Flora Ghazaryan

"When Faith Becomes a Political Weapon: Early 19th century Armenian Sectarian Violence in Istanbul"

Ֆլորա Ղազարյան

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WHEN FAITH BECOMES A POLITICAL WEAPON: EARLY 19TH CENTURY ARMENIAN SECTARIAN VIOLENCE IN ISTANBUL[1]

Flora Ghazaryan[2]
Central European University, Austria

Abstract

While Armenian communities of early modern Istanbul were preoccupied with confessionalization and confessional strives, in the early nineteenth century these already established sects moved to a power struggle against one another for more hierarchical and influential position within the Ottoman State. Confessional disputes continued but they became means to instigate conflict between communities.

On an individual level, for wealthy Istanbul Armenians, religious belonging or position within a certain group became a weapon to either ensure a position and political power or take that position and/or political power from someone else.

The first part of this article is an analysis of confessionalization and sectarianism paradigms. The second part of this research attempts to demonstrate the shift from confessionalization to sectarianism within Istanbul's Armenian communities, as well as the rise of new sectarian identities that went in parallel with the national identity building and influenced it.

Introduction

While in early modern Istanbul, Armenian communities were preoccupied with *confessionalization* and confessional strives, in the early nineteenth century these already established sects moved to a power struggle against

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[1] This article is a summary of one of the paradigms from my doctoral research titled "The Edge of Political Power: Informal Politics of Catholic Armenians in Early Nineteenth-Century Istanbul." The dissertation is financed by Central European University and Gerda Henkel Fellowship: https://www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/.

[2] Central European University, email: Ghazaryan_Flora@phd.ceu.edu

one another for a more hierarchical and influential position within the Ottoman State. Confessional disputes continued but they became means to instigate conflict between communities. On an individual level, religious belonging to or position within a certain group became a weapon to either ensure a position and political power or take that position and/or political power from someone else. This process demonstrates the shift from *confessionalism* to *sectarianism*, the rise of new sectarian identities intertwined with the national identity building and marks the passage from the early modern to the modern era.

In recent years, intra-confessional relations among Armenians and Ottoman communities in general became a central focus for Western scholarship, moving the discussion away from homogenously conceptualized "Christian" and "Muslim", or "Armenian" and "Greek" communities to reveal multiple intra-communal divisions and inter-confessional modes of competition and cooperation. This new wave of scholarship takes into consideration religio-political dynamics that shaped the self-fashioning of ethno-religious communities in an inter-imperial and entangled perspective not only in the Ottoman Empire but beyond.

However, this scholarship deals only with the early modern period through *confessionalization* paradigm. Furthermore, most scholars rely on the writings of contemporary Catholic and Apostolic Armenian priests as a primary source for their research. These sources certainly shed light on the dynamics of their era, however, they do not necessarily reflect the feelings of the laity or secular notables. This article builds on and goes beyond the available scholarly literature to demonstrate the new developments at the dawn of the modern era. This research suggests that in the early nineteenth century, sectarian identity became a key for the formation of two parallel Armenian national identities as well as for secular nationalism of the later period. By acknowledging the existence of not one but many Armenian communities based on their sectarian belonging, this research brings into the field of Armenian Studies a new understanding of Armenian communities, their relations, and dynamics.

From Confessionalization to Sectarianism

The years between the Peace of Augsburg (1555) and the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) are a period of confessional polarization in Europe. Political conflicts during the second half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century were marked by a religious or simultaneous religious-political character. The same applies to the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts which were taking place at the same period.[3] Religious conflicts of the early modern period did not only affect the churches and religions but also states and societies. The process of modern state formation was tied to the development of religious confessions and church doctrines. *Confessionalization* during the Ottoman-Safavid conflict, for example, brought about the consolidation of Sunni-Ottoman and Shiʻa-Safavid establishments in the sixteenth century. The Peace of Amasya, concluded between Ottomans and Safavids in 1555, coincides with the Peace of Augsburg. The Peace of Amasya brought to an end to what can be called the Twenty-Three Years' War (1532-55).[4]

The age of *confessionalization* was an early modern trend that went beyond the Europe-Ottoman-Safavid triangle.[5] First, with Ernest Walter Zeeden in German historiography, *Konfessionsbildung* (confession-building) came to denote the formation of a church outlined by a written and declared creed with defined adherents. The focus of *Konfessionsbildung* was the clear formation of doctrine, worship, and rites, their promulgation to the believers, and the formation of a group whose rites and articles of faith are guarded by the religious institution. This process is known to English

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[3] Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalisation in Ireland: Periodisation and Character, 1534-1649," in *The Origins of Sectarianism in Early Modern Ireland,* Alan Ford and John McCafferty eds. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University press, 2012), 25.

[4] Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," 34; Azmi Bishara, *Sectarianism without Sects* (London: Hurst & Company, 2021)*,* 62.

[5] American colonies, Great Britain, and even China went through similar processes of confession building or confessionalization. More on these cases see Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, *Confessionalism and Mobility in Early Modern Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Hartmut Lehmann, "Four Competing Concepts for the Study of Religious Reform Movements including Pietism in Early Modern Europe and North America," in *Confessionalism and Pietism: Religious Reform in Early Modern Europe,* Fred Van Lieburg ed. (Mainz: Phillip von Zabern Press, 2006), 313-22; Ad Dudink, Nicolas Standaert, *Forgive Us Our Sins: Confession in Late Ming and Early Qing China* (New York, Oxforshire: Routledge Press, 2006).

academia as *confessionalization*. It gradually transforms a group of believers into a community via belief in and profession of the articles of faith and their repetition in prayers, the performance of shared rites that are different from other communities, the interpretation of these differences as well as religious commandments.[6]

Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling built on the earlier studies of Zeeden and the latter's term *confession-building*. As early as 1958, Zeeden had proposed this term to describe how "during the second half of the sixteenth century, Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism started to build modern, clearly defined confessional churches, each of which centered on a confession of faith."[7] This process was part and parcel of early modern European state formation beginning roughly in the 1520s and culminating in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when Europe witnessed the emergence of centralized states defined largely by clearly demarcated confessional lines and with populations that were socially disciplined and confessionally homogeneous and uniform.[8] With the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), Europe officially recognized territorial sovereignty as well as the confessional divide between Protestant and Catholic states.

Alluding to Sanjay Subrahmanyam's 'connected histories' approach to writing global history, Ottomanist Tijana Krstić contended that

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[6] Ute Lotz-Heumann, Matthias Pohlig, "Confessionalization and Literature in the Empire, 1555-1700," in *Central European History*, vol. 40, no. 1 (Cambridge University Press, March, 2007), 35-61; Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalisation in Ireland: Periodisation and Character, 1534-1649," in *The Origins of Sectarianism in Early Modern Ireland,* Alan Ford and John McCafferty eds (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University press, 2012), 24-53; Tijana Krstić, "From Shahāda to 'Aqīda: Conversion to Islam, Catechization, and Sunnitization in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Rumeli," in A.C.S. Peacock ed., *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 296-314; Tijana Krstić, "State and Religion, 'Sunnitization' and 'Confessionalism' in Süleyman's time," in P. Fodor, ed., *The Battle for Central Europe--The Siege of Szigetvar and the Death of Suleyman the Magnificent and Nicholas Zrinyi* (Leiden, Boston Budapest: Brill and Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2019), 65-92; Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu, *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450-c. 1750* (Brill, 2020).
[7] Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," 34.
[8] Heinz Schilling, "Confessionalization: Historical and Scholarly Perspectives of a Comparative and Interdisciplinary Paradigm," in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700: Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan*, John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand and Anthony J. Papalas eds. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 21-37.

confessionalization was one of the "linchpin trends (with local manifestations) shared among inextricably connected polities on different continents."[9] She asserted that one of the confessionalization's central tenets, *cuius regio, eius religio* (English: whose realm, his religion), led to the tighter politico-religious integration as a basis for community and state building in both the Safavid and Ottoman Empires.

