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The Role of Armenians in Eskişehir's Urbanisation in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire

19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Eskişehir'in Kentleşmesinde Ermenilerin Rolü

Abstract: During the 19th century, the Armenian community played a significant role in the urbanization of Eskişehir within the Ottoman Empire. This article aims to explore the cultural, economic, and artistic impact of Armenians residing in Eskişehir on urbanization. This topic is crucial for studying the social and urban history of Ottoman cities, as Armenians have been an integral part of the Ottoman Empire for centuries. The Armenian quarter has made significant contributions to the identity of the city through its centres of education, entertainment, and worship, as well as its involvement in the meerschaum (lületaş) trade. However, in the 21st century, the traces of the Armenian culture of the 19th century have disappeared from sight in the city. We research the concept of the Armenian quarter that existed in the past and use various sources to investigate the history of the city.

Key Words: Ottoman Empire, Armenians, Eskişehir, urbanisation, art, city

Öz: 19. yüzyılda Ermeni cemaati, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu sınırları içerisinde yer alan Eskişehir'in kentleşmesinde önemli rol oynamıştır. Bu makale, Eskişehir'de yaşayan Ermenilerin kentin kültürel, ekonomik, sanatsal yapısına ve kentleşmesine katkılarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Ermenilerin yüzyıllardır Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun ayrılmaz bir parçası olmasından dolayı, bu konu Osmanlı şehirlerinin sosyal ve kentsel tarihini incelemek için çok önemlidir. Eskişehir Ermenileri ticaret ve yaşam alanları, eğitim kurumları ve ibadet merkezlerinin yanı sıra lületaş ticaretiyle de şehrin kimliğine önemli katkılar sağlamıştır. 21. yüzyılda şehirdeki 19. yüzyıl Ermeni kültürünün izleri silinmiştir. Bu makalede, Ermeni mahallesi odağında Eskişehir Ermenilerinin şehir katkısı farklı kaynaklar üzerinden aktarılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Devleti, Ermeniler, Eskişehir, şehirleşme, sanat, şehir

Introduction

Armenians have been reported to have settled in Eskişehir since the early 16th century. Although the exact year of settlement is unknown, travellers who visited Anatolia at that time mentioned an Armenian settlement of 30 households on the banks of the Porsuk River.¹ According to one source, in 1555 the fortress city of Karacaşehir as a place where Turks and Armenians lived² and in 1705 mentioned that Armenians lived at the foot of a hill in a village about 5 kilometers from Eskişehir.³ Armenians established their churches and opened schools

¹ Seyran Aktaş Batar, "XVI. Yüzyılda Orta Anadolu Şehirlerinde Ermeni Varlığı," [Armenians in Central Anatolia in the 16th Century] *Sosyal Bilimler Araştırmaları Dergisi* 10, no.2 (Temmuz 2020): 478-492.

² Suzan Albek, *Dorylaion'dan Eskişehir'e* [Dorylaion to Eskişehir] (Eskişehir: Anadolu Univ. Pres, 1991), 140-143.

³ Raymond H. Kevorkian and Paul B. Paboudjian, *1915 Öncesinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeniler* [Before 1915, Armenians in Ottoman Empire] trans. Mayda Saris, (İstanbul: Aras, 2012), 160.

for education shortly after settling in Eskişehir. They also made significant contributions to the community and actively mingled with the city's residents. The Muslim population carried out the urbanisation, transformation and development of the city together with non-Muslims, who played an important role in the development of urban culture with their lifestyle and presence. A city is defined as a settlement in which its inhabitants produce non-agricultural goods and services subject to the division of labor and market them in their immediate surroundings or in a wider area. According to Weber, the defining characteristic of a city is that its inhabitants have the opportunity to provide security, have developed some institutions based on partial autonomy to govern themselves, and have walls, marketplaces, administrative buildings and general gathering places as their identifying elements in space.⁴ As can be seen, they have made a great participation to the city's becoming a city. This article aims to analyze the Armenian influence on Eskişehir, utilizing Ottoman archival documents, periodicals, annual records (*salnâme*), missionary reports, and Armenian records. The analysis is presented confidently and objectively, while acknowledging the importance of the Armenian community in the region. The introduction provides population data, and the subsequent discussion focuses on the Armenian quarter as an example of the Armenian presence in Eskişehir.

The first census in the Ottoman Empire was conducted in 1831. The purpose of the census is to determine how many soldiers can be recruited for the new army to be established instead of the abolished Janissary Corps. Thus, income sources will be created to meet the needs of the army. According to the census, the total male population in Eskişehir is 24,509. Of this number, 20,546 are Islamic and 3,963 are non-Muslim.⁵ Although this census does not provide any information on Armenians, it does provide a possible indication of the total population of non-Muslims living in the city. When the population of children, the elderly and women are added, it is understood that there were more non-Muslims. In 1861 Eskişehir was a city of about 6000 inhabitants, the majority of whom were Turks, but there were 600 Armenians. It was stated that these were Armenian youth, mostly single, who came from other cities and villages to trade. This information shows that Armenian single men came to Eskişehir and its surroundings, which had become one of the important commercial centres of the country, to engage in trade. Especially the revival of the meerschaum (*lületaşı*) trade from the 18th century onwards should be one of the effective factors in this regard. In these years, the number of villages with an all-male population increased in the regions where meerschaum (*lületaşı*) was mined. In 1861, it was stated that there were about 3000 Armenians living in Sivrihisar, that there were two Christian churches, 6 priests and high clergymen. According to the *salnâme* dated 1900, there are 5549 Muslims and 3821 non-Muslim population.⁶

Several ethnic groups of Abaza, Circassians, Tatars and Balkan Turks who migrated to Anatolia from the 1860s onwards settled in Eskişehir. In the 1870s, it was possible to find many different ethnic and religious groups such as Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Copts, Kurds and Iranians in Eskişehir. However, data on the distribution of the population is quite limited. In the *1870/1871 Hüdâvendigâr Salnâmeleri*, the population of Eskişehir was recorded as 7931 Muslim males. The number of non-Muslims is not specified. In the *1873/1874 Salnâmeleri* the number of non-Muslim males is given as 71. Again, according to the *1875-1876-1877 Salnâmeleri* the population of the centre of Eskişehir -Muslim male- was 11,320. After the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War, the city became more crowded with the immigrants coming

⁴ Özer Ergenç, "Şehir Tarihi Araştırmaları Hakkında Bazı Düşünceler," [Some Thoughts on Urban History Research.] *Belleten* 52, no. 203 (1988): 667-683; Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı'da Kentler ve Kentliler* [Cities and Urbanites in the Ottoman Empire] trans. N. Kalaycıoğlu, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt, 2004).

⁵ Zafer Koşlu ve Erdiñ Utku Can, "1927 Nüfus Sayımına Göre Eskişehir," [According the 1927 Census Eskişehir] *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, no.68 (Spring 2021): 495- 530.

