. In the mid-1890's Young

⁵² Uras, pp. 435 - 436.

⁵³ Gürün, pp. 171 - 174.

Turks started to ask for the joint action with this group in which the Armenian revolutionaries took place. In later stages Young Turks, after 1895 under the name of Committee of Union and Progress, reached a compromise settlement with the Armenians in their national congress of 1907.⁵⁴ In July 1908, Young Turks revolution realized and all sides greeted this event but with their own expectancy from the new regime. If the new regime happened to be liberal and committed to administrative decentralization and private initiative it was good for the Armenians.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the constitutional regime experienced very different stages. In coming years the Committee of the Union and Progress became the main political body which applied unionist policies. So after short time all groups having separatist desires from the empire understood that unionist aspirations were not parallel with their own plans and interests. In this way, the distrust and confrontation emerged between the Ottomans and Armenians before very long.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, Russia's ignorance towards the Ottoman Armenians came to an end because of the strategic changes in the region. Command of Black Sea (with a minimum goal of defending Russian coasts and a minimum task of seizure of the straits) and defence of the Caucasus frontier and Persian sphere of influence became the priorities of Russia. To maintain these, the isolation of the eastern Anatolian region from the outside influence and the support of the Armenians should be provided. Furthermore, for future expansion either south or

⁵⁴ Although it was not known when the cooperation started between the Dashnaks and the Young Turks, they participated in both congresses of Young Turks in 1902 and 1907. In congress of 1907, they passed a resolution to form a commission consisting of Turks and Armenians to outline the principles of cooperation. The Dashnaks admitted to collaborate with the CUP in return for continuing their revolutionary organization and retaining total freedom of action and Unionist-Dashnak cooperation continued till 1912. The disasters of the Tripoli and the Balkan Wars were effective with the change of relations. That is, while the Unionist began to adopt the centralist policy against the forceful separatist movement which could not be stopped with the decentralizing and liberal policies, the Dashnaks began to think that it was the time to bring the Armenian Question again into the agenda of Great Powers, see: Feroz Ahmad, "Unionist Relations with the Greek, Armenian and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1914", *Christians and Jews...*, p. 423.

⁵⁵ Ahmad, p. 403-404.

west, Russia wanted to found basis.⁵⁶ To actualize these tasks as creating Russian zone of privilege in the region free from outside influence, she was interested in obtaining concessions in eastern railway constructions. First of all, she made a railway agreement with Ottoman state in 1900. According to this agreement, granting concessions for railways construction north of a line between Kayseri, Diyarbakır, Sivas and Harput was prevented for any foreign company. By this way, Russia also prevented the challenge of Germany against the Russian control of this region through Baghdad Railway construction. In 1911 Russia tried to co-operate with Germany through signing Baghdad Railway agreement including not building branch lines into the Caucasus. These agreements recognized Russian interests in Eastern Anatolia and Persia respectively. In September 1913 Russia again gained concession that the lines to Erzurum, Trabzon and the frontier would be built only by Russian firm. In addition to her diplomatic endeavours, at the same time, Russia gave its military aid to the Ottoman Armenians for obtaining support from inside against possible Russo-Ottoman clash. Significantly, Russian agitators, some consular officials among them, gave money, arms and advice to both Kurds and Armenians and generally the Armenian revolutionaries in Turkey had come from Russian Transcaucasia.⁵⁷

During that time, Armenian propaganda and preparations were continuing and especially during Balkan Wars Armenians encouraged by the Ottoman defeats intensified their actions to reach their national aim in the eastern Anatolia.⁵⁸ Meanwhile continuing their agitations in the region, they pursued great propaganda demanding reforms in Eastern Anatolia beyond the Ottoman Empire. As pointed out, in that time, Armenian interests were coincided with the Russian policies. So, firstly, they appealed to Russia through the Catholic George V, head of the Gregorian Church to ask for help to the Armenians for achieving their national aim. The Catholics also appointed a delegation headed by Boghos Nubar Pasha (in all 1913 he was in Europe)

⁵⁶ Roderic H. Davison, "The Armenian Crisis, 1912-1914" in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. LIII, No. 53, (April 1948), p. 487.

⁵⁷ Davison, p. 489.

⁵⁸ See: S. R. Sonyel, *The Ottoman Armenians*, (London, 1987), pp. 73-77.

to present the Armenian cause to Europe. The delegation demanded autonomous Armenia under European commission appointed by the Porte and giving equal responsibility to Christians and Muslims in military and administrative offices. At this point, Russia broached the problem in two ways, firstly, warned the Ottoman government and then sounded out British and French cabinets as to the possibility of making such reforms more effectively. Nevertheless, the Ottoman government prepared its own plan for reform in Eastern Anatolia and asked for English officials to help carry out their new reforms. The Russian reaction was great because this was just a threat to Russian control of the region. On the other hand, the Ottoman government thought that English participation would prevent Russian encroachment. Contrary to the expectation of the Ottoman government, England firstly consulted to Russia, and wanted to solve the issue through the negotiations among the ambassadors of the great powers in Istanbul.⁵⁹ The other reaction came from Germany because of fear of Russian partition of Asiatic Turkey.

Then, the Great Powers decided to discuss the question of reforms for eastern Anatolian provinces and Germany and its allies were invited to the negotiations and talks started. They came to an agreement on the reform plan after long-lasting quarrels and on 8 February 1914 Russo-Ottoman convention was signed.⁶⁰ According to this, six eastern provinces were to be grouped into two provinces, each under a European inspector. There was no mention of the words "Armenia" or "Armenians" and the program of reform did not include Armenian population living outside the two inspectorates, as in Cilicia. The European powers acting through their ambassadors were given the right to supervise the execution of the reforms, but the obligation to guarantee their success was eliminated. In February 1914, Russia (on behalf of the Europeans) and Turkey signed the revised accord. Thus, according to Hovannissian, this was the most viable reform proposed since the internationalization of the

⁵⁹ Öke, p. 87.

⁶⁰ The whole text of the reform plan and also the previous Russian Project, see: Cemal Paşa, *Hatıralar...*, pp. 403 -411.

Armenian Question in 1878.⁶¹ In another account by the Russian *charge d'affaires* in Istanbul, it had been the first step for the final goal of Armenian independence.⁶²

So as to the implementation of these reforms, it was cut off by the outburst of World War I on June 28, 1914 and the inspectors-generals were removed by the Ottoman government on 31 December 1914. In July Germany declared war on Russia, and on August 8 Ottoman government ordered a general mobilization. In December 1914, after Turkey had entered the war on the side of Germany, the reform agreement was annulled. Due to Lewy, the Armenian reform of 1914 contributed to the disastrous events of 1915. Young Turk leadership also deeply resented the intervention of European Powers on behalf of the Armenians, particularly, that of Russian intervention.⁶³ Feroz Ahmad cites that the reform agreement seemed like a prelude to a Russian protectorate over Eastern Anatolia, with final Armenian independence.⁶⁴ Therefore, when many Armenians demonstrated open sympathy in 1915 for the Russian invaders of the eastern provinces, Young Turks became convinced that only a radical measure such as the wholesale displacement of the Armenian population would provide a permanent solution to the recurring treasonous conduct of the Armenian minority.⁶⁵

1.2.3. Relocation Process

Apart from these diplomatic initiatives on Armenian Question, Armenian revolts continued in many parts of the Ottoman Empire. Relations between Armenians and Muslims in the Van area had been deteriorating for some time. Mobilization and the outbreak of war also aggravated this situation. While the Armenian propagandists planned to pursue their activities in Van, the other

⁶¹ Richard G. Hovannisian, "The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire, 1876 -1914", *The Armenian People From Ancient to Modern Times*, ed., Richard G. Hovannisian, p. 236-237.

⁶² Cemal Paşa, *Hatıralar...*, p. 424.

⁶³ Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide*, (Utah: The University of Utah Press, 2005), pp. 38 -39.

⁶⁴ Ahmad, p. 424.

⁶⁵ Lewy, p. 39.

revolutionary Armenians worked on the arming of Armenian population in that region. On 10 October 1914, the son of the Russian Armenian General, Loris Melikov, went to Van and made arrangements for the distribution of weapons in Van and Bitlis. By October 1914 Turkish military commanders reported increased Armenian desertions and it was also said that the Russians were distributing arms to Armenian bands. Moreover, in the beginning of December 1914 Armenians of the Karçikan and Gevaş districts of Van cut the telegraph wires, killed a corporal and fired at a sub-governor and his entourage.⁶⁶ Between November 1914 and March 1915 the Governor of Van, Cevdet Bey, started to send telegraphs about the attacks of Armenian rebels in various districts of Van.⁶⁷ When the Armenian rebels began to set fire the Muslim villages, Van started to be released and Ottoman soldiers retreated from the province to the south side of the Van Lake. After Russian army reached into the province, an Armenian state was set up at Van under Russian protection and an Armenian legion was formed to expel the Turks outside of Van entirely. Although Van was taken under control by the Turkish forces on 22 July 1915, it was seized again by the Armenian and Russian forces in August.⁶⁸

The Van revolt was the turning point in Turco-Armenian relations during the First World War. It forced the Ottoman government to take some decisions finally ending with relocation. The Ottoman government firstly appealed to the Armenian parliament members with the purpose of providing security inside and calming down

⁶⁶ Sonyel, *The Ottoman...*, p. 293. While Van rebellion was extending, Armenians were pursuing their attacks against Muslim villages, Ottoman governors and soldiers in other regions-Zeytun, Elazığ, Sivas (January 1915). In addition to these attacks, atrocities and attacks were made by Armenians in Bitlis, Aleppo, Kayseri and Siirt through February 1915. So the central government decided to disarm the Armenian soldiers and gendarmeries, placed them in work battalions and employed them in construction and transport work.

⁶⁷ Gürün, 264-267.

⁶⁸ For extensive research based on Turkish military archives and is about the sequence of events in Van rebellion: Gürün, pp. 251 -275; for assessing information (based on eye-witness accounts of Muslims inhabiting in Van) about the social, economic situation of the Armenian population and Turco-Armenian relations in Van before the Rebellion and Armenian atrocities during the rebellion: Hüseyin Çelik, "The 1915 Armenian Revolt in Van: Eyewitness Testimony" in *The Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period*, ed., Türkkaya Ataöv, (Ankara: Turkish National Assembly, 2001), pp. 87 -109.

the rebellious Armenians and warned the Patriarch.⁶⁹ Then against the possibility of another rebellion that undermined the power of Ottoman army units, the instruction was sent to 14 governorates, 10 administrations, on 24 April 1915 which ordered the arresting of the leaders of the Armenian communities and closing of their centres and confiscation of their documents, papers. However, despite all these measures, Armenian attacks continued and this forced the Ottoman government to put more effective and strict measures into action.

The Armenian attacks to the Ottoman army as well to the Muslim civilians, and their co-operation with the Russians forced the Ottoman Empire, which was fighting in many front lines at the same time, to take a decision to bring an end to this situation. On 2 May, 1915 Enver Pasha, thought to be as a solution, sent his plan to Talat Pasha which included two ways to cease the Armenian activities. The first step which envisaged the relocation of the Armenians was taken upon.⁷⁰ According to this plan, should the Armenians be dispersed into various places and divided into smaller units, instead of being left in their bulk, then they would not be capable of carrying on with their rebellion. For this reason, the first relocation decision was taken especially for the regions where the revolts happened.

Talat Pasha first tackled with the issue of moving the Armenians in Van, Bitlis, and Erzurum out of war zones. In the orders that were sent to the governors of these cities, it was required from them to make all cooperation with the military commanders and the Armenians of these cities would be transmitted to the south immediately.⁷¹

On 23 May 1915, the places, which were to be evacuated determined as follows:

- 1- Erzurum, Van and Bitlis Provinces,

⁶⁹ Sonyel, *The Ottoman...*, p. 299; Süslü, pp. 106 -107.

⁷⁰ Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Riyaseti, no. 1/1, KLS 44, Dosya 207, F2-1 from Gürün, p. 268; Halaçoğlu, *Facts on...*, p. 67-68.

⁷¹ Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi, numara (nr.). 52/200 (Ek1); nr. 52/281-282 from Halaçoğlu, *Facts on...*, p. 67-68.

- 2- Apart from the center of Aleppo Province, the villages and the towns in the regions of İskenderun, Belen, Cisir-i Şugur and Antakya,
- 3- Excluding Marash city centre, Districts of Marash city,
- 4- Adana, Sis, Mersin, Kozan, and Cebel-i Bereket Districts.

The Armenians removed from Erzurum, Van and Bitlis would be sent to the southern part of the Province of Mossul, District of Dar-al Zor , and excluding the centre, to Marash District and they would be settled there.

In order to protect the transportation process, officials and supervisors were appointed. The Armenians who came to their settlement areas were to settle in villages which were established again by themselves, either to the places that were indicated by the government or they would settle the houses which were constructed afresh by them in existing towns or villages. It was the necessity that the settlement villages of the Armenians must be at least 25 kms far from the Baghdad railway. The dispatch and the settlement of the transmitted Armenians were left to the local officials. The protection of life and property, food supply and comfort of these Armenians were left to existing governmental officials according to this rule. The deported Armenians could carry their removable properties with themselves and it was decided that an instruction would be prepared about their irremovable properties and it would be rescripted.⁷²

The chief commander to Interior Ministry sent a coded telegram on 26 May 1915 which declared that “It is decided that the Armenians from Eastern Provinces, from Zeytun and the places like this where they have a larger community would be sent to the south of Diyarbakır, the Euphrates valley and towns and villages around Urfa and Süleymaniye. In order not to cause new rebellions, some of the measures for the Armenian deportation should be taken into account: First of all, the Armenian community must not be much more than the proportion of the Muslim community and the tribes and their numbers must not be over than %10 of the Muslims and the tribes in the places where they were sent. Secondly, the villages that would be founded by

⁷² Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi, numara. 53/94 from Halaçoğlu, *Facts on...*, pp. 73 -74.

the deported Armenians must not be more than fifty houses. Thirdly, the Armenian immigrants must not change houses even if it would be for travelling and deportation.”⁷³

At that time, the notification sent by Russia, England, and France, which rendered jointly the Ottoman Empire liable for the execution of the Armenians made it necessary to make a proposal for the deportation of the Armenians. After this, Talat Pasha sent a proposal to Senate [Meclis-i Vükela] to be accepted and it was accepted on 27 May 1915. Thus, a temporary law was approved. Senate informed that the decision of Interior Ministry is useful in this struggle in order to protect the state’s existence and security and also to avoid further harmful activities. This law was approved by the Assembly on 15 September 1915 since the Assembly was not open at that time.⁷⁴ After that, it was decided that:

“1. The Armenians would be sent to the places only when their life and property security is provided.

2. Up to then they would be settled in the given places, their commodities would be provided by the immigrant fund.

3. The houses and fields would be given to these Armenians in respect to the values of their previous properties. For the poor, the government would construct houses; for the farmers and artisans, seed and tools would be provided.

4. The properties of these Armenians that remained behind would be accounted and they would be given to their owners later.

5. The places that were evacuated by the Armenians would be given to the refugees after identifying the Armenian irremovable properties.

6. Special commissions would carry out all these subjects and about them an order would be prepared.

⁷³ Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Riyaseti, no. 1/1, KLS 44, Dosya 207, F.2-3 from Gürün, p. 277.

⁷⁴ Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türk İnkılabı Tarihi*, III/3, 3rd Edition, (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1983), pp. 40-42.

7. Revenues like olive yards, caravanserai, factory, etc., which were out of the interests of refugees, would be rented or sold and their revenues would be sent to their owners”.⁷⁵

The government also sent many other orders relating to the relocation process. However, this process will be explored in detail in the third part of our study with respect to the information provided by the provincial governors of the Ottoman State and other states’ consular officials and foreign residents about the situation of the Armenians in the centers of the Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus.

In sum, after drawing the general picture of the situation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before World War I, then we tried to touch upon the changing Ottoman-Armenian relations and then upon the process leading to the relocation of Armenians. Under the light of the information provided up to now, we note that relocation of the Armenians was an emergency measure made necessary by the treasonable activities of the Armenian Revolutionaries who organized a full-scale rebellion behind the Turkish lines. They, on the one hand, betrayed the Ottoman armies on the Caucasus front in World War I and assisted the Russian occupation of the Ottoman provinces of Van, Kars and Erzurum. The armed activities also carried out by secret societies and armed bands of independence-seeking Armenians instigated by great powers such as Russia, Britain, France and Germany, bent on partitioning the Ottoman state. Thus, unable to tell who was and who was not in league with the enemy, the Ottoman government had no choice but to remove many of the Armenians to a new location in the interior part of the Ottoman Empire such as the destinations of Aleppo and Damascus in Syria and in Mesopotamia. During this relocation, unfortunate excesses took place and many Armenians lost their life because of various factors. The government did its best to prevent these killings and punished those who could be found responsible for them.⁷⁶ There were no large-scale massacres; moreover many Muslims, too died as a result of the atrocities of the

⁷⁵ Halaçoğlu, *Facts on...*, p. 75.

⁷⁶ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Documents: 247, 248.

Armenians carried out in Kars, Van, İzmit, Erzurum, Bitlis, and other Ottoman provinces assumed dimensions.

At this point, we want to move to our main task which is the Syrian Armenians during the last decades of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries. Then, we will continue with the application of the relocation process within the context of the centres in the provinces of Aleppo and Damascus.

CHAPTER II

SYRIAN ARMENIANS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE BEFORE WORLD WAR I

2.1. The Situation of the Armenian Community in the Sub-province of Aleppo Before World War I

2.1.1. Aleppo: A Historical Background

Aleppo; situated in the northern part of Syria, is considered as one of the oldest continuously populated cities in the world. It has a significant history as a commercial centre starting from the Middle Ages as a vital point on the Silk Road, which stretched from Mediterranean to China. It had undergone the domination of many different ancient civilizations since the erection of the settlement.¹ In addition to this viable site, extensive areas of fertile soil surrounding the city as well as the olive and mulberry orchards of the hill country to the west, and southwest contributed to the city's geographical significance.²

Aleppo was also a significant centre for the Ottoman Empire. Russell discussed the city of Aleppo in the 18th century as:

Aleppo, the present metropolis of Syria, is deemed, in importance, the third city in the Ottoman dominions. In situation, magnitude, population, and opulence, it is much inferior to Constantinople and Cairo; nor can it presume to emulate the courtly splendour of either of those cities. But in salubrity of air, in the solidity and elegance of its private buildings, as well as the convenience and neatness of its streets, Aleppo may be reckoned superior to both...³

¹ Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City Between East and West Aleppo, İzmir and İstanbul*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 17-19.

² Dick Douwes, *The Ottomans in Syria: A History of Justice and Oppression*, (London, 1999), pp. 6-7.

³ Alexander Russell, *The Natural History of Aleppo*, (London: Printed A. Millar, 1756), p. 1.

As to the association of Armenians with the city of Aleppo, which is the main area of our study, this dates back as far as the first century BC (84-83 BC) when Tigran the Great annexed Syria and Lebanon to his empire and for fourteen years Syria was governed by the Armenian armies. The Roman emperors established military colonies in Syria and on the mountains of Lebanon of the Armenian warrior satrapies from the third to the sixth century. There were Armenian soldiers serving to the Byzantine and Sasanid armies in Syria against the Arabs which was about 632-40 AD. After the fall of the capital of Armenia, Ani, many Armenians were put to move towards Cilicia and Syria. According to Krikorian, there were several organized Armenian communities in Syria in the twelfth century. The participation of the six Armenian bishops coming from Mesopotamia and Syria in the church council in Rumkale (*Halfeti*) in 1179 can be considered as proves that demonstrating well beings of the Armenian community in Syria.⁴

Between eleventh and fourteenth centuries, there were Armenian communities living in the main towns of Syria: Aleppo, Hamah, Latikia, Antioch, and Damascus. This period was also coincided with the time of the Armenian kingship of Cilicia. However, after the fall of Cilicia, the Armenians moved more and more into Syria for safety. Especially during the fourteenth century Aleppo became a centre for Armenians in which they had their church, school, and community leaders, both clerical and lay. In 1499-1500 the church of Forty Martyrs in the quarter of Salibah was extended and Aleppo became next to Sis (Kozan) which is the second seat of the Catholicate of Cilicia. Then, from the beginning of the sixteenth century the Armenian community of Aleppo had its regular episcopal prelacy.⁵

The first Armenian émigrés to Aleppo came from Cilicia, especially from the regions of Marash and Zeytun in the second half of the sixteenth century during the Ottoman period.⁶ Toward the end of the same century, many Armenians came newly

⁴ Krikorian, p. 80.

⁵ Krikorian, pp. 80-81.

⁶ Sanjian, p. 46.

from Julfa to settle in Aleppo. As talented merchants, these people contributed greatly to both the community life and trade in the city.⁷ Sanjian asserts that, that period marks the golden age of Armenian Aleppine commerce, with the natives of Old and New Julfa occupying a position of pre-eminence.⁸ Furthermore, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there were periodic migrations of ecclesiastics and laymen from the town of Karkarh, on the left bank of the Euphrates. The emigrants in the middle of the seventeenth century were principally from Sasun who were followed by others from the same town in later times. They distinguished themselves at Aleppo as bakers, millers, and wheat traders.

The magnates originally of Julfa were replaced by a group of enterprising merchants who arrived from the Anatolian cities of Akin, Arapkir, and the villages in their vicinities beginning from the eighteenth century. These traders and the artisans gradually emerged as the dominant class in the Aleppine community.

The period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries is the most prosperous era in the history of the Armenians of Aleppo in the sense that their ecclesiastico-national as well as their economic status have prospered significantly. Their two churches continued as the centres of religious and secular activity. Besides, they settled in the Salibiya and Jidayd as well as Hart, Sis and Hart-Zibbal quarters of the city.⁹

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Armenian migration was principally from Erzurum, Erzincan and Akin as well as from Cilicia, significantly Ayntab and Marash.¹⁰ Thus, the population of Armenians in Aleppo increased. According to Bayraktar¹¹, this increase is due to the settlement of Armenians who have left Marash *sanjak* in the aftermath of the Armenian rebellion during the mid-nineteenth century.

⁷ Krikorian, pp. 80-81.

⁸ Sanjian, p. 49.

⁹ Sanjian, p. 47.

¹⁰ Sanjian, p.46.

¹¹ Hilmi Bayraktar, *19. Yüzyılda Halep Eyaletinin İktisadi Yapısı*, (Elazığ, Fırat Üniversitesi Basımevi, 2004), pp. 24-25.

Rebelling in rural areas and slaughtering many Muslims, the Armenians had to migrate to Aleppo, a larger city they deemed to be more secure.

Final migrations to Aleppo did occur during the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from eastern Anatolia. The reason for these migrations was the relocation decision of the government which was ordered at a time of great insecurity during World War I. With this decision, thousands of Armenians relocated to Aleppo, Damascus and Mossul. However, we will discuss these migrations in the third part of our study. At this point, after considering the Armenian presence in Aleppo as a historical background, we want to give some information about the administrative structure of the province of Aleppo.

2.1.2. Administrative Structure of the Sub-province of Aleppo Before World War I

Aleppo was incorporated into the territories of the Ottoman Empire after the Campaign of Merçidabık in 1516. After conquest, Aleppo was established as a province by the Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Selim.¹² However, it is difficult to consider Aleppo as a distinct province with its sub-provinces (*sancaks*) and districts (*kazas*), because of the fact that its dependant sub-provinces were registered as the sub-provinces of the Province of Damascus or the Province of Arab.¹³ This situation changed during the reign of Sultan Suleiman after which Aleppo was established as a distinct province.¹⁴ In the report of Koçi Bey, which was presented to Sultan Mahmud IV. and Sultan İbrahim (1618-1640), it was stated that the Province of Aleppo consisted of nine sub-provinces (*sanjaks*) which were called as the sub-provinces of Aleppo, namely, Edene (Adana), Kilis Kürtleri, Birecik, Ma'arra, Aziz, Balisi,

¹² Solakzade Mehmet Hemdemi Efendi, *Tarih-i Solakzade*, vol. II, Vadit Çabuk, ed., Ankara, 1989, p. 56.

¹³ Enver Çakar, *XVI. Yüzyılda Haleb Sancağı (1516-1566)*, (Elazığ: Fırat Üniversitesi Orta Doğu Araştırmaları Merkezi Tarih Şubesi Yay., 2003), p. 24.

¹⁴ Çakar, p. 30.

Münbic / Menbic, Türkman and A'zaz. It was also cited that Aleppo was the “Sub-province of Pasha” (*Paşa Sancağı*)¹⁵.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, according to, an ‘avarız defteri’ in 1811, which was mentioned in Bayraktar’s study, the province of Aleppo was composed of 16 districts (*kazas*) and 12 communes (*nahiyes*)¹⁶ According to Bayraktar, although the divisions of the province changed from time to time, that structure mentioned below generally was preserved during the nineteenth century.

Table 2.1 Administrative Division of the Province of Aleppo in 1811 due to an ‘avarız defter’

SN	Districts	Communes	SN	Districts	Communes
	Haleb	Cebel-i Sem'an	7	Harim	Nefs-i Harim
1	“	Bâb		“	Ermeniyan ¹⁷
	“	Cebbul		“	Cebel-i 'Ala
2	Antakiye	Kasir	8	Tizin	
	“	Ordu	9	Cebel-i Berişa	Nefs-i Berişa
	“	Altınözü	10	Ma'arretü'n-Numan	
	“	Cebel-i Akram	11	Ravendan	
	“	Süveydiye	12	Şeyhü'l-Hadid	
3	Eriha		13	Cebel-i Badiye	
4	Sermin		14	Ma'arret'l- Mısrin	
5	Dergüş		15	İdlibü's-Suğra	
6	Münbic		16	İskenderun	

Source: *MAD*, nr. 2985, pp. 145-147 from Bayraktar, p. 16.

Besides, during the nineteenth century, the borders of the Province of Aleppo changed frequently. First change came in 1815 after an internal conflict in 1813. Due to this change, İskenderun, Payas, Üzeyr and Arsus were separated from the Province

¹⁵ Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, transl. by Zuhuri Danişman, (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yay., 1985), p. 136.

¹⁶ *MAD*, nr. 2985, pp. 145-147 from Bayraktar, p. 16.

¹⁷ Although the commune of “Ermeniyan” was cited in this ‘avarız defteri’, we did not coincide with such a commune called as “Ermeniyan” later.

of Aleppo.¹⁸ Again, during this conflict Ayntab was separated from Marash and attached to Aleppo. Another change which affected the Province of Aleppo during the nineteenth century was the Treaty of Kütahya. With this treaty, while the Provinces of Egypt, Crete and Damascus were given to Mehmet Ali Pasha, the Provinces of Ceddah, Aleppo and Adana were ceded to his son İbrahim Pasha. Thus, Aleppo was under the governance of Egypt until 1840.¹⁹

During the Tanzimat period, Ottoman administrative structure also changed. The most significant of these changes occurred in 1864, in which the new provincial regulation (*Vilayet Nizamnamesi*) was promulgated in order to reform the administration of the Ottoman Provinces.²⁰ Before moving into the application of these regulations for the Province of Aleppo we want to give some general information about this new structure. By this enactment the Ottoman territories were divided into: a) the ‘*vilayet*’ (province); b) the ‘*sancak*’ (subdivision of a *vilayet*= sub-province) c) the ‘*kaza*’ (administrative division next to ‘*sancak*’= district); d) ‘*nahiye*’ (subdivision of a ‘*kaza*’ = commune); and e) ‘*kariye*’ (village or quarter). The province was to be governed by a ‘*vali*’ (governor), the district by a ‘*mutasarrıf*’, the sub-district by a ‘*kaymakam*’, the commune by a ‘*müdiir*’ (director) and the village by a ‘*muhtar*’ (village headman).

Cevdet Pasha, who was the governor of the Province of Aleppo during that time, established a commission and prepared the new provincial regulation for the Province of Aleppo (*Haleb Vilayeti Nizamnamesi*).²¹ This code which was admitted and prepared as convenient to the samples of the provincial regulations of Syria, Bosnia and Danube with some changes such as the representation of the Muslim and non-Muslim members in the Aleppine Assembly. The number of the Muslim and non-

¹⁸ Bayraktar, p. 15.

¹⁹ Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol..V, (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1999), p. 136.

²⁰ “Vilayet Nizamnamesi”, *Düstur*, c. I, p. 200.

²¹ A.Cevdet, *Tezahir*, Tezkire 36, pp. 200-202. See also for the detailed information about the “Haleb Vilayeti Nizamnamesi”: Istanbul Üniversitesi Merkez Kütüphanesi / TY.83420.