The *confessionalization* paradigm first came to be applied by Krstić to the history of the early modern Muslim world. She argued in her *Contested Conversions to Islam* that the hardening of confessional distinctions between Catholics and Protestants in Europe had its parallels as well as counterparts in the early modern Ottoman and Safavid Empires. For Krstić, *confessionalization* in the Ottoman realm triggered a shift in Ottoman religious politics at the beginning of the sixteenth century from one comfortable with 'confessional ambiguity' to one increasingly concerned with defining and enforcing a particular understanding of 'correct' belief and practice.[10] Another prominent proponent of the *confessionalization* paradigm is Derin Terzioğlu whose close look at Tukish *ʿilm-i hāl* manuals showed similarities with their Christian counterparts- the *catechisms* of the period.[11] The two authors highlight the role that Kadızadelis and Şeyhulislam Feyzullah Efendi played in the Ottoman *confessionalization* process. Feyzullah Efendi was also heavily involved in the Armenian confessional strives and helped channel Ottoman-style *confessionalism* to the Armenian communities.[12]

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[9] Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 16.

[10] Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 13-6.

[11] Both *ʿilm-i hāl* and *catechism* are summaries of the principles of religion in the form of questions and answers, used for religious instruction. Derin Terzioglu, "Where *ʿIlm-i Hāl* Meets Catechism: Islamic Manuals of Religious Instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization," in *Past & Present,* No. 220 (August 2013), 107.

[12] Cezare Santus, "*Şeyhulislam* Feyzullah Efendi and the Armenian Patriarch Awetikʿ: a case of entangled confessional disciplining?" in *Entangled Confessionalizations? Dialogic Perspectives on the Politics of Piety and Community Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th-18th Centuries,* T. Krstić, D. Terzioglu eds, (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2022), 233-54; Charles A Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The church and the Ottoman Empire 1453-1923* (London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 179.

Unlike *confessionalization*, *sectarianism* as a paradigm developed simultaneously in two distinct historiographic traditions with two different origins. In the Ottoman and Middle Eastern literature s*ectarianism* is presented either as a phenomenon originated from the Middle East or as a phenomenon specific to the Middle East. Scholars of the Middle East such as Ussama Makdisi, Fanar Haddad, and Azmi Bishara presented sects as a concept originated from Arabic (*taʿifa),* distinguishing it from the Weberian sociological explanation of sects. They present *sectarianism* as "part of the modern history."[13] It is common even in modern Arabic everyday usage to distinguish between *taʿifiyya* (sectarianism) which refers to a religion, and *madhhabiyya* (confessionalism) referring to one of several confessions (*madhhab*) within the same religion.[14] The significance of the *taʿifiyya,* Bishara notes, is the strong in-group feeling, not necessarily regarding a religion or confession, but the community of followers of a religion or confession. [15] It determined one's position towards others who were also categorized based on religious or confessional affiliation.[16]

The Weberian academic sociological concept of *sect* laid the ground for the development of the second or Western *sectarianism* paradigm in British scholarship. The meaning of the sociological concept *sect* is different from what Arabic refers to as *taʿifa.* The Weberian term is used to signify a subgroup of followers of religious, philosophical, or political orientation. This subgroup is differentiated from or is opposed to the prevailing convictions of society in its teachings and rituals. With *sects,* Weber aimed to develop a sociological concept that accounts for religious groups made up of religious people who observed a religious life that is in opposition to the

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[13] Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, (Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2000); Bishara, *Sectarianism without Sects*; Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011).

[14] It is interesting that the Armenian community was referred to in Ottoman documents either as *millet* or *cemaʿat* (in Arabic جماعة) which simply means a community.

[15] Bishara, *Sectarianism without Sects,* 37.

[16] This divisions and terms, however, were used predominantly within the Islamic context. For example, to refer to Catholic Armenians, Ottomans would not use the word *taʿifa,* a different word *cemaʿat* (community) would be used even after their official recognition in 1831. "Ermeni Katolik Cemaati'nin…," B.O.A., HAT 1333/52025, 29 Zilhicce, 1230 (2 November 1815).

mainstream of society. For Weber, the church is a religious institution with both congregation and creed at the same time. It comprises both clerics and members of the church in Christianity.[17] In modern Arabic, the members of the church that is the flock, laity, or the people, are termed as a religious *taʿifa*.

As both versions of the paradigm define the same process with very similar characteristics, in this article I apply a combined approach of Western or Weberian and Arabic or Eastern definitions of *sectarianism* to the early nineteenth-century Istanbul Armenian communities. I regard the Armenian Apostolic Church as a subgroup of Orthodoxy, and the Mekhitarist Catholic Congregations as a subgroup of Catholicism. As such, in this research, *sectarianism* refers to the identification of a *sect* (subgroup) within a larger Christian religious tradition that has different interpretations, doctrines, and/or practices from its broader religious community. Members of such sectarian groups have strong in-group feelings not towards the everyday life practice of religion but rather towards their community.

After the 1980s, with Benedict Anderson's book, the perception of nations as political imagined communities operating along the lines of 'us' versus 'them' comes as a no surprise to any scholar.[18] Now, distinguishing between religious communities and religious imagined communities is a more complicated and difficult task. Every nation, even the smallest one, is an imagined community, Anderson claims.[19] Bishara claims the same for sects or sectarian communities. According to him, contrary to the widespread understanding that sects produce *sectarianism*, it is quite the opposite. *Sectarianism* is producing imagined sects by transforming religious and confessional affiliations into imagined communities. These communities then form a political reference point for their members.[20] *Sectarianism* appears as the transformation of a religion or confession into a pseudo-ethnic entity and its imposition onto the past to establish its connection to a land and its rights regarding a state. One of the most important features of

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[17] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology,* Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich eds (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 55-57, 1164.
[18] Benedict Anderson*, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 6.
[19] Anderson*, Imagined Communities,* 6.
[20] Bishara, *Sectarianism without Sects,* 17.

sectarianism, thus, is the link of land with a projected sectarian identity of the 'original' inhabitants.[21] Some ethnicities (for example, Armenians, Greeks, Jews) overlapped with religion in their early incarnations, and in some specific sects retained this overlap until modern days. Like ethnicity, *sectarianism* is translated into social structures and relations imposed onto the individual, even if that individual is not sectarian. In a sectarian society or system, individuals sectarianized by necessity as names, places of residence, and other phenomena, are all linked to sectarian affiliation. In such societies knowing the sectarian identity of another person can lead to all sorts of consequences, even be a matter of life and death.