⁶ Ali Ulu, "Eskişehir Kentinin Cumhuriyet Öncesi Mekânsal Gelişimi," [Spatial Development of Eskişehir City Before the Republic] *Kebikeç* 15 (Spring 2003): 147-154; See. The Missionary Herald, Contain In The Proceedings of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions with a view of other Benevolent Operations, Vol. LVII. 1 (Boston: Marvin & Son:1861), 241.

from the Caucasus, Crimea and the Balkans and construction activities gained momentum from these years.⁷

In 1882, sources stated that some of the total population of 10,000 was Armenian. In the encyclopaedias published in Europe between 1885 and 1902, the city population was written as 13,000. In parallel with these data in 1886, there were 15,000 inhabitants in total and that about 4000 of them were Greek and Armenian Christians.⁸ This information indicates that the Greek and Armenian population gradually increased in the 1880s. Another important data confirming this is the fact that a large number of Catholic Armenians were known to live in the newly opened Arifiye Quarter in Eskişehir during these years. It is mentioned that these Armenians, who mostly came from Kütahya and its surroundings, were accompanied by foreign Catholics, thus making it a quarter with a mixed population. The inhabitants of the quarter initially worshipped in a house they rented, and then they made an attempt to build a church. In 1886, as a result of the investigations carried out by the *Mutasarrıf of Kütahya* to decide on the construction of a church, it was determined that there were 173 Catholic Armenians in the quarter, seven of whom were homeowners and the rest were tenants.⁹

After the Anatolian-Baghdad railway line passed through the city and the first train started running in 1892, the population of the city increased further. In the *1893-1894 Hüdâvendigâr Salnâmeleri*, the population of the entire kaza is given as 59,657; 57,420 Muslims, 820 Greeks, 1172 Armenian Gregorians, 53 Jews and 192 Catholics.¹⁰ The population of the town centre is stated to be approximately 15,000. However, it should be taken into account that there may have been an unstable Christian population in the city. In the Catholic Encyclopaedia, the population of Eskişehir at the end of the 19th century is mentioned as 40,000 Muslims, 2,000 Greeks, 2,000 Armenians, 200 Latins, and some Armenian Catholics, Jews and Protestants. In 1894 was 67.074 in total, including 48.200 Muslims, 12.700 Orthodox Greeks, 6.074 Gregorian Armenians and 100 Jews. For the city centre, the total number of 19,023 was given as 17,131 Muslims, 1,147 Orthodox Greeks, 583 Gregorian Armenians, 132 Catholic Armenians and 30 Latins. Therefore, it is understood that about 700 Armenians lived in the centre. The *1898-1899 Salnâme* is also close to this information: 13,639 Muslims; 557 Armenians (282 men and 275 women), 323 Greeks, 15 Catholics, making the total population 14,534. However, in 1898, during the licensing of an Armenian church, the Armenian quarter - which will be discussed in detail below - was reported to have 272 households and 1195 inhabitants.¹¹ In the *1900-1901 Salnâmeleri*, the general population of the kaza was: 68.024 Muslims, 1163 Greek Orthodox, 2022 Armenian Gregorians, 211 Catholics, 3 Bulgarians, 63 Jews, totalling 71.486. Therefore, the number of Armenians increased as the railway line passed through the city. In the *1906-1907 Salnâmeleri*, 3427 Armenians, 407 Catholics and 210 Protestants are mentioned.¹² According to these data, there were approximately 3,500 Armenians in the kaza at the beginning of the 20th century. However, considering that there

⁷ Atila Yazıcı, "19. Yüzyılda Eskişehir'in Ekonomik Durumu," [Economic Situation of Eskişehir in the 19th Century] (MA. diss., University of Eskişehir, 1997), 24; Yurt Ansiklopedisi [Encyclopedia of Yurt] "Eskişehir", (Anadolu Yayıncılık: İstanbul, 1982), 2839.

⁸ Carl Humann and Otto Puchstein, *Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien: ausgeführt im Auftrage der Königlichen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin: 1890), 18; Walther von Diest, *Von Pergamon über den Dindymos zum Pontus mit zwei Karten* (Gotha: Perthes, 1889), 51.

⁹ CBOA, İrade Dahiliye (İ. DH.) File Num: 1003 Case Num: 79210 Date: 21 Zilhicce 1303 (20 September 1886).

¹⁰ Şinasi Acar, "Bir Köprü'nün Yaşam Öyküsü," [The Life Story of a Bridge] Eskişehir Ticaret Odası Dergisi 2, no. 93 (Ağustos 2004):16, 27; Ulu, "Eskişehir," 150.

¹¹ Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie: géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie-Mineure Tome IV* (Paris, 1890-95), 208-209; Mehmed Ziya, *Bursa'dan Konya'ya Seyahat* [Travel from Bursa to Konya] (Bursa: Yeşil Şehir Kitaplığı, 2009); S. Vailhé, "Dorylaeum," The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume V (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1909), 136;195-196; CBOA, İrade. Adliye ve Mezahib. (İ. AZN.) File Num: 32 Case Num: 1316 Date: 2 Şaban 1316 (16 December 1898).

¹² Yazıcı, "19. Yüzyılda," 26; Ulu, "Eskişehir," 150; Acar, "Bir Köprü'nün," 16-27.

were also Armenians among the Catholics and Protestants, it is understood that this number was even higher.

In 1909, the population of the kaza centre was 30.000-35.000. According to 1912 data, the population of the kaza centre was 31,000, of which 25,000 were Muslims. In 1913, there were 36,000 inhabitants in Eskişehir, of which 26,000 were Muslims, 13,000 were Tatars, Circassians, Bosnians and other immigrants, and 9,000-10,000 Christians (Greeks, Armenians, Catholics). All these data do not give the exact Armenian population. However, after it became a *sanjak*, the Armenian population of Eskişehir, including *the kazas*, is stated as 8,276. According to the 1914 census, the Armenian population, including *the kazas*, was 8,602. According to *Karpat's* data, 4185 of them lived in Sivrihisar and 112 in Mihalıççık. In the city centre, there were 4295 Armenians, 316 of whom were Catholic Armenians. Some sources on Ottoman Armenians give a number close to this: "*The total population of the Armenian quarter around 1914 consisted of 1000 people. In the kaza, where two other Armenian villages, Çiftlik and Yayla, were located, there was a total Armenian population of 4510.*"¹³

Armenian presence in Eskişehir: a quarter of Armenians

The flow of the Porsuk River (Thymbrius) through Eskişehir caused the city to be defined as an "upper" and "lower" city. *Odunpazarı*, where Muslims lived, was referred to as the "upper" city, while *Köprübaşı*, where Greeks and Armenians lived and where the bazaar and baths were located, was referred to as the "lower" city.¹⁴ In 1813, the city was divided into two parts: *lower* and *upper*.¹⁵ In 1834, he stated that the city, famous for its hot springs, was divided into two parts: the commercial area with bazaars and baths and the residential area.¹⁶ In 1840 there was a small bazaar and other buildings, while the upper quarter consisted of dwellings at the foot of low hills. About half a mile beyond this were cemeteries, roads and green areas.¹⁷ In order to be classified as a city or town in the Ottoman Empire, a settlement was required to meet specific criteria. These requirements were put in place to ensure that the settlement was able to support a diverse and thriving community. According to Ottoman law, the presence of an inn, bathhouse, bedesten, and caravanserai was necessary for a settlement to be considered a city or town. Additionally, administratively, the settlement had to have a *sanjakkbeyi* or a *kadi*. Market activities had to be proven by the existence of relevant taxes, and a significant portion of the population had to make a living through non-agricultural activities.¹⁸ While the railroad has played a significant role in Eskişehir's transformation, it is the people who have made the greatest contributions to the city. For instance: "...*Eskişehir has changed in a surprising way since the railway opened. The small Tatar houses on the left bank of the Badger have increased rapidly, while many Greek shops have opened around the station. Signs in various languages can be seen everywhere...*"¹⁹

¹³ Ahmet Şerif, *Anadolu'da Tanin* [Tanin in Anatolia] (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1999), 56; Encyclopedia of Yurt, 2839; Christiane Babot, *La Mission des Augustins de l'Assomption a Eski-Chéhir 1891-1924* (İstanbul-Strasbourg: Isis Press, 1996), 63; Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830-1914)* [Ottoman Population] (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2003), 220; Manuel Mirakhorian, *Voyage descriptif dans les provinces arméniennes de la Turquie orientale en 1882* (Paris: Société Bibliophile Ani, 2013), 309.