Muslim members in the Assembly would be determined in relation to their proportion within the general population.²²

Under that new administration, the administrative structure of Aleppo had been renewed by the first governor Cevdet Pasha. Then, the Province of Aleppo was composed of seven sub-provinces which were called as Aleppo, Adana, Kozan, Maraş, Payas, Urfa, Zor. However, sub-province of Zor was separated from this structure.²³ Within this structure, after 1865 nine districts and eight communes dependant on the central sub-province of the Province of Aleppo were as follows:

Table 2.2 Administrative Division of the Province of Aleppo in 1865

Sub-province of Aleppo					
SN	District	Commune	SN	District	Commune
1	Nefs-i Haleb	Sem'an nahiyesi	6	İzziye	
2	İdlib	Eriha	7	Cisr-i Şugur	Ordu
		Sermin			Dergüş
		Ma'arrtü'l-Masrin			Kal'a-i Mudyik
3	Harim	Berişa	8	Bab ve Cebbül	
4	Antakiye		9	Reyhaniye	
5	Ayıntab				
Sub-province of Uzeyr and Payas					
1	Osmaniye	Çend-oğlu	2	Payas	
		Tecirli	3	Belan	İskenderun
		Cerid			
Sub-province of Adana					
1	Nefs-i Adana	Misis	2	Tarsus	
		Karsanlı	3	Mersin	
		Sırkıñ-ı Zir	4	Karaisalı	
		Bozdoğan-zir			
Sub-province of Kozan					
1	Belanköy	Rum	4	Kozan-Rum	Haçin
2	Sis				Gürleşen
3	Kars-i Zilkadriye				Feke
Liva-i Maraş					
1	Maraş		5	Bulanık	Kaypak-oğlu
2	Andırın		6	İslahiye	Karayığit-oğlu
3	Zeytun				Delikanlu

²² Bayraktar, pp. 19-20.

²³ A.Cevdet, *Tezakir*, Tezkire 32, p. 202.

Table 2.2 (Continued)

4	Hassa	Hacılar			Çelikanlu
		Tiyek	7		
		Ekbez	8		
Sub-province of Urfa					
1	Urfa		3	Birecik	
2	Rumkale		4	Suruç	

Source: A.Cevdet, *Tezakir*, Tezkire 36, pp. 220-225.

However, this structure changed in 1876 as Adana was made an independent Province. According to the Ottoman yearbook of 1881, the Province of Aleppo was composed of the Sub-provinces of Aleppo, Urfa, Marash, that is to say, the Sub-province of Zor became a separate Sub-province.²⁴

Table 2. 3 Administrative Division of the Province of Aleppo in 1313 (1897/1898)

The Sub-province of Aleppo							
	District	Communes No	Village No.		District	Communes No.	Village No.
1	Aleppo	1	34	8	Kilis	9	570
2	Ayıntab	9	346	9	İskenderun	9	26
3	Antakiye	4	288	10	Harim	3	184
4	Cisr-i Şuğur	4	183	11	Ma'arra	1	140
5	Bab ve Cebbul	5	250	12	Belan	1	47
6	C.Sem'an	1	170	13	Münbic	1	232
7	Rakka	1	29				
The Sub-province of Urfa							
1	Urfa	7	612	3	Birecik	1	129
2	Rumkale	1	80	4	Suruç	1	318
The Sub-province of Marash							
1	Marash	1	220	4	Zeytun	1	39
2	Elbistan	1	130	5	Pazarcık	1	76
3	Andırın	1	82				

Source: Ali Cevad, p. 339.

²⁴ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1311 H / [1893] p. 62.*

When the information about the administrative division of Aleppo proved by Ali Cevad is compared with the information proved by the Ottoman year-books' that we focused on, it will be seen that the administrative division of the Province changed in the first decade of the twentieth century. Besides, the 'District of Idleb' which was mentioned in the three yearbooks of Aleppo was not cited in any way by Ali Cevad.

²⁵

Table 2.4 Administrative Division of the Sub-province of Aleppo in 1326 (1908) in Ottoman Year-book of Aleppo

The Sub-province of Aleppo							
	District	Communes No.	Village No.		District	Communes No.	Village No.
1	Aleppo	1	34	8	Kilis	9	469
2	Ayıntab	8	207	9	İskenderun	1	24
3	Antakiye	4	173	10	Harim	2	172
4	Cisr-i Şuğur	4	169	11	Ma'arra	-	167
5	Bab	1	198	12	Belan	4	349
6	C.Sem'an	-	113	13	Münbic	1	450
7	Rakka	-	83	14	İdleb ²⁶	3	117

Source: *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326 H / [1908]*, pp. 215 - 378.

In 1910, another change did occur in the administrative division of the Province that is, the Sub-province of Urfa was separated from the Province and was

²⁵ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308 H / [1890]*, p. 126; *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319 H / [1901]*, p. 213; *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326 H / [1908]*, p. 125.

²⁶ See for the detailed information about the District of Idleb: *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326 H / [1908]*, pp. 305 - 312.

established as a distinct Sub-province.²⁷ Besides, a district of the Sub-province of Aleppo, Rakka, was connected to the Sub-province of Urfa.²⁸

As a consequence, it is clear from these figures that the administrative structure of the Province of Aleppo was not stable and the boundaries of the Province had changed constantly during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to Bayraktar, the reason behind this instability lied either internal revolts or economic conditions.²⁹ On the other hand, when the situation of the Sub-province (*sanjak*) of Aleppo is considered in this framework, we see that it remained the centre of the Province of Aleppo as Sub-province of Pasha (*Paşa Sanjak*.)

All in all, the administrative structure of the Province of Aleppo was mainly composed of the Sub-provinces (*Sanjaks*) of Aleppo and Marash before World War I. Today, while the sub-province of Aleppo is within the boundaries of Syria with some changes as in the districts of Ayıntab, Antakiye, İskenderun and Kilis which are within the boundaries of Turkey; the sub-provinces of Marash and Urfa are within the boundaries of Turkey except for the district of Rakka. On the other hand, the sub-province of Aleppo was composed of the districts of Aleppo, Ayıntab, Antakiye, Cısr-i Şuğur, Bab, C.Sem'an, Kilis, İskenderun, Harim, Ma'arra, Belan, Münbic, İdleb before World War I. Today, whereas the districts of Ayıntab, Antakiye, Kilis, İskenderun are within the boundaries of Turkey as its cities, the rests are within Syrian lands.

²⁷ BOA.İR-DH.4(3.R.1328/9 Eylül 1910).

²⁸ BOA.İR-DH.5(10.C.1332/6 Mayıs 1914). However, the last change for the administrative division of the Province was made with a law in 1336 H/ 1918. According to the related parts of this law, which were second and third items, the districts of the Sub-province of Aleppo which were Ma'arra and Cısr-i Şuğur and the commune of Madiyk were connected to the Sub-province of Hamah. Besides, with the third item the sub-province of Aleppo was composed of the districts of Cebel-ü Sem'an, Bab, İdleb, together with the communes of Hanasır, Oguzhan, Meskene.(BOA.DH.İ-UM.E-47/44(18-B.1336/29 Nisan 1918.)

²⁹ See for the details of boundary changes: Bayraktar, pp. 30-34.

2.1.3. Armenian Population in the Sub-province of Aleppo before World War I

In this part of the present study, we will examine the Armenian population within the Province of Aleppo and then, we will concentrate on the centre of Aleppo during the Ottoman period before World War I.

The demographic situation of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire has been the subject of considerably more estimates and debates than any other community of the Ottoman Empire. According to Karpata, although there have been studies dealing with the population of the Ottoman state in the nineteenth century, the value of most of them is undermined by at least three shortcomings:

First, only a few of these studies are based on reliable statistical information stemming from actual counts of population. Second, they often were undertaken by Western observers to advocate the case of certain ethnic or religious groups and, besides demonstrating an appalling lack of information on practically every aspect of Muslim life, they reflected the political biases of the scholars involved or of their informants. Third, most of them dealt with the European part of the Ottoman state and often left Anatolia and the Arab-speaking countries unaccounted for. In fact, after most of the Balkans became independent in 1878, thus achieving the hidden purpose behind the manipulation of some population statistics, the number of studies on the Ottoman population dropped spectacularly.³⁰

Nonetheless, it is necessary to go to the basic sources on the Ottoman population in the nineteenth century to reach more reliable statistics. The Ottoman government kept statistics of the Armenian population as part of its regular registration system and as taxation records for the military exemption tax (*bedel-i askeriye*), that Armenians paid instead of military service. These statistics were made public in the usual way, through the censuses and the *salnames*. The *Salnames* contained official population figures and derived from more complete census figures which were seldom made fully public.³¹

Although these censuses provide reliable figures, on the other hand they had shortcomings. First of all, censuses were based on counts of individual households (*khanas*) or families which in a number of cases were households composed of several

³⁰ Kemal H. Karpata, "Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/82-1893" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 9 (1978), p. 239.

³¹ Karpata, p. 240.

nuclear families. Secondly, sometimes only the taxable males or those able to perform military service were included in censuses. Thirdly, most of the accounts dealt with the non-Muslims supplied by communal heads or local officials.³² Nonetheless, in spite of all these shortcomings, the censuses had to be accurate and complete since they provided the only factual basis available to the government for levying taxes and conscripting men into the army, which made them more valuable when compared to the figures given by observers, travellers and informants.

Besides, Ottoman palace departments and government ministries also kept summary statements on Armenian population³³ because of the fact that, the Armenian nationalism had become a source of external and internal political threats to the Ottomans in post- 1878 period.

As to the Armenian population of the Province of Aleppo, there are different estimates, often at variety with one another. While some studies based their figures on Ottoman population registers, some on the registers of Armenian Patriarchate, some on the reports of European consuls or personal estimates, and some on reports from members and officials of the Armenian *millet*.

In this part of the study, the general population of the Province of Aleppo will be explored with respect to different sources and then, as the core of our study, the population of the District of Aleppo will be highlighted in relation to the Armenian population in the city.

The Ottoman had censuses carried out during the first century of their occupation of the city and these recorded the number of households (*khana*), quarter by quarter, distinguishing their inhabitants according to their religious denominations: Muslims, Christians and Jews. The first census in Aleppo, dated 1.537, mentions a still very modest community: in the Judayda, Nasara quarter, 161 family units, and for all the streets situated outside Ba al-Nasr, mostly inhabited by Christians, 392 units. In all, 553 households out of a total of 10.270 that is to say 5.4 percent. The census

³² Karpat, p. 240.

³³ Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire*, (New York and London: New York University Press, 1983), p. 57.

realized towards the end of the century (1.584) indicates a limited growth: 638 units, 6.8 percent of the total (9.361 households).³⁴ The seventeenth century was marked by a considerable increase in the Christian community reinforced by a large immigration movement of Maronites from the Lebanon, Orthodox Christians from the inland regions of Syria and Armenians from Cilicia and Eastern Anatolia.³⁵

Around 1800, the Christian population of Aleppo represented 20 percent of total population of the city (about 100.000) inhabitants of that time, a proportion quadruple of the figure of 1516. Half of these Christians were Greeks, and one quarter Armenians.³⁶ According to Ghazzi, out of the 19.690 Christians living within the perimeter of the historical city (inside its limits around 1800)- 19.018 lived in the northern suburb for the end of the nineteenth century. When we compare these two evidences, the distribution of the Christians in this region suggested that a progressive settlement of the Christians expanded from west to east, replacing the Muslim population and formed homogenous quarters. To illustrate, as indicated above, the percentage of Christians, specifically the Armenians, did rise to 100 percent in the quarter of Saliba/Judayda. Moreover, the ratio of the Christians in the quarters situated along the street of Bab-Al-Hadid was 50 percent.³⁷

For the following years during the nineteenth century, A. Cevdet Pasha provided³⁸ a census in 1867, which was based on counts of individual households or families. According to this census, there were 115.377 households in the Province of Aleppo. Among these, 99.436 were Muslim households, 15.444 Christian households and 724 Jewish households. The distribution of these figures was as follows:

³⁴ Andre Raymond, *Arab Cities in the Ottoman Period: Cairo, Syria and the Maghreb*, (Ashgate Voriorum), p. 84.

³⁵ B. Masters, *Mercantilism and the Islamic Economy in Aleppo*, (New York: U.P., 1988), p. 40.

³⁶ A. Marcus, *Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York: Columbia U.P., 1989), p. 339.

³⁷ Raymond, p. 4.

³⁸ A.Cevdet Paşa, *Tezakir*, Tezkire 36, pp. 222-225.

Table 2.5 Population of the Province of Aleppo in 1867 (Households)

Sub-province	Districts	Muslims	Christians	Jews	Total	Non-Muslim %
Aleppo	Nefs-i Aleppo	10.180	1.978	500	12.658	19.5
	İzziye	1.220	0	0	1220	-
	Kilis	6.850	280	46	7.176	4.5
	Ayıntab	3.907	1.027	67	5.001	22
	Bab ve Cebbül	6.500	0	20	6.520	0.3
	İdlib	3.580	123	0	3.703	3.5
	Cısr-Şugur	2.661	436	0	3.047	13
	Harim	1.750	0	0	1.750	-
	Antakiye	8.775	1.096	33	9.904	11.5
	Reyhaniye	2.200	0	0	2.200	
Total		47.623	4.940	666	52.979	10.2
Payas	Nefs-i Payas	1.213	447	0	1.660	27
	Belan	1.729	312	0	2.041	15
	Osmaniye	1.388	0	0	1.388	-
Adana	Nefs-i Adana	5.800	767	0	6.567	11.7
	Muhcir	2.500	0	0	2.500	-
	Mersin	1.210	90	0	1.300	7
Total		9.510	857	0	10.367	8.3
Kozan	Sis	3.956	352	0	4.308	8
	Belanköy	1.895	259	0	2.154	12
	Haçin	1.584	1.739	0	3.323	52.5
	Kars-i Zülkadriye	2.500	96	0	2.596	3.7
Total		9.935	2.446	0	12.381	20
Liva-i Maraş	Nefs-i Maraş	5.476	2.371	29	7.876	30
	Andırın	2.011	448	0	2.459	18
	Zeytun	1.221	1.709	0	2.830	57
	Elbistan	4.063	196	0	4.259	5
	Pazarcık	2.622	36	0	2.658	1.4
	Bulanık	1.194	350	0	1.544	23
	İslahiye	2.021	28	0	2.049	1.4
	Hassa	1.118	100	0	1.218	8
Total		19.726	5.238	29	24.893	21
Urfa	Nefs-i Urfa	1.377	974	29	2.380	42
	Rumkale	2.956	97	0	3.053	3
	Birecik	2.602	119	0	2.721	4.5
	Suruç	1.377	14	0	1.391	1
Total		8.312	1.204	29	9.545	13
General Total		99.436	15.444	724	115.377	
	%	85.8	13.7	0.5	100	

Source: A.Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, Tezkire 36, pp. 222-225.

According to these figures, in the Province of Aleppo in 1867, 85.8 percent of the population was Muslims and the rest, that is %13.7, was Non-Muslims and 0.5 percent was the Jews. Moreover, when we look at the figures according to the district division, it is clear that the highest level of non-Muslim population lived in the District of Zeytun which consisted of 57 percent of the city population. This district was followed by the Districts of Haçin with 42 percent; Urfa with 30 percent; Payas with 27 percent; and Ayntab with 22 percent. As for the district of Aleppo, non-Muslim population covered the 19.5 percent of the city's population.

So as to compare the figures provided by A. Marcus cited above for the year 1800, the population of the non-Muslims in the city of Aleppo decreased 0.5 percent. We think that this decrease was caused by the approximate account of the city provided by Marcus about 100.000.

Besides, the study of Ali Cevad also provides information about the population of the Province of Aleppo at the end of the nineteenth century which based on nationalities rather than communities.

Table 2.6 Nationality-Based Population of the Province of Aleppo at the End of the 19th Century

Muslims		Christians		Jews
Nationality	Population	Nationality	Population	Population
Syrian Arabs	295.110	Greek Melkit	14.153	
Nusayri	34 000	Armenian Catholic	12.100	
Turks	135.785	Assyrians	15.000	
Others	451	Maronites	2.989	
		Chaldeans	14.000	
		Latin	1.058	
		Armenians (Others)	16.149	
		Orthodox (Others)	13.160	
		Yakubi (Others)	14.110	
		Chaldeans (Others)	14.460	
		Protestants	633	
Total	465.346	Total	111.809	9.885
General Total	602 426			

Source: A. Cevad, *'Memalik-i Osmaniye'nin Tarih ve Coğrafya Lügat'ı*, (İstanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1313 (1896)) vol. I, pp. 338-339.

The accounts cited above and provided by A. Cevad indicate that the largest group in the Province of Aleppo as Muslim was Arabs and then Turks. On the other hand, the largest non-Muslim group was Armenians, and then Assyrians which followed the Armenians as the second largest non-Muslim group in the Province of Aleppo. Significantly, while the population figures were given according to separated communities for the non-Muslim population, such a division was not given for the Muslim population. For Bayraktar, the reason for this division among the non-Muslim population was to preserve the unity of the state. By this way the unification among the non-Muslims would be prevented.³⁹

After giving the general information about the population of the Province of Aleppo, we want to concentrate on the population of the Sub-province (*sanjak*) of Aleppo and then the population of the city of Aleppo since it was the centre of the Armenian settlement in the Province of Aleppo.

The figures, which are provided below, recorded in the Ottoman year-book of 1311⁴⁰, demonstrate the population of the sub-province of Aleppo was 529.407 in 1895/96. Among these 451.906 people were Muslims covering % 85.3 of the population; 77.501 people were Non-Muslims covering %14.7 of the population. As to the 'City of Aleppo' (*Nefs-i Halep*), its total population was 105.918. Among these, 74.087 of the people were Muslims which were the 70 percent of the population; on the other hand, 29.791 of the people were non-Muslims which were the 28 percent of the population. Lastly, 2 percent of the population was foreigners.

³⁹ Bayraktar, p. 26.

⁴⁰ *Halep Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1311H* / [1893], pp. 222-250.

Table 2.7 Population of the Sub-province of Aleppo in 1895/1896 (Households)

Religious Groups	City of Aleppo	Aynth	Kilis	İskn	Antak	İdlb	Harim	Cısr-i Suğur	Maam	Bb&Cb	Balan	Mmb	Total
Muslim	73.695	67.054	68.413	10.903	56.365	47.909	25.653	56.375	14.841	22.743	13	6.436	451.906
Copts	392	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	392
Greek	926	-	305	1.000	3.514	588	-	3.514	45	-	-	-	9.892
Greek C.	8.045	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.045
Arm.	1.646	11.540	2.556	415	2.333	-	-	2.334	-	-	415	-	21.238
Arm. C.	4.127	334	354	298	-	-	-	354	-	-	-	-	5.467
Assyrian	2.611	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.611
Maronite	1.952	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.952
Prot	63	3.529	334	-	284	-	-	284	-	-	3.529	-	8.023
Latin	328	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	348
Chaldean	141	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	141
Jews	7.874	710	523	13	221	-	-	-	-	50	-	-	9.391
Monophysit	2.042	-	-	61	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.113
Foreigner	2.040	188	3.557	1.067	137	396	501	137	133	247	1.000	50	9.453
Total	105.918	83.360	76.042	13.757	62.874	48.893	26.154	62.874	15.019	23.044	4.857	6.486	529.407

Source: *Halep Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1311H* / [1893], pp. 222-250.

When we compare the population of non-Muslims according to these figures, while the population rate of non-Muslims was 19.5 percent in 1867, it rose to 28 percent in 1895/96. Thus, the population rate of non-Muslims in the city of Aleppo rose 8.5 percent in thirty years. The reason for this rise was the settlement of Armenians who have left the sub-province of Marash in the aftermath of the Armenian rebellion during the mid-century. During their rebellious activities in rural areas, they killed many Muslims. In turn they faced a parallel violent reaction of the Muslims and then they had to migrate to Aleppo which they thought as would be more secure.⁴¹

As for the Armenian sources, there is a difficulty in obtaining at least approximate numbers since they estimated the Armenian population totally. Statistics of any actual population count or enumerations are usually listed in odd numbers, as

⁴¹ Bayraktar, p. 24-25.

5.000, 10.000 for the Province of Aleppo. They did not provide detailed population figures for the Province of Aleppo. For example, Ormanian records the Armenians as 163.800. The details of the figures provided by Krikorian are as follows⁴²:

The Districts of Aleppo, İskenderun, and Belen:

Apostolic	15.000	
Catholic	5.000	
Protestant	2.000	
Total		22.000

The Counties of Urfa and Dayr al-Zor

Apostolic	24.000	
Catholic	1.000	
Protestant	800	
Total		25.800

The Counties of Maraş, Elbistan and Pazarcık

Apostolic	30.000	
Catholic	4.000	
Protestant	3.500	
Total		37.500

The Counties of Süleymanlı and Andirin and the Commu of Firmis

Apostolic	27.000	
Catholic	500	
Protestant	500	
Total		28.000

The Counties of Gaziantep and Kilis

Apostolic	30.000	
Catholic	1.000	
Protestant	4.000	
Total		35.000

The Counties of Antioch, Jisr al-Shughur and Sahiun

⁴² M.Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia*, 2nd English Edition, (London, 1955), p. 206-207 from Krikorian, p. 83.

Apostolic	12.000	
Catholic	2.000	
Protestant	1.500	
Total		15.500
General Total		163.800

Those figures followed by the Theodik's almanac which gives estimates as 186.000.⁴³

To compare these figures with those provided by Ottoman yearbooks, we will give the estimates of the Armenians for the Province of Aleppo which are as follows:

Table 2.8 Population of the Province of Aleppo According to the Provincial Year-Book of Aleppo in 1908

Religious Groups	Female	Male	Total
Muslims	365.492	393.548	759.040
Greek Orthodox	5.435	6.197	11.632
Greek Catholic	4.059	4.232	8.291
Armenian Catholic	4.926	5.054	10.016
Armenians	29.967	35.066	65.033
Assyrian Catholic	1.512	1.618	3.130
Assyrians	814	1.038	1.852
Maronites	949	698	1.647
Chaldeans	293	289	582
Protestant	6.497	5.574	12.071
Latin	1.120	1.163	2.283
Copts	83	108	191
Strangers	1.370	2.815	4.185
Jews	5.391	6.357	11.748
Foreigners	5.263	2.496	11.759
GRAND TOTAL	433.124	470.145	903.269

Source: *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326 H / [1908]*, p. 224.

⁴³ Theodik, Amenun Taretsoytse, (The Almanac For Everyone), 1922, pp. 262-3; from Krikorian, p. 83.

When we compare these two statistics, the statistics of Ormanian estimates the total Armenian population of the Province of Aleppo as twice of the provincial year-book's estimates. When he estimates the number of the Protestant Armenians in Aleppo, he claims their number as 12.300 which strictly contrasts with the statistics of the Ottoman year books since they estimate total numbers of the Protestants in the Province as 12.071. The Armenian writer Krikorian finds these figures too much and he estimates the population of not only Aleppo but also Six Provinces (*Elviye-i Selase*) and the Province of Syria as half of the figures provided by the Armenian sources. And in this case he estimates the number of the Armenians in the Province of Aleppo as half of the Ormanian's figures.⁴⁴

On the other hand, in Yellow Book, published in French, the total population of the Province of Aleppo was stated as 576.320 Muslims and 40.843 Armenians between the years of 1893-1897.⁴⁵ Another figure for the years of 1896-1897 was provided by Vital Cuinet for the Province of Syria, Jerusalem, and for the Islands. Due to these accounts, while the population of Muslims was 4.068.646, Armenians were 59.018 in those places. Lastly in another instance provided by the Ottoman statistics for the year 1905, the total population of the Province was 667.790 and among these 35.104 were Armenian Gregorians; 5.739 were Armenian Catholics; and 8.643 were Armenian Protestants.⁴⁶ Thus, when we want to make a conclusion from these three figures, this conclusion would be that the total population of the Armenians in the Province of Aleppo was not over 10 percent before World War I.

As to the statistics of the Armenian Patriarchate, they were based on records of baptisms and deaths kept by ecclesiastical officials. Besides, the Patriarch kept records that were used to impose an ecclesiastical tax and that used to fix the number of deputies from each district to the Armenian political and religious assemblies.

⁴⁴ Krikorian, pp. 82-83.

⁴⁵ Necioğlu, p. 334.

⁴⁶ Uras, p.138.

The Patriarchate statistics provided figures for the years 1882 and 1912. However, the Patriarchate did not give detailed population statistics for areas outside of six *vilayets*, nor did it present data on other groups of the population for those areas. For the Province of Aleppo, Patriarchate gave the approximate number as 100.000 for the year 1882.⁴⁷ However, there was not a population figure of the Province of Aleppo represented for the year 1912.

On the other hand, there were also many difficulties with the population figures provided by the Patriarchate. First of all, they were not recorded in the form of a compilation of baptismal records, but in the form of rounded to the nearest 100 000. Furthermore, no examples of detailed Armenian parish records were given. The detailed person-by-person records of Ottoman minority population were reported in the Ottoman archives.⁴⁸ No official from the Armenian Patriarchate wrote commentary on the statistics or on how they were collected and compiled. Significantly, the Armenian Patriarchate statistics, and all the statistics that followed from them, were uniquely presented as sections of polemic documents, not part of statistical documents which were used as the supports for Armenian Independence.⁴⁹

The Population of the City of Aleppo: As main task for our study, we will now highlight the population of the Armenians in the city of Aleppo during the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries. The first official census was held in 1831 in the Ottoman State. However this census did not cover the Province of Aleppo.⁵⁰ Because of this, we reach census figures about the population of the Province of Aleppo during the middle of the nineteenth century from the study of Cevdet Pasha who worked in Aleppo as the governor of the Province between 1866

⁴⁷ McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities...*, p. 54.

⁴⁸ See for details: McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities...*, p. 55.

⁴⁹ McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities...*, p. 55.

⁵⁰ E. Z. Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831*, Ankara : Başvekalet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü Yay. 1943; F. Akbal, "1831 Tarihinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İdari Taksimat ve Nüfus," *Belleten*, vol. XV, Ankara, 1951), pp. 57-60.

and 1868.⁵¹ And the information for the end of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century is provided from Ottoman Provincial Year Books, that is the yearbooks of the '*Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi*' dated 1308H / [1890], 1319H / [1901] and 1326H / [1908].

Table 2.9 The Population of the City of Aleppo in the Nineteenth and the First Quarter of the Twentieth Centuries

Year	Population
1883	99.189 ⁵²
1890	101.927 ⁵³
1898	100.676 ⁵⁴
1901	108.143 ⁵⁵
1908	119.811 ⁵⁶
1911	126.676 ⁵⁷

Source: Bayraktar, p. 27.

From these figures, it is clear that the general population of the city of Aleppo increased in the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries. Within this context, to reach the information about the population of the Armenians in the city of Aleppo, we will discuss the Yearbooks of the Province of Aleppo indicated above.

⁵¹ Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, Tezkire 36, p. 220.

⁵² *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye'nin Nüfusu, (1500-1927)*, Vol.II, Tarih İstatistikleri Dizisi, (Ankara: DİE Yay., 1996), p. 12 from Bayraktar, p. 27.

⁵³ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H / [1890]*, p. 124.

⁵⁴ *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye'nin Nüfusu, (1500-1927)*, Vol.II, Tarih İstatistikleri Dizisi, (Ankara: DİE Yay., 1996), p. 30 from Bayraktar, p. 27.

⁵⁵ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319 H / [1901]*, p. 124.

⁵⁶ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326 H / [1908]*, p. 224.

⁵⁷ *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye'nin Nüfusu, (1500-1927)*, Vol.II, Tarih İstatistikleri Dizisi, (Ankara: DİE Yay., 1996), p. 31 from Bayraktar, p. 27.

Table 2.10 Armenian Population in the city of Aleppo according to the Provincial Year Book of Aleppo in 1890 (1308 H.)

Religious Groups	Female	Male	Total
Muslims	37.503	35.258	72.761
Greek Orthodox	442	517	959
Greek Catholic	4.036	4.015	8.051
Armenian Catholic	1.892	1.955	3.847
Armenians	925	1.286	2.211
Assyrians	1.302	1.434	2.726
Maronites	979	1.018	1.997
Chaldeans	55	79	134
Protestant	27	38	65
Latin	195	149	344
Copts	212	180	392
Foreigners	271	265	896
Jews	3.776	3.758	7.534
GRAND TOTAL	51.615	50.312	101.927

Source: *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H / [1890]*

In these figures the population of the city of Aleppo was 101.927; among these 72.761 were Muslims covering %71.4 of the population; 29.166 were Non-Muslims covering 28.6 percent of the population. As for the population of the Armenians in the city of Aleppo, as it can be seen from the figures, they were the second largest non-Muslim group in the city which was estimated at 6.058 covering 5.9 percent of the population.