Generally, sectarian conflicts take place at times of economic, social, and political crisis or in moments of existential struggle for power.[22] It is important to distinguish a killing that occurs during a clash from a sectarian killing in such societies.[23] McVeigh states that sectarian killings are solely based on one's identity when a victim is killed for example simply for being a Catholic. Thus, he adds, *sectarianism* must be theorized as a structure. It is more than a set of ideologies or a category of practices or even an amalgam of individual actions; "*sectarianism* is the modality in which life is lived by everybody."[24]

As stated earlier, Makdisi and Bishara claim sectarianism to be part of modern history. Yet, if the phenomenon of religious *sectarianism* is entirely the product of modernity, then how does one deal with similar events from early modern or medieval periods? It is important to distinguish *sectarianism* from discrimination and oppression based on religious grounds, which encompasses awareness of the social boundaries of religions and confessions. Discrimination on religious grounds has existed since the Middle Ages and religious minorities have been subjected to discrimination that ranged from toleration to oppression and imposition of collective punishments. It is important to understand and study the conditions under

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[21] Bishara, *Sectarianism without Sects,* 32; Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq,* 7-23.
[22] Recent wars in Iraq and Syria are a good example of this.
[23] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq,* 15-23.
[24] Robbie McVeigh, *Sectarianism in Northern Ireland: Towards a Definition in Law* (2014), http://www.equalitycoalition.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Sectarianism-in-Northern-Ireland-Towards-a-definition-in-Law-April-2014-Unison-logo.pdf [last accessed on 22.02.2022].

which *sectarianism* as well as many versions of it, such as political, social, and religious *sectarianisms,* were formed.[25] What makes modern sectarian violence distinguishable from its early modern counterparts is the fact that this violence used religion or its denominations as a tool for political or personal endgames. Previous identitarian inter-group rivalries and confessional violence were part of the consolidation processes of these confessions. At the beginning of the nineteenth century when all the confessional groups were already formed and defined, the very form of rivalry changed from defining the nature and sphere of influence of each confession to protecting their domain of influence. In other words, similar to Anderson's political imagined communities there was and still is a clearly formed sectarian boundary of 'us' versus 'them.'[26]

The Rise of Armenian Sectarianism in Istanbul

Etchmiadzin, Rome (Propaganda de Fide), and Venice (Mekhitarist Congregation) were the main centers that enforced confessional boundaries on the Armenian communities. During the second half of the seventeenth century, post-Tridentine missionaries from Europe started to arrive in great numbers to Armenian communities of Ottoman and Safavid Empires leading to interconfessional conflicts. Etchmiadzin, the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, and its followers comprised the Apostolic Armenian community of Istanbul; the three separate orders of 'Uniate' or Mekhitarist Catholic Armenian congregations comprised the *Abbaean* Catholic Armenian community; and the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith with its Collegio Urbano from 1627, and specifically Armenian college or

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[25] Bishara, *Sectarianism without Sects,* 192.

[26] In the case of Armenians, this sectarian boundary resurfaces in the discourse of Muslim Armenians from Turkey and the Middle East, in the relations of Catholic and Apostolic Armenians of modern-day Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, and other diasporas. Until now, in these diasporas there is a bigger stigma for marrying someone from 'the other sect' than for marrying an ethnic Turk or Arab. In the Armenian diasporas of Europe, such as Venice and Vienna where the headquarters of Mekhitarist Congregation are located, there are still two distinct Eastern and Western or Catholic and Apostolic Armenian communities. The two churches have an agreement according to which a representative from each side visits the other on the days of special religious events, however, the laity rarely mixes or attends the events of the other sectarian group.

Collegio Armeno since 1660 comprised the core of *Qoletchean* Catholic Armenian community. However, the Apostolic Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul was the only legal representative of the capital's Armenian subjects in front of the Ottoman State. In addition to these three communities, Protestant and Muslim Armenian communities existed in Istanbul, which are not included in this research.

Contemporary witness accounts state that by the beginning of the nineteenth century both laity and priests of Armenian communities in Istanbul showed signs of religious sectarian unrest. The first wave of persecutions started at the dawn of the eighteenth century during the Patriarchate of Avedik I of Constantinople (1702-3). Around 1714, these persecutions along with *Communicaio in Sacris*[27] bans forced the Catholic Armenian community to start thinking about establishing their separate community. As a result, in 1742 the Pope established the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate of Lebanon with jurisdiction over Cilicia and Syria. In 1758, the Pope also appointed a Catholic Armenian pontific vicar in Istanbul whose jurisdiction extended over Istanbul, Armenia, and Asia Minor outside of Cilicia. This vicar had the authority to ordain priests who had to be approved by the Latin pontific vicar of Istanbul.[28]

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the status of Catholics within the Ottoman Empire became more stable as Marquis de Riviere, the ambassador of Louis XVIII, was able to return to Istanbul and represent Catholic France. De Riviere also took control over other Catholics of the city, especially Armenians and Greeks. The French control was not limited to the capital, for it soon spread to Ankara, Trabzon, the Balkans, and the Levant. With this, France was trying to take control over the Holy Places, a policy that it would try to repeat in the 1840s during Muhamed Ali's rebellion. As Charles Frazee claims, most of the French work of Ottoman partition on the ground was done with the help of local Catholics who continuously destabilized the situation in different parts of the Ottoman Empire with their

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[27] English: sharing religious and sacred services between two or more Christian denominations.
[28] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening: A History of the Armenian Church, 1820-1860* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1909), 38.

requests for separate Catholic *millet*. Thus, France instrumentalized these sectarian groups for its political gains.[29]

Around this time, the image of the Ottoman Empire as the 'sick man of Europe' appeared. European perception of the Ottomans shifted from a religiously tolerant empire to a despotic one. Such perceptions further paved the way for the European plans of the Ottoman partition. Another novel feature of the European political thought on Ottomans was the contrast between either primitive/simple or oppressed people of the empire and the Ottomans. As such, Ottomans were positioned between the image of enlightened Europe, and noble civilizations over which the despotic sultans governed and should be emancipated.[30] Political scientist Aslı Çırakman notes that Russia's seizure of Crimea further reduced the prestige of the Ottomans who once were perceived in Europe as the 'terror of the world.'[31] Crimea was a strategically crucial region for the Ottoman Empire and its loss to Russia in 1783 created enmity towards the Russian Empire, which, over time and especially at the dawn of the nineteenth century, turned into what Şükrü Ilıcak calls "Russophobia in Ottoman politics" of the period.[32] Years later, Count Volney in his *The Ruins* (first published in 1791) and Talleyrand would suggest that similar to the Russian annexation of Crimea, France should emancipate the ancient kingdoms of Greece, Egypt, Armenia, and Syria.[33] However, France was not alone in its partition plans. Russia, Austria,

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[29] Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and the Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453-1923* (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 223-31.

[30] Sir Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire: Containing the Maxims of the Turkish Politie, the Most Material Points of the Mahometan Religion, their Sects and Heresies, their Convents and Religious Votaries, their Military Discipline with an Exact Computation of their Forces both by Land and Sea. Illustrated with divers Pieces of Sculpture, representing the variety of Habits amongst the Turks. In Three Books*, (London, 1668); Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, vol. 1, translated by Mr. Nugent (London: J. Nourse and P. Vaillant Press, 1752).

[31] Aslı Çırakman, *From "the Terror of the World" to the Sick Man of Europe:" European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005), 164.

[32] Şükrü Ilıcak, "A Radical Rethinking of Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence (1821-1826)," unpublished PhD Dissertation, 2011, Harvard University, 69-73.

[33] "You murmur and say, how have an infidel people enjoyed the blessings of Heaven on earth? Why is a holy and chosen race less fortunate than impious generations? … Say when

and Vatican were the three other interested parties. As the pages below demonstrate, all three powers used Apostolic (by Russia) and Catholic Armenian (by France, Austria, Vatican) communities and their sectarian issues for their interests in the partition of the Ottoman Empire.