¹⁴ William Martin Leake, *Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor* (London: John Murray, 1824), 17-18; Nurdan Küçükasköylü, "Eskişehir Ermenileri ve İmar Faaliyetleri" *Anadolu'da Bir Çınar, Prof. Dr. M. Erol Altunsapan 60. Yaş Armağanı*, B. Yelda Olcay Uçkan, Editör, (Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2022), 340.

¹⁵ Mac Donald Kinneir, *Journey Through Asia Minor, Armenia and Koordistan* (London: John Murray, 1818), 38.

¹⁶ Charles Texier, *Asie Mineure, description géographique, historique et archéologique des provinces et des villes de la Chersonnèse d'Asie* (Paris: Didot Frères, 1862), 409.

¹⁷ William Feancis Ainsworth, *Travels And Researches In Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, And Armenia, Vol. II*. (London: John W. Parker, West Strand, 1842).

¹⁸ Özer Ergenç, "Osmanlı Şehirlerindeki Yönetim Kurumlarının Niteliği Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler," VII. Türk Tarihi Kongresine Sunulan Bildiriler II (1981): 1270-1280.

¹⁹ Albek, *Dorylaion'dan Eskişehir'e*, 154.

An ancient historian *Radet* stated that the road starting from the Old Bridge (Roman Bridge) was the bazaar road of Eskişehir after the baths, and that the road widened after passing small shops and turned into a wide street surrounded by willows. Stating that the old quarter of the city was established here, *Radet* stated that a fast-flowing river between the old quarter and the baths turned many water mills and flowed into the Porsuk to the east of the city.²⁰ *Duyûn-u Umûmiye Officer Vital Cuinet* said the following about the city: "The Muslim quarters consisting of wooden houses covered with tiles spread on the slopes of the hill to the south, the Greek quarters on the right and the Armenian quarters on the left began to develop towards the Porsuk stream, the spa and the bazaar also occupied a large area in this part, and new quarters formed by Rumeli immigrants began to develop on the plain."²¹ This information shows that there was an Armenian settlement to the left of Porsuk and a Greek Orthodox quarter to the right. In 1905, in the big fire that broke out in the lower quarter, most of the bazaar consisting of wooden buildings and the houses around it were burnt. Between 1905 and 1922, this area was tried to be rebuilt, but it was destroyed for the second time -during the Greek occupation- by fire in 1922. Afterwards, a new trade centre was established in the same area and partially shifted towards the Odunpazarı region. New houses were built in the lower city, where mostly Christians used to live, and İstiklal, Hoşnudiye and Arifiye quarters were established. Therefore, these quarters were also inhabited by Armenians. Among these, especially the Hoşnudiye quarter on the banks of the Porsuk was known as the "Armenian Quarter".²² (Figure 1-a, 1-b).



Figure 1-a: View of the Armenian Quarter of Hoşnudiye Quarter. Source: Kevorkian, Raymond H. – Paboudjian, Paul B. 1915 *Öncesinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeniler [Before 1915 Armenians in Ottoman Empire]*, (trans. Mayda Saris), (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2012).

Figure 1-b: View of the Armenian Quarter. Source: <https://www.houshamadyan.org/tur/ada/avrupa/celalian-arsivi-gr.html> [Accessed: 21.02.2024].

On the other hand, Abaza, Circassians, Tatars and Balkan Turks who migrated to Anatolia from the 1860s onwards were settled in Eskişehir, and with the passage of the railway and thus easier transport, even more Muslim and non-Muslim immigrants -Rum, Armenian, Jewish, Bulgarian- came to the city. In this process, especially the bazaar area gradually became a region where minorities lived. As a result of these settlements, the city expanded towards the north and different immigrant quarters -such as Macuncu, Hacı Seyit, Hayriye Hacı Ali Bey, İhsaniye and Güllük quarters- began to form. Meanwhile, care was taken to ensure that Muslim

²⁰ Georges Radet, "En Phrygie, rapport sur une mission scientifique en Asie Mineure" *Nouvelles archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires* 6 (1895): 425-594, 431-438; Acar, "Bir Köprü'nün," 55-59,56.

²¹ Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie: géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie-Mineure*, 209.

²² Neslihan Sönmez, "Eskişehir'de Odunpazarı Tarihi Yerleşiminin Fiziksel Gelişimi ve Geleneksel Konut Dokusunda Dizgisel Çözümlenmeler," [Physical Development of Odunpazarı Historical Settlement in Eskişehir and Systematic Analysis in Traditional Housing Texture] (PhD diss. İTÜ, İstanbul, 1984); Perihan Sarıöz, *Bir Zamanlar Eskişehir [Once upon a time in Eskişehir]* (Eskişehir: Esbank Yayınları, 1997), 84; Raymond H. Kevorkian-Paul B. Paboudjian, *1915 Öncesinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeniler*, 160; Hoşnudiye Quarter was also mentioned as Armenian Quarter in some documents in the state archives: see. CBOA, İ.AZN, File Num: 32 Case Num: 1316 Date: 2 Şaban 1316 (16 December 1898).

immigrants were not settled in non-Muslim quarters. For example, in April 1919, when the resettlement to the Armenian quarter began, the Muslim Muhajirs registered in the population registry were ordered to be immediately transferred to the Hacı Ali Bey Quarter.²³

Another aspect of urbanization: construction of religious buildings.

It is understood from their need for a church and their attempts in this regard that there was a dense settlement in the 1850s in the Hoşnudiye Quarter where Armenians lived. For the construction of an Apostolic Armenian Church, Armenian Patriarch Kigork (67th Patriarch Kevork Keresteciyan) of Istanbul wrote to the government at the end of 1859, stating that *Armenians did not have a church in Eskişehir and that they wanted to build a new church on their own land*. The construction of this church was authorised by the will of Sultan Abdülmecid.²⁴ The aforementioned Surp Yerrortutyun (Holy Trinity Armenian Church) Church, which was built in Hoşnudiye Quarter, became dilapidated in the following years and in December 1898 -during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II- permission was requested and was renewed in 1899.²⁵ At the time of obtaining the licence for the church to be rebuilt in 1898, it was stated that the quarter had 272 households and 1195 inhabitants.²⁶ (Figure 2)



Figure 2: 1898 dated project draft of the church to be rebuilt, (Source: CBOA, İ.AZN. 32/1316 02/Ş/1316).

When the Surp Yerrortutyun Church was left without a congregation after the deportation and Greek occupation, it was renovated and converted into a cinema by the Special Provincial Administration of Eskişehir after 1922 and opened on 13 May 1926 under the name *Asrı Sinema*. The first owner of the cinema, where silent films were shown, was Muharrem Rıfki Efendi, and the second owner was Hasan Bey from Tozmanlı in 1930.²⁷ The "Old Church",

²³ Engin Kırılı, "19.-20. yüzyılda Eskişehir'e Yapılan Göçler," [Migrations to Eskişehir in the 19th and 20th centuries] (MA Thesis., University of Osmangazi, 2001); Acar, "Bir Köprü'nün," 16.27; CBOA, Sicill-i Nüfus Tahrirat Kalemi (DH. SN. THR.) File Num: 83 Case Num:56 Date: 12 R 1337 (13 April 1919).

²⁴ For the document about the construction of a church for the Armenian nation in the town of Eskişehir in the Sanjak of Kütahya, see. CBOA, İrade Hariciye (İ.HR.) File Num: 172 Case Num: 9373 Date: 28 R 1276 (20 February 1860).

²⁵ Kemal Yakut, *Modern Eskişehir'in Doğuşu (1923-1938)* [Birth of Modern Eskişehir] (Eskişehir: Kebikeç Yayınları, 2015), 175-176.