Table 2. 11 Armenian Population in the City of Aleppo According to the Provincial Year-Book of Aleppo in 1900-1

Religious Groups	Female	Male	Total
Muslims	29.231	37.098	76.329
Greek Orthodox	46	519	979
Greek Catholic	4.080	4.015	8.095
Armenian Catholic	2.012	2.101	4.113
Armenians	910	742	1.652
Assyrians	1.263	1.349	164
Maronites	977	916	1.893
Chaldeans	74	90	164
Protestant	30	41	71
Roman	220	191	411
Copts	214	167	381
Foreigners	499	1.062	2.061
Jews	3.692	3.214	7.306
Yabancı	551	1.525	2.076
GRAND TOTAL	54.213	53.920	108.143

Source: *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319 H / [1901]*, p. 124.

In this second yearbook which we deal with here, the situation was not so different. In these figures, the population of the city of Aleppo was 108.143; among these 76.329 were Muslims covering %70.6 of the population; 31.814 were non-Muslims covering 29.4 percent of the population. So as to the population of the Armenians in the year 1891, they were again the second largest non-Muslim group in the city which was estimated at 5.765 covering 5.3 percent of the population. In addition, while the population of the Armenian Catholics increased in 1900, the population of the Gregorian Armenians decreased.

2.12 Armenian Population in the City of Aleppo According to the Provincial Year-Book of Aleppo in 1908

Religious Groups	Female	Male	Total
Muslims	42.918	40.761	83.679

Table 2.12 (Continued)

Greek Orthodox	401	466	867
Greek Catholic	3.804	3.970	7.774
Armenian Catholic	1.806	1.965	3.771
Armenians	848	919	1.767
Assyrians Catholic	1.244	1.354	2.597
Maronites	911	652	1.563
Chaldeans	96	96	192
Protestant	280	260	540
Roman	31	26	57
Copts	83	108	191
Monophysites	760	1.802	2.562
Jews	4.226	5.127	9.353
Foreigners	2.054	2.843	4.897
GRAND TOTAL	59.462	60.349	119.811

Source: *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326 H / [1908]*, p. 224.

In the last yearbook covering the population estimates of the year of 1908, the population of the city of Aleppo was 119.811; among these 83.679 were Muslims covering %70 of the population; 36.132 were Non-Muslims covering 30 percent of the population. So as to the population of the Armenians in the year of 1908, they were again the second largest non-Muslim group in the city which was estimated as 5538 covering 4.6 percent of the population. However, when we compare this last yearbook with the previous one, it will be seen that whereas the number of Gregorian Armenians increased, the number of Catholic Armenians were decreased in 1908.

Hence, when we compare these three figures provided by the provincial yearbooks of Aleppo together, the first conclusion that can be drawn from these figures is that, the population of the city of Aleppo did not change significantly during this thirty-year time. Moreover, the population of the Armenians in the city did not change significantly, that is it decreased approximately 1 percent. While the number of Armenians was estimated at 6.058 in 1890, it was estimated at 5.538 in 1908. According to Bayraktar, the earthquakes, migrations, cholera, typhus and the activities of brigands can be considered as the main reasons for the decrease in the population of the Province of Aleppo in general.⁵⁸ For instance, the cholera appearing in 1876 and

⁵⁸ Bayraktar, pp. 30- 35.

the earthquake that occurred in 1822 killed at least 12 thousand people in the Province.⁵⁹ Thus, a burst of population did not occur in the city and in the Province of Aleppo during the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth centuries. The second conclusion that can be drawn from these figures is that, there was not a steady decrease or increase within the population of the Armenians in the city. For example, while the population of the Catholic Armenians increased in 1900, it decreased in 1908.

As being the centre of the Armenian settlement area in the Province, the demographic structure of the city of Aleppo is also crucial since it could provide the information about the Armenian settlements in the city quarter by quarter.

⁵⁹ Bayraktar, p. 307.

Table 2.13 Demographic Structure of the City centre of Aleppo in relation to the quarters in 1884/85

No	Quarter	House hold No.	Musl.	Gr. C.	Arm. C.	Gr.	Arm.	Ita.	Chal.	Syz.	Syz. C.	Mm.	Prot.	Jews.	Ec.	Total
1	<u>Calimii'l-Kübra</u>	477	2956	16	35	-	65	41	9	37	0	34	-	-	350	3543
2	<u>Calimii's-Sügra</u>	164	1369	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1369
3	<u>Hasbe</u>	110	383	25	2	19	249	0	2	11	-	13	-	-	120	824
4	<u>Kaffati's Şarif</u>	132	957	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	957
5	<u>Bab-üKimesrin</u>	193	1306	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1306
6	<u>Surtii'l-Biza</u>	328	1953	-	-	-	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	175	2195
7	<u>Berzine</u>	144	1105	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1105
8	<u>Babü'n-Nasr</u>	57	477	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	477
9	<u>Sireykat-ı</u>	135	815	-	-	-	105	-	-	-	-	-	-	124	-	1044
10	<u>Eski Debbag</u>	83	251	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	509	-	760
11	<u>Bender</u>	225	580	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1870	-	2450
12	<u>Musabih</u>	138	554	-	5	-	35	7	-	9	-	2	-	777	226	1615
13	<u>Behsta</u>	264	363	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3860	-	4223
14	<u>Cibh- üEsechullah</u>	243	804	21	52	13	273	9	-	7	-	21	6	227	226	1659
15	<u>Seyik Hatem</u>	-	736	63	-	13	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	854
16	<u>Kelase</u>	353	3421	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3421
17	<u>Mugavr</u>	100	735	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	735
18	<u>Firdavs</u>	15	92	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	92
19	<u>Makamat</u>	86	673	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	673
20	<u>Miadi</u>	109	885	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	885
21	<u>Cisr-üSelahir</u>	70	545	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	545
22	<u>Şema An</u>	98	604	37	3	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	675
23	<u>Azmezn</u>	205	1564	8	99	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	1676
24	<u>Karvus</u>	144	1216	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1216
25	<u>Misaraka</u>	73	764	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	764
26	<u>Kittab</u>	-	51	6	16	-	6	23	7	4	-	20	-	-	-	133
27	<u>Cemilye</u>	220	593	30	3	1	5	1	-	-	13	5	1	632	450	1735
28	<u>Karlık</u>	225	2370	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2370
29	<u>Tatarlar</u>	125	851	145	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	996
30	<u>Dellaleyn</u>	195	1696	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1738
31	<u>Safa</u>	85	322	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	322
32	<u>Masatıze</u>	73	548	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	548

Table 2.13 (Continued)

33	Feraynii'l- Fezkani	70	548	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	548
34	Feraynii'l- Taktani	73	603	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	603
35	Sakmaga	107	660	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	660
36	Hamzabeg	131	1049	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1049
37	Im-Yakub	167	1104	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1104
38	Bellatii'l- Fezkani	146	1050	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1050
39	Bellatii'l- Fezkani	29	723	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	723
40	Han-ıSebil	67	591	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	591
41	Çukuncak	47	353	25	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
42	Sacihan Fezkani	148	1222	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1222
43	Çıbb-Kıman	133	1104	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1104
44	Sacihan- Taktani	125	1106	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1106
45	Tell Aran	112	948	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	948
46	Dudu	125	1181	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1181
47	Sahme	122	1064	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1064
48	Bakkara	174	1316	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1316
49	Muhammedbeg	243	2110	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2110
50	Kattan	46	368	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	368
51	Badencik	92	865	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	865
52	Safsafa	138	989	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	989
53	Dehdale	28	208	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	208
54	Bestan	84	610	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	610
55	Acem	108	918	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	918
56	Babii'l-Makan	151	1255	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1255
57	Mugazale	142	1084	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1084
58	Babii'n-Niber	52	412	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	412
59	Almhoga	172	1431	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1431
60	Ögülbeg	99	721	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	721
61	Beyaz	260	1289	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1289
62	Mistedambeg	95	861	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	861
63	Sahmbeg	82	719	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	719
64	Çabile	137	1058	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1058
65	Kadacker	73	649	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	649
66	Im-Nasr	59	517	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	517
67	Ehrac	94	827	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	827
68	Semirath	.	1335	12	2	12	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1363
69	Melendi	111	881	23	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	904
70	Akyol	313	1337	780	221	21	38	21	3	202	.	100	.	.	.	2723

Table 2.13 (Continued)

71	Ehmacı	108	413	321	85	32	58	13	13	121	-	39	6	-	-	1101
72	Serasus	99	108	386	180	12	5	21	-	110	-	28	5	-	-	855
73	Kasteli'l-Müst	53	214	71	41	28	26	3	-	22	-	25	5	-	-	435
74	Besaten	90	488	115	92	24	22	-	15	79	-	32	-	-	-	867
75	Kasteli'l-Harami	316	560	1340	540	58	76	28	10	302	-	225	-	-	-	3139
76	Zikak-ıRham	91	39	348	40	6	-	10	12	29	-	-	-	-	-	484
77	Bayt-Mühabbet	47	71	175	44	24	27	-	-	24	-	33	-	-	-	398
78	Timbi'l-Garba	58	38	215	122	36	128	8	8	67	-	36	12	-	-	670
79	Marash	77	201	91	102	77	237	-	2	41	-	8	-	-	-	759
80	Çukur Kastel	68	431	102	63	29	45	10	7	87	-	7	-	-	-	781
81	Mavendi	74	199	133	36	12	44	3	3	57	-	5	-	-	-	492
82	Harabhan	86	518	63	25	16	12	-	-	11	-	-	6	-	-	651
83	Anter	65	310	12	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	330
84	Nehziye	66	500	19	15	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	540
85	Em Bekir	15	105	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	105
86	Neyral	95	30	231	47	21	82	-	4	43	31	60	44	-	-	593
87	Hamidiye	509	1820	740	505	157	250	98	89	55	-	306	33	-	-	4053
88	Süleymaniye	76	-	330	122	72	4	25	5	26	71	71	-	-	-	726
89	Ekrad	101	88	381	277	28	51	24	-	7	-	246	-	-	-	1102
90	Cisr-ıKake	50	18	186	112	24	12	5	13	88	-	42	-	-	-	500
91	Table	56	123	85	83	17	70	5	-	60	-	28	15	-	-	486
92	Kayvas	49	49	172	121	7	55	4	5	94	-	23	4	-	-	534
93	Maeribhiye	57	171	44	50	36	52	4	10	62	-	19	5	-	-	453
94	Ateri El-Kebir	77	12	286	105	34	76	12	-	136	-	68	-	-	-	729
95	Ateri El-Sügra	97	23	52	58	-	42	1	2	46	-	10	-	-	-	234
96	Abdurrahim	80	166	204	133	40	64	17	7	170	-	64	-	-	-	865
97	Abdulhavyri	48	18	185	99	61	7	-	-	38	-	20	-	-	-	428
98	Hamaze	135	239	590	227	52	9	7	-	121	-	264	-	-	-	1509
99	Çıtac	13	-	74	19	37	-	1	-	4	-	72	-	-	-	207
100	Tamgyrad	86	-	234	189	13	7	9	-	83	-	143	1	-	-	679
101	Salibe(Kebir)	139	-	420	191	12	130	18	-	-	133	233	-	-	-	1137
102	Salibe (Sügra)	266	107	432	245	63	229	88	97	50	141	199	26	500	-	2177
103	Bali Buzul	32	3	78	72	30	4	15	1	38	-	14	-	-	-	255
104	Azamiye	205	45	312	157	78	32	36	67	5	178	171	15	-	-	1096
105	Çudeyde	29	7	106	62	11	22	4	2	50	-	26	-	-	-	290
106	Küçük Kilise	24	50	38	27	16	61	-	-	34	-	1	-	-	-	227
107	Kacile	293	2426	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2426
108	Kırbat	79	398	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	398
109	Bakkara	70	350	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	350
110	Arabi'l-İfisanake	39	71	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	71
	Total	13242	77064	9804	4732	1242	2815	571	393	2436	567	2719	185	8540	1547	112615

Source: Bayraktar, pp. 28-30

It is clear from Table 2.13 that there were separate quarters where Muslims and Armenians lived in the city of Aleppo. But the majority of population lived heterogeneously. According to Raymond, the reason for this heterogeneous living structure lies in their association in their professional activities in daily life.⁶⁰ Especially in the quarters of *Türabü'l-Gureba*, *Ağyur (Akyol)*, and of *Elmacı* this mixture was noteworthy. As it can be seen from the table 2.13, in the quarter of *Ağyur (Akyol)* while there were 221 Armenian Catholics, and 38 Armenian Gregorians, it was cited that the name of the quarter was given because a Turkish emeer was settled there.⁶¹ Besides, the quarter of *Elmacı* was mentioned as the quarters' of 'Aşçı and *Kethüda*' Families.⁶² Apart from these, whereas there were 122 Armenian Catholics and 128 Armenian Gregorians in the quarter of *Türabü'l-Gureba*, it was recorded as the quarter of the "Sivas Family".⁶³ Thus, while there were many Turkish families in these quarters, there were also Armenian families in these quarters living in a mixed way. Raymond, points out that although there was a tendency for highly homogeneous Christian quarters to develop, Muslims and Christians inevitably brushed shoulders in frontier mixed areas. According to Ghazzi, only Salibah and Tumayat were a hundred percent Christian: elsewhere some mixing was the rule. There was a constant cohabitation of the various communities.⁶⁴

Besides, it can also be pointed out from these figures that while many of the Arabs lived in the south and south-west parts of the Province of Aleppo and Turks lived in the city centre of Aleppo and in the northern regions. On the other hand, the Armenians lived in majority in the north and north-west of the Province of Aleppo. To illustrate, while there were 273 Armenians in the quarter of *Cübb-i Esedullah*, this number was 237 in the quarter of *Maraşlı*. Whereas there were 250 Armenians in the

⁶⁰ Raymond, p. 95.

⁶¹ Hasan Karaköse, *1876- 1918 Yılları Arası Ortadoğu ve Halep*, Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, (Kayseri, 1996), p. 147.

⁶² Karaköse, p. 147.

⁶³ Karaköse, p. 148.

⁶⁴ Raymond, p. 95.

quarter of Hamidiyah, this number was 229 in Salibah.⁶⁵ As to the Armenian Catholics, they were 221 in the quarter of Akyol; 180 in the quarter of Serasus; 540 in the quarter of Kasteli'l-Harami; 122 in the quarter of Türbü'l-Gureba; 505 in the quarter of Hamidiyah; 277 in *Ekrad*; 227 in Hezzaze; 245 in Salibah and 157 in the quarter of *Aziziye*.⁶⁶

2.1.4. The Socio-Economic Situation of the Armenian Community in the Sub-province of Aleppo Before World War I

In this part of the study, we will explore the effectiveness of the Armenian community within the socio-economic spheres of the province of Aleppo and in some parts, as our main task, we will concentrate on the sub-province of Aleppo.

The distinguished position of Aleppo among the Armenian communities of northern Syria originated from its significance as one of the most important centres of international trade. The Franco-Ottoman treaty of 1535 and similar agreements concluded subsequently between the sultan and England and other European countries opened Turkish ports to the European traders and enabled them to engage in commercial activities throughout the Mediterranean.⁶⁷ Thanks to their special status and privileges, colonies of French, English, Dutch, German, Venetian, and other European merchants grew in Syrian ports and passed most of trade between Europe and the Levant. They traded under the protection of their consuls, chiefly through the intermediary of the native Christians and Jews. That was for importing European manufactured goods and exporting Oriental raw materials and spices. Strategically situated between Mesopotamia, the Anatolian provinces, and the Mediterranean Sea, Aleppo soon became an important centre of that trade. Although her importance began to decline after the discovery of the sea route to the East Indies, it still remained a

⁶⁵ Bayraktar, pp. 29-30.

⁶⁶ Bayraktar, pp. 29-30.

⁶⁷ Ali İhsan Bağış, *Osmanlı Ticaretinde Gayri Müslimler*, (Ankara: Turhan Yay., 1998), pp. 55-58; Sonyel, "*Minorities and the ...*", pp. 109-110.

flourishing centre of international commerce in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁶⁸

Beginning from the sixteenth century, Armenian traders played significant roles as intermediaries in this international trade. They were acted as enterprising and wealthy magnates who occupied an important position in Aleppo's international trade. Those men, who were referred to as Khochas (mercantile magnates), engaged in a large-scale transit trade between Europe and the Orient, principally by acting as intermediaries between the European colonists at Aleppo and the eastern markets or by establishing direct contacts with the pro-eastern markets or by establishing direct contacts with the producing firms in Europe through the agency of foreign consuls. To illustrate, during the years of 1590-1632 the French, English, Dutch, Venetian and Spanish merchants at Aleppo conducted their silk trade only with the mercantile firm of Khocha Petik, who monopolized the supply of this product.⁶⁹

Another thing that contributed to the commercial significance of Aleppo in that era is the minting of Ottoman gold and silver coins in the city. During the years 1630-1660 a number of Armenians were entrusted with the superintendent of the mint, and even as late as the end of the seventeenth century local Armenian *sarrafs* (money-changers) for the most part handled the business of foreign exchange.⁷⁰

During that period, migrant Armenians in Aleppo, indicated above, who migrated from Akin and Arapkir in Anatolia also served as agents, cooks, and servants of wealthy Christians.⁷¹ Those migrants soon replaced those of Julfa as commercial tycoons on a relatively small scale. Many of them entered into the service of governors, high-ranking civilian and military officials, foreign consulates, and commercial firms, who accumulated great wealth by establishing independent commercial enterprises. According to Sanjian, many natives of Arapkir differentiated themselves as chamberlains, commercial agents, and bankers in the more than one

⁶⁸ Raymond, pp. 87-89.

⁶⁹ See for the Khocha Petik and Khocha Sanos's commercial activities in Aleppo: Sanjian, pp. 48-49.

⁷⁰ Sanjian, p. 50.

⁷¹ Sanjian, p. 50.

hundred khans and caravansaries at Aleppo during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷² During that time, the Armenians were the most industrious portion of the inhabitants of the city who engaged in carrying on commerce between Aleppo and Aintab.⁷³ Significantly, the Armenian community could not have known such a development without the tolerance shown them by the Ottoman authorities. Indeed, the situation of the Armenians in Aleppo have been particularly favourable in the Syrian city, as indicated by Alexander Russell who lived in Aleppo around 1750: “The authorities permit liberty of conscience...and tolerate the public exercise of the Christian and Jewish religion, with their respective rites and ceremonies.”⁷⁴

In the first half of the nineteenth century the economic prosperity and trading connections of Aleppo were significantly declined due to the fact that the instability of Mediterranean area stemming from the campaigns of Napoleon Bonaparte, the Ottoman administrative problems in Syria during that period, the mutinies of the janissaries, a number of earthquakes, and the ravages of cholera and plague all contributed to that situation. The opening of Suez Canal in the second half of the nineteenth century further declined the importance of Aleppo as a centre of international trade.⁷⁵ A traveller in 1868 cited that although there had been an economic decline, local Armenian community still possessed a number of well-known merchants whose firms had branches in Eastern Asia Minor, together with Baghdad, Basra, and Persia. That traveller also indicates the activities of migrants in commerce and small businesses who migrated from Anatolia at Aleppo.⁷⁶

It was only about 1880 that, Aleppo had a commercial revival in both imports and exports.⁷⁷ Beginning from that time, the commercial activities of the leading members of the Armenian Aleppine community were confined mainly to the role of

⁷² Sanjian, p. 50.

⁷³ J. L.Farley, *The Resources of Turkey*, (London, 1962), p. 195.

⁷⁴ A.Russell, *Natural History I*, p. 214.

⁷⁵ Sanjian, p. 50.

⁷⁶ Sanjian, p.50.

⁷⁷ Masters, “*Aleppo: the Ottoman...*”, p. 19.

middlemen or commission agents and to small-scale banking, especially with Istanbul. Majority of the Armenian refugees especially after 1895-96 chose Aleppo as their new home and established commercial ties with firms in the eastern provinces. That trade was composed greatly of shipments of local goods to eastern Anatolia and Cilicia.⁷⁸ Armenians continued to serve in the khans, banks, and foreign consulates until the relocation process.

The economic activities of the Armenian Aleppine community were not limited to commerce alone. In fact, according to both Sanjian and Krikorian, they all brought with them their traditional arts, crafts, and trades, as hereditary family occupations to the places where they migrated as beginning from the fourteenth century.⁷⁹ While the Armenians in towns were practicing different trades and professions, the ones in the villages were engaged in agriculture. Their well known handicrafts were sewing and shoe-making, the fur and silk trade, painting and tanning and watch making.

Numerous Armenians of both sexes engaged in the weaving in textiles in silk, wool, and cotton as one of the home industry. The workshops for this industry were the cellars of private homes, which was determined as a rule. Besides, an Armenian monopoly remained in the art of dyeing for several centuries which was developed by the Armenian artisans.

From the fourteenth century onwards, the Aleppine Armenians also established their monopoly over the job of goldsmiths. Particularly, a large portion of the clergymen were engaged in goldsmithery in their spare time.⁸⁰ Other local trades in which Armenians distinguished themselves were tailoring and furriery. According to Krikorian, the main business of Armenians who migrated from Asia Minor to Aleppo has been sewing since the eighteenth century. Besides, skilled sewers reached respected positions as the private tailors of the governors of the province and other government officials, together with, they also provided the clothing of the army. Many

⁷⁸ Sanjian, pp. 51-52.

⁷⁹ Sanjian, p. 51.

⁸⁰ Sanjian, p. 52.

expert artisans achieved fame and wealth as personal tailors of governors and other Ottoman officials and their families. Apart from sewing, The Armenians in Aleppo were also effective in preparation of furs. Furthermore, the textile trade of Aleppo, especially silk, was in the hands of Armenians, with wide connections extending from China to Holland.⁸¹ Tannery was in effect an Armenian trade. Carpentry was also an Armenian profession in Aleppo. In particular, immigrants from Urfa and Ayntab specialized in masonry and in cutting and dressing stones. As mentioned above, while a great number of the Armenians made and repaired watches; others painted and decorated homes with frescoes. As noteworthy to mention here is an Armenian Grigor Meserlian who had initiated the art of professional photography at Aleppo. From 1880 onwards, this profession remained in the hands of the Armenians.

Apart from these, the wheat dealers and bakers were the only Armenian artisans organized as a distinct trade guild. This guild's members were all from the Sasun who had arrived in Aleppo about the middle of the seventeenth century. They had monopolized the sale of wheat together with the baking and distribution of bread and confectionary for some three hundred years. The members of the guild elected their chief and that chief thus acquired the honorific title of sheikh. It was that person's responsibility to negotiate the purchase and sale of mills and bakeries, to settle disputes among members, to represent the guild before the local government, and to act as liaison between the group and the authorities of the Armenian national church and community.⁸²

All in all, Armenians of Aleppo during the Ottoman era gives the image of a religious minority group which was well integrated into the Muslim environment as the spirit of the time permitted. This integration was probably the most remarkable in professional activities. It is worth mentioning here is that, in an article on 'Crafts Organizations and Religious Communities in Ottoman Syria', A.Rafeq drew attention to the participation of both Muslims and Christians in common professional organizations (tawa'if) as revealed by the mixed delegations that came to settle trade

⁸¹ Masters, "*Aleppo: the Ottoman...*", p. 84.

⁸² Sanjian, p. 52.

matters before the Muslim judiciary courts.⁸³ A more thorough study of the economy of Aleppo during the Ottoman era would no doubt demonstrate the extent of this professional cooperation specially in the field of trade, and in the framework of trade partnerships (*shirkat 'inan*) whose frequency is pointed out by A. Marcus: many of these partnerships involved joint ventures between Muslims and Christians and between Muslims and Jews. Differences of religious affiliation did not stand in the way of trusting relations and common enterprises between businessmen.⁸⁴

2.1.5. Armenian Participation in Government Offices in the Sub-province of Aleppo Before World War I

The Armenian participation in the city of Aleppo's public life was especially notable and constant. From a chronological perspective the Armenians were given a larger part and higher positions in the different governmental units of the province after 1896. The main fields of public life in which the Armenians took part were the political administration, finance, judicial courts and the public health service. In these departments of the province there were usually to be found one or two, but sometimes three or four Armenian officials.⁸⁵

However, as distinct from the centre of the Province, during the period 1860-1908 there were not many Armenian inhabitants in the southern and eastern districts of the Province of Aleppo. Because of this, there were not many Armenian public officials in the districts of Jabal Sam'an, Harem, Idleb, Jisr al-Shughur, Ma'arrat ul-Numan, Bab-Jabbul, Manbij, and Rakkah.⁸⁶

⁸³ A.Rafeq, "Crafts Organizations and Religious Communities in Ottoman Syria" *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol.111 (1991), pp. 495-511.

⁸⁴ Marcus, p. 183.

⁸⁵ We reached this conclusion from the analysis of the provincial year-books of Aleppo. As indicated before, we determined three of them which are *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901] *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908] to evaluate the development of the Armenian community in the city of Aleppo in those thirty years of time.

⁸⁶ Krikorian, p. 85.

However, before moving into the Armenian participation in the government offices of the Province of Aleppo, we want to present a general picture of administrative apparatus at the centre of sub-provinces and where there is a relevant department, in outlying districts also:

a. Political administration: In administrative council there were ex officio member, governor general, deputy judge, head of financial department, *mufti*, Armenian bishop, Armenian Catholic bishop, Armenian Protestant pastor (sometimes), Greek metropolitan (if there was one). In municipality, there were mayor (*belediye reisi*) and members (from 6 to 12). As for the municipal officials, there were clerk (*katib*), cashier (*sandık emini*), engineer (*mühendis*), doctor (*tabib*), vaccinator (*aşı memuru*), midwife (*kabile*), inspector (*müfettiş*), inspector's assistant (*müfettiş muavini*) in municipal offices.

b. Finance: In finance, there were office of the controller of revenue and expenditure (*mal kalemi*); taxation department (*vergi dairesi*); tax collecting board (*tahsilat komisyonu*) and tax collection committee (*tahsilat heyeti*); Agricultural Bank Branch (*Ziraat Bankası şubesi*); Branch of the Ottoman Bank (*Osmanlı Bankası Şubesi*); Public Debt Administration (*Düyun-u Umumiye İdaresi*); Customs Administration (*Rüsumat Nezareti*), and the Régie (Stage Management). In these departments there were generally the officials like manager, assistant, members, clerk, cashier, tax collector, accountant etc...

c. The court: In the central and outlying districts there were only courts of First Instance (*bidayet mahkemesi*) whereas at the headquarters of the provinces courts of appeal (*istinaf mahkemesi*) were also established. The court of first instance composed of civil department (*hukuk dairesi*) and criminal department (*ceza dairesi*). There were head, members, assistant functionary, public prosecutor (*müdde-i umumi*), executive officer (*icra memuru*), and notary (*mukavelat muharriri*) in the court offices.

d. Technical Departments: In technical departments there was the public work's board (*nafia komisyonu*) consisting of the members of manager of the

Agricultural Bank, member from the Administrative council, member from the municipality, member from the Chamber of commerce, registrar of births or census officer, public works engineer and clerk. Secondly, there was post and telegraph board composed of members responsible for the post and telegraph services.

e. Public Health Service: Apart from the municipality's public health service, there was also a public health board (*heyet-i sıhhiye*) including doctor, chemist, vaccinator, midwife, and a veterinary surgeon.

f. Education: Doctors, members and clerks were the components of educational board. In an outlying district the Educational Board had a head and about 5 members, which were the director and teachers of the school of handicrafts (*sanayi mektebi*).

g. Forest Administration (*Orman İdaresi*): There were the superintendent of mounted foresters (*orman sivari memuru*), tithe officials (*odalık memuru*) and the forest-guards (*korucu*) in forest administration. In an outlying district, normally there was only one official for forest tithes.

Now, under the light of this information, we will try to clarify the efficiency of the Armenians in the Province of Aleppo. In the centre of the province, at Aleppo, there were Armenian elected members in the administrative council apart from the other Christian and Muslim officials. Kevork Efendi⁸⁷, Avedis Aleksan Efendi, Basil Efendi⁸⁸, and Yorgakilyan Efendi⁸⁹ were the elected members in the administrative council of the Province of Aleppo. There were, however, only a few ex officio members. In 1882-83, an Armenian Catholic was an ex officio member of the local council. In other parts of the province, normally one or two but sometimes three Armenians were elected to the administrative councils. As to the municipal councils, there were one or two Armenian members and they were generally ordinary officials.

⁸⁷ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 85.

⁸⁸ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 130.

⁸⁹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 124.