Accounts of Protestant missionary Harrison Dwight report that in 1760, an Armenian priest named Dibajian from Samatya wrote a book to expose the superstitions and abuses of the Apostolic church which circulated in the manuscript form. Another Protestant missionary named William Goodwell states that in the early years of the nineteenth century, there was not one important place within the Ottoman Empire where at least a few Armenians were not aware of the corrupt nature of their Apostolic Patriarchate.[34] Meanwhile, Patriarchate's policy of persecution which prevailed in the eighteenth century changed into a policy of reconciliation in the early nineteenth century; thus shifting its policy from defining the nature and sphere of influence to that of protecting its domain of influence. In 1810, 1817, and again in 1820, both community representatives attempted to find ways for co-existence and possible unification. Since the 1808 fire of the Holy Resurrection cathedral in Jerusalem until 1819, Armenian and Greek religious authorities were in a competition for control over the cathedrals of Holy Resurrection and Saint James. Thus, for those years the two Armenian sectarian groups put aside their differences and united against a different 'other,' the Greeks.[35] However, the first efforts of 1810 failed due to the opposition of Apostolic clergy and laity. Catholic Armenians had a 5-point

those infidels [Turks] observed the laws of the heavens and of the earth? … You have massacred the people, burnt their cities destroyed their cultivation, reduced the earth to solitude." In Constantin Francois Count de Volney, *The Ruins or Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires to which is added the Law of Nature and Short Biographical Notice*, translated by Count Daru (Boston, Josiah P. Mendum Press, 1869), 28-9; T. G. Djnvara, *Cent Projects de partage de la Turquie (1281-1913),* (Paris, 1914), 326-8.

[34] Edward Dorr Griffin Prime, *Forty Years in the Turkish Empire; or, Memoirs of Rev. William Goodwell*: *Late Missionary of the A.B.C.F.M. at Constantinople [published] by his son-in-law, E.D.G. Prime* (New York: 1876), 173; Harrison Grey Otis Dwight, *Christianity Revived in the East; or, A Narrative of the Work of God among the Armenians of Turkey* (New York: 1850), 5.

[35] Małakia Ormanean, *National History: The Events of the Apostolic Armenian Church from the Beginning until our Days, told along other National Events*, Vol. 3, Part 1 (Beirut: Sevan Press, 1961), 2321.

demand list that they were eager to discuss and find compromises. Their demands were the acceptance of Christ's double nature, the double procession of the Spirit, the doctrine of Purgatory, the supremacy of the Pope, and the sacrament of extreme unction or the Last Rites.[36]

Armenian sectarian groups met for the second time in 1816. The second attempt failed due to the lack of any response from Catholic Armenians. The Catholic Armenian *amiras* (English: notables) were eager to find terms of negotiations, however, the clergy was not. They caused delays in their responses until eventually the attempts were frozen for another couple of years.[37] The third attempt of 1820 also failed as it was undertaken under pressure from the Porte. This time, due to the recent execution of Düzoğlus in October 1819, who were the civil leaders of *Abbaean* Catholic Armenians, and circulating controversies about who was behind it, there was resistance and mistrust from all sides.[38] The only result of the 1820 attempt at reconciliation was that it clearly showed the impossibility of unification and the necessity of establishing a separate sectarian community. Leon Arpee claims that 'the year 1820 commenced the process of the civil emancipation of the Catholic Armenians' in the Ottoman Empire.[39] With the execution of Düzoğlus and the confiscation of their property along with the properties of their Catholic network, the Porte officially became a side in the Armenian sectarian affaires. Moreover, the extended search of properties discovered hidden chapels not only in the residency of Düzoğlus but in the residencies of other prominent Catholic Armenian families as well. This resulted in the exile of several of these families.

As an unauthored *Genealogy* (1814) of Düzoğlu family claims, right before his arrest, Serkis Düzoğlu wanted to send a servant to the vicar of

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[36] Małakia Ormanean, *National History,* 2321.

[37] Charles Frazee, *Catholics and the Sultans*, 256; Małakia Ormanean, *National History*, 2355-6. For a more detailed account of this unification attempt see Unauthored, *History of the Events that Occurred in Constantinople to Constitute the Truth of the Faith of the Armenian Holy Church who did not know and Sinned* (Constantinople: The Holy Mother press, 1818). Ormanean claims that this book was authored by Patriarch Bołos I and in its essence is an anti-Catholic narrative which praises the national church and his patriarchal rule.

[38] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 39-40; Małakia Ormanean, *National History*, 2366; Charles Frazee, *Catholics and the Sultans*, 256-7.

[39] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 40; Małakia Ormanean, *National History*, 2366.

Catholic Armenians, Ant'on My'sy'rlean (1806-1824), asking him to get a remission from all the priests whom they silenced together and for the false attempt to embark at unification. Serkis Düzoğlu was convinced that his change of fortune was the result of these 'crimes.' The Düzoğlus were involved in series of unification attempts between the Apostolic and Catholic Armenians, many of which ended with depositions and exiles of Apostolic Armenian Patriarchs. In the end, Serkis' brother Krikor Düzoğlu advised against sending the letter.[40] However, their sisters who after the arrest were kept captive in the Apostolic Patriarchate, did manage to send a letter to a Mekhitarist clergyman and a close ally of the Catholic Armenians' vicar. In the letter, they asked to gather all the priests who begrudged 'bitterness towards their family for old disputes' and pleaded for their forgiveness in the name of their brothers and the entire Düzoğlu family. Twice in the letter they beseeched Mekhitarist clergyman for its discretion, 'for if people outside the clergy learned about the scandal, they would make a spectacle out of it.'[41]

The Catholic Armenian community perceived the Düzoğlu execution as the beginning of another wave of sectarian persecution against them. On January 25, 1820, Patriarch Bołos I banished the Catholic Armenian pontific vicar and several of his clergymen from Istanbul.[42] Five days later, on January 30, 1820, the Porte sent strict orders to the Apostolic Armenian Patriarchate to solve the Catholic problem once and for all. Patriarch Bołos I saw the solution in the banishment of all known Armenian Catholic clergy. Once the clergy was removed from the city, it seemed easier for the Patriarch to deal with the laity. Therefore, he drew up an oath for all Armenians of the *millet*, which stated: "Whatsoever the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church accepts from the day of our holy Gregory the Illuminator until the present time, I accept, and whatsoever it rejects, I reject."[43] The Patriarch's hopes, however, did not come to fruition as most Catholic Armenians refused to

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[40] H. Eṗrem v. Połosean, *Oskean and My's'yrlean families,* (Vienna, Mekhitarist Press, 1953), 64.
[41] "…զերէ աս ալ մէկ մենծ կիւրիւլիւ մը կընեն," MS 601, *Genealogy of the royal Tiwzean family,* 123.
[42] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 41-2.
[43] Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and the Sultans*, 257; Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 42*.*

take the oath. As Arpee and Frazee state, this oath was then substituted with the Nicene Creed which Catholic Armenians accepted.[44]