²⁶ "Surp Yerrortutyun Kilisesi", Access: 25.03.2024, 57. https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eski%C5%9Fehir_Surp_Yerrortutyun_Kilisesi

²⁷ CBOA, Bab-1 Asaflı Divan-1 Hümayun Kalemi (A.DVN.) File Num: 45 Case Num:38. Date:25 R 1265 (16 June 1849). The patriarch mentioned in the document is the 64th Armenian Patriarch Balatlı III. It should be Hagopos Seropyan.

whose architecture was also modified during its operation as a cinema, was closed and reopened after the fire in 1948. After 1974, it became a cinema. The central dome and the apse on the east side are the elements of the architecture of the old church that have survived to this day. Today, the church, which is located in the city centre of Eskişehir, on the side street of the Officers' Army House (*Cumhuriyet Mah. Dinçer Sok. No:5*), was transformed into Zübeyde Hanım Cultural Centre by Tepebaşı Municipality in 2009 with a restoration project.²⁸

Based on the data provided above, the Armenian Gregorians had a church in 1859. It is not clear whether Eskişehir Armenians had a church before this date. However, a document dated 1849 shows that they used some places as places of worship: This document is the letter of the Armenian Patriarch Agop of Istanbul regarding the permission of *Eskişehir Armenians whose houses are far from the church to attend mass at the priest's house*. Therefore, it is understood that Armenians had a church or used a building/residence as a church before 1849. On the other hand, Armenian Catholics living in Eskişehir Hoşnudiye Quarter had their church built in 1886. As mentioned above, they applied to *Kütahya Mutasarrıflığı* and as a result, the construction of *the church, which also had outbuildings such as priest's rooms*, was authorised by Sultan Abdülhamid's will. In 1889-1891, *Karabet Efendi ibn-i Bagos (Bogos)* served as the Armenian Catholic priest.²⁹

According to the 1892 *Hüdâvendigâr Vilâyeti Salnâmesi*, there were two churches in Eskişehir. These must be the Catholic church run by French priests, which will be mentioned below, and the Armenian Catholic church. It is possible that the Apostolic Armenian Church was not in use at this time due to its dilapidation. In 1894, Vital Cuinet also mentioned the religious institutions in Eskişehir as *1 Greek Church, 1 Armenian Church and a Catholic Church run by French priests*. The Greek Church he mentions must be the newly built (1894-1895) church of the Greek Orthodox community of Eskişehir- at the end of *İki Eylül Street*, where today's *Yurt Passage* is located-. According to the 1898/1899 *Hüdâvendigâr Vilâyeti Salnâmesi*, there are 4 churches in Eskişehir. It is probable that these are the Greek Church, the reconstructed Armenian Apostolic Church, the church of the French Priests and the Armenian Catholic Church. Around 1893/1894, the name of Armenian Hasib Efendi is mentioned as the Reis-i Ruhan-i / Armenian religious leader.³⁰

Education and Schools

Eskişehir Armenians opened schools named Surp Mesrop and Surp Santukht in the mid-19th century in the Hoşnudiye quarter where they lived in dense settlements.³¹ A document in the state archive mentions the *'Armenian School built in 1256/1840'*.³² Although the name of the school is not given here, it is understood that in the 1840s, the Armenians needed a school in the overcrowded quarter and opened one of the aforementioned schools. Although the data on the curriculum, the quality of education and the identity of the teachers of the Armenians (and other non-Muslim Ottomans) in the quarter of Eskişehir is quite limited, some data/names have been found: In another document dated 1902-1903, a teacher named Hırand Sisak Çalıkıyan is

²⁸ CBOA, İ. DH. File Num:1003 Case Num:79210 Date:1303/1886; CBOA, Dahiliye Mektubi Kalemi (DH.MKT.) File Num:1361 Case Num:109 Date :25 Za 1303 (25 August 1886).

²⁹ Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie: géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie-Mineure*, 210; Ulu, "Eskişehir," 151.

³⁰ Zabit Acer, "1311-1320 Hicri Yıllarında Hüdâvendigâr Vilâyetinde Kütahya Sancağı Sâlnamelerinin Transkribesi ve Değerlendirilmesi" [Transcription and Evaluation of the Yearbooks of the Sanjak of Kütahya in the Hüdâvendigâr Province in the Hijri Years 1311-1320] (MS Thesis, University of Dumlupınar, Kütahya, 2000); CBOA, İ.AZN. File Num:16 Case Num:1313 Date:09 Ca 1313 (27 November 1895); CBOA, Maarif Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi (MF.MKT.) File Num:839 Case Num: 3 Date: 09 M 1323 (16 March 1905); CBOA, Dahiliye Muamelat (DH. TMIK.M.) File Num: 133 Case Num:5 Date: 04 R 1320 (7 October 1902).

³¹ Mehmet Konukçu-Hatice Büşra Özkan-Kevser Öztürk, *1910 Yılında Yayınlanan Eskişehir Gazetesinin İçerik Analizi* (Eskişehir: Eti Sosyal Bilimler Lisesi Yayınları, 2013),16.

³² Kevorkian and Paboudjian, *1915 Öncesinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeniler*, 160-61.

mentioned as the principal of the Armenian School, but his resignation is mentioned. Again in a local newspaper dated 1910, it was announced that "Eskişehir Armenian School will hire a teacher of Lisan-ı Osmanî with a salary of 300 kuruş".³³ In terms of numbers, it was reported that 221 students were studying in Armenian schools in 1914 (Figure 3).³⁴



Figure 3: Views of Armenian School near Porsuk River.

Source: <https://team-aow.discuforum.info/t732-Eskisehir-Kazasi.htm> [Accessed: 21.03.2024.]

During his travels in Anatolia between 1909 and 1914, *Tanin Newspaper* writer Ahmet Şerif also mentioned the school opened by Armenian citizens in Eskişehir in 1909. On 4 November 1909, Ahmet Şerif visited the city and found the school and education system opened by Armenians without government assistance successful:

"Firstly, I visited the Armenian school in Eskişehir, which our saintly citizens had managed to open this year by collecting five or six hundred liras. During my visit, the students of the last year were making discussions and debates, imitating the parliamentary assembly, and their teachers were supervising them. I was amazed by the cleanliness and order, the condition of the children, the seriousness and sense of duty of the teachers. The Armenian community's share of the thirteen thousand piastres allocated from the Ministry of Education to the Province of Eskişehir, the expenditure and management of which had been troubling the education commission for many days, was apparently one thousand liras, but in fact our citizens, who did not expect the government's help in this matter, collected five or six hundred liras with a congratulatory unity and initiative among themselves, and today they are educating their children as they wish. What can be given in return for this except appreciation?"³⁵

Barkley, who visited the city in 1878, wrote the following about the Armenian school in Sivrihisar (district of Eskişehir): "...what a noble people! When the city was burnt down a few years ago, Armenians in England collected and sent 300 pounds of money to rebuild the school here..."³⁶

Another important issue for the education of Eskişehir Armenians was missionary activities and schools: The arrival of a large number of non-Muslim immigrants such as Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Bulgarians as well as Muslim immigrants to Eskişehir created a favourable environment for missionary activities. For example, the priests of the Oblates de L'Assomption

³³ Ahmet Şerif, *Anadolu'da Tanin*, 56-57.

³⁴ Raymond H. Kevorkian-Paul B. Paboudjian, *1915 Öncesinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeniler*, 160-161.

³⁵ Şerif, *Anadolu'da Tanin*, 56-57.

³⁶ Henry C. Barkley, *Anadolu ve Ermenistan'a Yolculuk* [Journal to Anatolia and Armenia], trans. Nil Demir, (İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları, 2007), 72.