To illustrate, Mihail Efendi was the member of the municipal council and Ujen Efendi was the clerk.⁹⁰ Basil Efendi was the cashier in municipal office in 1890.⁹¹

Furthermore, Armenians played an important role in the customs administration of the Province of Aleppo. Most of the officials in the customs administration at Aleppo were Armenians. Zatur Efendi was the officer of the District's Department of Customs.⁹² While the majority of the officials were sent from different parts of the empire, especially from the Constantinople, some of them were natives of the province. Besides, Antun Bey al-Misri (Msrlia) exercised the customs monopoly over region extending from Mersin to Gaza including Aleppo in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁹³

The service of Armenian officials was not limited to the Ottoman administration, and many served as various foreign diplomatic and consular services in Syria primarily at Aleppo, Beirut, Jerusalem, and Jaffa.⁹⁴ While some of them attained the positions of consul, vice-consul, or consular agents; others were secretaries, interpreters, or dragomans. Armenians were employed by the states of Austria-Hungary, Prussia, the United States, Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, Naples, and Sardinia. Although they were all native-born subjects of the Ottoman Empire, many of them later gained citizenships of the countries they served.⁹⁵ For instance, Antuan Efendi served as an interpreter for the Consulate of Spain.⁹⁶ Nikolaki Efendi

⁹⁰ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 153.

⁹¹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 150.

⁹² *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 87.

⁹³ See especially for the officials of native customs administration: Sanjian, p. 68.

⁹⁴ Sanjian, p. 68.

⁹⁵ Sanjian, p. 68.

⁹⁶ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 120.

served as an interpreter for Belgium; Edvar Efendi served for Portugal.⁹⁷ Additionally, Ohannes Tarabyan was the interpreter of Germany, and Antun Asud was of Spain.⁹⁸

Apart from the activities of the Armenians in Ottoman administration, they were also effective in financial spheres. Most of the Armenians were in the taxation department, in the tax collecting board, 'regie' and public debt administration. With respect to taxation there was one Armenian official in the department of each district and he was usually the cashier. Mişil Efendi, Basil Efendi and İstifan Efendi served as tax collectors in the "*Tahrir Vergi Dairesi*".⁹⁹ In 'regie' the Armenian officials were comparatively more numerous, there being from one to three. In these departments the clerk and the store-keeper were very often Armenians, and sometimes so was the manager. In 1890, Abdah and Edvar Efendi was the accountant in 'regie' of Aleppo. While Agopcan Efendi served as Government Office chief clerk (*Tahrirat Baş Katibi*), Dizeri Efendi served as storage accountant clerk (*Ambar Muhasebe Katibi*) in the "regie" of Aleppo.¹⁰⁰ In 1908, Abdullah Basil Efendi served as documents officials; and Basil Sahati Efendi worked as storage clerk in 'regie' management.¹⁰¹

In the branches of Agricultural Bank, normally one or two Armenians could be found, employed as inspector, cashier or account's clerk. Vahan Efendi and Ohan Efendi served as agricultural inspectors in Agricultural Bank.¹⁰² And Misak Efendi served as clerk in Agricultural Bank in 1908.¹⁰³

In public debt administration also the Armenians numbered one or two and usually held the offices of inspector, clerk, cashier and accountant. Ohannes Efendi

⁹⁷ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 191.

⁹⁸ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 185.

⁹⁹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 130.

¹⁰⁰ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p.115.

¹⁰¹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 185.

¹⁰² *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], pp. 92-93.

¹⁰³ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 133.

worked as chief clerk and Abdah Efendi worked as official of documents in public debt administration.¹⁰⁴ In 1901, whereas Karabin Efendi served as chief inspector in public debt administration, Bedros and Mişil Efendis served as accountants.¹⁰⁵ In 1908, Mişil Efendi served as chief clerk and Ohannes Efendi served as accountant in public debt administration.¹⁰⁶

Apart from these, departments Armenians were from time to time employed as tax-collectors and as officials of the branches of the Ottoman Bank. To illustrate, Meradikyan Efendi served as clerk in the Ottoman Bank and Mihran Bozantiyan Efendi and Liyon Zahar Efendi served as assistants in the Operation Office of the Bank.¹⁰⁷ In 1908, all those three continued to serve as the same posts.¹⁰⁸

Besides, they were also included in the chambers of commerce in the province of Aleppo. Janitor Kirkorkulyan Efendi, Zahirzade Antun Efendi and tradesmen Mehmecizade Mihail Efendi were recorded as the efficient members of the chamber in 1890.¹⁰⁹ In 1908, the same men cited as the efficient members of the chamber.¹¹⁰

Although the Armenians took part in different offices in judicature, the main departments where they worked regularly were the courts of first instance and of commerce. In the court of first instance of every commune, there was generally an Armenian as well as the Turkish member. In the commercial courts there were up to three Armenians who acted as members or clerks. Azra Efendi acted as a member in the commercial court in 1890¹¹¹ and Karabet Efendi was a member in 1901 and

¹⁰⁴ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p.106.

¹⁰⁵ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 179.

¹⁰⁶ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 183.

¹⁰⁷ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 182.

¹⁰⁸ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 182.

¹⁰⁹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 194.

¹¹⁰ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 194.

¹¹¹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 103.

1908.¹¹² Nazareth Manushakian was also a member of commercial court. Apart from this, he studied in the Armenian Vardanean School. After finishing his studies he was engaged in trade, mainly importing paints.¹¹³ At Aleppo there were usually two or more Armenian judges in the court of appeal, some in the civil and some in the criminal department. Avedis and Mihail Efendis acted as judges of the criminal department of the court of appeal in 1890.¹¹⁴ In 1901, this number doubled and there were two Armenian judges, two in the civil and two in the criminal department. Whereas Avedis and Mer'a Efendis acted in the civil, Mihail and Nikolaki Efendis acted in the criminal department.¹¹⁵ However, in 1908, there was only one judge in the court of appeals' civil department who was Mihail Efendi.¹¹⁶

Other judicial duties which the Armenians carried out were the office of lawyer, judicial inspector, notary and clerk. In Aleppo, in 1878-9, the judicial inspector, and in 1902-3, the lawyers were Armenian.¹¹⁷

As for the public health and medicine at Aleppo, the Armenians rendered notable service in the infirmary and military hospital, especially during the years 1896-7, 1902-3 and 1908. They held positions as doctors and chemists. In 1901, Afif Efendi acted as the doctor of Municipality.¹¹⁸ Afif Efendi also served in the Hospital of Hamidiye for the poor. Together with him, Sarkis Efendi as a surgeon and Antun Efendi as a chemist served in the same hospital.¹¹⁹ Beside these, colonel doctor Nikolaki Efendi as well as surgeon Sarkis Efendi worked in the Aleppine Military

¹¹² *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 147; *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 150.

¹¹³ Krikorian, p. 90.

¹¹⁴ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 102.

¹¹⁵ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 144-145.

¹¹⁶ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 149.

¹¹⁷ Krikorian, p. 86.

¹¹⁸ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 151.

¹¹⁹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 151.

Hospital.¹²⁰ In 1908, while Sarkis Efendi continued to work as a surgeon in Hamidiye Hospital, Bedrus Mazlumyan Efendi joined him as an operator at the same hospital.¹²¹ As to the Aleppine Military Hospital, Sarkis Efendi continued to serve as a surgeon.¹²² Boghos Kiremitdjian was a veterinary surgeon in the army at Aleppo and was a censor at the same time.¹²³

In the other districts of the Province also there were Armenian doctors, chemists and vaccinators who worked in the public health.¹²⁴ For example, Dr. Zohrap was appointed as the superintendent of military hospitals. Dr. Paghtasar Melk'onion was a member of the commission charged with checking the spread of an epidemic in 1903; he served as director of the anatomical and histological laboratory of the medical school at the Universite' Saint Joseph in Beirut. The most notable among all Armenian physicians, nonetheless, was Dr. John Wortabet, who in 1871 was appointed professor of medicine at the Syrian Protestant College, a position which he held for seventeen years. Another example which we think will demonstrate the distinguished position of the Armenians in the fields of public health and medicine in Syria was Dr. Asatur Altunian, who founded the Altunian Hospital at Aleppo in 1891. This hospital with its modern equipment and surgical facilities provided the first-rate medical treatment to thousands of Syrians.¹²⁵

Other fields of Armenian participation in the Province of Aleppo were in technical affairs, that is, the secretariat, education and agriculture. Abdah and Mebyad Liyum Efendis were the secretariats in Booking Item (*Muhasebe Kalemi*) of the Province. Moreover, Basil Efendi was the cashier in the government office

¹²⁰ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 175.

¹²¹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 154.

¹²² *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 176.

¹²³ Krikorian, p. 90.

¹²⁴ For more information about the Armenian doctors and chemists see, Krikorian, p. 86 and Sanjian, pp. 67-68.

¹²⁵ Sanjian, pp. 68-69.

secretariat.¹²⁶ Maksudian Efendi was a provincial forest inspector of the Province from about 1900-1908.¹²⁷ In the sphere of education, Armenians were included on the educational council of the province in the secondary school and in school of handicrafts.¹²⁸ Antuan Efendi was the official for the examination of the foreign language books in the Council of Education.¹²⁹ Besides, Antuan Efendi was the French teacher in the Secondary Civilian School.¹³⁰ In 1901, it was cited that Haçadur Efendi was the teacher of Armenian language in the Board of Education.¹³¹ At Aleppo, the Armenian language was taught in the government's secondary school from about 1898-9 until 1908. In 1908 the teacher of carpet weaving in the handicrafts school of Aleppo was Akob Agha, and in the preparatory school for girls Aznivuhi was the lady-teacher of *hüner* (art). Mihail Efendi also acted as clerk in the Council of Education.¹³² Thoros Mahikian who learned Turkish and worked in government departments as a clerk and as an official of the judicial court of first instance taught Turkish in Armenian schools from 1880 onwards.¹³³

In Aleppo in the postal and telegraphic service there were almost always from two to five Armenians who served as mechanics or telegraph superintendents. Armenians were also employed in the provincial printing house as mechanics, compositors and editors. For example, Bazin Efendi was the chief in the telegraph and post service of the Province.¹³⁴ Besides, in the provincial printing house, Ohannes Efendi employed as mechanic; Mihail Agha as cylinder; and Mişel Efendi employed

¹²⁶ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 105.

¹²⁷ Krikorian, p. 90.

¹²⁸ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* [1908], p. 139.

¹²⁹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 91.

¹³⁰ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 118.

¹³¹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* [1901], p. 139.

¹³² *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 134.

¹³³ Krikorian, p. 90.

¹³⁴ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 88.

as the lithography machine craftsman in 1890.¹³⁵ In 1901, Mihran Efendi served as treasurer in telegraph and post service of the Province.¹³⁶ During that year, Basil Kamil Efendi acted as chief typesetter; Mişil Efendi as lithography machine craftsman; and Mihail and ‘Abud Efendis acted as typing machine craftsmen.¹³⁷ As for the information provided in the provincial year-book of Aleppo in 1908, Basil Kamil Efendi continued to serve as chief typesetter and again Mişil Efendi as lithography machine craftsman; and Mihail and ‘Abud Efendis continued to act as typing machine craftsman.¹³⁸

Armenians were also active in the department of engineering in the Province of Aleppo. Whereas Romer Efendi was the chief engineer of the Province, Agop Efendi was the engineer of Aleppo in 1890.¹³⁹ İşil Şartıye Efendi was also employed as conductor.¹⁴⁰ Araqel Khendamian was employed in Jerusalem as a government official from 1895 to 1903. In 1904 he moved into Beirut and in 1907 into Aleppo and he worked as a government engineer in these places.¹⁴¹

Furthermore, some Armenians were engaged in the purely secretarial departments at Aleppo, to illustrate, as chief secretariat, land registry and customs administration. In land registry Avedis Efendi was employed as accountant.¹⁴² In 1901, Liyon Efendi acted as accountant in land registry of the Province and Basil Efendi as customs administration official.¹⁴³ They were recorded to be still holding the

¹³⁵ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1308H/[1890], p. 92.

¹³⁶ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1319H/[1901], p. 148.

¹³⁷ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1319H/[1901], p. 142.

¹³⁸ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1326H/[1908], p. 145.

¹³⁹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1308H/[1890], p. 93.

¹⁴⁰ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1326H/[1908], p. 133.

¹⁴¹ Krikorian, p. 100.

¹⁴² *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1308H/[1890], p. 105.

¹⁴³ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1319H/[1901], p. 177-178.

same posts in the land registry in the provincial year-book of Aleppo in 1908, except for the clerk of the storage Artin Efendi.¹⁴⁴

Many of the Armenians in the Province were employed as clerks in different commissions. For instance, Mihail and Abdah Efendis acted as clerks in the commission of collection arrears in 1890.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, Mişil Efendi was employed as a clerk in the Department of Accounting; Basil Efendi as a clerk in the Ministry of Census; and Mihail Efendi as a clerk in the Administration of Waqfs.¹⁴⁶ Lastly, in 1908, as in 1901, Basil Efendi is cited as a clerk in the Ministry of Census and Mihail Efendi as a clerk in the Administration of Waqfs.¹⁴⁷

Significantly, there were two or more officials in the Central Foreign News Department (*Merkez Muhaberat-ı Ecnebiye*). In this context, Bazin Efendi acted as manager and Mıgırdiç Efendi was employed as official of war news and Ohannes Efendi was the mechanic.¹⁴⁸ In 1908, manager of the department was replaced by Kirkor Efendi and officials Nersis Efendi, Esaduryan Efendi, Yani Efendi, Aşud Efendi were mentioned as employed in this department.¹⁴⁹

Therefore, the conclusion which can be drawn from these figures, is that the Armenian community took active part in many different branches of the government offices of the Province of Aleppo. In the public life of the Ottoman Empire the administrative councils were the main governing bodies which acted under the presidency of the provincial governors (*valis*), governors of sub-provinces (*mutesarrıfs*), governors of districts (*kaymakams*) and the governors of communes (*müdürs*). The members of these councils came into office by election and each community would have officials in the councils in proportion to their numbers. Thus, in the administration of the Province of Aleppo, there were two or three

¹⁴⁴ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 180-181.

¹⁴⁵ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 94.

¹⁴⁶ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], pp. 134-7.

¹⁴⁷ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 131-132.

¹⁴⁸ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], pp. 149.

¹⁴⁹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 152.

representatives. At the provincial headquarters and in the centres of the districts there were also one or two ex officio Armenian members who were the spiritual heads of the Gregorian and Catholic Armenian communities. If there was a substantial Protestant community, and they were too entitled to representation. This number was increased to three if the head of government department of finance happened to be an Armenian.

In the municipal council of the Province, there were usually two or three elected Armenian members, in addition, the doctor or the chemist or the engineer was Armenian.

The judicature was one of those fields of public life which the Armenians were regularly represented. In the Province of Aleppo, they were active as judges in the courts of appeal, first instance and in the commercial courts. Apart from being judges, the Armenians were admitted into the administration of justice as judicial inspectors, assistants, executive officers, lawyers, notaries and clerks.

The financial departments in the province present the field where the Armenians had the largest participation as in the other Provinces in Eastern Anatolia.¹⁵⁰ They co-operated with the government in all offices of economic affairs. In taxation department there were about 2 Armenians; in tax collecting board 2-3 Armenians; in chamber of commerce 2-3 Armenians; in Ottoman and Agricultural Banks about 2 Armenians; in Public Debt and Customs administrations there were about 2-3 Armenians. As to the posts which Armenians filled these posts were those of board committee member, tax collector, clerk, accountant, storekeeper, and particularly that of cashier. Evidently, The Ottoman State trusted the Armenians in fiscal matters and employed Armenian officials in large numbers.

The participation of Armenians in the department of public health of the Province was larger and constant. Armenian medical men employed chiefly in the local municipality of the district and also in the government hospital of Aleppo. They held various posts, but usually were doctors, surgeons and chemists; and their activity was larger and more firmly established at the centre of the Province.

¹⁵⁰ Krikorian, p. 104.

On the other hand, the technical and the agricultural departments were secondary fields in which Armenian participation was not very influential or continuous. In public works Armenians were included as chief and second engineers being two or three in number. From two-three of them worked in the provincial presses as mechanics and compositors. Significantly, in the government press of Aleppo there was a section for Armenian printing.¹⁵¹ In the postal and telegraphic services Armenians acted as directors, operators and translators especially in the foreign language divisions. At the centre of the District, that is Aleppo, Armenian participation in technical affairs was quite remarkable.

As to the agriculture, Armenians were employed in the agricultural and forestry boards and in the inspectorates of agriculture and forests. In each of these departments, there were two to three Armenian officials.

As a result, the demand which arose after the new administrative division and organization of the Ottoman Empire in 1864 was filled by the Armenians acting almost in all departments. In some fields of public life as in finance, municipal councils, law courts, and public health, their participation was steady but fluctuated in others, as in technical affairs, agriculture and secretariat.

2.1.6. Religious and Political Life of the Armenians in the Sub-province of Aleppo Before World War I

Prior to the nineteenth century, although the bishopric of Aleppo has a significant place for the Armenians, not much is known about the territorial extent and the administrative and organizational structure of it.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, as in the past, the special significance of the bishopric of Aleppo was originated from the unique position of the city as a crucial political, commercial, and ecclesiastical centre. As the both episcopal seat and the provincial centre of the expansive province of Aleppo, the bishopric was directly responsible to the local government not only for the communities of Aleppo but also for the north and north western Syria as well as for a larger number of

¹⁵¹ Krikorian, p. 105.

Armenians attached to other bishoprics of the Cilician see (Sis).¹⁵² The leader of the community in the bishopric was Karabet Efendi.¹⁵³ They had four churches in Aleppo; the first was in the quarter of Türebü'l Gureba. The other three churches were Kırklar, Kenisetü's-Seyyide and Ümmü'l-Maunet.¹⁵⁴

As to the efficiency of the bishopric, immediate matters affecting the ecclesiastical and civil life of these communities were handled by the bishopric and its prelate. However, resolution of issues of secondary importance lessened the burdens of the patriarchate. Significantly, the strong administrative organization of the bishopric was also determining in view of the presence of a large number of foreign diplomatic representatives and other powerful Christian communities in Aleppo.

The changes in the structure of the Patriarchate within the framework of Armenian Constitution were established in the Aleppine bishopric from the 1870's onwards. The bishopric was administratively linked to the Patriarchate and its governing bodies, which guided the direction of its affairs. At the order of the Aleppine provincial assembly, the patriarchate normally appointed the locum tenentes, some of whom subsequently were elected prelates of the bishopric.

The primary internal problems were general popular misconception of the constitutional system, and factional ambitions and personal rivalries. The management of the bishopric's revenues was the main cause of discontent among people. These revenues were derived from its real properties, and used for the needs of the ecclesiastical institutions and parochial schools. Besides, the efforts of both opposing secular factions and of the certain prelates and locum tenentes to control these revenues gave way to constant unrest within the Aleppine Armenian community. Ever changing character of the community because of the periodic influx of Armenian migrants from other provinces also contributed to the already existing communal discord. While these new migrants on the one hand affected the homogeneity of the

¹⁵² Sanjian, p. 271.

¹⁵³ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 188.

¹⁵⁴ *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, 1316H* / [1888], pp. 740-745.

community, on the other hand, they held different views due to their different backgrounds on ecclesiastical and national affairs. These differences of outlook and different interests reflected itself in both Aleppine provincial assembly and executive councils, which resulted in controversies among Aleppine Armenian community.¹⁵⁵

In addition to the organization of the constitutional system, the bishopric of Aleppo also tried to meet the needs of the prosperous Aleppine community and of neighbouring and remote rural Armenian enclaves. Village priests continued to attend to the communicants' spiritual needs; frequently visiting clergy were scattered to the regions where there were no resident priests. Also, school teachers were supplied wherever educational facilities existed. According to Sanjian, although such efforts were made by the bishopric, the community organizations in isolated rural regions remained unsatisfactory. The frequent disagreements among the governing bodies of the bishopric prevented the community from the creation of an organization and administration which could function in an expansive area.¹⁵⁶ This is why some areas became increasingly vulnerable to the Catholic and Protestant missionary activities.

After being admitted as a religious community in 1830, the Armenian Catholics in Aleppo were also represented by a religious leader. According to the provincial year-book of Aleppo dated 1890, the leader of the Armenian Catholics was Metropolidi Gariguryus Efendi.¹⁵⁷ In the other year-book, Yuhanna Efendi was recorded as the substitute for Metropolidi Gariguryus Efendi.¹⁵⁸ In 1908, the religious leader of the Armenian Catholics was cited as Mitraboliyadi Agustinus Sayi' Efendi.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Sanjian, pp. 270-273.

¹⁵⁶ Sanjian, pp. 273.

¹⁵⁷ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 125.

¹⁵⁸ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1319H* / [1901], p. 183.

¹⁵⁹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1308H* / [1890], p. 188.

2.1.7. Cultural and Educational Life of the Armenians in the Sub-province of Aleppo Before World War I

As in the other places, so in the Province of Aleppo monastic institutions were active in the cultural life of the Armenians. This structure changed, to some extent, with the introduction of more secular institutions such as learning institutions during the nineteenth century. However, we could not reach much information specifically about the culture of the Aleppine Armenians.

As to the education, the Aleppine Armenians in general showed little interest in education. Despite their generally prosperous economy, they failed to develop either a higher institution of learning or elementary schools. This caused by, first of all, a sufficient budget never permitted from the revenues of bishopric for the improvement of the schools' facilities. Secondly, while the education in these schools was free of charge, this led to the inadequacy of training principles and teachers. Therefore, frequent changes in the teaching and directorial personnel resulted in a lack of continuity and stability in the program. Most significantly, these inadequacies impelled many parents, especially those of whom were the Arabic-speaking segment of the Armenian community to send their children to local foreign institutions, notably Franciscan and German.¹⁶⁰

Significantly, in the Province most of the schools were established by a group of individuals who aimed at providing an Armenian education for Arab-speaking as well as Armenian-speaking pupils.¹⁶¹ However, the system of public-parochial education at Aleppo was developed during the nineteenth century. The earliest reference to an elementary school for boys was in 1841, which offered instruction in Armenian and Arabic languages and in music.¹⁶² In 1846, an organization named Rebenian Miut'iun which was established by a group of individuals as a fund raising drive launched both locally and at the capital to foster the use of the Armenian

¹⁶⁰ Sanjian, p. 90.

¹⁶¹ See for the examples of such organizations, Sanjian, pp. 78-94.

¹⁶² Sanjian, p. 89.

vernacular in the Arabic speaking community. Besides, in 1853 a kindergarten was added and the boys' school was rebuilt. Some years later with the efforts of the progressive Aleppine magnate Hovhannes K'iurk'jianof a special elementary school for girls was founded. Again, he was effective in the foundation of an Armenian bookstore and of a library designed to encourage the reading of Armenian literature in the 1860's Aleppo.

On the other hand, more joint effort in the field of education at Aleppo was implemented after the acceptance of the Armenian National Constitution. On the national level, the millet's educational policy and program were directed by the educational council of the patriarchate of Constantinople. In 1876 complying with the directives of the Patriarch, the prelate of the bishopric of Aleppo Hakob Aslanian reorganized the boys' and girls' schools. He also charged for them with more qualified teaching personnel and substantially extended the schools' curricula.¹⁶³

The arrival of a large number of Armenian refugees from Asia Minor subsequent to the uprisings of 1895-96 affected the educational facilities at Aleppo in the sense that it rendered the school buildings and staff inefficient. To overcome these inadequacies, new school buildings were constructed with separate sections for boys and girls. Additionally, certain reforms such as charging tuition fees and increasing the educational budget were initiated. According to a census taken for the academic year 1901-02, the two schools had a total student body of 687 pupils who were instructed by twelve men and six women teachers.¹⁶⁴ Besides, in the provincial year book of Aleppo dated 1908, it is cited that there were 6 schools of Armenian community in Aleppo. Two of them were for the Armenian Catholics and for the boys. Whereas the first one was situated in the quarter of Tumâyât, the second one was situated in the quarter of Hamidiyah. While the first school was an elementary school, the second one was a secondary school.¹⁶⁵ According to the *Salname-i*

¹⁶³ Sanjian, pp. 89-90.

¹⁶⁴ Sanjian, p. 90.

¹⁶⁵ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 142.

Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, this second school was opened in 1895.¹⁶⁶ The other four schools were for the Armenians (Gregorians). The first one, which was situated on the quarter of Salibah, was for the boys. It included both elementary and secondary departments. The second one, situated on the quarter of Sokak Bilonide, was also for the boys. It was an elementary school. The third one was also situated on the quarter of Salibah, but it was for the girls. It was also an elementary school. The fourth one was again in the quarter of Salibah and it was for the girls. As distinct from the third one, this school included both elementary and secondary departments.¹⁶⁷

Furthermore, there were also two schools for the Protestants. While the first one was situated on the quarter of Handek, the other was in the Kastal Corade. These two schools included elementary and secondary departments. While the first one was for the girls, the second one was for the both sexes.¹⁶⁸

Significantly, it was also cited in the year-book of the Province of Aleppo that there were Ottoman language teachers for the schools of the non-Muslims and other religious groups. For example, İbrahim Hakkı Efendi was working as an Ottoman language teacher in two of the Armenian Catholic schools. Besides, Abdülkadir Efendi was working as an Ottoman language teacher in other Armenian schools.¹⁶⁹ Thus, we can say that every non-Muslim pupil was studying Ottoman language during their primary and secondary schools education.

So as to the higher education at Aleppo, as cited before, the hospital which was founded by Dr. Asatur Altunian as Altunian Hospital at Aleppo in 1891 contributed to the higher education of the Armenians at Aleppo. A total of 232 Armenians graduated from the medical schools of the Armenian University of Beirut and the *Universite Saint Joseph* from their beginning until 1918.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1316H* / [1888], p. 1014.

¹⁶⁷ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 142.

¹⁶⁸ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 142.

¹⁶⁹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326H* / [1908], p. 143.

¹⁷⁰ Sanjian, p. 68.

Hence, cultural and educational life of the Armenians developed with respect to the introduction of new educational institutions. The number of the newly established schools and the attendants to these schools also increased during the nineteenth century.

2.2. The Situation of the Armenian Community in the Sub-province of Damascus (Syria) Before World War I

2.2.1. Damascus: A Historical Background

The geographical setting of Damascus, which is situated in the Syrian hinterland and without easy access to the Mediterranean Sea, naturally turned the city toward the interior. Thanks to its location along the road, which crossed Syria from north to south and also its setting in the middle of a rich oasis, the city served as a market for nomads and as a station for caravans.¹⁷¹

The transformations that Damascus underwent in the Ottoman period were mainly in the domains of religious and economic infrastructure. Especially, in the first half of the 18th century, due to the investments in economic projects as well as the growth of Sayda as a centre of Mediterranean trade, the economic situation of Damascus improved markedly. However, unlike Aleppo, in the 18th century Damascus was not incorporated into the main commercial networks linking the European merchant towns in the Mediterranean.¹⁷² This partly determined the role of Damascus within this urban system in the economic field, that is, it was not an emporium of international commodities, but rather a centre of regional trade.¹⁷³

The centrality of the city in the regional trade was supported by the city's role as the starting point of the pilgrims' caravan and the maintaining intensification of trade relations with the Hicaz.¹⁷⁴ The pilgrims assured themselves with the materials that needed during their journey which lasted for three months; and on their return

¹⁷¹ Sanjian, p. 58

¹⁷² Richard Van Leeuwen, *Waqfs and Urban Structures: The Case of Ottoman Damascus*, (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 193-94.

¹⁷³ Leeuwen, p. 195.

¹⁷⁴ Leeuwen, p. 190-91.

from Mecca they passed out at Damascus and sold there what they had brought in Arabia.¹⁷⁵ Thus, the expansion of Damascus in the Ottoman period reflects the growing importance of the hajj as a spiritual and economic undertaking in the sense that the pilgrimage not only linked the city directly with the political and religious centres of the Empire-Istanbul and Mecca- but also gave it a central position within several trade networks, reaching from Cairo to Hicaz in the south, Baghdad and Central Asia to the east, and Aleppo and Istanbul to the north. The hajj also fostered a local specialization of artisans and merchants providing the pilgrims with everything they needed for their journey.

Apart from being a centre of trade, Damascus was also the annual meeting place of the Ottoman Empire, as it was the last stop in settled country on the route to Mecca. This density gave way intense commercial activity and composed the city's principal source of income.

Damascus was above all, a centre of regional politics and administration. The governor was responsible for making the collection of taxes in a geographically, economically, and ethnically very variegated area and for making the government of the province subservient to his main task, namely, the organization of the hajj.

Within the micro-system relations with the agricultural areas, Damascus had a great importance. The strongest links were developed with Sayda, Tripoli, Ba'albakk, Jerusalem and Hamah, which were the organic parts of the hinterland of Damascus. Tobacco was obtained from Tripoli and stored in a specialized khan; merchants in Aleppo and Hims also had their separate khans. Rice was imported from Damietta through the port of Sayda and silk was exported from Mount Lebanon and silk tissues from workshops in Damascus. Ba'albakk was also the centre of one of the main agricultural areas in the vicinity of Damascus, producing wheat, barley, beans and lentils.¹⁷⁶ Hence, these towns provided Damascus with an outlet to the Mediterranean and were capitals of provinces which remitted an important contribution to the

¹⁷⁵ Sanjian, p. 58.

¹⁷⁶ Leeuwen, p. 195.

finances for the hajj, especially to cover the expenses of protection force accompanying the pilgrims. The development of Damascus within the context of the empire and the province demonstrates the structures that determined the function of Damascus as a centre of authority and administration, the preservation of culture and education, and the economic centre of urban networks and agricultural hinterlands.

As for the Armenian community in Damascus, before the Ottoman period the history of the Armenians in the city is ambiguous.¹⁷⁷ During the Ottoman period, Armenians were not highly populated in such an important centre of the Empire. Their numbers were not so many and they were not effective on a significant level in the Sub-province of Ottoman Damascus.

2.2.2. Administrative Structure of the Sub-province of Damascus Before World War I

As for the administrative structure of the Sub-province of Damascus, it would be necessary to examine this structure in two periods. The first period includes the years between 1840, in which the Ottoman Empire took the Province of Damascus back from the Egyptian administration, and 1865, in which the new provincial regulation (*Vilayet Nizamnamesi*) was applied to the Province. The second period begins with the year 1864 after the new provincial regulation for the Province of Syria (*Suriye Vilayeti Nizamnamesi*) was applied. After this regulation, a province was established by the name of ‘Syria’ for the first time. Before this, the Province was called as the Province of Damascus (*Şam Eyaleti*).¹⁷⁸ However, we continue to use “Province of Damascus” in our study.

During the first period between 1840 and 1865, Aleppo, Damascus and Sayda were organized as the three provinces of the region. While the centres of the Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus were not changed, the centre of Sayda became Beirut.¹⁷⁹ In

¹⁷⁷ Sanjian, p. 57.

¹⁷⁸ Tuncer Baykara, *Anadolu'nun Tarihi Coğrafyasına Giriş I, Anadolu'nun İdari Taksimatı*, Seri: VII, No. A.9, (Ankara, Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yay., 2000), p. 130.

¹⁷⁹ Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, No: 4,10,16,17,23,29 (Related parts about *Eyalet* of Damascus and *Vilayet* of Syria.) from Sabahattin Samur, *Suriye Vilayeti'nin İdari ve Sosyal Yapısı*

1850, the Province of Sayda was composed of the sub-provinces of Beirut, Sayda, Sur, Deyru'l-Kamer, Bilad-i Bişare, and Nablus.¹⁸⁰ During the same period, the Province of Damascus was composed of the sub-provinces of Damascus, Hamah, Hims and Aclun.¹⁸¹ This structure changed in 1856. In this new structure, Province of Damascus consisted of 5 counties and 27 districts which were as the following:

Eyalet of Damascus in 1856

<u>Sub-province</u>	<u>District</u>
Damascus	16
Hims	2
Hamah	3
Hauran	2
Adjlun	4

Source: *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, 1272H/ [1855]* , pp. 102-104.

Before the application of the Provincial Regulations for the Province of Damascus, this structure changed lastly in 1863. With this change, the number of the districts rose to 29. Thus, while the Sub-province of Damascus consisted of 18 districts; Hims consisted of 1; Hamah of 3; Hauran of 7.¹⁸²

The second period began with the application of the Provincial Regulation for the Province of Syria (*Suriye Vilayeti Nizamnamesi*) in 1865. With this new regulation, the Provinces of Damascus and Sayda were combined under the administrative structure of the Province of Syria. In this new structure, the centre for

(1840- 1908),), Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İslam Medeniyeti ve Sosyal Bilimler Bölümü İslam Tarihi Anabilim Dalı, Unpublished Ph. D.Thesis, (Ankara, 1989), p. 16.

¹⁸⁰ *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, 1272H/ [1855]*, p. 83.

¹⁸¹ *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, 1272H/ [1855]*, p. 86-87.

¹⁸² *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, 1280H/ [1863]*, p. 185.

the Province was Damascus and the Province was composed of the earlier Province of Damascus, Sayda and “*mutasarrıflık*” of Jerusalem. However, this administrative structure did not last long. According to the administrative year-book of 1291, the “*mutasarrıflık*” of Jerusalem was separated from the Province of Syria and organized as a separate “*mutasarrıflık*”, which was directly connected to the central administration.¹⁸³ Significantly, Beirut was established as a distinct Province composing of the sub-provinces of Beirut, Akka, Balka, Trablus and Lazkiye. With these changes, the administrative structure of the region was composed of the Provinces of Aleppo, Syria, Beirut and the ‘*mutasarrıflıks*’ of Jabal Lubnan, Jerusalem, and Dar-al Zor.¹⁸⁴

As for the Sub-province of Damascus, which constitutes the scope of our study as the centre of the Province, its administrative structure was also changed from time to time. According to an administrative year-book dated 1307H / 1891, the Sub-province of Damascus was composed of the following districts and communes:

Table 2.14 The administrative division of the Sub-province of Damascus in 1891

<u>Districts</u>	<u>Communes</u>	<u>Villages</u>	<u>Arable Fields</u>
Ba’lbakka (Baalbek)	-	76	-
Al-Biqā’ ul-Azizi	1	60	15
Wadi al-Adjām	-	82	23
Duma	-	74	19
Nabak	-	30	3
Hasbayya	-	18	-
Rashayya	-	17	-

Source: *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, 1307 / [1889]*, p. 492.

¹⁸³ *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, 1291H / [1874]*, p. 254.

¹⁸⁴ Samur, pp. 25-26.

In another instance, which was provided by Cuinet for the year 1896, there were 431 settlement areas dependant on the Sub-province of Damascus. According to this:

Table 2.15 The administrative division of the Sub-province of Damascus in 1896

<u>Districts</u>	<u>Communes</u>	<u>Villages</u>
Damascus	-	55
Ba'lbakka (Baalbek)	1	76
Al-Biqa' ul-Azizi	1	67
Duma	-	86
Nabak	-	32
Wadi al-Adjam	-	30
Hasbayya	-	19
Rashayya	-	16

Source: *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1314H/* [1896].

When we compare abovementioned administrative division with that of the year 1900, “Zebedani” was added as a district as distinct from the year 1891.¹⁸⁵

Besides, according to the Syrian provincial year-book of 1900, the list of the districts, villages and the level of the districts of the Sub-province of Damascus were as follows:

Table 2.16 List of the districts and the villages of the Sub-province of Damascus in 1900¹⁸⁶

Sub-province of Damascus	Level of the Sub-province	Administrative Center of the Sub-province	District	Villages and Arable Lands
Damascus	-	Damascus	-	50
Ba'lbakka (Baalbek)	1	Ba'lbakka (Baalbek)	2	61
Al-Biqa' ul-Azizi	1	Muallaka	1	59 villages, 15 arable

¹⁸⁵ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H/* [1891], p. 271.

¹⁸⁶ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H/* [1900], p. 253.

Table 2.16 (Continued)

Duma	2	Duma	1	60
Nabak	2	Nabak	2	28
Wadi al-Adjam	3	Katana	1	24
Hasbayya	3	Hasbayya	-	18
Rashayya	3	Rashayya	-	20
Zebedani	3	Zebedani	-	28
Total			7	348 villages, 15 arable lands

Source: *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H/[1900]*, p. 253.

Thus, it is clear from these figures that the administrative structure of the Province of Syria, as well as the Sub-province of Damascus, was not stable and the boundaries of both had changed constantly during the nineteenth century in parallel with the emerging political disorders in the region.

All in all, as to the early years of the twentieth century, there were three provinces in Syrian region, which were the Provinces of Syria, Aleppo and Beirut. There were also 11 sub-provinces and 52 districts dependant on these Provinces in 1911 which were as follows:

Table 2.17 Administrative divisions of the Provinces of Syria, Aleppo and Beirut in 1911

Province	Dependant Sub-provinces	Number of Districts
Syria	Damascus	9
	Hama	3
	Hauran	5
	Kerek	3
Aleppo	Aleppo	13
	Marash	4
Beirut	Beirut	3
	Akka	4
	Trablusşam	3
	Lathikia	3
	Nablus	2

Source: *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, 1327H/[1910-1911]*, pp. 627, 681.

At the same time, there were 3 separate ‘mutasarrıflık’ and 17 dependant districts of these ‘mutasarrıflık’ in the region which were as follows:

Table 2. 18 Administrative Divisions of the “mutasarrıflık” of the Syrian Region in 1911

Name of the “mutasarrıflık”	Number of Dependant Districts
Cebel-i Lübnan	8
Zor	4
Kudüs-i Şerif	5

Source: *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, 1327H / [1910 -1911]*, pp. 855- 858, 866.

Thus, the administrative structure of the Province of Damascus, which later became the Province of Syria, changed frequently during the nineteenth century due to the regional political changes. When we consider abovementioned administrative structure of Syrian region for today, the Provinces of Syria and Aleppo compose the Syrian cities today, and districts compose the present of towns of Syria. As distinct from those, Marash which was the sub-province of Aleppo is now one of the cities of Turkey.

2.2.3. Armenian Population in the Sub-province of Damascus Before World War I

The situation of the Armenians in Damascus was affected from the Druze-Maronite community strife in Lebanon in 1860. During that time, while some Armenians were troubled, the others escaped. According to Ephrikian, which is quoted in Krikorian, before the massacres of 1860, there had been about 30 naturalized Armenian families and quite a few alien merchants in Damascus. He also cites that during 1897/8, there had remained only five families and none were engaged

in trade. In 1900 also he mentions that there had been 40 houses, approximately 300 persons, migrated from different towns, who had hardly earned their daily living.¹⁸⁷

To be able to see the detailed population accounts of the Province of Syria, we will give the population figures in the Provincial Year-book of Syria dated 1900, which was as the following:

Table 2.19 Armenian Population in Provincial Year-Book of Syria in 1900-1

Religious Groups	Male	Female	Total
Muslims	247.242	222.124	469.366
Greek Orthodox	20.588	15.572	36.160
Greek Catholic	10.688	7.369	18.057
Armenian Catholic	101	108	209
Armenians	166	148	314
Assyrians Catholic	940	874	1.814
Assyrians	2.800	2.225	5.025
Maronites	2.965	2.672	5.637
Protestant	606	472	1.078
Latin	208	86	294
Dürzi	12.792	2.151	14.943
Jews	3.582	3.422	7.004
Total	302.678	257.223	559.901

Source: *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H/ [1900]*, pp. 364-365.

In this source, it is mentioned that the population of the Province of Syria was 559.901. Among these while 469.366 were Muslims comprising the 83.8 percent of the population; the number of the non-Muslim population was 90.535 comprising the 16.2 of the population. So as to the Armenian population within the Province of Syria, there were 523 Armenians in the Province by the year 1900, which consisted of the 1 percent of the population.

When we compare these figures with those of Aleppo, it will be able to be seen clearly that Armenians were highly populated in the Province of Aleppo. While Armenians comprised the largest non-Muslim group in the Province of Aleppo, Greeks were the largest non-Muslim group in the Province of Syria. On the other hand, whereas the population rate of the Armenians in the Province of Aleppo was 8.5

¹⁸⁷ Krikorian, p. 96.

percent, it was 1 percent for the Province of Damascus during the last decade of the nineteenth century.

As for the Armenian population of the Sub-province of Damascus, we will give first the population figures provided by Karpat and then the population figures provided in the Provincial Year-book of the Province of Syria.

Table 2.20 Armenian Population in Ottoman General Census of 1881/82- 1893 by Sub-province of Damascus¹⁸⁸

Religious Groups	Female	Male	Total
Muslims	124.498	116.931	241.429
Greeks	7.364	8.905	16.269
Armenians	96	103	199
Catholics	8.630	10.780	19.410
Protestant	320	235	555
Latins	43	47	90
Non-Muslim Gypsies	6	-	6
Jews	3.093	3.185	6.278
Total	143.953	140.181	284.134

Source: Karpat, p. 265.

When we look at these figures, it can be concluded that the population figures were not given in detail. For instance, when we look at the Armenian population, the Catholic Armenians were not separated, as in the population of the Greeks.

Table 2.21 The Armenian Population in the Sub-province of Damascus According to the Provincial Year-Book of Syria in 1900

Religious Groups	Male	Female	Total
Muslims	55.185	70.724	125.909
Greek Orthodox	2.421	2.310	4.731
Greek Catholic	2.120	2.174	4.294

¹⁸⁸ Karpat, p. 265.

Table 2.21 (Continued)

Armenian Catholic	134	123	257
Armenians	88	91	179
Assyrians Catholic	41	28	69
Assyrians	239	217	456
Maronites	122	123	245
Protestant	52	38	90
Latin	27	59	86
Dürzi	-	-	-
Jews	3.523	3.412	6.935
Total	64.016	79.305	143.321

Source: *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H*/[1900], pp. 364-365.

According to these figures, the population of the Muslims in the city was 125.909, which covered 87.8 percent, the population of non-Muslims in the city was 17.412, which covered 12.2 percent of the population. Within this structure, the Armenian population was 436, which covered 2.5 percent of the city. In fact, these outcomes reflect the larger picture in a micro level. When we compare the population of the Armenian in the centre of the sub-province, that is in Damascus, with the Armenian population of the Province of Syria, it will be clear that the majority of the Armenian population lived in Damascus. On the other hand, when we compare the Armenian population of the city of Damascus with Aleppo during the same period, while the Armenians in the city of Aleppo covered the 5.3 percent of the population, it was 2.5 in Damascus. Thus, the Armenian presence in the city of Aleppo was more constant and more sensible.

As to the Armenian sources, there was not any information about the Armenian population of the Province of Syria provided by the Patriarchate. As indicated above, the Patriarchate did not give detailed population statistics for areas outside of the six provinces. Apart from the statistics of the Patriarchate, Ormanian gives the number of the Armenians in the Province of Syria as 2.000 which is much higher than the figures of the provincial yearbook of 1900-1. Cuinet also records the Armenian population as 2.025, a number which is in close agreement with Ormanians

statistics.¹⁸⁹ However, these statistics did not depend on any archival material which would make these estimates valuable, but dependant on approximate estimates.

In sum, due to the information provided by the sources until now, it is clear that the Armenian population was not constant or large in the Province of Syria. On the other hand, the Armenians of Syria settled in majority in the sub-province of Damascus, especially in the city of Damascus.

2.2.4. The Socio-Economic Situation of the Armenian Community in the Sub-province of Damascus Before World War I

Unlike those of Aleppo, the Armenians of Damascus did not play a notable role in the city's commerce. While some proportion of the Armenians in Damascus engaged in commercial activities and operated small scale businesses, the majority were artisans and shop-keepers. As for the other trades and professions of the Armenians in the sub-province of Damascus, they were occupied in agriculture and crafts during the second half of the nineteenth century. Wheat, barley, maize, rice, cotton, tobacco, vegetables and fruits, coal, iron and copper were the main products of this province. The leather work of Damascus was well known, and wood and metal inlaid works was exported to other countries.¹⁹⁰

The Druze-Maronite community strife in Lebanon in 1860 also affected the situation of the Armenians in Syria in the sense that they were more industrious and prosperous before 1860, when the communal conflicts arose in Damascus and Jabal Lübnan. After the strife, their economic situation worsened.

Significantly, to improve the community's economic status, a group of Armenians of Damascus founded the Haykazian Society in 1875. The society's aim was to tackle exclusively with financial investment for the benefit of its subscribers.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Krikorian, pp. 94-95.

¹⁹⁰ Krikorian, pp. 95-96.

¹⁹¹ For detailed information about that society see: Sanjian, pp. 58-59.

2.2.5. Armenian Participation in Government Offices in the Sub-province of Damascus Before World War I

In the province of Syria, the centres of Armenian participation were Damascus, Ba'albakka and Rashayya in the sub-province of Damascus; Hamah and Hims in the sub-province of Hamah; and the district of Adjlun in the sub-province of Haouran.¹⁹² Armenian participation in the public affairs of the sub-province of Damascus was not very large or constant as compared to the sub-province of Aleppo. The reason for such a difference lies in the less Armenian population in this sub-province.

In the sub-province of Damascus, the Armenians took part mainly in the departments of finance, engineering and the public health service. They contributed significantly to the development of public works in Syria particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century.

At the headquarters of the province we witness Armenian officials. There were Armenian elected members in the administrative council of the district. Mehran Efendi was the elected member in the administrative council of the District of Aleppo in 1891.¹⁹³

Moreover, there were Armenian officials in the Agricultural Bank and Ottoman Bank branches of the Sub-province. In 1891, Mihail Efendi was the director of a division and Mikailyan Efendi was also the director of the Division of 'Nafi'a' in the Agricultural Bank of the District.¹⁹⁴ In 1888-9 the Agricultural Bank agent was an Armenian as was the manager of the Ottoman Bank, who was Antun Efendi in 1891.¹⁹⁵ There were also Armenian accountants in the Ottoman Bank in 1900-1. Miracyan Efendi, Antun Efendi and Marsil Safi Efendi were the accountants in the Ottoman Bank.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Krikorian, p. 96.

¹⁹³ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H* / [1891], p. 113.

¹⁹⁴ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H* / [1908], p. 134.

¹⁹⁵ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H* / [1908], p. 142.

¹⁹⁶ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H* / [1900], p. 126.

In the technical field, in 1888-9 there were an Armenian engineer and a foreman in the department of public works.¹⁹⁷ For instance, while Tigran Efendi was the assistant engineer in 1895-6 in the department of public works, in 1900-1 Shahin Efendi replaced him in the same department. Furthermore, while Mihran Efendi was the agricultural inspector in 1891¹⁹⁸, Melokn Sukiasian was the agricultural inspector in 1900-1.¹⁹⁹ Manuk-Bshara Manukian was also the chief engineer in the Provinces of Syria and Beirut for a long time. He was honoured with ‘five decorations’ by the Ottoman government for his public service.²⁰⁰ Melkon Suikasian worked first as the agricultural inspector until 1903 and then, from 1904-1908, as mining engineer.²⁰¹

In the spheres of public health, at the military hospital, many Armenians participated. Armenians acted as surgeon, chemist, adjutant-major doctor and hospital warder in the sub-province of Damascus. In 1888-9 the chemist and adjutant-major doctor were Armenians; in 1891 and 1900 Artin Efendi was a major doctor; Antun Efendi was the doctor of municipality.²⁰² Besides, Esber Lekis Efendi was the dentist in 1900.²⁰³

In addition, Armenians were also active in the sphere of education of the Province. Due to their knowledge of Turkish and Arabic, they were employed in the government secondary schools as vice-directors and teachers.²⁰⁴ Doctor Antun Efendi

¹⁹⁷ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1306H/ [1888-89].

¹⁹⁸ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1306H/ [1888-89], p. 136.

¹⁹⁹ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1318H / [1900-1901].

²⁰⁰ Krikorian, p. 100.

²⁰¹ Krikorian, p. 100.

²⁰² *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1309H / [1891], p. 138; *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1318H / [1900-1901], pp. 122-124.

²⁰³ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 1318H / [1900-1901], p. 308.

²⁰⁴ See for a detailed information about some notable Armenians in the public life of Damascus, Krikorian, pp. 99-101.

was the teacher in the Elementary School of Damascus.²⁰⁵ Hamyarsun Nizamyian Efendi was in Board of Teachers as the teacher of mechanics, chemistry and maths.²⁰⁶

Although they were not many as compared to Aleppo, there were also Armenian officials in judicature in the sub-province. To illustrate, Mihail Saydah Efendi was the member of the Judicial Office in 1891.²⁰⁷ In the courts of appeal, Nikola Şağuri and Mihail Efendis acted as clerks.²⁰⁸ And Antun Efendi was the contemporary member in Commercial Court of Damascus.²⁰⁹ In 1900-1, while Edvar Ayun Efendi acted as accountant and cashier in the court of appeals, Seçan Efendi was also the first director of the department. Antun Efendi was the director of the fourth department.²¹⁰

Apart from these professions, Armenians were also employed as clerk, cashier, usher and secretariat. While Antun Efendi worked as tax clerk in 1891²¹¹, Secan Efendi was the cashier in 'reji' management of Damascus.²¹² On the other hand, Mihail Efendi acted as usher in the Court Secretariat.²¹³ Lastly, Basil Efendi was employed as Chief of the Foreign Languages Centre of Damascus Telegraph Center in 1900-1.²¹⁴

In sum, Armenians were the active participants of the social and economic life of the two sub-province of Aleppo and Damascus. They also actively participated in the public services of the sub-provinces. The *Tanzimat* reforms, together with the new

²⁰⁵ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H / [1891-2]*, p. 131.

²⁰⁶ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H / [1900-1901]*, p. 117.

²⁰⁷ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H / [1891-2]*, p. 117.

²⁰⁸ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H / [1891-2]*, p. 119.

²⁰⁹ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H / [1891-2]*, p. 121.

²¹⁰ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H / [1900]*, p. 125.

²¹¹ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H / [1891-2]*, p. 136.

²¹² *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H / [1891-2]*, p. 143.

²¹³ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H / [1900]*, p. 107.

²¹⁴ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H / [1900]*, p. 119.

provincial organization, gave the Armenians the chance of participating in Ottoman public affairs on a large scale. They had well integrated themselves to the Ottoman social, economic and public lives. However, when we compare these two sub-provinces, it can be concluded that the Armenians of Aleppo were more active and accurate participants in government offices and socio-economic sphere of life in Aleppo.

When we compare the number of Armenian participants in Ottoman public life with the total number of Armenian inhabitants, we can rightly conclude that they were well treated. While the reason for this, on the one hand, can be considered as the fact that the Armenians were the industrious element of the Empire; on the other hand, from a political point of view, they were a trusted element in the Empire.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the Armenian participation in the public life of the sub-provinces of Aleppo and Damascus is that while they were included on the administrative and municipal councils, in the courts of justice and financial departments in the sub-province of Aleppo; they acted mostly in technical departments, in the health service, in public finance and agricultural affairs in the sub-province of Damascus.

2.2.6. Religious and Political Life of the Armenians in the Sub-province of Damascus Before World War I

The ecclesiastical and community affairs at Damascus were administered by clerical superintendents appointed by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.²¹⁵ The Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which had the character and scope of a monastic institution, was responsible for the preservation of the religious rights and privileges of the Armenian Church in the Holy Land. While the religious leader of the community in the sub-province of Damascus was the Priest Ağışe Efendi in 1891²¹⁶, it was Gabriyel Anuşyan Efendi in 1900.²¹⁷ The church of St. Sarkis was the church of Armenian Gregorians in Damascus.

²¹⁵ Sanjian, p. 149.

²¹⁶ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H* / [1891-2], p. 139.

²¹⁷ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H* / [1900], p. 127.

For the Armenian Catholics of the Province, Sarafyan Efendi was the leader of the community during the years 1891 and of 1900.²¹⁸ Armenian Catholics constructed a church in near to Deyru'r-Ruhban for themselves.²¹⁹

In the second half of the nineteenth century, with the changes came as a result of Armenian National Constitution, an executive council consisting of five members elected by the people and accountable to the community and the patriarchate cooperated with the ecclesiastical representatives in the management of the local institution. However, the Armenian community in Damascus remained under the jurisdiction of Jerusalem until the end of World War I. Spiritual administrators and clerical assistants were appointed by the See as elsewhere. Significantly, the financial needs of the community at Damascus were met by the proceeds from the monastery's properties, which produced benefit an annual income of some 100 liras.²²⁰

2.2.7. Cultural and Educational Life of the Armenians in the Sub-province of Damascus Before World War I

During the reign of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians had their own educational institutions within the framework of the *millet* system. The lesson of the history of Armenians was among the most important lessons and the language of instruction was their national language. Each non-Muslim community was free in the administration of the schools, which were established by them. In Syria, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem assumed the responsibility of establishing and maintaining parochial schools for the Armenian secular communities together with Palestine and Lebanon. Under the administrative jurisdiction of the Patriarchate, these institutions followed two main objectives: one was providing the children of these widely scattered communities with at least an elementary education free of charge, and the

²¹⁸ *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1309H* [1891-2], p. 139; *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H/* [1900], p. 127.

²¹⁹ Samur, p. 156.

²²⁰ Sanjian, p. 150.

other was ensuring that the children of a substantial number of Arabic-speaking Armenians acquired fluency in their native tongue.²²¹

The Patriarchate made arrangements for the education of Armenian children in the community of Damascus. As a rule, the schools in Damascus were administered by the resident prelates appointed by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and assisted by local elected lay trustees. Raising funds for supporting the schools was the responsibility of those trustees.²²²

On the other hand, most of the schools were established by a group of individuals who aimed at providing an Armenian education for Arab-speaking as well as Armenian-speaking children.²²³ For example, the customs director of Syria, Georg Misakyan founded the Nersisian Society. Under the supervision of this society he founded a regular elementary school. This school was established in 1849 and toward the end of the century it consisted of two divisions, one for boys and one for girls, with a total of 310 pupils.²²⁴

As for the higher education among the Armenians at Damascus, the Syrian Protestant College, founded by American missionaries in 1866 and later constituted into the American University of Beirut and the *Universite Saint Joseph* were the two main universities that attracted Armenian students from Asia Minor, Cilicia and Greater Syria as early as 1880's.²²⁵ Whereas the first Armenian graduate from the American University dates back to 1885, this number had increased from that time on. From 1885 to 1918 the total number of graduates was 226, primarily from the schools of medicine, pharmacy, and nursing. Besides, the Armenian graduates from the *Universite Saint Joseph* were eighty-nine during the years 1881-1915, principally from the schools of medicine, pharmacy and theology. Thus, these figures

²²¹ Sanjian, p. 82.

²²² Sanjian, p. 83.

²²³ See for the examples of such organizations: Sanjian, pp.78-94.

²²⁴ Sanjian, p. 83.

²²⁵ Sanjian, p. 92.

demonstrate that the majority of the Armenian graduates from both institutions favoured the professions rather than the humanities or social sciences.²²⁶

In sum, in this part of the study we examined the effects and contribution of the Armenians within the Sub-provinces of Aleppo and Damascus to the socio-economic, political, religious, cultural and educational realms before World War I. We see that the Armenian population of Aleppo was noteworthy as compared to Damascus and also the Armenian efficiency and participation in governmental offices of the Province of Aleppo was more constant and stable as compared to Damascus. Moreover, Aleppo was a crucial socio-economic centre for the Armenians. It can be pointed out from the abovementioned information that the Armenians of both Aleppo and Damascus had well integrated themselves within the context of society they lived and they were the active participants of different branches of life.

²²⁶ Sanjian, p. 92.

CHAPTER III

SYRIAN ARMENIANS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE DURING THE COURSE OF WORLD WAR I AND THE FOLLOWING YEARS (1914-1925)

3.1. General View Of The Armenians In The Sub-provinces Of Aleppo and Damascus During World War I and Following Years (1914-1925)

3.1.1. The Situation of the Armenians in the Sub-province of Aleppo During the Relocation Process

During the relocation process, the approaches and activities of the Armenians in the centre of the Province of Aleppo were largely affected by the relative social, economic and political well beings of them. Because of the fact that, they had well integrated themselves into the social, economic, political life of the Ottoman Empire, they had an economically privileged position as mentioned largely in the second part of our study. As also indicated in many phases of the second part of the present study, the Armenian population of both Aleppo and Damascus were talented people and active in many different branches of the economic life of Aleppo and Damascus. They also shared a common culture and language with the Muslim population and many Armenians integrated themselves into the Ottoman ruling class from 1850 onwards with the *Tanzimat* reforms. They were appointed to significant positions in the Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus. Hence, the fact that large numbers of the advocated urban Armenians had reasons to be satisfied with the status quo.¹ On the other hand, there were orders regarding the relocation of foreign Armenians in Aleppo. An order was sent on 13 May 1916 from the Ministry of Interior to Cemal Pasha, the Commander of the Fourth Army, regarding deportation of the foreign Armenians in Aleppo, other than the Catholics and Protestants, to other locations, and

¹ Öke, pp. 104-106.

the arrest until the arrival of Esad Bey of those who are linked to revolutionary committees and those who can provide information. Additionally, in another ciphered telegram dated 18 June 1916 from the Ministry of Interior to the province of Aleppo, it was ordered that sending of foreign Armenians in Aleppo to Syria and Mossul was not appropriate; instead they should be sent to Zor.² Namely, in these two telegrams the deportation of foreign Armenians and the arrest of those who are linked to revolutionary committees and those who can provide information except for the Catholic and Protestant ones from Aleppo were ordered. Those foreign Armenians indicated in the telegrams were from the foreign nationals. The reason behind this order was the rebellious and spy activities of these foreign Armenians. They were not the indigenous Armenians or the relocated Armenians. However, we do not have accurate information about these foreign Armenians. At the end of the second telegram it was also stated that if their native countries demanded information about them, a notification would be carried out.³

Since we could not reach any contradictory evidence, we believe that the indigenous Armenians of Aleppo did not organize any separatist movements or joined any such organizations. According to the ciphered telegram which includes the details of the deportation decision of the cabinet dated 30 May 1915 and also indicated in Lewy, while most of the Armenians in the Province were relocated, the centre of Aleppo province together with Istanbul and Smyrna did not experience a full scale relocation process.⁴ Thus, the indigenous Armenian population of the centre of Aleppo did not share the same fate with the relocated Armenians. Two main incentives, which are also indicated above, can be considered as the reasons for this. First of all, Armenians in Aleppo were prosperous and glad and more crucially, they had well integrated themselves into the society they lived in. Besides, this region could also be considered as the homelands by the Armenians because of the fact that

² *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 187.

³ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 184.

⁴ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 17; Lewy, p. 191.

Syria neighbored the historical Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia and where, especially in and round Aleppo, old Armenian communities had settled as early as the twelfth century and also included the important See of Aleppo of the Armenian Cilician Catholicate beginning from the fourteenth century. We claim that, due to these reasons, they did not organize any separatist rebellions nor establish any separatist organizations against the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, with respect to these facts, neither the Armenians of Aleppo nor the Armenians of Damascus did experience a full scale relocation process. Contrarily, the rebellious Armenians were relocated to these regions. According to the Ottoman documents, Armenians from Eastern Anatolia, Ankara, Kayseri, (Kütahya⁵) would be relocated in Aleppo and its surrounding region.⁶ When it was recognized that the relocated Armenians in Aleppo was too many for the centre of population which was determined earlier, many of the Armenians were sent to the Province of Syria.⁷ In a telegram⁸ sent from the Ministry of Interior, it was stated that some of the Armenians within the province have been sent to the province of Syria and to the districts of Menç, Bab, Ma'arra, and some of the remaining ones in the convoys of thousand people and by train was in progress, that the Armenians of Kilis and Aintab were being sent to the area of Urfa, Zor, Mossul. Besides, Armenians from Aleppo were sent to the Kerek, district of Damascus, the sub-province of Hauran, and the districts of Ba'albek, Tebek, Duma, and together with the cities of Hamah and Hims.⁹ Thus, the provinces of Aleppo and Damascus were the central places for the relocation process.

As also designated in many parts of the present study, Aleppo was the crossroads of several important routes taken by the relocation convoys. Armenians from towns such as Bursa and Konya along the Baghdad railway were coming to

⁵ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 97.

⁶ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Documents: 106-109.

⁷ Karaköse, p. 71.

⁸ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 105.

⁹ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Documents: 105, 116, 187.

Aleppo from the northwest on the still unfinished railroad. Armenians from various places in Cilicia were using branches of that same railroad. From the northeast, through Urfa, a road combined on Aleppo from Diyarbakır. That was the route taken by the refugees from Erzurum and Harput. Most of these exiles generally spent a few days in Aleppo or in transit camps located around the city. From Aleppo, the exiles were shipped by rail eastward to Ras-ul-Ain and south to Hamah, Hims, and Damascus, several locations in Palestine. Others were sent on foot toward Dar-al Zor in Eastern Syria.¹⁰ Hence, the Ottoman territories of Aleppo and Damascus (as will be mentioned soon) became the last station for the deported Armenians from Asia Minor and Cilicia.

As for the places that were included as relocation areas within the Province of Aleppo, in the beginning of 1915 the Turkish governor of the district of Antioch, Maaruf, informed the local Armenians of the government's decision regarding their relocation. Before they could complete plans for armed resistance the Armenians of Antioch and the valley of Orontes were rounded up and relocated to Hamah. Ostensibly to secure the strategic Levantine coast, the Turkish authorities proceeded to evacuate the Armenians of Kasab and its surrounding villages. In spite of the urgings of an Armenian delegation from Jabal Musa, the leaders of the community at Kasab refused to join forces in armed resistance. Their reason not to accede to the suggestion can be attributed, first, to the Turkish authorities' successful efforts at thwarting a possible insurrection by sowing the seeds of discord among the community leaders; and second, to the assurances given by the German missionary Herter, who directed an orphanage at Kasab, to the large Armenian Protestant community there that they would not be relocated. Be that as it may, the entire Armenian population of the region was driven to the interior, notably to Hamah, Hims, Aleppo and Dar-al Zor. The relocation also affected the community at Latakia and its environs. In November 1915 the local Armenian monastery and its properties

¹⁰ Lewy, p. 191.

were occupied by the gendarmerie; and the entire community of Latakia was relocated to Aleppo.¹¹

Among the Armenian communities of north Syria, only those of Jabal Musa resolved to offer armed resistance to the Turks rather than submit the relocation. Equipped with arms and munitions, some eight hundred young fighters, for over a month, fought against the Turkish army in Jabal Musa Mountain.

It is significant that the Armenians contributed to the Allied military campaign against the Ottomans in Palestine and Northwestern Syria. Some eight thousand young men, including the survivors of Musa Dagh as well as volunteers from the communities in the United States and elsewhere, formed the *Armenian Legion*, which distinguished itself in battles in Palestine and Northwestern Syria. This military effort was not motivated merely by a desire to avenge the Turkish; rather, it was also inspired by an allied, particularly French, promise of freedom for Cilicia as an Armenian state.¹²

Similarly, another instance that indicates the target of relocation policy of the Ottoman State as aiming at preventing Armenians from any separatist movements or aids to the Great Powers during war process was that Armenian communities in Palestine and Lebanon were not subjected to the relocation. At Beirut, with the outbreak of war Armenian officials in the local government were relocated to Damascus. On the other hand, a group of Armenians who engaged in revolutionary activities was summarily executed. The monastery of St. Nshan and its adjacent properties belonging to the national church were confiscated and later demolished because of its revolutionary activities.¹³

Descriptions of the deportees as they arrived in Aleppo and of conditions in the encampments in and around the city have given us by the provincial governors, American, German and Austrian consular officials as well as foreign residents.

¹¹ Sanjian, p. 284.

¹² Sanjian, p. 285.

¹³ Sanjian, pp. 284-285.

Nonetheless, before moving into our main objective in this part, namely the situation of the Armenians in the sub-province of Aleppo during the relocation process, we want to add that, as in the discussions of the Armenian Question, there are two kinds of descriptions stating the relocation process. On the one hand, there are sources from Ottoman archives and the reports sent by the provincial governors, on the other hand, there are consul reports, hearsay, eyewitnesses and approximate accounts. In this part of the study we will try to represent the information provided by the two kinds of sources within the limits of our subject and then we will try to reach some conclusions from these figures about the situation of the Armenians in the sub-provinces of Aleppo and Damascus during the relocation process. Then, we will move to the aid programs in the region.

Cemal Pasha was the Commander of the Fourth Army during the relocation process under control of who the relocations took place. Erden cited that with the efforts of Cemal Pasha, the Armenians were not sent to desert. They were settled in highly populated regions such as the cities, towns and villages. Cemal Pasha also did collect the talented ones and tradesmen in the city centres of Aleppo and Damascus.¹⁴ He also tried to prevent any harmful activities directed towards the Armenians. For instance, a watch of an Armenian was stolen in Aleppo. Cemal Pasha immediately ordered to police for finding the watch and then, when the watch was found, the thief was executed.¹⁵ Besides, the Ottoman government also followed the situation of Armenians in Damascus and Aleppo, that is, from where the immigrants came, how many immigrants reached to Aleppo and Damascus, to which regions they were sent. All these developments were followed by the reports coming from the provincial governors of the relocation areas.¹⁶ In a ciphered telegram provided by the province of Aleppo to the Ministry of Interior on 1 September 1915, it was stated that 26.064 Armenians from the province of Aleppo, 11.638 from other provinces and totally

¹⁴ Ali Fuat Erden, *Birinci Dünya Harbi'nde Suriye Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Halk Mtbaası, 1954), p. 123.

¹⁵ Erden, p. 125.

¹⁶ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Documents: 68, 171, 175.

37.702 Armenians were sent to the Province of Syria; 5.700 Armenians were sent to the districts of Menç, Bab, Ma'arra. By that time, there were 12.957 Armenians in Aleppo and among these one thousand Armenians had been deported as groups or by railway per day. There were also 12.000 Armenians in Kilis at Katme railway and 5002 Armenians in Ayıntab at Akçakoyun. In other words, there were 17.000 Armenians who would be sent to Urfa, Zor and Mossul in groups composing of 500 or 1000 people daily.¹⁷ In another telegram which was sent from the governor of the province of Damascus to the Ministry of Interior dated 19 September 1915, the situation of the Armenians who had come to Damascus from Aleppo and who had been deported to various areas and Armenians in Hamah and Hims were reported¹⁸ According to this telegram, 21.000 Armenians were sent from Aleppo to Damascus; 8.858 to Kerek; 11.289 Armenians to Houran; and 492 of them were composed of the widows who were sent to the districts of Kuneytra, Ba'albek, Tebek, Doma. The number of relocated Armenians by that time was reported as 12.000 in the province of Hamah and the district of Hims.¹⁹

The needs of the Armenians were also reported to the Ministry of the Interior by the Commander of the Fourth Army, Cemal Pasha. In this telegram, it was outlined that because of the shortage of food, Armenians were dying in the convoys. To supply this basic need, 100.000 *liras* was demanded from the government on 26 October 1915. In response to this demand, the Ministry of Interior called for information from Şükrü Bey who was the Director of Refugees. In this telegram, the information was demanded about whether the funds allocated for feeding the Armenian convoys was sufficient, and whether this had been paid out of the property funds.²⁰

Furthermore, in a ciphered telegram dated 14 April 1916 from the Ministry of Interior to the Province of Aleppo, it was regarded the report of Abdülbad Nuri Bey,

¹⁷ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 105.

¹⁸ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 116.

¹⁹ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 116.

²⁰ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 145.

the Director of Deportations, on the situation of Armenians in Aleppo and Damascus and their return to Istanbul.²¹ Another ciphered telegram was also sent from the Ministry of Interior to the Fourth Army Command in Damascus, regarding that information would be provided on the sites where Armenian families and those who were foreign nationals were set up.²² Thus, the details for the accession of the Armenians to their transportation areas and then to the relocation areas in Syria was proved by the provincial governors' reports for the government.

On the other hand, as for the report of consular officials and foreign residents, according to Özdemir (et al.,) while some of the reports were written under the framework of war propaganda such as Morgenthau, Lepsius, Bryce and Toynbee and the others which were written by the consulate reports, and missionary reports also did not base on reliable sources, namely they had it only from hearsay.²³ Among these, reports from American Armenian missionary groups demonstrate that although there occurred some serious difficulties in their trip to relocation areas, they reached Syria without great losses.²⁴ As a matter of fact, in the memoirs of Morgenthau the dialogue during a meeting with Zenop Bezciyan who was the representative of the Armenian Protestants was recited as follows: "One and a half million relocated Armenians settled and they were established a business and started to earn their livelihood in their newly settled areas."²⁵

As quoted in Lewy by the American Consul Jackson to Ambassador Morgenthau on June 5, 1915, many of the relocated Armenians had arrived to Aleppo and had been taken care of locally by the sympathizing Armenian population of the

²¹ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 171.

²² *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 180.

²³ Hikmet Özdemir, Kemal Çiçek, Ömer Turan, Ramazan Çalık, Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeniler:Sürgün ve Göç*, Appendix -10/1, (Ankara: TTK Yay., 2005), p. 106.

²⁴ Özdemir, et al., p. 110. The report sent by the American Aleppo Consul Jackson to the Ambassador Morgenthau on 3 February 1916; US ARCHIVES State Department Record Group 59,867.48/271.

²⁵ Heath W. Lovry, *Büyükelçi Morgenthau'nun Öyküsü'nün Perde Arkası*, (İstanbul: Isus, 1991), pp. 47-48.

city. According to that report, they had rested a few days in the churches and schools, where they had filled all rooms, courts, balconies and even cover the roofs. Then, they continued to their relocation areas. Due to the same report, by late September 1915, more than thirty thousand had arrived by rail and at least a hundred thousand on foot many of whom were worn out because of the treatment by their escorts and the despoiling depopulation en route.²⁶ On the other hand, there were orders given by the government regarding the security of Armenian convoys during the relocation process. Due to these orders, it was stated that care should be given to the relocation and feeding of Armenians gathered in station, to determined locations and that they should be protected from attacks.²⁷ It was also decreed that their expenses would be paid out of the refugees fund, the necessary measures should be taken for the protection of the convoys, and the ones who attacked them would be severely punished and officials prompting such acts would be dismissed and brought before court martials.²⁸ However, despite these precautions, excesses did occur. For those who committed crimes during the deportations, investigations were ordered to be held and it was decided that the expenses of the Armenians would be paid out of the Finance Treasury.²⁹ These orders were worth mentioning here in order to demonstrate the approach and the attitude of Ottoman State for the relocated Armenians.

On the other hand, the hard conditions of the process also affected the situation of the relocated people in the sense that many of them died from disease and fatigue. The exhausted conditions of the relocated Armenians further contributed to the death of many of the relocated people arriving in the city.³⁰ The issue of the relocated Armenians' health, sickness, selling of properties etc. were also taken into consideration by the government. On 28 August, 1915, the Ministry of Interior Affairs

²⁶ Lewy, p. 192.

²⁷ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 79, 102.

²⁸ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 99.

²⁹ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 219, 220, 221, 223.

³⁰ Lewy, p. 192.

ordered to check health conditions of those relocated and the sick ones among them and ordered a special interest should be given for pregnant women and babies. The railway would transport patients, women and children and horses and carts would transport the rest. Each convoy's food stocks should be provided and the army units would defend them.³¹

According to the aid report of Jackson who was the American Consul in Aleppo dated 8 February 1916, between Aleppo and Damascus and in that surrounding country, down the Euphrates River as far as Dar-al-Zor there were 500.000 Armenians.³² This number was also confirmed by the reports of American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief Organization (ACASR) which called the same number repeatedly.³³ In a report provided by this organization dated 8 February, 1916, it was stated that they aided about 500.000 relocated Armenians. The information about the encampment areas as well as the number of relocated ones was also provided in a table. According to this table, while there were 100.000 Armenians in Damascus and Ma'an, there were 12.000 in Hamah and its environs; 20.000 in Hims and its environs; 7.000 in Aleppo and its environs; 4.000 in Ma'arra and its environs; 8.000 in Ba'b and its environs; 5.000 in Münbic and its environs; 20.000 in Reisü'l-Ayn and its environs, 10.000 in Rakka and its environs and lastly 300.000 in Dar-al Zor and its environs. Thus, total number of the relocated Armenians was stated as 486.000 in Syrian region.³⁴

Also it is mentioned in Consul Jackson's report that the sum of Ltq. 500 weekly was not sufficient to aid those people. In order to maintain the continuity of life of those people more than 2 gold piasters should be given per day, thus it would require Ltq. 10.000 a day to keep those alive who were in good health. As indicated

³¹ Öke, p. 167.

³² Kemal Çiçek, *Ermenilerin Zorunlu Göçü (1915-1917)*, (Ankara: TTK Yay., 2005), p. 249.

³³ From J.B. Jackson to W.W. Peet NARA RG 84 Box 20 from Çiçek, p. 334-5. Besides, for the discussion about the number of the relocated Armenians in different parts of the Empire see: Çiçek, pp. 249- 259.

³⁴ Çiçek, p. 249.

above, about one and a half month before this report, the shortage of food in Aleppo was transmitted to the Ministry of Interior. To supply this basic need 100.000 *liras* was demanded from the government on 26 October 1915.³⁵ During relocation process, Ottoman government took precautions in order to meet the needs of convoys. While Halaçoğlu cited that 2.250.000 piasters were spent for the needs of convoys³⁶, Gürün mentioned that, for this project, about 5 million piasters had been spent in 1915, 86 million piasters at the end of the year 1916, 150 million piasters at the end of the same year.³⁷

In addition to these, report of Consul Jackson in Aleppo indicates that the Protestants had a fairly good organization for caring for and distributing money and other help to those in the localities. The two distribution centres were stated as in Aleppo and Damascus in that report.³⁸ It also gave the statistics of Armenian immigrants. Due to this list, in Damascus as far as Ma'an more than 100.000 Armenians had been aided. Additionally, in Aleppo and surrounding villages more than 7.000 Armenians had been aided.³⁹

Consul Jackson also provided some other information displaying the situation of the Armenians in Aleppo. It was about the whereabouts and wellbeing of Mr. Nerses Guzelimian and his family and Mr. Krikor V. Levonian and his family dated 5 May 1916. Due to this information, all the members of the Guzelimian family were in Aleppo in good health. As to the Levonian family, they were in Dar-al Zor.⁴⁰ Consul Jackson also reported about the Armenians relocated in Aleppo either about their

³⁵ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 145.

³⁶ Halaçoğlu, p. 67.

³⁷ Gürün, p. 290.

³⁸ U.S. State Report Department Record Group 59, 867.48/271, from Özdemir, et al., p. 199. As distinct from these figures, according to Çiçek there were two distribution centres in Aleppo controlling the aids to Syrian region. In February 1916, the third centre was planned to be established in Damascus. The administration of that would be given to priest Vahran Tahmizian. For the organization of aids in Aleppo, Hovhannes Eskijian had already had a key position. (Çiçek, p. 263.)

³⁹ U.S. State Report Department Record Group 59, 867.48/271, from Özdemir, et al., p. 200.

⁴⁰ US Archives NARA, RG-84, BOX 18; from Özdemir, et al., p. 192.

names, exact places⁴¹ or about their life conditions.⁴² There is also information in the American Consul of Aleppo, Consul Jackson, about the requests for help from the Consulate⁴³ or via the Consulate from their relatives in America.⁴⁴ Thus, these aid requests display the need of the people during the relocation process.

Another description relating to the situation of the deportees was provided by Martin Niepage a German teacher in Aleppo. He sent a report which was forwarded to the German embassy on October 19. According to that report, the situation of the deportees was horrible and they needed help.⁴⁵ Another description about the situation of the deported Armenians was carried out by an Armenian from Sivas, who was nine year old at the time and reached Aleppo with his family. Similar to the Niepage's report, he describes the similar disabilities in Aleppo during the relocation process, such as the irregular and insufficient distribution of food and water, typhus and inadequacy of accommodation for the relocated Armenians.⁴⁶

Consul Rössler, who was German Consul of Aleppo, also provides information about the situation of the deportees in Aleppo. According to him, while the average daily death toll of the deportees in Aleppo was 25 at the beginning of September 1915, it was 60 by the middle of the month, and it had reached 110 on September 26.⁴⁷ He attributed this situation to a combination of thoughtlessness, lack of foresight, the harshness of the authorities and the brutality of the lower governing

⁴¹ US Archives NARA, RG-84, BOX 18 from Özdemir, et al., p. 188.

⁴² US Archives NARA, RG-84, BOX 20 from Özdemir, et al., p. 189.

⁴³ US Archives NARA, RG-84, BOX 14 from Özdemir, et al., p. 191.

⁴⁴ US Archives NARA, RG-84, BOX 14 from Özdemir, et al., p. 187; see for more information about the requests for help: Çiçek, pp. 309-311.

⁴⁵ Martin Niepage, *The Horrors of Aleppo: Seen by a German Eyewitness*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1916), pp. 4-5.

⁴⁶ Kerop Bedoukian, *The Urchin: An Armenian's Escape*, 1st ed. (Hardcover: John Murray, 1978), p. 40.

⁴⁷ Özdemir, et al., p. 106.

bodies of the Ottoman State.⁴⁸ Besides, by the end of October 1915, the number of exiles dying in Aleppo reached to 200 daily after the outbreak of typhus. Due to Lewy, the situation was similar in the several camps around the city.⁴⁹ According to Sarafian's Jackson summary report, which is quoted in Lewy, although Turkish authorities had provided tents for the deportees at Karlukh which was a small city just north of Aleppo, those were not sufficient for the great majority of the exiles who were exposed to the burning sun and later in the season to rain and snow. Thus, many of the exiles were dead from disease and exposure.⁵⁰

Moreover, German Wilhelm Litten(ş) travelled from Baghdad to Aleppo with the demand of Consul and he mentioned his impressions on the road. He stated that people were in an abject poverty and contagious diseases that were spread about the region. In his report he also gives the details such as the number of dead bodies and the places where he saw them. According to him, there were 100 dead bodies and new cemeteries.⁵¹

In another instance, Consul Rössler stated on 14 February 1916 that many of the 6.600 Armenians who had been sent to Rakka died because of starvation. He also said that this was also admitted by Diyakonoz Küzler.⁵²

Under these circumstances, Ottoman State sent orders to the provincial governors dealing with the situation of the relocated Armenians as cited above in detail. According to these orders, which were also sent to the governor of Aleppo, the Armenians who have accumulated in the railway stations would be transferred as soon as possible to the pre-determined areas of settlement, they would be provided with food, and special precautions would be taken to protect them from attack.⁵³

⁴⁸ Lewy, p. 193.

⁴⁹ Lewy, p. 193.

⁵⁰ Lewy, p. 193.

⁵¹ Inscription of Aleppo German Consulate dated 6 February 1916, Foreign Ministry of Germany Political archive, Bd.41, No.7141, R.14090; from Özdemir, et al., p. 10.

⁵² Inscription of Aleppo German Consulate dated 6 February 1916, Foreign Ministry of Germany Political archive, Bd.47,R. 14096, 7165, K.No.46/No.804; from Özdemir, et al., p. 107.

⁵³ Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920), Documents: 46,102, 145.

Government also instructed the Fourth Army commander, the Aleppo Communications inspector and other relevant authorities about providing food for the Armenian refugees sent to the area of the Fourth Army.⁵⁴ The government did take care of the feeding and lodging of homeless Armenians. An order was sent to various provinces as well as the Aleppo Province and governors of districts regarding that the homeless families who were without protection would be distributed in villages and towns that were not populated by Armenians or foreigners, food could be provided for them, young and widowed women would be married and the children would be settled in orphanages.⁵⁵ A large sum of money would be sent from the funds for immigrants; and if it would not be sufficient, another appropriation would be requested.⁵⁶ Thus, it can be said that, under war conditions and economic difficulties, the Ottoman government tried to do its best for the relocated Armenians.

Contagious diseases were also significant for the fate of the relocated Armenians. Typhus, dysentery, and even cholera spread from the sick deportees to the general population, to the workers on the railroad, and to the troops. A German unit near Islahia at one time counted 25 percent of its total strength struck down by disease, and many dead.⁵⁷ The entire route from Bozanti to Aleppo became infested, thus, threatening this essential military supply line, and by November an epidemic of typhus had broken out in Aleppo itself. Cemal Pasha commanded energetic remedial measures. He went to Aleppo personally to investigate the situation of the relocated Armenians after the appearance of these fatal contagious diseases. To prevent the spread of these diseases he charged a German doctor. Besides, he appointed the director of Jerusalem '*Hilal-i Ahmer*' Hospital as the Military Health Consultancy.

⁵⁴ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 152.

⁵⁵ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Document: 179.

⁵⁶ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Documents: 145, 152, 179.

⁵⁷ Çiçek also gives information about the camps in Islahia based on B. Rohner's statements. According to this information, dead bodies of 57 immigrants were witnessed by her at camps in Islahia and those were not buried. Furthermore, she stated that so many people got infested with lice, and 580 people were buried in a day because of this. (NARA 867.4016/260 from Çiçek, p. 273.)

Doctor Omer would examine and cure the diseases. Cemal Pasha also informed that the ones from either civilian or military officials who did not help the doctor would be sent to court martial (*Divan-i Harb*). Beside this, Cemal Pasha did open a hospital in Aleppo with 850 beds for the medical treatment of the immigrants. Aleppine Armenian Altunyan was appointed as chief doctor for this hospital.⁵⁸ However, the camps were not established in hygienic places or the necessary care was not given for the cleaning of camps, which made them more open to the outspread of epidemics.⁵⁹ By early November 1915 not only the Armenian refugees, but also a hundred and fifty to two hundred Muslim inhabitants of Aleppo were dying of typhus every day.⁶⁰ Apart from the clinic facilities, bread and fruits were delivered in order to prevent the spread of epidemics in the hospitals. However, these efforts did not restore the situation of the relocated Armenians. Because of the fact that while the needs of the people were immense, but the sources were limited.⁶¹ The scarcity of food⁶² and the rise of the food prices during war years also effected the situation of the relocated Armenians. To illustrate, the price of a *kilo* of wheat was 28 *kuruş*, it was 31 *kuruş* in Syria, 40 *kuruş* in Lebanon. In 1915, the prices increased 35 percent in Istanbul, 50 percent in Syria, 125 percent in Lebanon.⁶³ On the other hand, it should also be noted that the production of wheat was also decreased 30 percent in 1915. This situation was also worsened in 1916 and scarcity began.⁶⁴ In Syria where the relocation was

⁵⁸ Erden, pp. 123-124; Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, *Suriye'de Modern Osmanlı Sağlık Müesseseleri, Hastahaneler ve Şam Tıp Fakültesi*, (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1999), pp. 20-21; Hikmet Özdemir, *Salgın Hastalıklardan Ölümler, 1914-1918*, (Ankara: TTK Yay., 2005), p. 250.

⁵⁹ Çiçek, p. 268-269.

⁶⁰ Lewy, p. 190-191.

⁶¹ Çiçek, p. 269; for the effects of wartime economic conditions for decline of production and shortage of food see: Vedat Eldem, *Harp ve Mütareke Yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomisi*, (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1994), p. 38.

⁶² Invasion of grasshoppers in the region also contributed much to this situation. For detailed information about this issue see: Özdemir, *Salgın Hastalıklardan Ölümler*, p. 104.

⁶³ Eldem, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Ekonomisi*, pp. 52-53 from Çiçek, p. 280.

⁶⁴ Eldem, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Ekonomisi*, pp. 34 from Çiçek, p. 276.

directed the production of food decreased 100 percent from 557 thousand ton to 257 thousand ton as compared to former year.⁶⁵ According to a report quoted in Moranian's study it was explained that sometimes people could not find anything to eat rather than grass. According to same report, it was added that the necessary money would have to be 1000 *liras* per week.⁶⁶ In another source it was mentioned that the quilts had been delivered by the state, however the number of quilts were not sufficient for the relocated Armenians.⁶⁷ Thus, it is clear from these figures that many factors came together with unpleasant war conditions and contributed much to the worsening of the situation for the relocated Armenians. Under these circumstances, the precautions taken by the state was not sufficient to warrant the life of the relocated Armenians.⁶⁸

The role of the indigenous Armenians in Aleppo was crucial at that point in the sense that they provided shelter for the several thousand deportees who managed to go into hiding. The number of the Armenians who escaped and made their way to the city from the places of resettlement grew steadily. According to the report of Vice-Consul Hoffman, some eight hundred such non-local Armenians had been relocated by the time August 29, 1916.⁶⁹ Significantly, a network of support was organized for those deportees by the Reverend Hovhannes Eskijian, who was a young Armenian Protestant minister. Within this framework, women, girls, and boys under the age of fourteen were placed as servants in Christian, Jewish and even Muslim homes. For others, according to Sarafian, jobs were found in an army hospital. Another Protestant minister who guided the support for those escaped deportees was the Reverend Aaron Shiradjian. He rented several houses to set up orphanages.⁷⁰ Besides, wealthy

⁶⁵ Eldem, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Ekonomisi*, pp. 231 from Çiçek, p. 276.

⁶⁶ Çiçek, p. 270.

⁶⁷ Çiçek, p. 270.

⁶⁸ For more information about the efforts of Ottoman State for the refugees see: Çiçek, pp. 270-79.

⁶⁹ Lewy, p. 194.

⁷⁰ Lewy, p. 194; Sarafian, pp. 150-156.

Armenians in Aleppo and of American and Swiss charities contributed to defray the cost of the orphanages.⁷¹ Hence, the role of the indigenous Armenians of Aleppo during the relocation process was noteworthy; in other words they provided both shelter and some other basic needs of the deportees which were vital for the relocated Armenians.

On the other hand, the official Turkish position for the aids to the deportees from foreigners was not positive, since this might make the Armenians expect foreign intervention on their behalf and encourage more treasonable conduct. However, when conditions worsened during the relocation process, the government relented somewhat and tolerated a *de facto* aid program.⁷²

The Constantinople-based treasurer of the American missions in Turkey William W. Peet had good relations with the German embassy and was able to send the relief workers money through the German consulate in Aleppo. His activities were important for the deportees especially in channelling funds to the relief effort.⁷³ With his suggestion, Sister Beatrice Rohner, who was a Swiss missionary with the German League of Assistance for Works of Christian Charity in Orient, agreed to head the relief work in Aleppo at the end of the year 1915. She had come to the Ottoman territories in 1899 and expanded her activities very quickly. As being the head of the relief, she sent 500 pounds a week to be spent on the needs of the Armenian deportees.⁷⁴

Another implication of the attitude of the Ottoman State for the deportees can be the Cemal Pasha's consent in December 1915 an aid program for orphans. Cemal Pasha opened an orphanage in Lebanon and appointed Lütfi Kırdar, the former governor and the head of municipality of Istanbul, as the director of the orphanage. Apart from this, Cemal Pasha also opened an orphanage in Damascus and two other

⁷¹ John Minassian, *Many Hills Yet to Climb: Memoirs of an Armenian Deportee*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Jim Cook Publishing), 1986p. 103.