Apostolic Armenian *amira* Artin Bezdjean along with the royal architects Krikor and Garabet Balians spearheaded the pacification process between the two Armenian sectarian communities. However, the deepened division between the *Qoletchean* and *Abbaean* Catholic Armenians complicated the matter even further. Istanbul's Catholic vicar, the leader of *Qoletchean* Catholic Armenians, was appointed by the Pope, while the *Abbaean* Catholic Armenians recognized the authority of the Mekhitraist leader in the capital. Father Mesrop Ağaçırağean, the Mekhitarist leader of Istanbul's *Abbaean* sect, was caught in an intertwined relationship with Balians, Bezdjean, Aznavourian, and Allahverdi *amiras*.[45] They proposed Father Mesrop to have a meeting with *Qoletchean* Catholic clergy as well as with the learned men of the Apostolic church to find possible grounds for reconciliation. The proposal was more of a threat as *amiras* warned Father Mesrop that if he does not comply, the Apostolic Patriarch had a sultanic order to start persecutions against them. Father Mesrop gave in and sent a messenger to *Qoletcheans* inviting them to a roundtable with the *Abbaeans* and representatives of Apostolic church.[46]

The committees of the three Armenian sects met during the months of February and March (1820) to discuss the five key points of disagreement between Catholic and Apostolic Armenian denominations: the Catholic Christology, the double procession of the Spirit, the doctrine of Purgatory, the supremacy of the Pope, and the sacrament of extreme unction or the Last Rites. After numerous negotiations, they drafted a new *catechism* for the united Armenian national church called *A Word of Love* or *Invitation to Love*,[47] which, after Istanbul's Apostolic Patriarch's approval, was to be

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[44] Charles Frazee, *Catholics and the Sultans*, 257; Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 44.
[45] Barseł Sarkisean, *Bicentenary Literary Activity of Prominent Figures of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice* (Venice: San Lazzaro Press, 1905), 350.
[46] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 44; Małakia Ormanean, *National History*, 2355-6.
[47] Unauthored, *A word of Love* (Constantinople, Połos Arapean Press, 1820). A 33-page pamphlet with commentary was published also in 1822. Unauthored, *Explanation to the Thoughts of 'A word of Love' Tetragrammaton according to the Doctrine of Holy Apostolic Priests* (Constantinople, Holy Virgin Patriarchate Press, 1822).

presented to the general synod of bishops, priests, and *esnafs* for adoption. The document represented the old orthodoxy of the Armenian Apostolic church with alteration on the above-mentioned issues.[48]

With this *catechism,* the three Armenian sects came the closest to unification. On April 18, 1820, Patriarch Bołos I summoned a general synod in the Patriarchate. As expected, priests, heads of *esnafs* (English: guilds)*, amiras,* as well as Catholicos of Sis and legates of Etchmiadzin and Jerusalem Patriarchate were present. The synod adopted the *catechism*, and, in compliance with an imperial edict, took out the anathema against Pope Leo the Great and the Council of Chalcedon from the Hymnals and the Ordinal of the Apostolic church. They also agreed to accept all councils, to drop the names of Gregory and Moses of Tatev and other fourteenth century anti-Catholic writers who were canonized during the age of confessionalization from the Apostolic mass. Thus, the negotiations for unification concluded, and seven of the ten Catholic clerics entered a communion of the 'national' church under Porte's orders on April 30, 1820.[49]

However, both Arpee and Ormanean note that this union did not receive much sympathy from laity or any representatives of the sects who did not directly participate in it. *Qoletcheans,* who had the biggest number of Catholic followers, sabotaged Mekhitarists' efforts at reunion. With the help of French ambassador de Riviere, they forced the Latin pontifical vicar of Istanbul to recall the *Communicatio in Sacris* ban, which, along with other articles, prohibited doctrinal discussions with 'schismatic Armenians.'[50] Furthermore, *Qoletcheans* persuaded the Latin vicar to issue a bull of excision and anathema against *Abbaean* Catholic Armenians who were instrumental in drafting the unified *catechism*. In addition to this, the Apostolic Armenian community negatively perceived the consecration of

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[48] Małakia Ormanean, *National History*, 2366; Charles Frazee, *Catholics and the Sultans,* 257.

[49] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 47; Unauthored, *The Year of Preparation for the Vatican Council* (London: Burns, Oates, and Co, 1869), 76-7; Małakia Ormanean, *National History*, 2370-2; Richard Antaramian, "Confessionalism, Centralism, Armenians, and Ottoman Imperial Governence in the 18th and 19th Centuries," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, No 54 (2022), 327.

[50] Due to their dual approach towards their national and sectarian identities, the Mekhitarists were marked as schismatics by the Roman Pope. Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 48.

olive-oil for the use in extreme unction on July 24, 1820. A new wave of sectarian violence was brewing, waiting for a moment to erupt.

The violence erupted on August 19, 1820, when a *Qoletchean* Catholic Armenian from Galata went to the quarter of Armenian shoemakers with a copy of *A Word of Love* pamphlet.[51] He replaced the picture of the Illuminator with the portrait of the Pope in the pamphlet and walked down the quarter chanting that Patriarch Bołos I had renounced the Illuminator for the Pope of *Franks* (Appendix, Image 1). As proof of his words, the man showed the picture in the pamphlet claiming that Istanbul's Apostolic Patriarchate pledged its allegiance to Rome. Word quickly spread within the district that those who would not appear the next morning in front of the Patriarchate to riot would be expelled from their *esnafs*. On Sunday morning of August 20, 1820, crowds marched towards the Patriarchate.[52] The mob demanded explanations, and when two bishops came out to reaffirm the crowd that Patriarchate did not change allegiance, the crowd beat them. Afterwards, the mob broke the doors of the Patriarchate and went into the building to find the Patriarch. Patriarch Bołos I managed to escape from the rear window and hide in the neighboring Muslim household. Only the intervention of a Janissary ağa with his five hundred troops managed to quell the riot. Failing to find the ringleaders of the riot, the grand vizier arrested representatives of the shoemakers' *esnaf* who submitted a complaint against the Patriarch the next day of the riot.[53] The ten Catholic priests who entered the communion of the 'national' church, fled to the foreign Catholic churches of Pera, performed penance for their apostasy, and returned to the Roman church. Their flock followed its priests, thus ending the short-lived unification and peace between the Armenian communities.[54]

The position of Catholic Armenians was turning into an anomaly. On the one hand, as an unrecognized sect, the Porte was forcing them to join the Apostolic Patriarchate, on the other hand, there was no ecclesiastical or civil power that could make this unity last or make them feel welcomed within the

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[51] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 49.
[52] Unauthored, *The Year of Preparation for the Vatican Council,* 78.
[53] Unauthored, *The Year of Preparation for the Vatican Council,* 79-80.
[54] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 50-1; Małakia Ormanean, *National History,* 2374-6.

Apostolic church. Furthermore, now more than ever, the capital and fortunes of Catholic *amiras* were becoming a subject of a deeper envy for Apostolic laity.[55] Hence, there was only one solution left – civil recognition of Catholic Armenians' rights in some way. In 1827, the head of the Armenian National Council, Bezdjean, advised the Porte to appoint a Catholic Armenian priest as a civil agent of the Catholic Armenians. He was still supposed to be subordinate to the Apostolic Armenian Patriarchate. However, this was the first semi-official recognition of Catholic Armenians as a separate civil-ecclesiastical body.[56]

According to Arpee's account, this recognition encouraged *Qoletchean* Catholic Armenians to seek for an independent Patriarchate. To achieve their goal, they 'restored to old tricks of court-intrigues,' which backfired with Bezdjean now being the right hand of the sultan.[57] The post-Napoleonic era is generally known for its political betrayals and spy networks. Seizing the moment, *Qoletchean amiras* tried to turn the sultan against Apostolic Armenians. Amidst the Greek Independence War and Russian-Ottoman war, another one between Russia and Safavid Iran unfolded in 1826-1828. Its outcome was the Russian conquest of the Ararat province, which included Yerevan Khanate and the Holy See of Etchmiadzin. *Qoletchean amiras* reported to Sultan Mahmud II that the pro-Russian Apostolic Armenians are planning to engage in hostilities against the Porte and with the help of Russia establish their own principality similar to Moldavia and Wallachia.[58] Thus, on behalf of the Catholic Armenian community, they were requesting the Sultan to separate them from the Apostolic community and not punish them for the future coup of Apostolics.[59] With the ongoing Greek Independence War, where Russia had

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[55] Miroslav Šedivy, "Austria's Role in the Constantinople Armenian Catholics Affair in 1828-31," in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 48, No 1 (January 2012), 52.