Society (Saint Augustin de L'Assomption), who came to the city in 1891 to provide education, religion and health services to the French, Italian, Swiss and other European engineers, workers and their families working on the railway, also carried out missionary activities and opened schools, churches and dispensaries.³⁷ According to a letter dated 30 December 1900 from Père Kayser, one of the mission's top officials, Eskişehir had: a residence for eight missionaries, a new religious convent, nine nuns, a girls' school with 90 children, a boys' school with 85 pupils, 28 trainees in two schools, a clinic where more than 4000 patients were treated annually, the church of La Sainte Croix dedicated to the Holy Cross, a chapel dedicated to St. Antoine, the chapel of the Sisters dedicated to the doctrine of the Virgin Mary. 1913 According to the dated list, there were 9 French-owned institutions in the city: 5 schools, 2 monasteries, 1 temple, 1 dispensary.³⁸

One of the most important missions of the Assomptionists was to Catholicise Greeks and Armenians. However, they did not achieve the desired results in the city. For example, the fact that the Catholicised Armenians continued to perform rituals according to the Gregorian Armenian method was a problem for the Assomptionists. They also continued their missionary activities among other foreigners in the city. For example, among the German Protestants who used the Assomptionist church in the city for worship, there were also some who were Catholicised. While the missionaries Catholicised the Armenians and Greeks in the city, they also carried out secret baptisms among Muslims. According to the report of Father Basset of the Assomptionist sect in Eskişehir in 1912, they made friends with the people, visited Muslim homes and baptised sick and dying children. Father Basset stated that 1391 children were secretly baptised in this way in Eskişehir. In particular, the nuns of this mission worked in the dispensary, providing health services as well as education, visiting the sick in their homes and distributing medicines to the people. In 1893, they also helped in the treatment of the cholera epidemic in October and November.³⁹

The mission activities of the Assomptionists were greatly supported by the papacy-for the realisation of the mission of the Eastern Churches designed by Pope Leon XIII -and it was important for the Catholic Assomptionist movement in Eskişehir to take root. In 1896, Monsignor Bonetti, the Papal Vicar in Constantinople, travelled to Eskişehir and held talks, and in accordance with the instructions of the Ottoman state, he was facilitated by the local authorities. In return for this assistance, Pope Leon XIII sent insignia to Eskişehir District Governor Reşid Bey and Ahmet Hamdi Efendi, the former mayor of the municipality.⁴⁰

The school founded by the Assomptionist priests is the French College of Saint Croix (Figure 4). The priests initially settled in an old mansion on Söğütlü Street, which was used as a meerschraum (*lületaşı*) workshop, and provided education there. Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Orthodox, Gregorian Armenians, Jews and Muslims were educated at the school where French, German, Armenian, Turkish, maths and music classes were offered. In 1893, Georges Radet visited the city and reported that there were 80 students in the three-classroom school. Assomptionist Father Kayser, in his report dated 20 July 1898, also mentioned that there were boarders and stated that 8 of the 22 boarders were Catholics, while the others were Greeks and Armenians. On 30 December 1900 it was listed as a girls' school with 90 children and a boys' school with 85 pupils. Father Andeol Basset (1906-1912) also reported in 1908 that there were

³⁷ Adnan Şişman, *20. Yüzyıl Başlarında Osmanlı Devleti'nde Yabancı Devletlerin Kültürel ve Sosyal Müesseseleri* [Cultural and Social Institutions of Foreign States in the Ottoman Empire in the Early 20th Century] (İstanbul: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2000), 158-159.; Mehmet Aydın, "1891-1924 Yıllarında Assomption'un Augustinleri Tarikatının Eskişehir Merkezli Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri," *Türk-İslam Medeniyeti Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi* 7, no.14, (2012): 9-26, 14.

³⁸ Encyclopedia of Yurt, 2839; Christiane Babot, *La Mission des Augustins de l'Assomption a Eski-Chéhir 1891-1924*, 63.

³⁹ Aydın, "1891-1924 Yıllarında," 14, 18, 20-21, 24-25.

⁴⁰ Radet, "En Phrygie," 70.

15 Muslim pupils in the French schools, mostly the children of district governors and officers. It is understood that Muslims, as well as non-Muslims, showed interest in the schools because the education was comprehensive and rigorous, and the graduates could be employed in good jobs. On the other hand, even though the state administrators had their children study in these schools, they tried to act cautiously against their missionary activities and took precautions by closely following the Assomptionist activities by order of the government.⁴¹

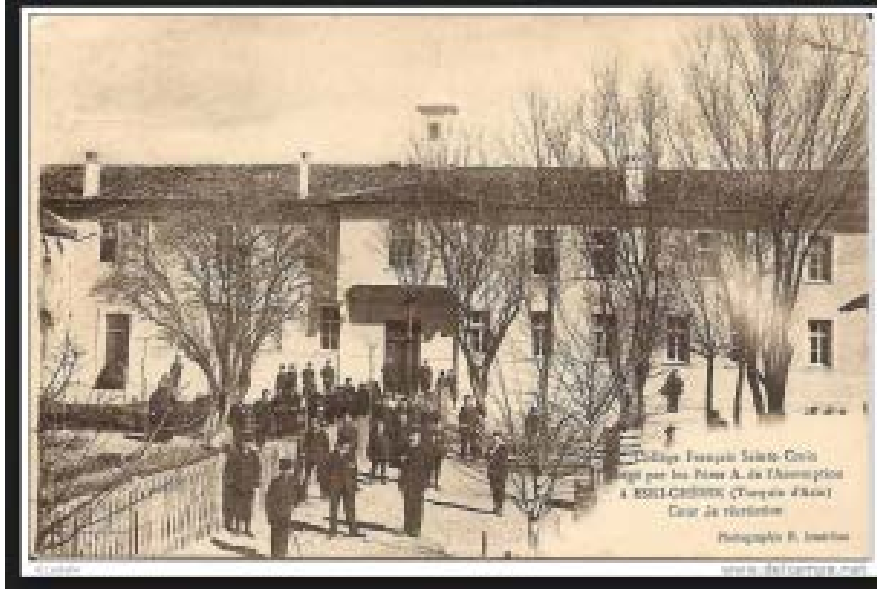


Figure 4 : Eskişehir, French College of the Holy Cross run by Assomptionist priests, Collège Français Sainte Croix, circa 1912

<https://www.houshamadyan.org/arm/mapottomanempire/hudavendigarbursavilayet.html> [Accessed: 03.03.2024].

Another educational institution where Armenians received education was the school opened by the Germans near the railway station. It is known that in 1909-1910, there were 71 students in this school, which served the children of German officers and workers on the railway, and that classes were taught in French, Greek, Turkish, arithmetic, astronomy, history, geography, physics, painting, music, gymnastics, and handicrafts, with German predominating. Around 1912-1913, there were 123 male and 144 female students and 144 Muslim students. In the 1914-1915 academic year, out of 202 male and 69 female students, 24 were German and 231 were Ottoman citizens. Of the 271 students, 24 were Greek Catholic, 18 Protestant, 93 Greek Orthodox, 39 Armenian Gregorian, 36 Jewish and 61 Muslim. When the Ottoman Empire seized the school building for military use in February 1915, education continued in a clubhouse. Another German school was a technical engineering school at the tertiary level opened by the German railway company (Philipp Holzmann Company). In 1904, The Times announced the opening of the school as follows: "*In recent months the company has opened an engineering technical school. It has 24 students. 18 of them are Turkish, 2 Armenian, 2 Greek, 1 Italian, 1 Austrian. The language of instruction is French, the native language of the railway company.*" Therefore, in addition to the schools they founded, Eskişehir Armenians also received education in Turkish, Catholic and German schools, and also served in these institutions.⁴² (Figure 5)

⁴¹ Aydın, "1891-1924 Yıllarında," 14; CBOA, MF.MKT. File Num: 526 Case Num: 36 Date: 20 Ca 1318 (15 October 1900); Şişman, *20. Yüzyıl Başlarında Osmanlı Devleti'nde Yabancı Devletlerin Kültürel ve Sosyal Müesseseleri*, 322,323.