⁷² Lewy, p. 194.

⁷³ Lewy, p. 159.

⁷⁴ Lewy, pp. 194-195.

orphanages in Aleppo.⁷⁵ The government also took care of the feeding of the Armenian orphans. According to this ciphered telegram, if there was no allocation for feeding the Armenian orphans, the amount needed should be communicated in order to be sent.⁷⁶

Another orphanage in Aleppo which was run by Sister Rohner had 850 children. The local authorities had also provided food and clothing to the orphanage, because it was considered as a quasi-official institution. After the death of Reverend Eskijian in March 1916, Sister Rohner took over some of the institutions which were set up by him. One of these institutions was an orphanage which set with Sister Rohner by June 1916, for her care 1400 orphans. However, in February 1917 the authorities in Aleppo began to remove children from her care and take them to government orphanages in Lebanon and other locations in Anatolia. After that, she was able to continue to provide needed help for the many thousands of needy Armenians in Aleppo for a short time.⁷⁷

In addition to these activities, she also was able to find jobs for about ten thousand Armenian men and women in several large factories newly founded to manufacture cloth, uniforms, and bedding for the Turkish army with the help of the local Armenians. The thing that will point out the efficiency of Sister Rohner was her aids to the Armenians left in Cilicia as well as to the deportees in Mesopotamia and Syria. This was an activity started by Eskijian and continued by Rohner who provided money to much-needed Armenians.⁷⁸

On the other hand, German money became available in support of the Armenians, too. According to Lewy, starting in 1915, Ambassador Metternich repeatedly sent money to German Consul in Alexandretta. In November 1916 the

⁷⁵ Erden, pp. 123-124.

⁷⁶ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Documents: 45, 191.

⁷⁷ Lewy, p. 169.

⁷⁸ Lewy, p. 195.

foreign ministry deposited 15 000 marks directly into the bank account of the related missionaries to help Armenians.⁷⁹

Other funds were forwarded through American Consul Jackson. He was able to send funds to many in need with the supports of friendly business-people, and local bankers. According to Rössler, the Turkish authorities knew and approved of this aid program.⁸⁰ Due to McCarthy, more than one million dollars of relief was distributed to the Armenians of Eastern Anatolia, this could never have been done without Ottoman approval.⁸¹ According to Sarafian, Armenian churches in Aleppo itself used American money to support about nine thousand exiles on the relief list.⁸² Within the context of aids sent to the relocated Armenians, the activities of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACRNE), which was called as Near East Relief later, as organization for these two provinces are worth noting here.⁸³ The funds were delivered through the American Embassy in Constantinople. The Ottoman parliament permitted to coordinate the relief efforts originating from the Armenian immigrants (USA) and its distribution to the Armenians under the knowledge of the government by these institutions. The money and resources were directly transferred to the

⁷⁹ Lewy, p. 168.

⁸⁰ Lewy, p. 195.

⁸¹ Justin McCarthy, "Missionaries and the American Image of the Turks", in *Turkish American Relations: Past, Present and Future*, eds. Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan, (Routledge, 2003), p. 28.

⁸² Sarafian, p. 119.

⁸³ This relief organization established during the World War I in 1915 in response to the sufferings of Christians in Eastern Anatolia. The Christians to be assisted were primarily Armenians but also it dealt with a smaller Christian group, the Assyrians. The relief activities of the Committee continued between 1915 to 1930 across different (Tiflis, Yerevan, Beirut, Damascus, and Jerusalem) geographical locations, which after the war (1919) some of these efforts channeled to Armenians in Istanbul, Sivas, Urfa, Marash. (McCarthy, "*Missionaries and the...*", p. 33). During and after the war, as refugees and survivors, sought to escape, return to their homes or establish themselves in refugee camps in Syria and elsewhere and especially as the presence of large numbers of orphaned children turned to be the tasks of providing and caring for the needs of the survivors. According to James Barton, this relief organization was not a missionary endeavour per se; it was a national organization, endorsed by the American government and granted an official governmental charter in 1919. James Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1930), p. VIII. However, McCarthy cites that the Committee's ties in personnel and leadership to missionary organizations were central and key, as evidenced, for example, by James Barton's leadership as well as that of numerous other missionaries. (Justin McCarthy, "*Missionaries and the...*", p. 33.)

Armenians who were in need by the Armenian missionaries and USA consuls, without Ottoman Government involvement.⁸⁴

In 1915 the relief effort fell into four categories: general relief (supply the needy with a daily ration of bread), special relief (for those considered only mildly or temporarily destitute, such as transit or sick "Armenian Soldiers"), medical work (the numbers are reaching thousands monthly) and the missionaries (giving food, education, clothing, bedding to orphans).⁸⁵ ACRNE worked in concert with the American Councils in Syria. In 1916, relief activities increased, with funds being dispersed to Anatolia, beyond the initial Syria, Egypt and Greece. In other places such as in Aleppo, missionaries had enough support for 1,350 orphans and asked for more funds to reach the others.

Though wealthy philanthropists donated large sums and the American government contributed significantly, Near East Relief and its former incarnations conducted popular fund raising drives, carried on through churches together with by appeals to the general public. Hence, the work of Near East Relief did much for the relocated Armenians of the Ottoman Empire by providing relief and educational services for the Armenians who survived from the relocation process in Anatolia and the organization enabled the community to reconstitute itself both in the Middle East and abroad. Although we do not have precise information about the aids of the organization for the indigenous Armenian population in the provinces of Aleppo and Damascus, our acquirements demonstrate that this relief organization contributed much to the relocated Armenians in Aleppo and Damascus.

Thus, the foreign support for the deportees in Aleppo was permitted by the Ottoman State.⁸⁶ Especially, a special care was given to the children by supporting the

⁸⁴ McCarthy, "*Missionaries and the...*", p. 33-35.

⁸⁵ See for detailed information about the other activities of Near East Relief, such as job opportunities for the Armenians or incorporation of them to production processes in Syria, Mesopotamia, and Alexandretta: Çiçek, pp. 280- 285.

⁸⁶ Çiçek maintains that Ottoman government did understand that its sources could not solve the provision of the refugees in a short time and then, collaborated with foreign philanthropic organizations. As a matter of fact, it is known that under the direction of state's orders, provincial governors got into touch with the officers of Red Cross. (Çiçek, pp. 276-77.)

establishment of orphanages by the foreigners. Besides, Ottoman state itself established orphanages for the Armenian children which was cited before. Moreover, local authorities alongside with local Armenians provide both clothing and food for the Armenian children in Aleppo. These actions can be prompted only by feelings of humanity rather than brutality.

To sum up, in this part of the present study we tried to describe the situation of the Armenians in the Province of Aleppo with respect to the information provided by the provincial governors of the Ottoman State and other States' consular officials and foreign residents. The common point between these reports was that the conditions of the relocated Armenians were not good. However, the differences between these reports were that whereas, on the one hand, Ottoman government displayed its efforts for the well-beings of relocated Armenian community, on the other hand, many of the reports of consuls and foreign residents emphasized the shortcomings of the Ottoman State during the relocation process. However, the hard war conditions that the Ottoman State faced, its economic difficulties and the hard winter conditions of the region together with the epidemics should also be taken into account at this point.

3.1.2. The Situation of Armenians in the Sub-province of Damascus During the Relocation Process

Although we do not have decisive information about the indigenous Armenian population in the sub-province of Damascus during the relocation process, as we mentioned above, the Armenians of Damascus were not many as compared to Aleppo and they were not subjected to the relocation process. Contrarily, the relocated Armenians were settled in Damascus.

During the relocation process, more than one hundred thousand Armenians were sent to the Sub-province of Damascus rather than to the Syrian deserts. Significantly, as indicated before, the intervention of Cemal Pasha was effective for this direction of relocation. According to Lewy, many of the Armenians in Damascus

were able to rent quarters in the major cities such as Hamah, Hims and Damascus where they made themselves useful as artisans and traders.⁸⁷

As we have indicated in the case of Aleppo, apart from the governmental records, American, German, and Austrian consular officials as well as foreign residents have given us the description of the relocated Armenians as they arrived in Damascus and of conditions in encampments in and around the city. The first of them was reported by the Austrian consul in Damascus, Dr. Karl Ranzi on September 24, 1915. During that date, according to him, some twenty-two thousand Armenians had come through the city. Although the governmental authorities had let it be known that the exiles would receive shelter and arable land to settle on, according to Ranzi, this had been granted only one group, who had been put into homes prepared for Muslim refugees.⁸⁸

In another report of Ranzi, which was some five months later, it was cited that there occurred for the better in the situation of exiles. According to his notes, while previously the deportees had been sent to the southern thinly populated areas of the Jordan, they now also were being sent to more populated parts of the province, and some had even been kept in Damascus. Many exiles had found work in agriculture and with the railroad. The subsistence allowance paid to them had been raised.

During the winter of 1915-1916, Syria and Lebanon experienced a drastic shortage of food in addition to an epidemic of typhus, and the situation of the deportees worsened under these circumstances. During the relocation process many Armenians had died because of the various diseases. It is estimated that 20-21.000 Armenians have succumbed to contagious diseases on the way.⁸⁹ According to the cipher telegraph sent by Interior Ministry to the Province of Syria, 17 October 1915, typhoid fever and dysentery were seen among the deportees in Hamah. It was stated

⁸⁷ Lewy, p. 171.

⁸⁸ Lewy, p. 218.

⁸⁹ Halaçoğlu, p. 59.

that daily 70-80 people died because of the diseases and it was asked for the shift measures.⁹⁰

Another description about the situation in the province of Damascus was held by Loytved Hardegg who was the German Consul in Damascus. Since in March 1916 Cemal Pasha organized an aid program for the Armenians which was headed by Hussein Kasim Bey, the information about this aid program was reported by that consul. According to him, on May 30, that Kasim Bey had provided bread, had established a delousing and bathing facility together with a hospital, and had found work for many of the exiles. About seven hundred widows and orphans had been sent to Hamah, where they were given work in a knitting factory. Hardegg additionally cited that, because of the insufficient funds Kasim Bey wanted to resign his office during that time on the ground that he could not help the approximately sixty thousand Armenians in Syria and Palestine. Besides, the lack of support for his measures from the local authorities was mentioned as another reason for that demand.⁹¹ He also cited that the Swiss charity program sent money to the Turkish officials of that region according to whom it was the sign of how confident Kasim Bey was.

An instance on the fate of the bulk of the Armenians relocated from Trabzon was provided by the Austrian consul in Damascus. He reported the arrival of a group of deportees from Trabzon who had reached the Syrian city after many tribulations. Half of them perished during the long trek on foot.⁹²

Another thing that held in the reports of both the German and Austrian consul was the increasing pressure on the Armenians to convert especially for the ones who lived in the villages during the course of the year 1916.⁹³ Many of the exiles in the towns were relatively in a better situation since they had been able to practice their

⁹⁰ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Documents: 130-131.

⁹¹ Lewy, p. 219.

⁹² Lewy, p. 181.

⁹³ Lewy, p. 219.

crafts. However, according to Ranzi, the poor ones were in a danger. Because of this pressure they could lose their strength to resist.⁹⁴

As indicated above, the deportations from Cilicia involved a smaller loss of life than those from eastern or central Anatolia. The reason for such an outcome was, firstly, that many of the deportees were transported by rail and thus were spared the agony of long treks on foot. As an American relief worker quoted in Lewy, “the distance between Cilicia and Syrian wasteland was considerably shorter and, although thousands died in a blistering exile, at least half of the deportees from Cilicia still clung to life when the war ended.”⁹⁵ Second, while some of the convoys from Cilicia were attacked by the brigands; the deportees did not have to cross the main Kurdish territory which was another reason for the lesser losses of the relocated Armenians. Thirdly, many of the Armenians from Cilicia were acculturated to Turkish customs and spoke Turkish as their first language. This coupled with their generally better economic situation meant that they had an easier time making or obtaining through bribery ameliorative arrangements, such as getting carriages and carts or provisions for the journey. Miss Frearson, a foreign resident in Aintab who was on her way to Egypt, met a convoy of deportees from Adana and Mersin near Aleppo. According to her report published in the British Blue Book of 1916, as cited in Lewy, the refugees had ox-carts, mules, donkeys, a few horses and “looked so much better off in every way than any refugees we had seen that they hardly seemed like refugees at all. There were many more men than usual among them.”⁹⁶

What Lewy cites as the last archival reference to the exiles in the province of Damascus is a dispatch from Hardegg dated March 23, 1917. According to Hardegg, the Armenians had gone through hard times. Without giving exact figures, he mentioned that some thirty thousand deportees had lost their lives. Due to him, only about 10 percent of the exiles could be considered self-sufficient, and at least fifteen

⁹⁴ Lewy, p. 119.

⁹⁵ Lewy, p. 183.

⁹⁶ Lewy, p. 183.

thousand depended on outside help. The situation for artisans in the towns recently had improved somewhat.⁹⁷ There was news in daily *İkdam* about the ones who had good business in Damascus. According to this news, “The Armenians who had good business in Damascus did not return after the return decision was held.”⁹⁸

To the extent we rely on the information about the issue, we note that as long as the characteristics of the relocation process considered in many aspects, it is clear that a premeditated program of extermination of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire was not carried out. First of all, as indicated above, the large Armenian communities of Constantinople, Smyrna and Aleppo were excluded from the relocation. Secondly, in eastern and central Anatolia there were no railroads where the road should be followed by the Armenians during the relocation. Thus, the lack of proper transportation facilities together with the feeding problem further added to the death toll among the Armenians. On the other hand, the deportees from the western provinces and Cilicia who had money were allowed to buy tickets for travel by rail. Thirdly, contrary to the claims of many, the responsibility of the central government for the events, the relocation and resettlement demonstrated a great deal of variation that depended on factors such as geography and the attitude of local officials.⁹⁹ Therefore, when we considered the issue in its historical context, the order for the relocation of the Armenians was ordered at a time of great insecurity.

Thus, when we consider the situation of the Aleppine and Damascene Armenians within this context, it is clear that they were not subjected to the relocation, because they did not organize any separatist movements or any rebellious activities did not originate from these two centres. Additionally, the Armenians of these two centres were had well integrated themselves to the social and economical life of the cities in which they lived. During the relocation process, the indigenous

⁹⁷ Lewy, p. 220.

⁹⁸ *İkdam*, no: 7742, 30 August 1918, from Eroğlu, p. 148.

⁹⁹ Lewy, pp. 251- 252.

Armenians of the two central cities did aid to the relocated Armenians by providing food, shelter, job and any other vital needs of them.

When the deportees of Aleppo and Damascus are compared, the ones in Damascus were in a better situation and could be able to live. Moreover, the ones who had skill and prosperity, continued their lives in Aleppo and Damascus and established their jobs and living in these two provinces and some of them did not return with the decision relating to the return of the relocated Armenians. On the other hand, many of them did return and many of them joined the French forces in Cilicia region for the promise of France enabling the Armenians to establish an independent Armenian state in a region including Cilicia region.

3.1.3. End of Relocation Process and the Situation of the Armenians in Aleppo and Damascus after World War I and the Following Years (1918-1925)

During relocation, the transportation was stagnated many times because of climatic conditions as well as crowd during relocation. Nonetheless, the ongoing Armenian activities caused the beginning of the transportation again. With the general order on 15 March 1916, as the last one, it was declared that the resettlement process was totally stagnated. For this reason, the ones who had not reached their settlement areas yet were settled in the places where they were at that time.

After the Russian Revolution on 7-8 November 1917, the Bolsheviks decided to cede from the war and asked for armistice between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. This event changed the entire situation in the Eastern front and Eastern Anatolia. Firstly, the Peace Treaty was signed between the Ottoman Empire and Russia on 3 March 1918 and then the Russian army started to retreat from the Eastern Anatolia. This gave an advantage to the Armenians since they began to occupy the areas evacuated by Russia. On the other hand, the Ottoman army started its campaign on 12 February 1918 and until April 1918 Erzincan, Trabzon, Erzurum, Van, Batum and Kars were ceded to the Ottoman Empire. During the very time the Muslims were exposed to the atrocities of the Armenian brigands.¹⁰⁰ These were the members of

¹⁰⁰ Gürün, p. 325.

Transcaucasia Federation at first. Later, they became the military units of Armenian Republic. Especially the most serious ones were seen in Erzurum and up to 1918 the massacre of Armenian committees continued on local bases.¹⁰¹ The Armenian units, who could not take control, killed many Muslims, fired their houses and attacked to women. Especially in eastern provinces like Erzincan, Erzurum, Kars and Bayburt, they massacred Muslims. Both in Russian and Turkish documents, these massacres had taken place: “The Armenian bandits, which were withdrawing from Erzincan to Erzurum, massacred all the Muslim villages and their people on their way. The Turks who could not escape from Ilıca village were killed...The Armenians in Erzurum fired Turkish bazaar. All the people; women, men and children were killed...”¹⁰²

Meanwhile, the Ottoman campaign continued and the Ottoman army occupied Gümrü and defeated the Armenian forces in Karakilis.¹⁰³

At the end, the peace treaty was signed between the new Armenian Republic and the Ottoman Empire on 28 May 1918. However, the war did not come to an end because of dispute in Bakü and English soldiers were there. Armenians continued their attacks and atrocities against Muslims and the Ottoman army during the year 1918. Furthermore, they helped England in the Caucasus in 1918 like aiding Russia in the Eastern front during the war.

The sign of Armistice in 1918 was accompanied by the decision about the return of the deported Armenians. An order was sent to call back the deported Armenians on 22 December 1918. According to this order the Armenians who were

¹⁰¹ Öke, p. 172.

¹⁰² See: Erdal İter, *Türkiye’de Sosyalist Ermeniler ve Silahlanma Faaliyetleri (1890-1923)*, (İstanbul: Turan Yay., 1995), pp. 142- 148. He explains in his book the oppressions of the Armenians and the Russians in Muş, Van, Erzurum, Hakkari, Siirt, Erzincan and Trabzon to the Turks in a detailed way.

He used in his explanations the speeches of the witnesses who were living at that time in the above mentioned regions.

¹⁰³ Gürün, p. 305.

relocated could come back if they wanted. For this, the necessary precautions were taken.¹⁰⁴

After the return decision was taken, thousands of Armenians returned to their home lands with the material assistance of the government, Patriarchate and Armenian, European, and American philanthropic organizations set about restoring their homes and businesses.¹⁰⁵ However, some of them remained where they were sent because of the fact that their jobs were good in their new homes such as in Aleppo and Damascus, but their numbers were not many.¹⁰⁶ The minor number of the remained Armenians was also indicated in a newspaper report published in *İkdam*.¹⁰⁷ In another report in daily *İkdam* about the ones who remained, it was mentioned that the Armenians who had good business in Damascus did not return.¹⁰⁸ There could also be some of the remained Armenians in their relocation areas due to the fact that they could have found the returning as insecure. However, we could not reach any information about them. On the other hand, majority of the unreturned Armenians migrated to Middle Eastern countries, Russia, America, France, South America as well as Australia, India and Iran.¹⁰⁹

As to the returned Armenians, although there is not decisive information about how many Armenians did return to their homelands following the return decision,¹¹⁰ at this point we will apply to different sources to compare and assess the population of Aleppo and Damascus after World War I and the following years. According to a

¹⁰⁴ *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)*, Documents: 210, 211, 214; See for the details of the decision; Halaçoğlu, pp. 82-83.

¹⁰⁵ For a detailed information about the material assistance and other deeds of the government, Patriarchate, and Armenian, European, and American philanthropic organizations for the returning Armenians under the light of the news provided by that time's newspapers, see : İbrahim Ethem Atnur, *Tehcirden Dönen Ermenilerin İskanı Meselesi*, Unpublished MS Thesis, (Erzurum, 1991), pp. 101-128.

¹⁰⁶ Atnur, p. 110-111.

¹⁰⁷ Eroğlu, p. 148.

¹⁰⁸ *İkdam*, no: 7742, 30 August 1918, from Eroğlu, p. 148.

¹⁰⁹ Özdemir, et al., p. 140.

¹¹⁰ Özdemir, et al., p. 120.

table provided by the Patriarchate demonstrating the settlement areas and numbers for the year 1921, there were 5.000 Armenians in the city of Aleppo, together with 400 Armenians in the Province of Damascus. Again in the same source, it was stated that there were totally 57.000 Armenians in the province of Aleppo including the district of Ayntab and the above cited city of Aleppo. Specifically, when we compare the population of the Armenians of the city of Aleppo in 1908 and 1921, while it was 5538 in 1908¹¹¹, it was stated as 5000 in 1921. So as to the Province of Damascus, it was stated in 1900-1 as 436¹¹², and it was cited as 400 in 1921. Thus, although there is not decisive information whether these recorded Armenians were the indigenous population of the cities or there were also relocated or returned Armenians among them, these outcomes suit well with each other. Besides, although we could not reach accurate information whether there was any returned Armenians to the city of Aleppo or Damascus, due to the information provided by American Consulate of Aleppo it was stated that 6.520 Armenians returned to the Province of Aleppo in a period of 7 months from 1 January-20 July 1919.¹¹³

On the other hand, whereas some of the Armenians returned their homelands to resettle, the others returned with the feelings of revenge.¹¹⁴ While the Armenians cooperated with the Russians in 1915, with the end of World War I they took part within the French troops in the south. This alliance targeted to the establishment of an independent Armenia in Cilicia region.¹¹⁵ Thus, Armenians acted with the French troops within the regions occupied by France.

¹¹¹ *Haleb Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1326 H* / [1908], p. 224.

¹¹² *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi, 1318H* / [1900], pp. 364-365.

¹¹³ US ARCHIVES NARA, M 353 R 55, 867.48/1316; From the American Consulate of Aleppo to the Foreign Ministry, 23 August 1919 from Özdemir, et al., p. 136.

¹¹⁴ Özdemir, et al., p. 146.

¹¹⁵ Özdemir, et al., p. 140; see also for the atrocities perpetrated against Muslims by the Armenians in Cilicia region: Stanford J. Shaw, "The Armenian Legion and Its Destruction of the Armenian Community of Cilicia" in *From Empire to Republic: The Turkish War of National Liberation, 1918-1923, 5 vols.*, (Ankara: TTK, 2000), pp. 155-190. Cilicia as a province never existed in the four hundred years of Ottoman administration in the area. The name was resurrected by the Allied occupation powers, with as a definition as possible, in order to justify the area that they were authorized

In Cilicia region, the French occupation troops' atrocities and abuses inflicted on the Turks during the two years following the Mudros Armistice in 1918 led to a Turkish national resistance. The French troops were largely composed of the members of a section of the French *Legion d'Oriente* called the *Armenian Legion*.¹¹⁶ Starting with their initial landings at İskenderun a month later, and continuing as the French army moved into Anatolia, members of the *Armenian Legion* indiscriminately attacked and pillaged Arab and then Turkish villages and towns, killing hundreds of Muslims in the process. Local Armenians remaining in Cilicia, together with Armenians brought from southern Russia and Central Anatolia also joined the French forces as they attacked the Turks, initially in the areas of İskenderun and İslahiye, later extending to the areas of Toprakkale-Dörtyol, Mersin, Adana, Tarsus, Pozantı and Marash. As the surviving Muslims fled into the adjacent hills to escape massacre, members of the Armenian Legion plundered their homes and shops and set the villages on fire. When their French officers attempted to stop the atrocities, the Armenian soldiers mutinied and Armenians deserted their units, joining local Armenians and Armenians in Cilicia from central and western Anatolia in continuing their attacks on the rest of the settled Turkish population.¹¹⁷

The resistance of the Muslims of Cilicia, combined with the resentment over the British tendency to dominate the Allied occupation of İstanbul, finally convinced the French government to abandon its Allies and make a separate peace with the Turkish nationalists by the summer of 1921. The result was the Treaty of Ankara, signed between the Ankara Government and France in October 1921, by which the French government agreed not only to evacuate their forces from Cilicia, but also to leave their armaments. Whereas the treaty left the Armenians of Aleppo and Damascus (later Armenians of Syria) under French rule which did last long from 1921 to 1946, on the other hand, this separate agreement dealt a grievous blow to the

to control by the Armistice of Mudros. In general terms, it included the area of Çukurova, and included the Ottoman province of Adana, the district of Maraş and adjacent areas.

¹¹⁶ See also for the activities of the Armenian Legion during World War I: Shaw, pp. 155-157.

¹¹⁷ McCarthy, *Death and Exile...*, pp. 205-243.

Armenians of Cilicia, who felt France had betrayed their political aspirations in the region by tacitly renouncing her pledges to the Armenian leaders. Thus, the real losers were in fact the Armenians in Cilicia, since by their welcome of French occupation, their support of the Armenian legion and their participation in the French administration, they had ended whatever feelings of community that previously had existed with their Turkish neighbours and laid themselves open to violent acts of retribution. However both the French and the Turkish nationalists promised to protect them, the Armenians knew that under the conditions that existed in that area at that time they had little chance to escape the revenge of those Turks who had lost families, homes, and properties as a result of the French occupation and the activities of the Armenian Legion.¹¹⁸ Thus, almost all the Armenians in Cilicia left their homes, some going with the evacuating French forces, some sailing on British and French ships that came to the ports of the area to pick them up, some walking overland into Syria, Palestine and Lebanon, where they settled down and made new lives for themselves.¹¹⁹

According to McCarthy, for the number of Armenian migrants to the Arab world, no data better than the estimates of Professor Richard Hovannisian (table 3.1) has been discovered which were also supporting the available census statistics (table 3.2) provided by the country.¹²⁰

Table 3.1 Armenian Refugees to the Arab World and Iran After World War I

<u>Country</u>	<u>Number</u>
Syria	100.000

¹¹⁸ Özdemir, et al., p. 147.

¹¹⁹ Shaw, “*The Armenian Legion ...*”, pp. 189-191. For more information about the Armenian migrants from Cilicia region under the light of archival materials from the Western States see: Özdemir, et al., p. 147.147-161; see also: McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities...*, pp. 124-126.

¹²⁰ McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities...*, p. 125.

Table 3.1 (Continued)

Lebanon	50.000
Palestine& Jordan	10.000
Egypt	40.000
Iraq	25.000
Iran	50.000

Source: Richard G.Hovannisian, “The Ebb and Flow of Armenian Minority in the Arab Middle East”, *Middle East Journal* 28, no. 1 (1974), p. 20.

As it is clear from these figures, the largest Armenian migrations in the Middle East were estimated to Syria.

McCarthy also provides the information about the Armenians who migrated from Anatolia because of war after World War I. With respect to these estimates, apart from the Middle East, Armenian immigrants dispersed to all continents. The other three main areas of Armenian settlement were France in Western Europe, the Caucasus, and North America. Besides, there were many minor refuges. According to these figures, whereas there were 400.000 Armenian refugees in Soviet Union; there were 45.000 in Greece; 30.000 in France; 20.000 in Bulgaria; 2.500 in Cyprus; 2.000 in other European countries, 35.380 in North America; 1.000 in Japan, China, India, and America, and 70.000 in Turkey. Totally, there were 605.880 Armenian refugees all around the world at the end of World War I.¹²¹

At this point it should be noted that, the Armenians who migrated to the eastern regions of Anatolia together with those who did not cooperate with the occupied powers continued to live in their newly returned territories.¹²²

There were also Armenians sent to Aleppo and Damascus because of their activities in Cilicia region. The Armenian Patriarch learnt that some of the Armenians had been sent to Damascus from Cilicia region and he presented a letter to American Superintendent of Police who was Admiral Bristol.¹²³ According to that letter, it was

¹²¹ McCarthy, *Population History of the Middle East and Balkans*, (İstanbul: ISIS Press, 2002), p. 209.

¹²² Özdemir, et al., p. 147.

¹²³ US ARCHIVES NARA 867.4016/447. From Charles A. Allen to Admiral Bristol quoted in Özdemir, et al., p. 150.

predicted that 5.000-6.000 Armenians had reached to Damascus by 6 February 1922. Among these 3.000 did not have shelters; 1.000-3.000 were living in a glass factory or in tents around the glass factory; 500 of them were living in empty stores; and 1200 were living in tents, shops and some houses in Christian quarters. In another record of the Patriarch dated 15 March 1922¹²⁴, it was stated that by 26 November there were at least 55.000 Armenians in Aleppo. According to this record, whereas 20.000 of them were older dwellers, 35.000 were the ones who had been settled in Aleppo after relocation. There were also thousands of migrants in the south of Aleppo and in Syria. This record also cited that there were also migrants coming to Aleppo.

The American Consul of Aleppo, Jackson wrote on 4 December 1922, stated that the total number of the migrants reaching Aleppo was exactly 39.600. The great majority of them were Armenians. According to his hearings, 4.000 more refugees would reach Aleppo by that week. Also he told that some groups were also on road and among them a group composed of 1.000 people would reach very soon.¹²⁵

Entente Powers did not want to accept the Armenian immigrants to their countries. Especially the USA limited the number of Armenian immigrants; France tried to keep the Armenian immigrants in Syria and England did not admit Armenian immigrants.¹²⁶ The issue of Armenian immigrants was presented at Lausanne Peace Conference by the Armenian delegate. With a diplomatic note it was demanded that for 700.000 Armenian immigrants, settlement areas should be founded.¹²⁷ However, the Conference did not take a decision in the direction of Armenian demands. After the signature of Lausanne Peace Treaty on July 24, 1923, Armenian representatives applied for something to be done for the Armenian immigrants as well as they applied

¹²⁴ US ARCHIVES NARA 867.4016/794 from Charles A. Allen to Admiral Bristol from Özdemir, et al., p. 150.

¹²⁵ Özdemir, et al., p. 151.

¹²⁶ Özdemir, et al., p. 151.

¹²⁷ Özdemir, et al., p. 151.

for the acceptance of Armenian refugees to three allied countries. As a response it was stated that those applications had already been taken.¹²⁸

These Armenians indicated above continued to migrate from Anatolia to Greece and Bulgaria.¹²⁹

Although there is not accurate information about the number of the Armenian migrants to Aleppo or Damascus from Cilicia region, we tried to reach some information about the region from the reports prepared by the officials of some other countries. In a telegram from the American Consul Jackson, dated 26 November 1922, it was stated that 55.000 Armenian exiles from Anatolia were living in Aleppo and hundreds of them were living in tents. According to Consul Jackson, some of these exiles had moved to south of Aleppo. Besides, there were orphans under supervision of Near East Relief who were except from above mentioned estimates.¹³⁰

Near East Relief also provided information about the Armenians in Aleppo by the autumn of 1923. With respect to this information, there were 40.000 Armenian immigrants in Aleppo; while 10.450 of them were men, 15.550 of them were women and 14.000 were children under the age of fifteen. Furthermore, it was also added that while 25.200 of them stayed in houses and could supply the payments of their rents, 4.800 of them stayed in public houses and their rents were supplied by the Armenian National Union or by some other philanthropic organizations. About 10.000 of them were in camps and did not pay any rents.¹³¹

According to the information provided by another American Consul of Aleppo, Parker W. Buhrman, on 10 May 1924, although Armenians had a tendency to leave from Cilicia region, there was not an official pressure for them to leave. Again

¹²⁸ See: Ömer Turan, "Lozan Barış Görüşmelerinde Ermeni Sorunu", *Osmanlının Son Döneminde Ermeniler*, Türkkaya Ataöv, ed., (Ankara : TBMM, 2002), pp. 195 -222.

¹²⁹ Özdemir, et al., p. 152.

¹³⁰ US ARCHIVES NARA 867.4016/977 from American Consul to Foreign Minister from Özdemir, et al., p. 158.

¹³¹ "Refugee Industry in Aleppo", *The New Near East*, Vol.8, Nu:11, Nov.1923, p. 15 from Özdemir, et al., p. 175.

in the same information it was said that 154 Armenian refugees reached to Aleppo passing from Malatya, Harput and Arapkir.¹³²

Parker Buhrman also provided information to its Foreign Ministry about the population movements and migrations. According to Buhrman's statement dated 23 February 1924, it was stated that the Armenian immigrants were continuing coming from Urfa to Aleppo which were estimated as 33 headquarters, about 150 people. The other Armenians from Urfa, about 150 people, were still on the road or still were preparing to come.¹³³ In another statement dated 11 March 1924, he cited that up to that time 450 Armenians had come from Urfa to Aleppo. He added that the exiled Christians continued to Aleppo. According to him, on 24 March 1924, 1.250 Assyrians as well as 750 Armenians came from Urfa to Aleppo.¹³⁴

Another report was also prepared by French Agriculture Expert Mr. G.Cayle which also took part in Dr. Nansen's report appendix. Under the light of this report, it was cited that there were 55.000 Armenians in Aleppo region and particularly, 25.000 in Aleppo; some 15.000 Armenians in Damascus region and particularly, 13.000 in Damascus by the year 1925.¹³⁵ Hence, when we compare the estimated figures for the Armenian migrations to Syria after their activities in Cilicia, we can say that their number did increase from year to year. As it can be seen from these figures their number did reach its climax in 1925. Apart from this, these estimates indicate that with the changing circumstances, Armenians again dispersed not only to the Middle Eastern countries but also to the other countries such as Russia, Iran, the USA, France, England, India, Cyprus, Manchuria as well as some other Asian countries.¹³⁶

¹³² US ARCHIVES NARA 867.4016/981 from American Consul to Foreign Ministry: 10 May 1924 from Özdemir, et al., p. 150.

¹³³ US ARCHIVES NARA 867.4016/970 from American Consul to Foreign Minister from Özdemir, et al., p. 153.

¹³⁴ US ARCHIVES NARA 867.4016/977 from American Consul to Foreign Minister from Özdemir, et al., p. 154.

¹³⁵ Özdemir, et al., p. 161.

¹³⁶ For a larger information about the Armenian refugees in the Middle East and above mentioned other countries after 1922, see: Özdemir, et al., p. 161-178; McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities...*, pp. 124-130.

To sum up, the three groups which are largely mentioned above composed the Armenian population of Aleppo and Damascus after World War I and the following years (1918-1925). The first group was composed of indigenous Armenians who did settle in Aleppo and Damascus during Ottoman period and did not experience relocation. These indigenous Armenians of Aleppo and Damascus largely continued their lives in these city centres.

The second group was the Armenians who came to Aleppo and Damascus as a result of relocation and remained in these places. After World War I, while great majority of them returned to their homelands after the return decision, some of them remained. On the other hand, among the remaining ones, whereas many found their way to Europe and America with the support of the missionaries and the philanthropic organizations, some who could establish a business largely remained especially in the city centres of Aleppo and Damascus. Moreover, some of them could have remained due to the fact that they could have found the return as insecure.

As to the third group, it consisted of those left their homes after their activities in Cilicia region. They were also settled in the city centres of Aleppo and Damascus.

Thus, at the end of World War I and during the following years these three groups were largely composed of the Armenians in Syria.

In a population figure provided by A.H.Hourani, it is stated that Syrian centres of population were the cities of Damascus and Aleppo together with the coast corners after 1925 which included 1/3 of the population. While this part of the population dealt with trade and industry, the rest those living in the villages, who dealt with agriculture, composed of the 2/3 of the population.¹³⁷

Table 3.2 Religious-Based Population of Syria in 1938-1939

Muslims	Population	Christians	Population	Jews
Sunnis	1.737.402	Maronites	11.800	26.250

¹³⁷ Ömer Osman Umar, *Osmanlı Yönetimi ve Fransız Manda İdaresi Altında Suriye (1908-1938)*, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2004), p. 511.

Table 3.2 (Continued)

Shiites	11.541	Roman Catholics	4.750	
Druzes	79.428	Greek Orthodox	115.118	
Alawites	247.486	Greek Catholic	42.427	
İsmailiye	24.390	Syrian Orthodoxes	32.892	
		Syrian Catholics	14.182	
		Ermenian(Gregorian)	86.742	
		Chaldeans	3.759	
		Armenian Catholics	12.137	
		Protestants	7.660	
		Others	2.063	
Total	2.127.247	Total	333.530	26.250
General Total	2.447.027			

Source: Hourani, p. 121

As it is clear from these figures, while 85.53 percent of population was Sunni Muslims, the rest, that is, 14.47 percent of population was non-Muslims. Among these, the population of the Armenians in Syria after 1925 was 98.879 composing 3.97 percent of general population. However, figures on how many Protestants were Armenians were not available.

According to an official census provided by the Directorate of Statistics of Syrian Republic of for the year 1945, the population of Armenians in Syria is as the following; nonetheless, figures on how many Protestants were Armenians were not available.

Table 3.3. Armenian Population in Syria in 1945

Religious Groups	Numbers
Armenian Gregorians	104.331 ¹³⁸
Armenian Catholics	16.979 ¹³⁹
Armenian Protestants	4.240 ¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Syrian Republic, Ministry of National Economy, Directorate of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Syria*, 1953, p. 21.

¹³⁹ Syrian Republic, Ministry of National Economy, Directorate of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Syria*, 1953, p. 21.

Source: Syrian Republic, Ministry of National Economy, Directorate of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Syria*, 1953, p. 21.

In establishing the number of Armenian Protestants, the estimates of Poladian have been followed. According to him, there were 4.240 Armenian Protestants in Syria. Totally, there were 125.550 Armenians in Syria.

After mentioning these population figures for the Armenians in Syria, now we want to compare and access these figures chronologically. While there were 5538 indigenous Armenians in Aleppo in 1908 and 523 indigenous Armenians in Damascus in 1900, The Patriarchate stated in a table in 1921 that there were 5.000 Armenians in Aleppo and 400 Armenians in Damascus. Although there is not precise information about how many of them indigenous or immigrant Armenians, the Armenian population in these two centres did not change much. Then, in another report provided by the Patriarchate in February 1922, it was mentioned that 5.000-6.000 Armenians were sent to Damascus because of their activities in Cilicia and then, in March 1922 it was stated that there were 55.000 Armenians in Aleppo. Thus, these figures display that the population of the cities of Aleppo and Damascus increased due to migrations from Cilicia region. Furthermore, American Consul Jackson in Aleppo also supported this figure by stating the number of Armenian exiles in Aleppo as 55.000 in November 1922. Under the light of the last information provided by French Agriculture Expert Mr. G.Cayle, there were 55.000 Armenians in Aleppo region and particularly, 25.000 in the city Aleppo; some 15.000 Armenians in Damascus region and particularly, 13.000 in the city of Damascus by the year 1925.¹⁴¹ Thus, these figures display that the number of Armenians in these cities increased due to migrations from Cilicia region.

As for 1938-39, the number of Armenians in Syria in general rose to 98.879 and this number was supported by the statistics of Syrian State for the year 1945.

¹⁴⁰ Antranik Poladian, *History of Armenians of Arabkir*, (London, 2004).

¹⁴¹ Özdemir, et al., p. 161.

There were 125.550 Armenians in Syria by the year 1945. On the other hand, the population estimates of Syrian State and Hovanissian ones suited well with each other. Thus, we can conclude that after World War I because of the war and the migrations the number of the Armenians in Syria rose to about 125.000. We can also say that while approximately 70.000 of the Armenians in Syria were the migrants from Cilicia region, on the other hand, among the rest, which is about 75.000, there were indigenous Armenians apart from the remained Armenians remained in the region after the relocation process not returning to their original homelands.

As to particularly, cities of Aleppo and Damascus, their Armenian population did rise after World War I and the following years and these two cities continued to be the centres for the Armenians. While there were about 6000 indigenous Armenians in Aleppo in 1908, this number rose to 25.000 in 1925 with the migrants. On the other hand, whereas there were about 600 indigenous Armenians in Damascus in 1900, this number rose to 13.000 in 1925 with the migrants. We can also reach to the conclusion from these figures that at the end of World War I and the following years the cities of Aleppo and Damascus continued to be the centres for Armenian settlement.

All in all, after World War I, apart from the Armenians returned to Anatolia, while many Armenians found their way to Europe and America, many others remained in the Middle East, establishing and enlarging communities in Syria, Greece, Cyprus, the Levant, and Egypt. On the other hand, the Armenian activities in Cilicia region in cooperation with France resulted in large migrations again to the Middle Eastern countries together with some other countries such as Russia, Iran, the USA, France etc... However, particularly for the Armenians of Syria, World War II, the end of the French mandate in 1946, and the rise of nationalism as well as the civil war in Lebanon, in particular, resulted in large-scale immigration of Armenians to the West.¹⁴²

¹⁴² NEF Archives. *Dockets* 1931-1932. The Executive Committee Meeting, January 15, 1931; from Eleanor T. Tejirian, "Altruism and Imperialism: The Western Religious and Cultural Missionary Enterprise in the Middle East" in *Middle East Institute Conference: Bellagio*, Italy, August 2000.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This thesis strives to reveal the situation of the Syrian Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during the last decades of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries. Syrian Armenians are studied in the thesis due to three main incentives. First of all, the main thought behind the studying on this issue is that Syria was a crucial centre for both the Armenians and the Ottoman Empire in the sense that Syria neighboured the historical Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, and was a place where, especially in and round Aleppo, old Armenian communities had settled as early as twelfth century and also included the important See of Aleppo of the Armenian Cilician Catholicate beginning from the fourteenth century which contributes the significance of Syria for the Armenian community. This region also had a centrality for the Ottoman Empire. The proximity of Syria to the “Six Provinces”, the area considered as highly populated by the Armenians namely Diyarbakır, Mamüratü'l-Aziz (Elazığ), Bitlis, Van, Erzurum, and Sivas, as well as its central position during the relocation process are the main incentives that determine the focus of this study as Syrian provinces. Secondly, up to this time, although the Armenians in general, and the Armenian Question in particular, have been studied in many aspects, Syrian Armenians in the Sub-provinces of Aleppo and Damascus are untouched fields of research with respect to their socio-economic, political, religious, cultural and educational situations during the last decades of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and their evolution during the relocation process and the following years. Thirdly, we thought that as studying such case studies as Syrian Armenians at a micro level we could reach some macro conclusions and give a general picture about the situation of the Armenians in general during that period.

As a result of this research, it is seen that Aleppine and Damascene Armenians had well integrated themselves in the society they lived in and they were the active participants of the socio-economic and political life of the provinces of Aleppo and Damascus before World War I. One of the common points for both of the Provinces of Aleppo and Damascus was that the administrative structures of both were not stable and the boundaries of the Provinces had changed constantly during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Unlike the Province of Aleppo, the Armenian population was not large in the Province of Damascus. In both Provinces, the Armenian population was concentrated in the centres of the provinces, namely in the cities of Aleppo and Damascus. In both cities, the Armenian population were settled in the city centres and worked in many branches of economic life of the Provinces; in other words they were active in commerce, trade, arts, crafts and home industry. While the Armenians in cities were practicing different trades and professions, the ones in the towns and villages were engaged in agriculture. Their well known handicrafts were sewing and shoe-making, the fur and silk trade, painting and tanning and watch making. Armenians of Aleppo and Damascus during the Ottoman era give the image of a religious minority group which was well integrated into the Muslim environment as the spirit of the time permitted. This integration was probably the most remarkable in professional activities, especially in the field of trade, and in the framework of trade partnerships many of which involved joint ventures between Muslims and Christians and between Muslims and Jews. Differences of religious affiliation did not stand in the way of trusting relations and common enterprises between businessmen. The Armenian participation in the city of Aleppo's public life was especially notable and constant as compared to Damascus. From a chronological perspective, the Armenians were given a larger part and higher positions in the different governmental units of the province after 1896. Whereas the main fields of public life in Aleppo in which the Armenians took part were in the departments of political administration, finance and judicial courts, in Damascus they were effective in the realms of the finance, engineering and the public health service. In these departments of the province, there were usually to be found one or two, but sometimes three or four Armenian officials.

As for the religious life of the Armenian community in Aleppo and Damascus, while both the episcopal seat and the provincial centre of the expansive province of Aleppo, the bishopric of Aleppo was directly responsible to the local government not only for communities of Aleppo but also for the communities of the north and north western Syria as well as for a larger number of Armenians attached to other bishoprics of the Cilician See (Sis). The ecclesiastical and community affairs at Damascus were administered by clerical superintendents appointed by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. As for the educational realms of the provinces, during the reign of the Ottoman Empire, Armenians had their own educational institutions within the framework of the *millet* system. Each non-Muslim community was free in the administration of the schools which were established by them. While the bishopric of Aleppo assumed the responsibility of establishing and maintaining parochial schools for the Armenian secular communities, in Syria, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem assumed this responsibility for the Syrian Armenians together with the communities in Palestine and Lebanon.

After comparing and explaining the situation of the Armenian population of the provinces of Aleppo and Damascus, now we want to assess our conclusions about the situation of these Armenians during the relocation process. The indigenous Armenians of Aleppo and Damascus did not experience relocation. Two main determining factors can be considered as the reason for this. First of all, Armenians especially in the city centres of Aleppo and Damascus were prosperous and glad and more crucially, they had well integrated themselves into the society they lived. Secondly, these indigenous Armenians consider these two provinces as their homelands because of their proximity to their historical homelands. We noted that, due to these reasons, they did not organize any separatist rebellions nor establish any separatist organizations against the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, with respect to these facts, neither the Armenians of Aleppo nor the Armenians of Damascus did experience a full scale relocation process. Contrarily, the rebellious Armenians were relocated to these regions.

During the relocation process, the indigenous Armenians of the two central cities did aid to the relocated Armenians by providing food, shelter, job and any other vital needs of them. On the other hand, when we compared the deportees of Aleppo and Damascus, the ones in Damascus were in a better situation and could be able to live. Moreover, the ones who had skill and prosperity even continued their lives in Aleppo and Damascus and established their jobs and living in these two provinces and some of them did not return with the decision relating to the return of the relocated Armenians.

After drawing the picture of the Armenian community in the provinces of Aleppo and Damascus during the last decades of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries, and during relocation process, we want to generalize our view by means of comparing these Armenians with the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. To begin with, the Aleppine and Damascene Armenians had many things in common as well as different with the Ottoman Armenians. That is, both of them were regarded as trusted people and effective in many branches of life. The Armenians of Syria, as in the Ottoman Empire in general, were employed in various administrative, judicial, economic and secretarial fields and, to a lesser extent, in technical affairs, agriculture, education and public health. They were practising trade and different professions as well as being the most industrious portion of the inhabitants of Syria. Similarly, the Armenians in towns and villages were engaged in small trades and crafts. However, the situation of trustful relations turned into an Armenian-Turkish conflict escalated on the eve of the First World War and reached a climax during the difficult war conditions for the Armenians who did found separatist organizations and join rebellious activities. Both internal and external factors contributed to this process by accelerating the rise of nationalism among the Armenian community of the Ottoman Empire. As distinct from these Armenians, the Armenians of Aleppo and Damascus did not organize any separatist movements or rebellious activities, since they had well integrated themselves into the community they lived in and they were pleased with the status quo. Because of this, the centre of the Province of Aleppo, in which great majority of the Syrian Armenians lived, were excluded from relocation. Thus, neither

Aleppine nor Damascene Armenians were relocated. Contrarily, rebellious Armenians in many parts of the Ottoman Empire were relocated to the provinces of Aleppo, Damascus or Mossul in such a way that they would not form large communities, minimizing the chance of a rebellion.

After return decision was promulgated, while some of the relocated Armenians remained in these centres where they were sent due to different reasons, the majority of the unreturned Armenians migrated to Middle Eastern countries, Russia, America, France, South America as well as Australia, India and Iran. On the other hand, the majority of relocated Armenians did return to their homelands. While some of them did return to their homelands to resettle, the others did return with the feelings of revenge, acting with French troops in Cilicia region after World War I. However, the treaty of Ankara left the Armenians of Aleppo and Damascus (later Armenians of Syria) under French rule which did last long from 1921 to 1946, on the other hand, this separate agreement dealt a grievous blow to the Armenians of Cilicia, who felt France had betrayed their political aspirations in the region. Then, again by their welcome of French occupation, their support to the *Armenian Legion* and their participation in the French administration, they had ended whatever feelings of community that previously had existed with their Turkish neighbours and laid themselves open to violent acts of retribution. Thus, almost all the Armenians in Cilicia left their homes, some going with the evacuating French forces, some sailing on British and French ships that came to the ports of the area to pick them up, some walking overland into Syria, Palestine and Lebanon, where they settled down and made new lives for themselves. Thus, these Armenians together with the indigenous Armenians and those remained in Aleppo and Damascus after return decision implemented were the three significant groups composing some parts of the Armenian population of Syria today. Therefore, today's Armenians of both Aleppo and Damascus are largely those of the descendants of refugees from Turkey between 1915 and 1917. There was another large influx of Armenians during the years 1925 - 1945.¹ Although a small number of Armenians had been settling in the country for

¹ Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, Second Edition, (New York: Dryden Pres, 1971), p. 345.

several generations, some remained after relocation, the bulk of those in Syria arrived in successive waves from Turkey especially those of from Cilicia and Alexandretta that considerably increased the Armenian community in Syria.

When we compare the Armenian population in Syria, it was mentioned as 100.000 after World War I.² This number was estimated as 125.550 in an official census provided by Syrian Republic of Directorate of Statistics for the year 1945.³ This number also included the Protestant Armenians in Syria due to accounts of Poladian.⁴ Then, this number rose to about 150,000 Armenians according to Collelo in the mid-1980s.⁵ The conclusion that can be drawn from these figures is that the population of the Armenians in Syria increased after World War I and the following years due to migrations.

Like Armenians throughout the Middle East, Armenians in Syria today are city or town dwellers. Roughly 75 percent live in Aleppo, where they are a large and commercially important element, and fewer than 20 percent live in the Hayy al Arman (Quarter of the Armenians), a new section of Damascus. Although the community is relatively small in Damascus, Armenians have been able to prove themselves in the business domain. According to church statistics, there are approximately 10,000 Armenian Orthodox in Damascus, and 4,000 Armenian Catholics. Many of them own jewellery shops throughout the Syrian capital.⁶ The remainder are scattered in cities and towns throughout the country, especially in the larger towns near the northern border of the Jazirah. Most Armenians belong to the Armenian Orthodox Church, but about 20,000 belong to the Armenian Catholic Church.⁷

² McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities...*, p. 125.

³ Syrian Republic, Ministry of National Economy, Directorate of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Syria*, 1953, p. 21.

⁴ Antranik Poladian, *History of Armenians of Arabkir*, (London, 2004).

⁵ Thomas Collelo, ed. *Syria: A Country Study*, (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987).

⁶ Najwa al-Jamali, "The Armenians Loved Life and Syria", in *Society*, No. 64 (Oct. 2007), p. 1.

⁷ Thomas Collelo, ed. *Syria: A Country Study*, (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987).

The Armenians work chiefly in trade, the professions, small industry, and crafts; a few are found in government service. In Aleppo, where some families have been traders for generations, their economic position is strong. Many of the technical and skilled workers of Damascus and Aleppo are Armenians. Armenians in Damascus own 70 factories that specialize mainly in textile and construction material. They are also making a name for themselves in medicine, law, and art. Armenian industrial participation, with its high proficiency, has had a positive impact on the Syrian economy as a whole, which vibrated positively throughout the country. In the smaller towns they are generally small traders or craftsmen as in the past.

Today, Armenians continue their lives in Syria.⁸ They retain many of their own customs, maintain their own schools and read newspapers in their own language. Today the 150,000 Armenian-Syrian-Gregorians and 20,000 Catholics live mainly in Aleppo, Jazira and Latikia. In the beginning, Armenians lived within the high walls of Old Damascus, mainly in Bab Sharki and Bab Touma, two Christian quarters of town. Indeed, there is an entire neighbourhood in Old Damascus named after the Armenian community. Economic conditions, however, and the modernity drive led the Armenians to move into new Damascus; just like other Damascenes. What differentiates them is the organizational structure of their community. Rarely will one find an Armenian who is not committed to his community. There are two Armenian Catholic Dioceses. Armenian liturgy is based on traditions from Jerusalem, Cappadocia and Byzantium. Christians support the government that guarantees their survival.⁹

All in all, the cases of Syrian Armenians, which provide information about the situation of Armenians during the last decades of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries are significant examples for the researches about the Armenians, because these years are the most important years for the Armenian

⁸ <http://countrystudies.us/syria/24.htm>, (15.10.2007).

⁹ <http://countrystudies.us/syria/24.htm>, (15.10.2007).

Question. The events occurred during the relocation of Armenians (1915-1916) are represented today as “genocide” by some historians. However, the cases of Aleppo and Damascus Armenians present the information which is opposed to this claim. As indicated in many parts of our study, the Armenians in the centres of Aleppo and Damascus were not relocated and contrarily, the relocation was directed to these centres, because of the fact that they did not organize any separatist movements or organizations and they had well integrated themselves into the society they lived in. They were also permitted to help the relocated Armenians and continued their lives in these centres. Hence, the relocation can not be regarded as genocide when the cases of the Syrian Armenians, namely the Armenians of sub-provinces of Aleppo and Damascus taken into account under the light of the sources represented so far.

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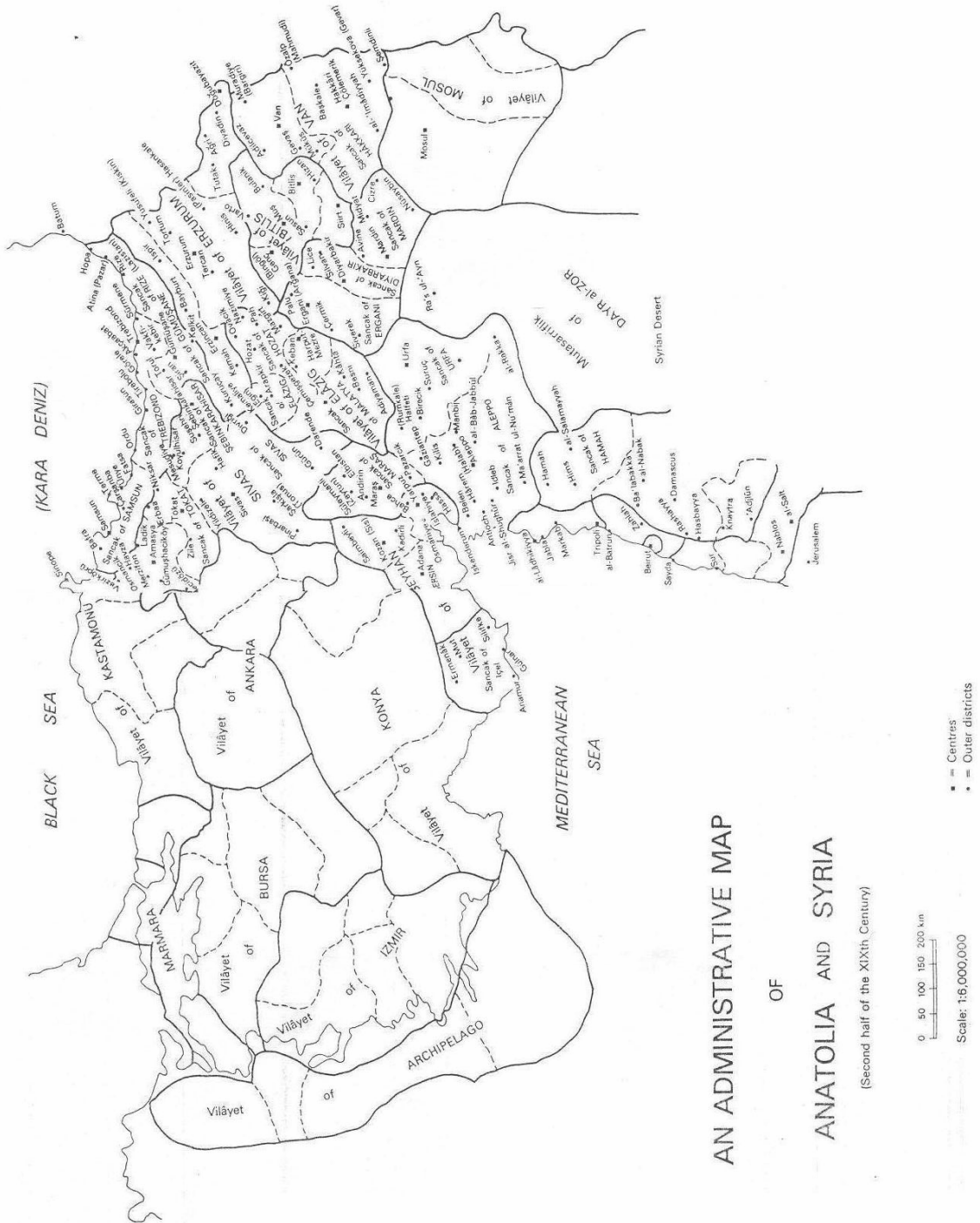
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: An Administrative Map of Anatolia and Syria During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century



Appendix B: Ottoman Empire Before World War I