[56] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 54; Małakia Ormanean, *National History,* 2374-6; Charles Frazee, 258.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Stephan Papazeants, *The Biography of Harutyun Bezciyan: A National Unique Benefactor* (Constantinople: Hovhannes Mühentisean Press, 1864), 48-9; Miroslav Šedivy, "Austria's Role in the Constantinople Armenian Catholics Affair in 1828-31," in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 48, No 1 (January 2012), 52.

[59] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 55.

its hand, such news must have been quite alarming for Sultan Mahmud II. Amidst the war, the Sultan could not allow his Armenian subjects to be subservient to external power, i.e. Armenian Catholicosate within the Russian Empire.

We should bear in mind that there were two Armenian national awakenings in the early nineteenth century; the Eastern one, with which most Apostolic Armenians aligned due to Etchmiadzin's location, saw their liberation with Russian aid, while the Western one, to which most Catholic Armenian *amiras* of the empire aligned with, saw their liberation through Europe, particularly France. Additionally, given the publications and activities of the Madras group, even though Etchmiadzin opposed many of their ideas, it is not surprising to assume that Apostolic Armenians indeed aligned with Russia for their liberation.[60] It is worth remembering here also Etchmiadzin's position regarding the national issue, which envisioned a decentralized nation governed by Etchmiadzin rather than a secular ruler. Thus, Etchmiadzin, which was already within the Russian Empire, would not mind further expanding the territories of its power through Russian army's invasions and wars to become the national leader of Anatolian Armenians as well.

Sultan Mahmud II summoned the current Patriarch Karapet III Palats'i (1823-31) and Bołos Adrianapolsets'i to the Porte. The two Patriarchs stood as guarantors that Apostolic Armenians never had in mind such a betrayal against the Ottoman State:

"…if something like that were to be organized, the Holy See of Etchmiadzin would inform us with a letter to get prepared. On the other hand, there is a tradition among Christians to tell the priest their secret thoughts or evil deeds to get a remission of sins from God. Hitherto, not one priest informed us about such intentions among Apostolic Armenians. If we get

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[60]Armenian support for Russia in both Russo-Ottoman and Russian-Safavid wars in the regions of Transcaucasus is well documented in military and political texts of the period. For more on this topic see George Bournoutian, *Russia and the Armenians of Transcaucasia, 1797*-1889 (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 1997); Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government, and Society, 1815–1833* (Oxford, 2006).

such concerning news, we will inform the Porte and His Highness Sultan about them."[61]

As such, the two Patriarchs ensured Mahmud II that the Apostolic Armenians of the empire had no intension to conspire against the Porte with Russians and the only part of the *millet* they could not vouch for were the Catholic Armenians.

As a result of these meetings, on October 2, 1827, two *Qoletchean amiras* were exiled from Istanbul. The Catholic Armenian community, unaware of the details, understood this exile as a signal for another wave of sectarian persecutions. After the battle of Navarino (20 October 1827), Sultan Mahmud II expelled the foreign ambassadors from Istanbul and issued new restrictions on Catholics and Europeans in the Ottoman lands. Sultan's foreign minister, Reis Efendi Pertew, further convinced Mahmud II that the Catholics of the empire were guilty of treason and blamed the Pope for distress of the empire.[62] The battle of Navarino and consequent rupture with European powers freed Mahmud II's hand from all policy considerations in his treatment of Catholic Armenians who were regarded as European sympathizers.[63]

On 8 January 1828, to avoid a rebellion in his capital during the Russo-Ottoman war, Sultan Mahmud II imposed new restrictions, part of which concerned Catholic Armenians. The restriction stated:

> All Catholic Armenians of Galata should be expelled to their fatherland. Catholic Armenian clergy should be expelled to Europe. The Catholic Armenian laity of Constantinople, those who will not obey to Armenian Patriarchate should be expelled to Anatolia. Those Catholic Armenians who will stay in the city should not live in Pera, Galata, or other parts of the city inhabited by Europeans. They are to be moved to

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[61] Papazeants, *The Biography of Harutyun Bezciyan*, 50-1; Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 56.

[62] Christopher Korten, 'Private Partners: Cooperation between Russia and Rome in the Crisis of the Armenian Catholic Chruch, 1827-1830," in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 92, No 4 (October 2014), 654.

[63] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 57, Małakia Ormanean, *National History,* 2429.

the center of the capital where they could be kept under better surveillance.[64]

In February of the same year a mass exile of Catholics started not only in Istanbul but also in other cities of the empire. Fear struck Armenian Catholics everywhere in the Ottoman lands. Many emigrated to Russia, Europe, the Greek islands, or Trieste. Their houses and possessions were auctioned off, and the once wealthy group of Catholic Armenians continued its existence in poverty and humiliation.[65] Arpee states that around 12000 Catholic Armenians were expelled and that around four hundred kids died on the roads of the exile.[66] This exodus left a mark in the memory of Istanbul's Catholic Armenian community until present days and even found its way into the early-twentieth century Western Armenian dramaturgy.[67] Propaganda de Fide led efforts to provide housing and facilitate transportation for those exiled clerics who wished to relocate to Italy. Foreign embassies and entities also made donation to cover the expenses of the exodus.[68]

Catholic Armenians' grave situation in the Ottoman Empire did not last long. It rapidly improved after the Treaty of Adrianople (14 September 1829). Once the Pope, France, and Austria made sure that Ottomans were not what they once used to be, they started to put pressure on the Porte. Korten even claims that arguably there was no more serious matter for Propaganda de Fide between 1827 and 1830 than the status of Catholic Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. It relied on European powers to achieve its goals. France, as the protector of Catholics in the Ottoman Empire and Sultan's closest Western ally until 1833, intervened on behalf of Rome.

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[64] By sending the decree, Sultan Mahmud II was not concerned with confessional fights between Armenian groups. The reason of the order was to stabilize the situation in the Armenian *millet* and put all its subjects back under the control of the Patriarchate which was the only responsible institution in front of the Ottoman government for all Armenians of the city. Papazeants, *The Biography of Harutyun Bezciyan*, 52-3; Charles A. Frazee, 258.

[65] Charles MacFarlane, *Constantinople in 1828: A Residence of Sixteen Months in the Turkish Capital and Provinces* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1829), 492; Małakia Ormanean, *National History,* 2430.

[66] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 57; Salahi R. Sonyel, *The Ottoman Armenians: Victims of Great Power Diplomacy* (London: K. Rustem& Brother, 1967), 198.

[67] Vahan Totovents, *New Byzantium* (Yerevan, 1925).

[68] Christopher Korten, "Private Partners," 659.