⁴² CBOA, Dahiliye Şifre Kalemî (DH. ŞFR.) File Num:629 Case Num:122 Date: 13 Ce 1335 (7 March 1917); Perihan Sarıöz, *Bir Zamanlar Eskişehir*, 86.



Figure 5: Different views of the building used as Armenian School / Armenian Club and Corps Building. (Sources: Sariöz, 1997, pp.88-89; Atuk, 2002, pp.113, 117, 119, 121, 127; Acar, 2009, pp.13, 32)

Although it is not certain which of the above schools (Surp Mesrop and Surp Santukht) it is known that a school known as *the Armenian School* was in the same building as the Armenian Club, which opened around 1909. Therefore, the upper floor of the building, which is known by names such as Armenian Maarifperver Club / Theatre / Armenian Club / Armenian Club Casino, served as an Armenian primary school. It is understood that the building, located on the banks of the Porsuk Stream, near the Yeni Köprü (New Bridge) and evaluated by Ertuğrul within the I. National Architecture period, has two storeys and a rectangular plan and that its entrance is opposite today's officers' army house. The building, which was used as the corps command building during the War of Independence, was demolished in 1940. Today it is replaced by the Şale Hotel.⁴³

It is understood from the announcements and news of the period that theatre troupes were organised, performances were given, and opera and ballet performances were held in the halls of the club. For example, in the local newspaper of Eskişehir in 1910, there is an advertisement for the theatre titled "Hafıye Darbesi" to be performed in the Armenian club on İstasyon Street. Around 1909, it is known that Nubar Agobyan served as *the head of the Armenian Education Club*. Again in 1912, an advertisement published in the newspaper *Metânet* reads as follows:⁴⁴

"The Theatre Committee of the Eskişehir Armenian Club under the direction of Sâlim Bey": This time, a committee consisting of the most talented actors and actresses of Dersaadet (Istanbul) will join our company under the leadership of Reşad Rıdvan Bey, the famous director of the city. The names of the actors and actresses who will participate: Director Reşad Bey; Actor Niyazi Bey; Actor Hasan Cevad Bey; Actor Adnan Bey; Actor Se'adeddin Bey; Actor Serkisyan Bey, Actor Osman Bey, Actor Nivak Bey, Chantöz-i Şehire Petite Virjin Hanım; Actress Elmasyan Hanım, one of the famous chanteuses in Dersaadet theatres, Chantöz-i şehire Eleni Hanım. The most selected plays written so far by our Ottoman writers will be put on stage and they will try to please the theatre-goers (lovers) in every way. Sâlim"

⁴³ Mehmet Konukçu and H. B. Özkan-Kevser Öztürk, *1910 Yılında Yayımlanan Eskişehir Gazetesinin İçerik Analizi*, 67; CBOA, Bab-1 Ali Evrak Odası (BEO) File Num: 3603 Case Num: 270215 Date: 05 R 1327 (20 September 1909).

⁴⁴ CBOA, DH. ŞFR. File Num: 629 Case Num:122. 13 M 1335 (9 November 1916).

Around 1916, a theatre performance that had been permitted to be performed at the Eskişehir Armenian Club was banned by the district governor, and the fifteen Muslim and Christian members of his entourage became desperate and sent a telegram to the Interior Ministry from Eskişehir (signed by Eşref), whereupon a report was prepared stating that "Eşref was wrong about the theatre being against decency and not being permitted because it was harmful". It is understood from the archive documents that the activities of the club continued in 1917.⁴⁵

Life in the Eskişehir

In the mid-19th century, Eskişehir was mentioned in geography books for the export of meerschaum, grain and wool. Especially after 1892, with the railway line passing through the city, the products produced had the opportunity to reach other markets, economic life gradually revived and the structure of the city began to change. Therefore, the number of non-Muslim merchants and artisans who wanted to trade increased due to the increase in new business areas. Before the railway line, the city was often described as a miserable, neglected place.⁴⁶ Barkley, who arrived in 1878, made the following observations about Christian life in Eskişehir:

"Another reason that drove Christians -with a few exceptions- away from living in Eskişehir was that the local government did not give them permission to buy land and build houses. A small number of wealthy Christians solved the problem by renting houses here and gave up land in favour of trade. In fact, this was the most favourable place in Anatolia for the Turk, if he could cope with his malaria. The land is fertile and cheap, the distance from the nearest harbour is not so great as to prevent the sale of his produce, and there are meerschaum deposits everywhere, and the mines are located on a hill only four hours from the city."⁴⁷

Barkley also drew attention to the congestion in the city:

"The inns were so crowded that they had no room for us, and Ali Agha could not find Joanaki Hardja Efendi, an Armenian merchant to whom we had brought letters of recommendation. So we had to pitch our tent in a stinking wasteland, and then we found ourselves in a clean room in one of the most spacious and comfortable houses in the quarter belonging to Joanaki Hardja Efendi and his brother-in-law, Mr. Kocamanoglu, both of whom gave us a very warm and cordial welcome."⁴⁸

Eskişehir Armenians worked in various fields such as weaving, jewellery making, stonemasonry, meerschaum embroidery, pottery, tile making, and quilting. In the second half of the 19th century, the city became an important centre of commerce, and among the non-Muslims, most of whom were tradesmen and merchants, we can find the *Armenian confectioner Agop, son of Birros*, and the *merchant Krikor son Ataoğlu* (around 1872-1874). The production of alcoholic beverages in Eskişehir was also mostly carried out by Christians. Cuiet stated that there were 5 alcoholic distilleries in Eskişehir in the 1890s. Although the city was economically vibrant in the second half of the 19th century, it is understood that there were periods of labour shortage before the opening of the railway: For example, *after the famine in Eskişehir* in 1888, the government issued an order to *send Armenians who could not find work in Dersaadet, where they had come to find work, to Eskişehir, their hometown*.⁴⁹

With the railway line passing through the city, the population increased, the economy revived and the *Eskişehir Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture* was established in 1894. In the 1895 *Malumat* newspaper, wool, mohair, cereals, cotton, grapes and meerschaum mines

⁴⁵ Josiah Conder, *The Modern Traveller, Volume III* (London: James Duncan, 1830), 327.

⁴⁶ Sato Moughalian, *Feast of Ashes* (Stanford University Press, 2019), 28; Yazıcı, "19. Yüzyılda Eskişehir'in," 102-103.

⁴⁷ Barkley, *Anadolu ve Ermenistan'a Yolculuk*, 56.

⁴⁸ Barkley, 56-57.

⁴⁹ Yazıcı, "19. Yüzyılda," 108; Acar, "Bir Köprü'nün," 16-27.

were again mentioned among Eskişehir's sources of livelihood. In parallel with all these developments, new quarters were formed, restaurants, shops and stores were opened, and export goods increased. In addition, the number of hotels has increased here. These include the *Osmaniye Hotel* opposite the station (circa 1894), "where conductors and other officials who came to Eskişehir usually dined", *Hüsmen Ağa's Hotel* (circa 1891) at the bridgehead in the city, the *Kontinental* run by an Italian, (circa 1900) *Hotel Brikly Kajika*.⁵⁰ (Figure 6)

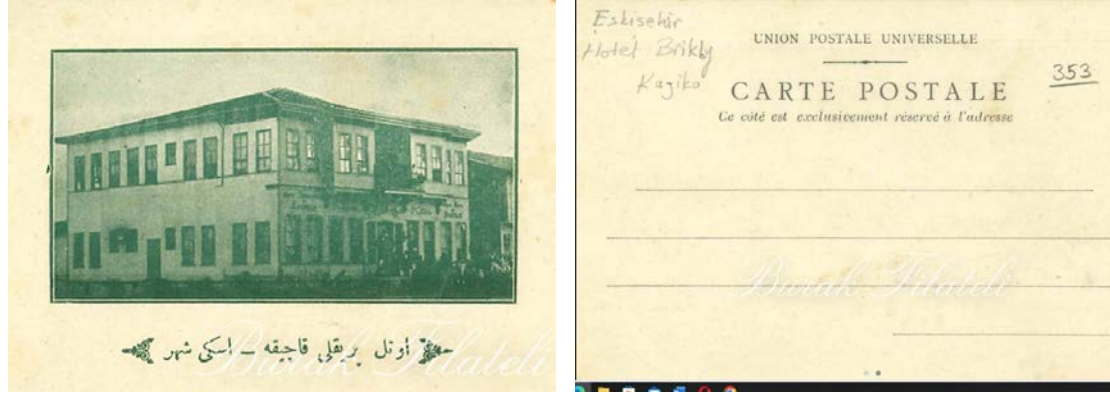


Figure 6: Circa 1900 *Hotel Brikly Kajika*. *Eskişehir, Perikli Kaçika Oteli, Kartpostal-Hotel Brikly Kajika* | Online Müzayede - Burak Filateli & Müzayedecilik (onlineburak.com) Accessed: 04.04.2024.

As mentioned earlier, travellers also spoke of the railway's transformation of the city. *Huart*, who visited the city in 1892, stated that the railway works had revitalised the city and that new constructions had started near Porsuk.⁵¹ *Henri Ouvré*, travelling in 1893, mentioned that there were *open cabarets (taverns) on the left and right, and signs with misspelled French (doubtful French) such as Restaurent, Intemazional Hotel, Café Urope*.⁵² Hungarian traveller/turcologist *Béla Horváth*, describing his trip to Anatolia in 1913, states that *Aunt Tadeus*, who came to Eskişehir from Austria, has been running a hotel since 1891. A significant portion of these new businesses opened in the city were run by Europeans, Ottoman non-Muslims and immigrants. Therefore, Armenians continued to be active in trade and many other institutions in the city: For example, among the Armenians working for the railway, the name *Yazidjian* a doctor residing in Eskişehir, is well known. There were also many station attendants, guards and porters.⁵³

Although it is difficult to know the names and occupations of all of them, there are many people of Armenian origin among the tradesmen. For example, *Papasyan* and *Sertoldegan*, two of the *Armenian wealthy people in Eskişehir* who were engaged in trade around 1913, are mentioned. In the same years (around 1917), *Zara Agopian*, an Armenian shopkeeper in the city, owned a store selling meerschaum, carpets, porcelain, crystal sets, parlour and bedding sets. Another shopkeeper with the same surname in the city was *Karnik Agopian Efendi*, a well-known merchant with a shop on the Roman Bridge, and as mentioned below, he was a member of the Eskişehir Board of Trade. The business of *Karnik Efendi*, who later passed away, must have been carried on by his sons. Indeed, in the Eskişehir newspaper published in 1910, there is an advertisement for a trading house named *Karnik Agopian evlamları* (*Karabet Agopian, Agop Agopian, Artin Agopian*). In 1917, a fire broke out in the city centre and the Agopian shop was also burnt down. Later, when the municipality decided to expropriate the burnt shop plots for the reconstruction/reinforcement of the Roman Bridge and the widening of the road during the

⁵⁰ Béla Horváth, *Anadolu 1913* [Anatolia] (İstanbul: Türk Vakfı Yayınları, 1997), 6; Acar, "Bir Köprü'nün," 22; Henri Ouvré, *Un mois en Phrygie* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit, 1896), 36-37.

⁵¹ <http://www.site-collaboratif.com/Histoire-de-la-famille-Kambourian> [Accessed: 04.02.2024].

⁵² <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/100-yilinda-surgun-yolunda-eskisehirin-soykirimla-imtihan-1338021/> [Accessed: 04.04.2023].

⁵³ Horváth, *Anadolu 1913*, 6-15.

renovation works of the municipality, the heirs/son of Karnik Efendi (together with the other plot owners on 19.02.1919) objected, claiming that the decision was unnecessary and unfair. The municipal authorities partially implemented their decision in the 1920s, perhaps in agreement with the owners, and demolished the old "stone bridge" and replaced it with a two-eyed, flat and wider reinforced concrete bridge. The shallower eye on the Porsuk Coffeehouse side of the bridge was also filled in (Figure 7).⁵⁴



Figure 7: View of the Old Bridge (Roman Bridge / Istanbul Bridge). Photograph taken during the construction of the reinforced concrete bridge. The Büyük Porsuk Hotel can be seen in the right background and Ali Asgar Coffee House, also known as Porsuk Coffee House, can be seen in the foreground on the left. (Source: Acar, s.91.)

Many Armenians also served in local government and state institutions. For example, among the members of the Eskişehir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Armenian non-Muslims were frequently mentioned alongside Greeks: Karnik Efendi and Hampo (Hamparsum) Efendi in 1891-1892; İstevan Agha in 1893-1896; Karnik Agopian Efendi, one of the "well-known merchants of Eskişehir" in 1897-1902 and 1907-1908; Setrak Durmasyan Efendi in 1902-1905; Setrak Matosyan Efendi in 1904-1905; Kevork Efendi in 1904-1906. In addition, many Armenians served in the banks in the city. For example, among those who served at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were Karabedian Efendi, the director of the Ziraat Bank, İstirati Efendi, the clerk, Karnik Efendi, one of the members of, and Pozanit Teonyan Efendi. Again, the fact that many Armenians were among the presidents and members of the Ottoman Bank shows that non-Muslims were active in the banking sector. Among other institutions where Armenians from Eskişehir served as members and officers was the Reji Administration, which was established in 1892. Keyforuk Efendi, clerk of the administration, K m rciyan Efendi, accountant, Kevork Efendi, clerk and litigation attorney, and Monsieur Suibanyan Efendi, accountant, are among the employees mentioned in the salmons. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, among the deputies (Armenian Murahhasa Deputies) representing the Armenians in the Kaza Administrative Council were Hasib Efendi, Hamazavesb Efendi, Cazaseb Efendi, *Catholic Murahhasa Deputy* Agop Efendi and *Law Enforcement Murahhasa Deputy* Agop Efendi.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Acar, *Bir K pr n n Yaşam  yk s *, 38-41.

⁵⁵ Ayfer Aky z, "Saln melerde Eskişehir" [Eskişehir in Saln me] (MS Thesis University of Dumlupınar, 2009), 35-37, 44, 46-47, 64, 102, 145-146.

At the end of the 19th century, Corci Effendi served as the Treasurer in the Divan-ı Umumi, Handukyan Mardirus Agha, the second bailiff, and Artin Effendi, the second clerk, served as the Muhakeme-i Bidayet officer. Kevork Efendi, Timber Forest Officer, worked in the Forestry Administration; Agop Agha, Artin Agha, Clerk Karabet Efendi worked in the Municipality between 1872-1880; Kevork Efendi, architect Ruben Kalfa, member Karnik Efendi, Sandukian Mardirus Agha and architect Otik Kalfa worked between 1887-1905. According to the Hüdâvendigâr Vilâyeti Salnâmesi, Setrak Durmasyan Efendi, a member of the Commercial Court around 1899-1901, and Artin Efendi, the chief clerk of the court around 1904/1905, are among the names known among those who worked in the Commercial Court. It is understood that all of these individuals worked in almost every field of the city administration. They also worked as writers for local newspapers: Ersan Karabetian, who wrote for the local newspaper in Eskişehir around 1910, is one of them.⁵⁶

Armenians in Meerschaum (*lületaşı*) Trade

Another important field in which Armenians were active was the extraction and processing of meerschaum (*lületaşı*). *Meerschaum*, known as *white gold*, *sea foam* (*meerschaum*, *écume de mer*) or *Eskisehir stone*, was mined in the west, northeast and southeast of Eskişehir and gained importance especially since the second half of the 18th century due to its recognition in the European market. For this reason, as mentioned in the introduction, villages of single men increased around Eskişehir and Armenian youth came from the surrounding villages to work in this field. *Charles Texier* mentioned in 1834 that merchants from Germany and Russia came and bought meerschaum in crates. Around 1839-1840, *Ainsworth* stated that this business was in the hands of Christians and that the Turks were content with the tax they received. In the 1850s, another traveller stated that meerschaum was widely used among Germans and sent to Germany via Trieste. Meerschaum, which has a wide range of uses such as pipe, mouthpiece, nozzle, rod material, belt, rosary beads and pearl imitations, goblet, small trinket, filter and insulation material, has become a widely used mineral. As meerschaum attracted great interest in Europe, a merchant class that marketed meerschaum to foreign countries settled in the city. In addition, hundreds of stone cleaning workshops opened to clean meerschaum were also located in the city.⁵⁷

The stones, which were brought from Eskişehir -in their cleaned raw form- to Istanbul via Karamürsel and Izmit on horseback, were shipped to Vienna, Budapest and Belgrade. Since Austria did not charge customs taxes, Vienna became the centre of meerschaum trade and the most beautiful centre where the stone was processed. The products processed here were exported to European and American markets. In the mid-19th century, it is estimated that there were about a thousand meerschaum craftsmen in Vienna, and about 10,000 workers in Eskişehir quarries in the same years. Some of these workers were the labourers who extracted the stone from the wells, while others were the craftsmen who cleaned and crated the stone, and export merchants. At the end of the 19th century, in encyclopaedias published in Europe, it is mentioned that Eskişehir had meerschaum mines with the world's best examples and that these were sent to Vienna and Paris.⁵⁸

It is understood that meerschaum exports were not on a large scale before the railway arrived in the city. For example, *Andreas David Mordtmann*, who visited Eskişehir in 1859, stated that although there were well-processed products, the production in the city did not reach significant quantities. *Mordtmann* also states that the meerschaum quarries were rented by Greek and Armenian merchants, who sold the product to companies in Eskişehir, but most of the extracted product ended up in the hands of German merchants in Istanbul. It is known that

⁵⁶ Yazıcı, "19. Yüzyılda," 98; Texier, *Asie Mineure, description géographique, historique et archéologique des provinces et des villes de la Chersonnèse d'Asie*, 409-410.

⁵⁷ Ainsworth, *Travels And Researches In Asia Minor*, 56-57; Yazıcı, "19. Yüzyılda," 94-99.

⁵⁸ Barkley, *Anadolu ve Ermenistan'a Yolculuk*, 56-57.

many companies were established in these years. For example, a document in the State archive shows that in 1859, the Prussian merchant Makis Sunrag and Arap Hasanzade Hacı Hasan Ağa from Eskişehir established a company for the export of meerschaum. Barkley also noted that around 1878, despite the poor system, the mines were an important area of employment and that the stones were sold to merchants after they were sorted and cleaned. Around 1876-1884, in addition to the Muslim merchants who were engaged in the meerschaum trade in Eskişehir and sent it to Vienna, there were also Greeks and Armenians such as Mihalagi Ohannes Ağa, jeweller Mihalagi, Abaci Yorgi, jeweller Monsieur Herstagi, Monsieur Kariskuvan, Monsieur Hamyo, Monsieur Rakos Nalbandyan, Monsieur Ohannes, Monsieur Tomsonivan and Andonaki Efendi. It is understood that thousands of chests of meerschaum were sent to Vienna during these years and the export continued to grow.⁵⁹ (Figure 8)



Figure 8: Workers and two Viennese merchants in a meerschaum processing workshop in Eskişehir in the late 19th century. (Ma'lûmât magazine dated 19 September 1895)

The arrival of the railway to the city and the use of freight wagons led to important developments for the export of meerschaum. Under the leadership of the export merchants, the relationship established with Vienna developed and this relationship showed its effect on the architecture of the city and led to the construction of "Vienna-type" houses. Armenian merchants are also known among those who transported meerschaum from Eskişehir to Vienna. For example, one of the famous broker merchants who collected meerschaum in Eskişehir and transported it abroad was Karnikoğlu Artin Garabet. Another Armenian merchant of Armenian origin who was engaged in the same business in Vienna at the beginning of the 20th century was Setrak son of Matrosyan. Other famous commission merchants were the Jewish Baymul and the Bulgarian Prençof. The fact that local merchants -due to language problems, high travelling and accommodation costs, shyness, etc.- could not go to Vienna and send their goods to these intermediaries, and even if they did, they could not stay there until the crates were sold, eliminated the possibility of enquiring and learning when and for how much the brokers actually sold the meerschaum. All these unfavourable conditions prompted some families from Eskişehir to investigate the possibilities of exporting meerschaum directly rather than through these brokers, and some of them even sent representatives to Vienna and opened offices there. It is known that a few of these offices remained open until the 1930s.⁶⁰ (Figure 9)

⁵⁹ Kevorkian and Paboudjian, 1915 *Öncesinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeniler*, 160-61.

⁶⁰ Ulu, "Eskişehir," 149; Acar, "Bir Köprü'nün," 16-27, 48.



Figure 9: Photograph published in Ma'lûmât magazine dated 19 September 1895, a meerschaum processing workshop.

Conclusion

The Ottoman Empire is a state that has carried different ethnic groups within its structure. Armenians have lived in Anatolian lands since the pre-Ottoman Seljuk period. It is known that Armenians contributed to the lands where they lived with elements such as art, literature, education, culture, language and left deep traces. In Eskişehir, which is located in a continental geography in Central Anatolia, Armenians made artistic, architectural, cultural and economic contributions to the city and made great contributions to the process of Eskişehir, which was a small town, evolving into a city with trade and railroads.

Eskişehir became a thriving trade centre in the mid-19th century, leading to a significant increase in population and welfare. The incoming of young workers triggered rapid urbanisation, while the Armenians' enrichment through the meerschaum trade played a crucial role in the city's structural, cultural, and artistic development. Armenians were highly skilled in various handicrafts, such as jewellery making, meerschaum processing, stonemasonry, tile making, pottery, weaving, and quilting. Their settlement in the lower part of the Porsuk River was a significant factor in the development of the region. The Armenians residing in the Hoşnudiye and Arifiye quarters played a crucial role in shaping the urban identity of Eskişehir. They constructed school buildings, churches, and residences for educational purposes, contributing to the public works of the city.

The construction of religious buildings in the second half of the 19th century is a clear indication of the growing Armenian population in the city. For the Ottomans, the presence of religious sites was crucial in establishing a city's identity, ensuring its safety, and providing structures for cultural and artistic activities. It is undeniable that the Armenians played a significant role in the city's development through the construction of these buildings. Armenians played a significant role in shaping the urban identity of Eskişehir, which was one of the most important Ottoman cities.

Appendix



The present location of the Armenian Quarter of Hoşnudiye (From Google Earth 18.08.2024).



The present location of the Armenian School / Armenian Club (A); The Surp Yerrortutyun Church (B) (From Google Earth 18.08.2024).

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