French ambassador Armand Charles Guilleminot met Pertew Efendi and Husrev Paşa in the Porte to ratify the official recognition of the Catholic Armenian *millet*.[69]

Meanwhile, Austrian representative Internuncio Franz von Ottenfels criticized the Porte for leaving the matter in the hands of the Patriarchate. He pointed out the bribed nature of the institution as well as the fact that Bezdjean bribed Ottoman officials to stand on the side of Apostolic Armenians. Quoting von Ottenfels' report, Šedivy states that the Porte also tried to bribe foreign diplomates by offering them the houses of exiled Catholic Armenian *amiras* which they immediately refused.[70] Of course, one must understand that such international interventions had their personal benefits and were not based purely on the concern for the well-being of Catholic Armenians. Austria, for instance, was trying to weaken the French protectorate over Catholics and stop its advance in the Levant. However, legal limitations did not allow Austria to become the protector of this new Catholic Armenian *millet*. Only France had such a right based on the previously signed treaties with the Ottoman Empire.[71] The Porte saw sectarian persecution of Catholic Armenians as a political measure.[72] Austrian chancellor Clemens Wenzzel Lothar Nepomuk Prince von Metternich-Winneburg called it 'a criminal game of the schismatic patriarch.' Von Metternich also accused Orthodox Greeks and Apostolic Armenians in serving the political interests of Russia.

Failing to secure the protectorate over the *millet*, Austria changed its strategy. During the period of exile, it issued most of the Catholic clergy who wanted to exit the Ottoman Empire Austrian passports, thus turning them into its subjects. Additionally, Ottenfels had a private meeting with Mahmud II's private secretary Mustafa Bey where he explained the need to separate

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[69] Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and the Sultans,* 259; Christopher Korten, "Private Partners," 655; Małakia Ormanean, *National History,* 2434-5.

[70] Šedivy, "Austria's Role," 53-4.

[71] Miroslav Šedivy, "Austria's Role in the Constantinople Armenian Catholics Affair in 1828-31," in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 48, No 1 (January 2012), 56.

[72] Full documentation of Porte's correspondence on the matter of Catholic Armenian *millet* with originals in Ottoman Turkish as well as their transcriptions can be found in Beydilli's research. Kemal Beydilli, *II. Mahmud Dervi'nde Katolik Ermeni Cemaatı ve kilisesi'nin Taninması (1830)* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1995).

two Armenian communities, and the importance of having a loyal leader for this new *millet* who being educated in Mekhitarist congregations of Venice and Vienna would preach loyalty to the Sultan.[73] With this Ottenfels tried to make sure that even if France became the protector of the *millet,* Austria with Vienna's Mekhitarist congregation would still have control over the internal affairs of the *millet*.

As a result of French and Austrian pressure, in 1830, Sublime Porte agreed to recognize the Catholic Armenian *millet,* recall Catholic Armenians from their exile, return their properties, and pay compensation for the exile. Catholic Armenians were allowed freedom of worship in their own churches. The formal civil recognition of the *millet* came the following year, in 1831.[74] With the establishment of this *millet,* Catholic Armenians were no longer dependent on the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate's good will. Istanbul's Catholic Armenian *millet* formed the most prestigious Catholic community of the empire as the richest and most influential *amira* families were its members. The *millet* formed a Catholic lay assembly which was supposed to have a great say in the administration of the church. It was this lay assembly that elected prelates which were then ratified by the Pope. Meanwhile, a question of a civil 'Patrik' who would represent the *millet* to the Sublime Porte remained.

The mere creation of two sources of authority created tensions at times between the two.[75] The tensions intensified when either Sublime Porte or Popes did not agree with the elections. This reached to a point that Pope Pius IX chose bishops for Istanbul without much of a concern for the interests of

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[73] Šedivy, "Austria's Role," 51-4; 57.

[74] Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening,* 58. An Armeno-Turkish copy of the *berat* on the foundation of the Catholic Armenian *millet* as well as its Armenian translation by Hakob Düzoğlu is available in Perperean's account. Avetis Perperean, *Armenian History: from 1772 until 1860, with Important Information and Timeline of the Events* (Istanbul: Bołos Qirishdjean Press, 1871), 217-22.

[75] One of the well-known clashes of the two sources of authority within Catholic Armenian *millet* are the Hassounian events who in 1846 combined the two offices in one person. For more on the Hassounian events see John Whooley, "The Armenian Catholic Church," 419-21.

local laity in the matter. Now the choice of the leaders of this *millet* became a political game between Porte, Pope, Austria, and France.[76]

Other Examples of Nineteenth Century Sectarianism

The Catholic Armenian emancipation was not the only sectarian issue of the century. Almost simultaneously, sectarian conflicts arose in Britain and Mount Lebanon. In the late eighteenth century, the constant threat to Protestants in Ireland developed to the point where working-class Protestants similar to Mekhitarists formed a secret society called the *Orange order,* to protect themselves and their families. Soon after the establishment of this order, the parade that celebrated Protestant victories in Ireland, turned into a place of violence between Protestants and Catholics. Similar to the shoemakers' district events of Istanbul's Armenian communities, this procession was an important event in the process by which the sectarian violence became institutionalized in working-class life of Liverpool. Like the Armenian reality of the early nineteenth century Istanbul, the sectarian conflict in Liverpool gave many people an excuse for violence, providing labels by which the victims or the 'others' can be singled out. The Catholic clergy were accused in sermons, books, pamphlets, and lectures of all kinds of immoral behavior. [77]

The story of the Mount Lebanon events also started decades before the well-known clashes of 1860. Violence existed in pre-1860 Ottoman Lebanese society, but it was mainly an elite violence, aiming to reaffirm a rigid, status-based social order. This social order shaped for centuries the Ottoman Lebanese society and, heuristically speaking, cut Mount Lebanon into two parts: at the top of it, there was the elite community which included local notables, those who chronicled their histories, Ottoman officials, as

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[76] Małakia Ormanean, *National History,* 2435-7; John Whooley, "The Armenian Catholic Church," 419; Šedivy, "Austria's Role," 59.

[77] For more on the topic see: Frank Neal, "Sectarian Violence in Nineteenth Century Liverpool: A Study of the Origins, Nature and Scale of the Catholic-Protestant Conflict in Working Class Liverpool, 1819-1914*,"* PhD Dissertation. Vol. 1, University of Salford, 1987*;* Keith D. Roberts, "The Rise and Fall of Liverpool Sectarianism: An Investigation into the Decline of Sectarian Antagonism on Merseyside," PhD Dissertation, University of Liverpool, 2015.

well as religious leaders. This community exited above the second, *ahali* community which consisted mainly of Druze and Maronite villagers. Like sectarian leaders of the three Armenian communities, the Druze and Maronite elites considered that only they deserve to rule the region could be achieved by representing themselves as the guardians of tradition and social order and by 'othering' rivals as instigators of perennial perfidy. Essentially, both claimed loyalty and deployed a number of languages of legitimacy, mainly those of faith, to strengthen their respective causes. A crisis of communal representation unfolded in Mount Lebanon. At stake was the struggle over the meaning of community and geography in the post-partition world. In 1858, local Maronite villagers of Kisrawan took advantage of an ongoing feud between the Maronite notables to press for a reform of social order. Their grievances were against the unjust and excessive taxes and gifts that they traditionally were compelled to present to Druze Khazin *sheykhs*. In the first half of 1860, seemingly random murders of Maronites and Druzes occurred. This, of course, drew retaliation and soon enough the mobilizations turned into a full-scale hostility between Druze and Maronite communities. In a resulting sectarian conflict, at least two hundred villages were destroyed, and thousands of villagers were killed. Both Maronites and Druzes started a savage campaign against one another to purify the land and militarily resolve their contradictions.[78]

Conclusion

To quote historian Ronald Suny, "much what we take to be nationality today was contained in religious identification in earlier times."[79] Armenians identified themselves primarily as a religious community, but the very concept of Armenians as a religious community was challenged by the Western notion of secular nationality. In the early nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, especially with the establishment of the Catholic Armenian *millet* in 1831, the sectarian identity was institutionalized through the *millet*

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[78] Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism,* 29.
[79] Roland G. Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 9.

system. This meant that religious sect, rather than language or ethnicity, defined Armenian communities.

The process of sectarianizing identity was immensely complex. The construction of political sectarian identity did not come naturally. It entailed petitions, meetings, the immense amount of moral and physical pressure by the leaders of respective communities to overcome family loyalties, regional differences, as well as local rivalries. Istanbul's Armenian sectarian violence similar to those in Mount Lebanon (1860) and Liverpool (1819), was an expression of a new form of local politics that emerged from reforms and/or transitions. Early and mid-nineteenth century sectarian violence laid the foundations for later nationalist secularism discourse. British historians Frank Neal and Keith Roberts wrote extensively on the role that sectarian violence played in the secularization of Liverpool and England. Makdisi and Bishara claim the same for Mount Lebanon and the Middle East in general.[80] In the Armenian case, the post-sectarian nationalist secularism is visible with the drafting of the Ottoman Armenian Constitution (*Nizâmnâme-i Millet-i Ermeniyân*) in 1860, which removed Catholic Armenian notables as major political players, limited the power of the Armenian Patriarch, the *amiras* in general, and formed Armenian National Assembly.[81]

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[80] Neal, "Sectarian Violence," 447-508*;* Roberts, "The Rise and Fall of Liverpool Sectarianism," 217-249; Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism,* 1-15.
[81] Vartan Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1863: A Study of Its Historical Development*, (Istanbul: S. N., 1988), originally presented as PhD Diss., Brandeis University, 1969.

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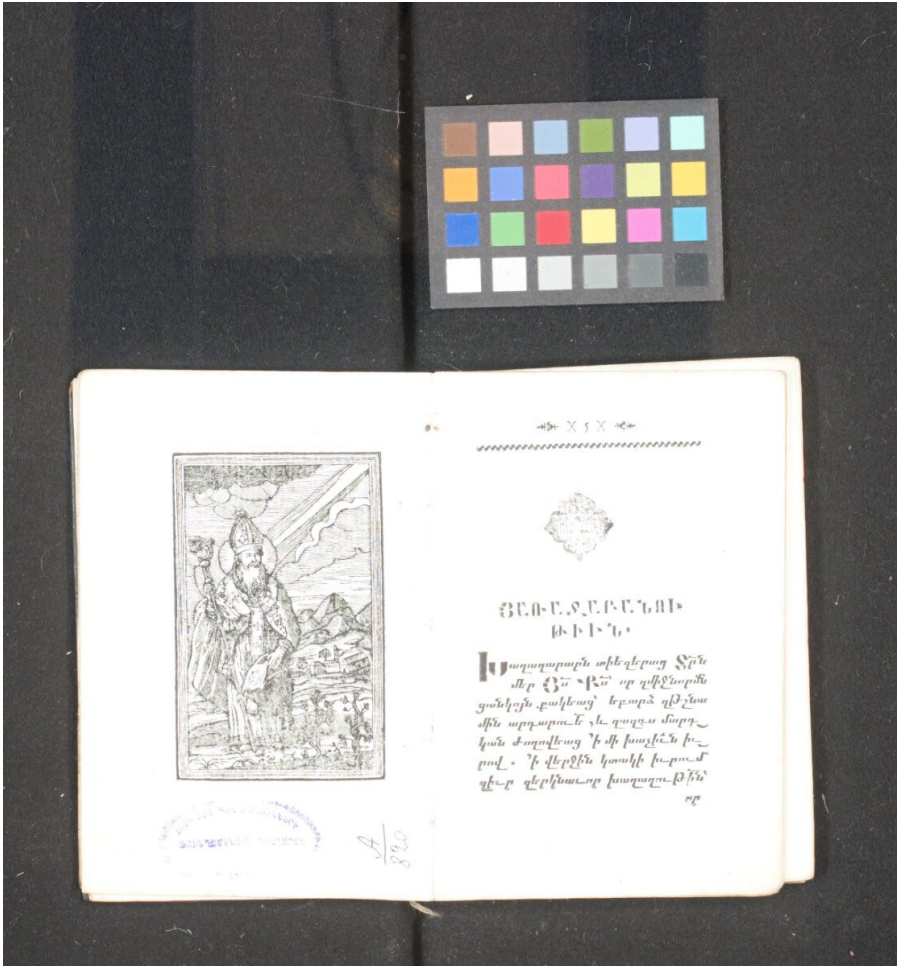
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Appendix
Image 1: *A Word of Love* catechism with the original engraving
of Gregory the Illuminator

Source: British Library, Endangered Archives Program
https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP180-1-2-82#?c=0&m=0&s=0&
cv=2&xywh=305%2C1554%2C1101%2C698 [Last accessed: 21/11/2023].

ԵՐԲ ՀԱՎԱՏՔԸ ԴԱՌՆՈՒՄ Է ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆ ՉԵՆՔ. XIX ԴԱՐԻ ՍԿԶԲԻ ՍՏԱՄԲՈՒԼԻ ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՀԵՐՁՎԱԾԱԿԱՆ ԲՌՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ

Ֆլորա Ղազարյան

Կենտրոնական Եվրոպական Համալսարան, Ավստրիա

Բանալի բառեր՝ *դավանականություն, հերձվածողականություն, Օսմանյան պատմություն, Հայոց պատմություն, սուլթան Սելիմ III, սուլթան Մահմուդ II, օսմանյան բարեփոխումներ, կաթոլիկ հայեր:*

Վաղ ժամանակակից շրջանում Ստամբուլի հայկական համայնքները զբաղված էին դավանականության ձևավորմամբ և վերջինիս շուրջ դավանաբանական բախումներով: XIX դարի սկզբին այս արդեն ձևավորված կրոնական խմբերը անցան իշխանության համար միմյանց դեմ պայքարի՝ Օսմանյան պետության ներսում ավելի հիերարխիկ և ազդեցիկ դիրք գրավելու համար: Դավանաբանական վեճերը շարունակվեցին՝ դառնալով համայնքների միջև հակամարտություն հրահրելու միջոց: Մեծահարուստ պոլսահայերի համար կրոնական պատկանելությունը կամ որոշակի կրոնական համայնքում գրաղեցրած դիրքն ու պաշտոնը դարձել էին քաղաքական իշխանություն ապահովելու կամ այդ իշխանությունը ուրիշից վերցնելու ձենք:

Սույն հոդվածի առաջին մասը վերլուծում է դավանաբանություն և հերձվածություն հարացույցները: Հոդվածի երկրորդ մասում փորձ է արվում ցույց տալ Ստամբուլի հայկական համայնքների ներսում դավանականացումից հերձվածա-կանության անցումը, ինչպես նաև հերձվածական նոր ինքնությունների առաջացումը, որոնք զարգացան ազգային ինքնության կառուցմանը զուգահեռ և մեծապես ազդեցին վերջինիս ձևավորման վրա: