

ARMENIAN MUSA DAGH AS A SUMMER RESORT IN THE SANJAK OF ALEXANDRETTA DURING THE 1920s-1930s

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For a number of Armenians in Syria estivation offered a respite from resettlement hardships after the World War I genocide and the scorching summer heat characteristic to cities and other habitations. It also constituted a channel for refugees to reconnect spiritually with their lost village life in the homeland, by sojourning at Armenian-inhabited hamlets nestled on hills in the host country. Other Armenians and ethnically diverse people came from Egypt, France, and elsewhere. This activity took place mainly in the autonomous Sanjak (county) of Alexandretta/Iskenderun (hereafter the Sanjak) in the northwestern corner of Syria, then under French mandate. Against the backdrop of Armenian summer resorts in the Sanjak in general, the following study describes the scene in Musa Dagħ, particularly at the village of Bitias, considered by one newspaper as "the main" vacation spot in the said county.¹

Tourism and estivation in Syria and Lebanon developed with some success under the French mandate. Although political upheavals during 1925-1927, the world economic depression later in the decade and in the 1930s, and an aggressive campaign by other countries in the Eastern Mediterranean such as Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey to attract travelers had had an adverse impact on vacationing in French mandated territories, still several thousand visitors came, particularly from Egypt, Palestine, and Iraq.² The Sanjak benefited from this trend as well.

Four main areas of Armenian concentration existed in the Sanjak. The first encompassed the synonymous coastal town of Alexandretta and several communities perched on the surrounding uplands. The second included the rural towns of Kirik Khan and Rihaniye. The third engulfed Musa Dagħ and Antioch city. The fourth consisted of Kesab (Kasab) on Jabal Aqra/Mount Cassius and its satellite hamlets.³ Whereas the hilly habitations around Alexandretta town as well as Musa Dagħ became centers of estivation during the period under study, Kirik Khan and

Rihaniye did not develop as such. Kesab, on the other hand, emerged as a summer resort after 1939 especially, when France ceded the Sanjak to Turkey, with Kesab, despite sustaining substantial territorial losses in the process, remaining within the redrawn map of Syria.⁴

In the Alexandretta zone, four Armenian communities evolved into vacation destinations: Nargizlik, Atik, Beylan, and Soghukoluk. Nargizlik had a mixed population of 250 Armenians and Turks in the late 1920s-early 1930s. What attracted vacationers to this place were its water sources, greenery, and houses somewhat reminiscent of chalets in the mountains of Europe, especially those in Switzerland and the Tyrol.⁵ Home to 350 Armenians, Atik had a small hotel consisting of tiny chambers and a pension. Visitors could also rent any one of the thirty available houses for 6-7 gold liras per lodging per season. The construction of additional three-unit buildings aimed at attracting and accommodating more people.⁶ Similarly, the French missionary *Action Chrétienne en Orient* possessed a "vacation colony" near Atik, where Hedwig Büll, an Estonian associate, each year took undernourished Armenian children to improve their health.⁷ Divided by a ravine into two sectors, one inhabited circa 1930 by about 1,000 Armenians and another by about 2,000 Turks, Beylan hosted "the majority of well-to-do families" from Alexandretta. While they generally owned properties to spend their summers on, other vacationers could stay at the Canal Hotel or rent residences.⁸

But the most attractive summer resort within the Alexandretta zone was Soghukoluk, which in 1927 consisted of forty Armenian families. Situated at an elevation of 650 meters on one of the thickly wooded hills of Jabal (Mount) Nama, Soghukoluk abounded with springs, breathtaking vistas, and nearby leisure spots such as Knali Tepe, Tesbihli, Arnavutluk, Dasholuk, Chatal Arik, and Zevdalioluk. One could also visit the hamlets of Geozelli and Jizmejiler within some 10-12 minutes walking distance. While not sophisticated in terms of comfortable dwellings and lifestyle, Soghukoluk's pristine setting and cool, healthy air worked to its advantage.⁹ It thus gradually acquired fame among Armenians not only in Alexandretta but also in Aleppo. Families, groups, and individuals began to arrive in larger numbers after the mid-1920s, renting cottages or reserving rooms at Hotel Ayvazian and Hotel Belleview/Manzar el-Jamil.¹⁰ A segment of the Aleppo Armenian elite and foreigners spent time at Soghukoluk each summer, among them Dr. Asadur Altunian, owner of the synonymous hospital; the Mazlumians of the famed Hotel Baron;¹¹ Karen

Jeppé, the Danish humanitarian and her Armenian protégés rescued from captivity in the Syrian deserts;¹² Dr. Samuel Kennedy, a British Presbyterian Church missionary stationed at Alexandretta;¹³ and others. The vacationers spent their time in hiking, picnicking, hunting, attending cultural events, playing games, and gambling.¹⁴ Musa Dagħ, however, had the best name recognition among all Armenian summer resorts in the Sanjak not only regionally but also internationally.

TRANSPORTATION

Estivation in Musa Dagħ, as elsewhere in the Sanjak, started slowly, because until the mid-1920s transportation to and from the Armenian villages was conducted via donkeys, horses, and mules.¹⁵ One of the very first journeys to Bitias, undertaken in the summer of 1924 by the families of Dr. Avedis Jebejian and Dr. Philip Hovnanian of Aleppo, is described by Jebejian's son, Robert, as follows:

[After traveling from Aleppo to Kirik Khan by car and] making a detour at Kirik Khan, we arrived in Antioch past noon (the Aleppo-Antioch road had not yet been completed). Here we stayed overnight. On the following day, pack-horses were rented to ascend to Bitias; there was no auto route. The re-bundled packs were mounted on the sides of the beasts. [The] adults settled between them [the sides], one person on each transport. We, the children, had to travel stuffed in [empty] petroleum containers fastened on the sides of the pack-horses: the little ones, Vahe and Anahit, together on one side, whereas I alone, squeezed cross-legged in the other container.

Thus we traveled four hours by caravan along circuitous paths passing through graduated dense vegetation.... After crossing the ancient tall bridge, we climbed yet another hour along the slopes of the wooded mountain, arriving in the village of Bitias.¹⁶

In order to modernize communications, the French authorities attached great importance to the construction of roads across Syria and Lebanon. Accordingly,

The road system was...brought to a level of excellence entirely new to the territory, and well in advance of any of its neighbours. The phenomenal increase in wheeled traffic was met by hundreds of miles of newly-constructed and usually asphalted roads of high

standard, scores of passable tracks, and many greater or smaller bridges. Many areas were given road access for the first time, and the importance of omnibuses and lorry traffic was recognized. Reliable highways joined all the main centers, and local and village authorities were helped in their parochial plans by grants, and the permitted use of volunteer labour.¹⁷

Northwestern Syria, too, thus witnessed a rapid expansion of the road network, the linking of Antioch to Svedia/al-Swaidiyya constituting an important initial phase. In the spring of 1925, a commission representing the various ethnic groups in the region studied this project but failed to reach a consensus. On the one hand, the Turkish notables of Antioch, holders of substantial real estate in the district, insisted that the road pass along the left bank of the Orontes River and then cross it to the right over a bridge at the St. Simeon the Stylite junction. Their argument rested on two premises: First, that there already existed the half-constructed Antioch-Daphne/Harbiye road which simply needed completion, and second, that their proposal would be less costly given the fewer bridges to build over valleys. The Armenians and the Arabic-speaking Alawis (also referred to as Fellahs/Nusayris/Tats), on the other hand, preferred the road to pass along the north bank encompassing the three sub-districts (*nahiyes*) of Svedia, Kara Murt, and Musa Dagh, thereby benefiting 75 percent of the population in the Antioch-Svedia district. The latter position ultimately prevailed despite reservations by the administrative council of Antioch.¹⁸ But the Armenians of Musa Dagh paid a heavy price for their success, as each of the six main villages was required to pay an annual tax of 800-900 Syrian liras for three years and to provide 120-150 workers for free labor. In addition, the Armenian workers had to supply their own provisions while staying away from home with Alawi families in the plain of Antioch for a number of days at a time. Similarly, it is true that houses and other buildings were circumvented and thus spared when the work reached Musa Dagh; nevertheless, fruit trees were felled without any compensation to the owners.¹⁹ Written complaints lodged from the outset proved futile. When the senior French officer (*musteshar*) at Antioch visited Musa Dagh in late June 1925, he met with Musa Dagh sub-district governor (*mudir*) Movses Der Kalusdian, Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian of Yoghunoluk, and all the village headmen (*mukhtars*), and urged them not to accept the imposed levies and to continue sending written entreaties. But when implored to

mediate, the Frenchman deflected responsibility by claiming that they, the French, were there as guests and observers subject to League of Nations directives.²⁰ Despite the temporary and partial stoppage of the construction work thanks to a strike organized by the underground local communist cell,²¹ the project proceeded as planned. As a result, by the summer of 1926 automobiles could access Kheder Beg by following the Antioch-Svedia route.²²

The Antioch-Svedia road was also important because it covered two-thirds of the distance between Antioch and Bitias; the remaining segment of about 8 kilometers was completed in 1927. Its inauguration took place on Sunday, December 4, with great fanfare. A delegation of high-ranking French officials, Arab and Turkish governmental figures, Armenian dignitaries, and reporters arrived at the juncture where the Bitias road diverged from that of Svedia and was greeted by Movses Der Kalusdian. The High Commissioner's Delegate to the Sanjak, Pierre Durieux, and the governor of the Sanjak, Ibrahim Adham Bey, cut the ribbon of the "Route Capitaine Renucci" (thus named after its chief supervisor from the Antioch Information Service), declaring it officially open for traffic. The procession of vehicles then rolled up the hills to Bitias through a corridor of cheering peasants. From the village entrance the new *mudir* of the Musa Dagħ sub-district, Serop Sherbetjian, escorted the guests to Hetum Filian's āafé. Following musical renditions by an Armenian band from Antioch, Der Kalusdian exalted the French for their efforts at expanding the roads, George Madani delivered a speech in Arabic on behalf of the press, and Durieux underscored the importance of the Bitias access road. Armenian, Arabic, and French newspapers in Antioch, Alexandretta, and Beirut covered the event.²³

The construction of roads in the region continued for several more years, connecting Beirut-Latakia-Kesab-Antioch, Bitias-Kheder Beg, and Aleppo-Antioch.²⁴ Only Kabusiye remained inaccessible by car.²⁵ Armenian chauffeurs from Musa Dagħ serviced some of the vehicles. Yeprem Balabanian, for example, ran a Chevrolet between his native Bitias and Antioch, as did partners Arakel Kendirjian (nicknamed "Shashgahints") and Ohannes Keosheian, operating a Ford until it was wrecked in an accident.²⁶ The brothers Vanes and Hagop Hagopian drove a Chevrolet between Antioch and Svedia until 1932, when Hagop died and the car was sold. Misak Yarialian ("Vatani") of Vire Izzir, an extension of Kheder Beg, carried passengers in his Chevrolet along the Antioch-Bitias-

Kheder Beg-Svedia line, and Apraham Abajian (“Batakjen”) of Yoghunoluk drove a Ford between Antioch and Bitias.²⁷ In the early 1930s, Tateos Bakkalian and an Alawi friend named Saleh Hashemi managed a Chevrolet truck carrying people and other loads between Antioch and Svedia, but the business failed because of the lack of sufficient income.²⁸ Antioch taxis destined for Bitias charged 35 French francs per passenger or 120 francs per car round trip²⁹ and parked at the open garage “with a thatched roof for shading” near Hetum’s Café and Taniel Chaparian’s hotel.³⁰ To be sure, neither the roads nor vehicles in those decades provided smooth, comfortable travel. But the visitors seemed undeterred by such inconveniences because of the “hundred-fold” gratification they sensed after staying at Bitias. As an Egyptian Armenian man vacationing in that village for three seasons during the first half of the 1930s testified, the exhausting twelve-hour Beirut-Tripoli-Latakia-Antioch-Bitias overland trip was worth taking given the beautiful scenery enjoyed en route and especially the delightful and unforgettable days and nights spent in exploring Musa Dagħ and its folklore.³¹

SOURCES OF ATTRACTION

Several factors propelled Musa Dagħ in general and Bitias in particular into prominence as a summer resort. First and foremost, the name Musa Dagħ evoked romanticism, pride, admiration, and a sense of indebtedness, all inextricably associated with the heroic exploit of its people against the Ottoman Turkish genocidal campaign in 1915. Indeed, the publication of Franz Werfel’s *The Forty Days of Musa Dagħ* in 1933 and its subsequent rendition from the original German into numerous languages captured the imagination of the international readership, making Musa Dagħ a household name in various parts of the world.³² Second, for Armenian estivators especially, this “little Armenia,” i.e. Bitias, with its dialect, customs, folklore, and hospitality, epitomized the traditional village in the Armenian homeland now vanished as a result of the genocide.³³ Within this context, a newspaper editorial exhorted Armenian intellectuals, teachers, and students alike to spend their summer break in Musa Dagħ, as well as in Kesab, so that they, as prospective community leaders, could interact with “our toiling masses” to gain invaluable experience.³⁴ Third, Musa Dagħ’s beautiful landscape, springs and streams, and salubrious climate offered urbanites a much needed respite from the relatively hectic and stressful life and excessive summer heat in the cities. Wrote Dr. Hagop Yacoubian, then

(in 1933) a young boy: "What I remember about nature in the area is that everything seemed so pristine and unspoiled.... Wherever you walked past a bush, dozens of quails would fly away. We never hunted them. Hawks and eagles flew overhead. Jackals could be heard at night."³⁵ Indeed, Bitias was dubbed "The Armenian Lebanon" and "The Lebanon of Syria."³⁶ Fourth, the proximity of the larger towns, especially Aleppo, made it possible for working fathers to visit their families over weekends.³⁷ Fifth, life was inexpensive; locally produced vegetables, fruits, dairy products, and other foodstuffs were cheaper than those sold in the cities.³⁸

In addition, certain individuals and groups visited Musa Dagħ as part of archeological expeditions to the historical sites abounding in the general vicinity, from Antioch to the Seleucid ruins scattered along the Mediterranean coast.³⁹ In September-October 1924, for example, Professor Paul Perdrizet of Strasbourg University in France and Henri Seyrig of the Antiquities Service in Syria and Lebanon and a member of the School of Athens, armed with special recommendations from High Commissioner General Maxime Weygand and the President of the Federal Council of Syria, Subhi Bey Barakat, spent seventeen days in the Seleucid ruins and took pictures of the Surutme/Sultumu (Surp Tovmas/St. Thomas) ruins situated between Yoghunoluk and Haji Habibli for further studies.⁴⁰ Seyrig returned to the Seleucid site in the spring of 1928.⁴¹ Similarly, Jean Mécérián, an Armenian Jesuit priest teaching at St. Joseph University in Beirut, endeavored in 1929 and 1932 to uncover the origins of the ancient monasteries and edifices dotting Musa Dagħ, publishing his findings in a monograph.⁴² Furthermore, on 19 July 1937 an agreement was signed between William Alexander Campbell, the representative of the Committee for the Excavation of Antioch and its Vicinity, and the brothers Mateos (priest) and Serop Guzelyan of Kabusiye, whereby the latter leased their orchards encompassing the Seleucid ruins at Magharajik near the sea for digs through 31 December 1938.⁴³ Although no agencies or tour guides existed to organize excursions for the general public, Movses Der Kalusdian, Serop Sherbetjian, and Fr. Benoit, the resident Capuchin missionary at Kheder Beg, furnished useful information for curious tourists.⁴⁴

VACATIONERS

The improvements effected in transportation and the heightened public awareness about Musa Dagħ as a viable resort spurred a surge in the

number of visitors after the mid-1920s. Not only did this “growing development”⁴⁵ lure Armenians from Alexandretta, Aleppo, Beirut, Egypt, Iraq, and the Sudan, but also Arabs, Turks, Jews, and Frenchmen.⁴⁶ Some members of the Aleppo Armenian elite, particularly from the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-*Tashnagtsutium* (ARF) circle, often visited or summered at Bitias, among them Haygazian School teachers Yetvart Dasnabedian and Krikor Ulubeyian, writer Antranig Dzarugian, teacher-author Yetvart Daronian, Dr. Adur Kabakian, Fr. Mgrdich Muradian, entrepreneur Kasbar Ipekian, and Dr. Hamzasb (Hamo) Ohanchanian, one of the prime ministers of the erstwhile Republic of Armenia (1918-1920). Their ranks were swelled by Hrach Papazian, the director of the *Vosdayn* textile factory in Bitias and an ARF leader; Suren Papakhian, a teacher at the local parochial school; and Hagop Simoni (Dasnabedian), likewise a teacher and an eloquent public speaker. Other sojourning notable families and individuals from Aleppo included the Abajians, Azirians, Fattals, Hreshdagians, Tuysuzians, Babigians of the Musica Leon establishment, Sarkis Laleian of the Aleppo College Press, and Evangelical pastors Rev. Hagop Chakmakjian and Rev. Hagop Kumruian.⁴⁷ Even Armenian American author Hamasdegh (Hampartsum Gelenian) included Musa Dagħ in his 1929 “pilgrimage” to Armenian communities in Syria and Lebanon.⁴⁸ Besides, two ARF general congresses of Syria and Lebanon convened at Bitias.⁴⁹ Here, too, camped boy scouts from the Aleppo and Kirik Khan branches of the Armenian General Athletic Association (*Hay Marmnamarzagān Enthanur Miutium*), often parading in the village streets with torches and thus electrifying the atmosphere.⁵⁰ Last but not least, guest physicians such as Dr. Toros Basmajian and Dr. Rupina Ohanchanian, often acting on behalf of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross (*Suriahay Oknutian Khach*), rendered free health services to estivators and natives alike.⁵¹ Among the non-Armenian vacationers mention is made of the governor of Aleppo, Nabih Mardini, the mayors of Antioch and Alexandretta, the commander-in-chief of French troops in north Syria and other French military officers, and several prominent Antioch families which, despite possessing villas on their farms at nearby Harbiye, chose Bitias as their summer resort.⁵²

While certain individuals and groups spent limited time at Bitias, families staying the entire summer season constituted the bulk of vacationers, their number growing from eighty households in the late

1920s to 400 households by 1937.⁵³ Speaking of her experience at Bitias as a little girl, Alice Araradian writes:

In our childhood, during summer each year, we would go there from Aleppo for a change of air, as did many other friendly families. We were not rich, but my father would somehow manage the extra expense incurred by our large family. It was a great joy for us to be free from school, from the desert heat of the city, and to go to that wonderful village.

...

During the week the mothers and the children would stay in the village, [and] at the end of the week, on Friday evening, we would line up along the sides of the only [main] street, awaiting the arrival of our fathers. What a joy...! We would jump on the auto busses, attempting to welcome father before anyone else.

My father, [carrying] a basket filled with food in one hand, [holding] the *saz* [a string musical instrument] in the other, and lifting one of us, we would go home, and that Saturday and Sunday would become holidays.⁵⁴

For political reasons, not everyone was reportedly welcomed to Bitias. According to *Yeprad* (Euphrates) of Aleppo, the mouthpiece of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (*Ramgavar Azadagan Gusagtsutium*), it often received verbal and written complaints from vacationers for being harassed by Bitias ARF affiliates. Furthermore, those without special permits from the Aleppo ARF committee to enter Musa Dagħ would be questioned by “irresponsible youths” and, if deemed undesirable, expelled. Therefore, “who dares to go to Musa Dagħ under these circumstances?” unless the Catholicos, other leaders, and, if need be, the French authorities found a remedy.⁵⁵ Affiliates from the Musa Dagħ chapters of another rival organization, the Social Democrat Hnchakian Party (*Sotsial Temograd Hnchagian Gusagtsutium*), likewise refrained from visiting Bitias. But this self-imposed ban based on fear was lifted beginning with summer 1930, when some Hnchakian youths went there to test the waters and returned without being bothered.⁵⁶ Another incident of political nature involved a Turkish consul who wished to summer at Bitias in 1937. Reacting to the news, a deputation of Armenian notables met with the High Commissioner’s Delegate to the Sanjak to express their resentment and concern, warning that they could not be responsible for any demonstrations

or mishaps that might occur should the consul come. The crisis ended when about fifty armed youths, also carrying French and Syrian flags, blocked the village entrance, forcing the consul to cancel his plan and leaving a good impression in Arab circles.⁵⁷

LODGING AND OTHER SERVICES

The demand for accommodation was commensurate with the increase in the number of vacationers each summer. Three hotels in Bitias partially satisfied this need. Taniel Chaparian's inn, originally a two-story silk house, consisted of several renovated rooms with comfortable European-style beds, a restaurant, a bath, and a covered dance floor in the backyard, where many soirees took place.⁵⁸ In the impressionable mind of the young Dr. Yacoubian, Chaparian's inn "was the only presentable building in the village, at least outwardly, with hewed stone walls, red tiled roof, and painted shutters on the windows. It was...elevated from the main road by a stone wall and had a flower garden in the front."⁵⁹ The second inn emerged as follows. The local Church Lovers' Association (*Yegeghetsasirats Miutian*), in search of a suitable parochial school facility, leased a religious endowment to Aharon Izmirlian, a restaurateur from Antioch, with the understanding that he would build a hotel on the land, operate it for ten years without rent, and turn it over to the parish council during off season to be used as a school.⁶⁰ According to a newspaper advertisement, Hotel Aharon, as the emergent inn became known, compared to the best hotels in Syria and Lebanon, boasting beautifully furnished modern rooms, a spacious hall (where concerts, dramas, lectures, and gambling took place), a bath, and European and Middle Eastern cuisine.⁶¹ Margos Iprajian served as *maitre d'hotel* and accountant for five seasons during the 1930s, and the remaining staff consisted of a chef named Iskandar, two waiters, an aide, and a few women responsible for laundry, cleaning, and washing dishes. French military families and Aleppo Armenians constituted the bulk of customers.⁶²

Around 1930, Nasib Khuri, the owner of Hotel Silpius in Antioch, forged a partnership with the brothers Garabed and Serop Keoseian of Bitias, whereby they gave their two-story, ten-room house to Khuri, who, in turn, furnished it (moderately) as a hotel. After a year the Keoseians paid their partner off and became the sole owners of Hotel Khuri, renaming it Hotel Jabal Musa. With the partition of some of the larger chambers and the addition of a new wing, the hotel now consisted of a regular bathroom

with a tub (a novelty at that time) and twenty rooms with fifty beds and many more mattresses that were spread on the spacious veranda and even on tables in the courtyard to accommodate the numerous visitors converging on Musa Dagħ on special occasions. When the hotel was full, new arrivals were placed in ordinary homes according to a prearranged deal with the owners. Similarly, a part of the adjacent garden was converted into a restaurant with space for fifty tables. The hotel fee of 6 Syrian pounds per customer per day covered three meals as well, served *table d'hôte*, that is, with a fixed menu and at scheduled times. Breakfast included milk, eggs, jam, butter, olives, and five kinds of cheese to choose from; lunch consisted of five entrees, fruit, and coffee; and dinner comprised four entrees, soup, fruit, and coffee. Drinks cost extra. Since on any given day most customers were the families of French military and civilian officials, chefs Iskender Khamisian and Setrag Libaridian prepared mainly European dishes. In the absence of electricity and refrigerators, ice in the form of frozen snow, gathered during winter and preserved by a company in Antioch, was utilized to keep perishable edibles fresh.⁶³

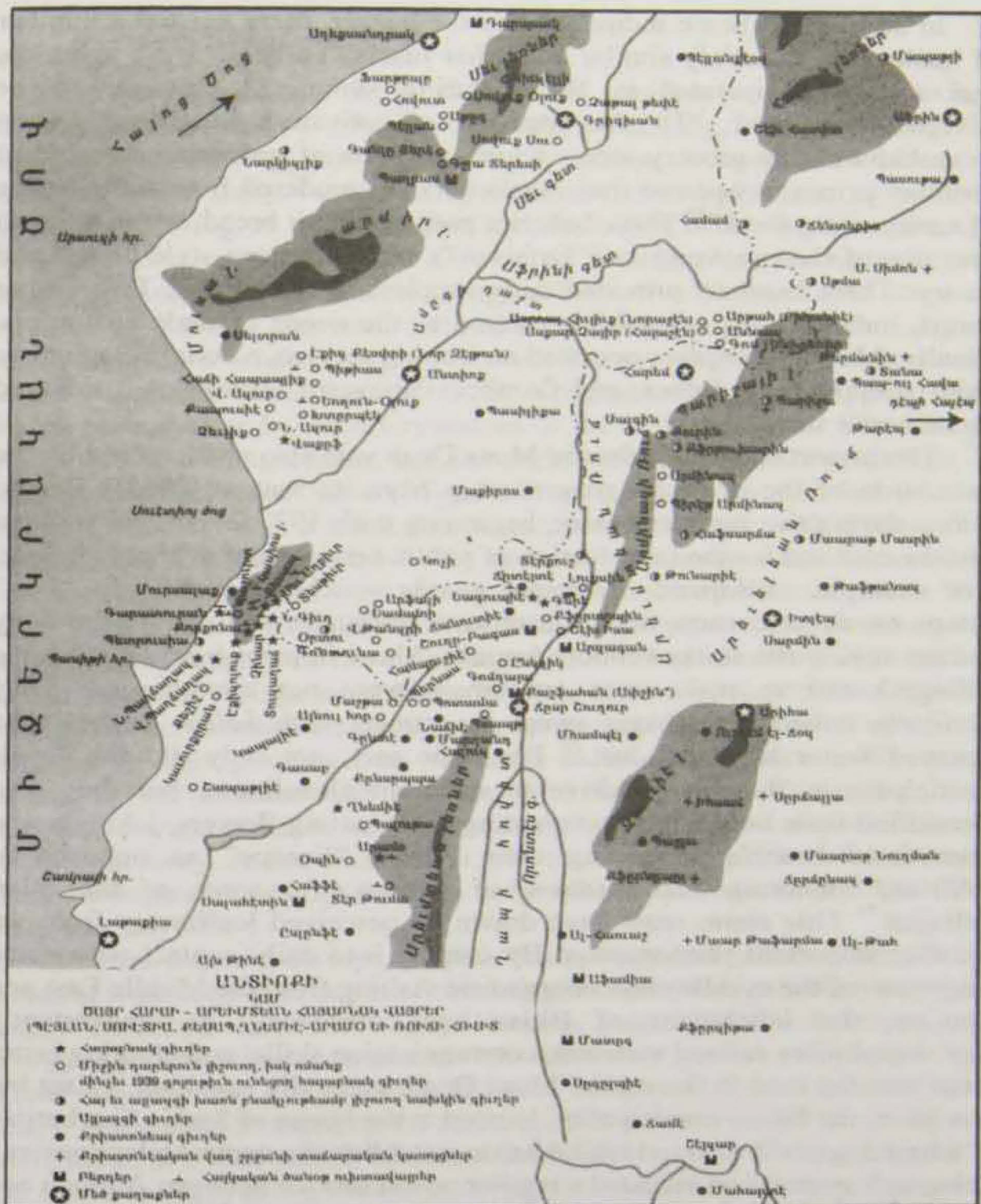
Unlike the two other hotels, which operated only during the summer season, Hotel Jabal Musa was open year-round to accommodate, often free of charge, the proprietors' personal guests including ARF leaders, the governor of Aleppo, the French High Commissioner's Delegate to the Sanjak, and their retinues and families, in addition to occasional sojourners. The hotel likewise became a preferred spot for official functions, parties, and wedding celebrations (including that of Movses Der Kalusdian) that sometimes lasted well into the night under the glimmer of "Lux" kerosene lamps. Despite free spending and the considerable expenses including also the payroll of the cooks, the accountant, and some fifteen waiters and helpers, accurate books kept for 1934-1936 showed a net profit of 1,800 ottoman gold liras for the owners from their orchards, other business dealings, and tourism combined. After 1936, however, the fortunes of Hotel Jabal Musa declined as Serop Keoseian departed Musa Dagħ for political reasons and brother Garabed, like the rest of his compatriots, was left helpless in the face of the escalating Sanjak crisis.⁶⁴

Indeed, the three hotels alone could not accommodate the numerous visitors seeking lodging. The solution rested in the unfurnished and furnished housing provided by the villagers. About 1930 unfurnished housing in Bitias consisted of two categories—those on the second floor and those on the ground level. The first category included seven lodgings

with three units each; thirteen lodgings with two units each; and nine lodgings with one unit each, for a total of twenty-nine lodgings with fifty-six units. The second category included three lodgings with three units each; fifteen lodgings with two units each; and ten lodgings with one unit each, for a total of twenty-eight lodgings with forty-nine units. In sum, the grand total of unfurnished housing amounted to fifty-seven lodgings with 105 units. A second-floor unit rented for 4-5 Turkish liras per season, generating a gross income of 224-280 liras. A ground-level unit rented for 3-4 liras, for a total of 147-196 liras. Thus, the overall income from unfurnished accommodation varied from 371-476 liras.⁶⁵

The growing influx of vacationers caused a parallel increase in the number of furnished lodgings. In fact, virtually every household in Bitias was converted into some kind of a pension, compelling many a family member to sleep outdoors on his verandah (if not already rented), backyard, or barn to make room for the sojourners. The latter's presence necessitated yet another adjustment—the building of toilets, which until then seldom existed, a corner in nature having played that role since time immemorial. At any rate, homeowners did not mind the extra expenses, ones that ameliorated their own living conditions after all. Finding vacancies on the spot without advanced booking sometimes proved difficult. In order to facilitate the search for available lodging, a special village committee assigned one or two men (usually the municipal guards) to await the arrival of cars at the parking lot near Hetum's Café, guide the passengers to available guest rooms for a commission, and mediate disputes arising between homeowners and tenants. Sometimes street-smart lads upstaged the official middlemen to earn pocket money.⁶⁶

Income from the sale of homegrown and/or homemade food and other commodities augmented the revenues from rents. Many households kept a few goats and/or cows, chickens, and beehives to produce milk, yogurt, cheese, other dairy products, eggs, and honey for personal consumption as well as to generate extra cash. They also grew vegetables and fruit which were sold fresh, dried, or cooked. For example, vacationers purchased sun-dried eggplants, zucchini, and peppers, tomato and pepper paste, and jam for winter rations. *Tonir* (hearth) bread was likewise in great demand, as were wooden combs, ladles, and charcoal produced by local manufacturers. The vacationers similarly frequented a daily bazaar of fresh produce at a neighborhood called Kabirlik.⁶⁷



Source: Hagop Cholakian, *Kesab*, vol. 3 (in Armenian), Arevlk Press, Aleppo, 2004, p. 528.

In addition to home industries and the bazaar, there existed a number of businesses to satisfy similar and other needs. To begin with, some six grocery stores operated in Bitias during summer.⁶⁸ One newspaper advertisement read: "To the attention of estivators in Bitias: Levon Norashkharhian's grocery store, where all sorts of groceries are sold at ordinary prices, is open so that vacationers are rendered free of the hassle of transporting food."⁶⁹ Three bakeries prepared tonir bread, while a fourth one, that of George Arushian ("Urfatsen"), sold European-style breads and pastry. Three butchers provided daily supplies of fresh meat. Two barber shops, both run in partnerships, catered to the needs of male customers. Finally, Movses Renjilian operated an ironing service, a certain Baghdasar from Aleppo sold clothes, and Garabed Panoyan ("Antakalen") tinkered metal house ware.⁷⁰

The importance of tourism in Musa Dagħ was also underscored by the relocation of the district's governorship from its seat at Kheder Beg to Bitias during the summer season beginning with 1927.⁷¹ This move must also be credited for the introduction of public services not available before. For example, uniformed municipal guards watched security, lit "Lux" lamps on street corners from sunset until midnight, and visited the daily bazaar at Kabirlik to tax vendors (usually Alawi farmers from neighboring villages) and to make sure consumers were not overcharged. They similarly collected garbage, swept the streets with *bellan* bushes, and sprayed water to settle dust.⁷² For their part, not only did the locals participate in the overall drive to maintain cleanliness, but they also beautified their homes and surroundings by planting flowers, jokingly and sometimes boastfully terming their habitat "Europe" as opposed to "Africa," denoting backwardness in reference to some of the other villages.⁷³ This claim must have drawn its perceived legitimacy from yet another important phenomenon: By coming into daily contact with some segments of the middle class bourgeoisie visiting from the Middle East and Europe, the inhabitants of Bitias had consciously or inadvertently developed more refined manners, communication skills, and clothing tastes than was the case in the rest of Musa Dagħ, generally speaking.⁷⁴ Last but not least, the Bitias municipality, located at the house of Sarkis Sherbetjian ("Khashdagints") next to Hotel Aharon, established a central telephone and telegraph system and initiated a regular postal service between Antioch and Bitias.⁷⁵ These modernizing measures, however elementary, simple, and/or limited in scope and application, improved the overall standard of living.

PASTIMES AND ACTIVITIES

The atmosphere in Bitias during the summer months could be characterized as festive. Hiking, camping, picnicking, flower and thyme picking, promenading, and serenading by amorous couples in nature's bosom occurred daily.⁷⁶ After dark, families visited each other, sat on the verandah (if living on a second floor), chit-chatted, drank spirits, and sang folk, love, and patriotic songs. One could also hear late at night Suren Papakhian sing nostalgic Kurdish songs of his native Khnus in the Ottoman province of Bitlis.⁷⁷ The main natural attractions included the Dum-Dum Mughara, a cave where, it was believed, the ancients buried their dead; Serder Mughara, another cave; Ohan Vosgeperan, the ruins of an old church named after St. John Crysostom or the Golden Mouth; Chamlik, a pine forest; and Chaghleghan and Sev Aghpiur/Kara Punar, both springs.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Minasen Serte (Minas's Back), situated to the left of the village entrance, "was a small flat outcropping (plateau), with a beautiful view of the [Antioch] plain" "In the late afternoon—Dr. Yacoubian continues his description—the setting sun provided a spectacular view. We often visited there with adult friends and just sat on the plateau and enjoy[ed] the scenery in the gathering dusk."⁷⁹ Soghukoluk (unrelated to the synonymous village near Alexandretta), at some distance from Bitias, constituted yet another enchanting corner to explore: "We went camping there for 4 days pitching our two tents in an open glade.... We were surrounded on all sides with mist shrouded dense forest. The bark of the trees was covered with moss due to the moisture from the sea, which was not too far away. A fire was built in the center of the glade and was kept going throughout our stay there to keep away bears and wild boars. We never saw any."⁸⁰

Children improvised toys, played "Lido," watched water crabs, threw stones at walnut trees in hopes of obtaining some walnuts, climbed trees, or simply frolicked carefree.⁸¹ They likewise joined adults in swimming outings. Dr. Yacoubian reminisced: "At least once a week, 15 or 16 of us would pile into one taxi and ride down to the [nearby] river [called Kara Chay]. Some used to stand on the running boards, some would be sitting on the fenders. We kids would be inside for safety reasons. We would pass a few hours in enjoyable swimming, diving into it [the river] from the rocks on the edges, in places where deep pools were formed. By the end of summer we had all tanned to a dark brown."⁸² It was also common for kids

and adults alike to hike or ride to Kheder Beg to view its landmark gigantic plane tree and the spring gushing nearby. Thence they would continue their excursion to the Mediterranean.⁸³

Other sorts of entertainment added to the merriment. Armenian classical music, interpreted by violinist Hagop Nalbandian and vocalist Hovsep Seraydarian on businessman-producer Khachadur Shahin's "Odeon" records filled the air.⁸⁴ Kemanchist Rupen (Sapszian) in 1930 gave a solo concert with his traditional folk instrument.⁸⁵ To the natives' delight, composer-songwriter Parsegh Ganachian in 1933 arranged the popular local folksong "*Hele-Hele Ninnoye*" and presented it for the first time as part of his choral repertoire in a concert at Hotel Aharon.⁸⁶ In the same vein, actor-director Parsegh Apovian in the summer of 1931 toured Musa Dagħ staging "*Ashkharhi Tadasdane*" (The Judgment of the World) at Bitias and Kabusiye, and "*Ashik Gharip*" (The Amorous Stranger) at Kheder Beg.⁸⁷ Another servant of the theater, known by the singular name of Chaprasd, produced his own shows.⁸⁸ Local teenagers and youths from both genders participated in and drew inspiration from some of those cultural activities and further developed their talents in similar events organized on various occasions throughout the year.⁸⁹

Two Armenian religious-national holidays attracted thousands of celebrants to Bitias and Damlajik, a central spot on Musa Dagħ where the 1915 resistance had taken place. The first event, held in mid-August, was dedicated to *Surp Asdvadzadzin* (Holy Mother of God). After collecting donations of sacrificial lambs, wheat, salt, and wood from the natives, the parish council oversaw the cooking of the traditional food of *harisa* in large copper kettles in ceremonious rituals that lasted from Saturday evening until Sunday morning. Following mass, the priest blessed the *harisa* before it was distributed to impatient congregants pushing and shoving each other to fill their plates. Then *zurnaja* (player of a flute-like wooden instrument) Hagop Tosunian ("Devej") and *tupkaja* (drummer) Giragos Khoshian, both from Kheder Beg, led dancers in a circle to the tune of local folk music.⁹⁰

The second feast, commemorating Musa Dagħ's successful resistance to the Turkish genocidal onslaught in 1915, took place at Damlajik, where a pile of rocks had served as a makeshift altar during the actual fights. For almost a decade mass was celebrated at this site, and requiem for the repose of those who had fallen in the battlefield was conducted in a nearby lot where eighteen wooden crosses were stuck into the ground. But in 1932

this rough arrangement was replaced by a more fitting graveyard that included eighteen tombstones, each inscribed with the name of a fallen fighter.⁹¹ The celebrants, including natives and vacationers alike, congregated at Damlajik from Saturday until Sunday afternoon, making their way on foot in several hours through difficult terrain. Once there, they hoisted the Armenian and French tricolors and indulged themselves in feasting, fireworks, singing and dancing, reciting poetry, and reminiscing myriad details pertaining to the resistance. Sunday morning was reserved for the official program consisting of mass, requiem, and speeches by Armenian and French dignitaries. The organizers likewise sent telegrams to the French Minister of the Marine and the High Commissioner of Syria and Lebanon to express their appreciation and gratitude for the French goodwill vis-à-vis the Armenians of Musa Dagh.⁹²

The seventeenth anniversary celebrations took place on 18 September 1932 with pomp and circumstance as a new monument glorifying the resistance was unveiled. From one perspective, this edifice resembled one of the French frigates that had participated in the rescue operations in 1915; from a different angle, it represented and served as a church altar. An inscribed marble plaque under each of the two small domes read (one in Armenian and another in French): "For sixty days the Armenians of Musa Dagh resisted the enemy heroically and were rescued from the danger of annihilation on 14 September 1915, with the help of the [French] marine of the Syrian region, commanded by Dartige du Fournet." The inauguration began with the "*Marseillaise*," after which Movses Der Kalusdian thanked and praised "magnificent France" for using its weapons not to destroy, but rather to safeguard peace. In turn, Sarkis Tosunian, chairman of the monument building committee, delivered "a beautiful address" in French. Speaking on behalf of the High Commissioner, Colonel Huguenet surveyed amicable Franco-Armenian bonds through the course of history, considering the French assistance in 1915 a natural continuation of that close relationship. In a clearly political message, he also reminded the audience that only under French protection could such a monument symbolize freedom and friendship among peoples. After poet-teacher Paul Borain read an unpublished poem dedicated to Musa Dagh, Admiral Joubert, commander of the Eastern Mediterranean Fleet, took the podium to pay homage to the Armenian martyrs. The celebrations continued with an official banquet held in the shade of the centuries-old plane tree of Kheder Beg.⁹³

Outdoor cafés were popular spots. Of the total of sixteen cafés operating in Musa Dagħ during this period, one was located in Vakef;⁹⁴ two in Chevlik on the beach;⁹⁵ three in Haji Habibli;⁹⁶ four in Kheder Beg;⁹⁷ and six in Bitias,⁹⁸ Yoghunoluk and Kabusiye having none.⁹⁹ While the ones in the first three places entertained natives mainly, those in Kheder Beg and especially Bitias received a large number of vacationers and weekend visitors as well. Three of the Kheder Beg cafés were situated within the contours of the plane tree mentioned above, and the fourth one a short distance away.¹⁰⁰ The cafés in Bitias, too, were established near waters: Hagop Filian's ("Fllig") at Frangen Aghpayre (The European's Spring); Movses Makhulian's and Ohannes Keosheian's at Sev Aghpiur/Kara Punar; Movses Chaparian's ("Happeye") at Ohan Vosgeperan; and Movses Sdambulian's ("Chellig") at Shibil Ayn.¹⁰¹ The sixth café, that of Hetum Filian, a man remembered for his wit, was arranged around a large pool built by a retired British diplomat called John Barker (The Frank, i.e., European) a century before.¹⁰² This café, like the rest, offered coffee, hookahs, and *lokhum* (a delight), in addition to a pleasant ambience in which families and friends gathered together to have fun, chit-chat, knit, play cards and backgammon, and listen to music broadcast via a "His Master's Voice" gramophone.¹⁰³

Amateur as well as professional photographers took snapshots of vacationers in such leisure activities, important events, and scenery. Among the professional photographers one could find the reputed Vartan Derunian, who was commissioned by the Syrian government to take pictures of noteworthy places in the Sanjak for official use,¹⁰⁴ and Photo Gulbeng, also from Aleppo, whose photographs of the 1932 inauguration of the Damlajik monument appeared on the front pages of *Aztag* newspaper.¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, some films were likewise screened at the Vosdayn textile factory by an Armenian from Aleppo named Misak Bzhian (or Abajian), who utilized the factory's motor-generated electricity, something that did not exist elsewhere in Musa Dagħ.¹⁰⁶ Last but not least, a modest tennis court¹⁰⁷ and bicycle rentals¹⁰⁸ satisfied the needs of sports enthusiasts to some extent.

CONCLUSION

Ominous political clouds marred the 1938 vacation season. Referring to the new Franco-Turkish regime in the Sanjak, now called the Republic of Hatay, an Armenian newspaper asked: "Who can think about estivation

in this political turmoil when the general mood is one of changing places, that is, leaving the Sanjak altogether?"¹⁰⁹ Despite the nice weather and the abundance and affordability of fruit, the number of vacationers dropped by 75 percent, from 400 families in the previous year to 100 families.¹¹⁰ In addition to voluntary restraints, there existed official restrictions. Beginning on 6 August, the French authorities in Beirut forbade leisure travel to Musa Dagħ; only those with previously-obtained round-trip permits were allowed to go.¹¹¹ In Aleppo, while permission was granted for travel to other Armenian resorts in the Sanjak such as Atik and Soghukoluk, families destined for Bitias were denied visa. Such a distinction, "it is said," resulted from French deference to the wishes of the Turkish authorities in Alexandretta.¹¹² In any case, neither the French nor the Turks saw a need to pursue this policy thereafter, for in the following summer most Armenians and other ethnicities exited the Sanjak fearful of direct Turkish rule (to be established on 23 July 1939) so tarnished with brutality and bloodshed in recent memory.

As the Armenians of Musa Dagħ resettled in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, their new home, called Anjar, emerged gradually as a summer resort for a number of Lebanese and Syrian Armenians. This reincarnation has retained some of the features characteristic to the bygone days in Bitias and Musa Dagħ in general.

ENDNOTES

¹ For the primacy of Bitias as a center of estivation, see editorial of *Aztag* [Medium] (Beirut), 11 July 1933.

² Husni Sawwaf, "Natural Resources," in Sa'id B. Himadeh, ed., *Economic Organization of Syria*, Beirut: American Press 1936, pp. 27-47.

³ There is not a general work on the Armenians in the Sanjak of Alexandretta, however, the following study provides a wealth of information on the number and placement of Armenian refugees there during the interwar years: Thomas H. Greenshields, "The Settlement of Armenian Refugees in Syria and Lebanon, 1915-1939," Ph.D. dissertation, Durham University, England, 1978.

⁴ For the case of Kesab, consult Hagop Cholakian, *Kesab*, Aleppo: Hamazkayin 1995, vol. I, pp. 139-140, 142; Robert Jebejian, *Inknagensakrutian. Husher yev Kord. uneutiunner* (Autobiography: Memoirs and activities), Aleppo: Asfahani Press 1999, pp. 169-173.

⁵ Paul Jacquot, *Antioche. Centre de Tourisme*, Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique 1931, vol. I, pp. 134-135.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

⁷ Paul Berron, *Une Oeuvre Missionnaire en Orient et en Occident. Origine et Développement de l'Action Chrétienne en Orient*, Strasbourg: Editions Oberlin, n.d., pp. 50-51.

- ⁸ Jacquot, *Antioche*, I, pp. 110-111.
- ⁹ *Aztag*, 14 September 1927.
- ¹⁰ Jacquot, *Antioche*, I, pp. 14, 16, 104.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104; Jebejian, pp. 168-169.
- ¹² Hagop Cholakian, *Karen Yeppe Hay Koghkotayin yev Veradznuntin hed* (Karen Jeppe with the Armenian calvary and rebirth), Aleppo: Arevelk Press 2001, pp. 101-104, 156.
- ¹³ Mihran Moses Koeroghlian, *A Latter-Day Odyssey: The Autobiography of the Man Who Would Not Give Up*, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Dorrance & Company, Inc. 1986, p. 207.
- ¹⁴ Yervant Babayan, *Hishadagneru Arahednerov* (On the trails of memories), Los Angeles: Araks Press 1998, pp. 125-130; Jebejian, pp. 168-169; *Aztag*, 14 September 1927.
- ¹⁵ *Husaper* (Hope bearer) (Cairo), 30 September 1924; *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian press) (Aleppo), 7 October 1924; *Aztag*, 8 June 1935.
- ¹⁶ Jebejian, p. 166.
- ¹⁷ Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, Beirut: Librairie du Liban 1968, 2nd ed., p. 277.
- ¹⁸ *Piunig* (Phoenix) (Beirut), 9 May 1925.
- ¹⁹ Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia Archives (ACCA), Antelias, Lebanon, File 22/1 Jebel Musa-Svedia 1920-1940, Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian to Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan, 27 June 1925; Hovhannes Hajian, "Im Hushere" (My memoirs), unpublished MS, Hollywood, California, notebook 3, pp. 69-70; Tateos Babigian, "Husher. Tebker u Temker" (Memoirs: Events and profiles), unpublished MS, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Dzidzernagapert, Armenia, pp. 115-117, 144.
- ²⁰ ACCA, File 22/1, A. Der Kalusdian to Sahag II, 27 June 1925.
- ²¹ Setrag Haygazian, "Setrag Haygaziani Husherits" (From the memoirs of Setrag Haygazian), unpublished MS, Musa Ler Monument-Museum, Musa Ler Town, Armenia, notebook I, n.p.
- ²² ACCA, File 22/1, A. Der Kalusdian to Sahag II, 12 October 1926.
- ²³ *Husaper*, 29 December 1927; *Aztag*, 21 January 1928.
- ²⁴ Isabelle Mavian, "La Communauté Arménienne de la Région de Kessab a l'Epoque du Mandat Français sur la Syrie (1918-1940)," mémoire de maîtrise, Paris I-Sorbonne, 1993-1994, pp. 75-76; Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, pp. 473-474, 505, 508-510; *Aztag*, 21 January 1928, 16 July 1932.
- ²⁵ Antranig Urfalian, *Geanki me Hedkerov* (On the trails of a life), Palm Springs, CA: Haig's Printing 1990?, p. 11.
- ²⁶ Interview with Lusaper Makhulian Jambazian, 24 November 1988, Thousand Oaks, California.
- ²⁷ Interview with Hovhannes Hajian, 22 March 1989, Hollywood, California.
- ²⁸ Interview with Tateos Bakkalian, 4 August 1994, Anjar, Lebanon.
- ²⁹ Jacquot, *Antioche*, II, p. 211.
- ³⁰ Dr. Hagop D. Yacoubian, letter to the author, received 18 November 1997.
- ³¹ Sahag Balekjian, "Bitiasi Hayerene" (The Armenian dialect of Bitias), *Baykar Nor Darvo Patsarig* (New Year's Special Edition of *Baykar*), Boston: Baykar Press, 1958, p. 190.
- ³² For various aspects of and reactions to Werfel's novel, see Edward Minasian, *Musa Dag: A Chronicle of the Armenian Genocide Factor in the Subsequent Suppression, by the Intervention of the United States Government, of the Movie Based on Franz Werfel's The Forty Days of Musa Dag*, Nashville, Tennessee: Cold Tree Press 2007; Vahram L.

Shemmassian, "Literature, Film, and Genocide Denial: The Case of Franz Werfel's *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*," in Barlow Der Mugerdechian, ed., *Between Paris and Fresno: Studies in Honor of Dickran Kouymjian*, Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publications 2007, pp. 549-571; Yair Auron, *The Banality of Indifference: Zionism & the Armenian Genocide*, New Brunswick, USA, and London, UK: Transaction Publishers, 2000, pp. 293-311; Rachel Kirby, *The Culturally Complex Individual: Franz Werfel's Reflections on Minority Identity and Historical Depiction in The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, London: Associated University Presses 1999, pp. 150-180.

³³ *Aztag*, 12 July 1934.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 12 July 1933, 25 July 1936.

³⁵ Dr. Yacoubian, letter, received 18 November 1997.

³⁶ *Aztag*, 7 June 1932, 2 August 1933.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 8 June 1935. For the waters of Bitias, see *Yeprad*, 28 August 1934.

³⁸ *Aztag*, 11 July 1933.

³⁹ Paul Jacquot, *L'état des Alaouties. Terre d'Art, de Souvenirs et de Mistere. Guide*, Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1929, pp. 198-201; *idem*, *Antioche*, III, pp. 469, 510; Leonard Woolley, "Excavations near Antioch in 1936," *The Antiquaries Journal* XVII:1, January, 1939, pp. 1-15.

⁴⁰ *Syria. Revue d'Art Oriental et d'Archéologie* V: Quatrième fascicule (1924): 385; *Piunig*, 18 October 1924; *Husaper*, 11 November 1924.

⁴¹ *Syria* IX: Deuxième fascicule (1928): 169.

⁴² *Ibid.*, XV: Première fascicule (1934): 104; *Yeprad*, 14 August 1929. Fr. Mécérian's monograph is titled *Expédition Archéologique dans l'Antiochène Occidentale*, Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique 1964.

⁴³ Sarkis Guzelian, private papers, Hollywood, California, agreement (in Arabic) signed by W. A. Campbell and Sarkis Geuzelian (Guzelian), 19 July 1937.

⁴⁴ Jacquot, *Antioche*, I, pp. 17-18.

⁴⁵ Sawwaf, p. 46.

⁴⁶ *Aztag*, 8 June 1935.

⁴⁷ Alis Sutjian Araradian, *Mdorumner Hin u Nor Ashkharhen* (Contemplations on the old and new world), Los Angeles: Sarko Press 1993, p. 168; Dr. Hrayr. A. Kabakian, "Hrachige [Dasnabedian]" *Asbarez* (Arena), Glendale, California, 2 April 1997, p. 6; *idem*, letter to the author, January 2008 (received 4 February); Rozvart Siserian, "'Yerneg Ayn Orerun.' Husher Musa Leran Haygagan Geanken (Blessed be the good old days": Memories from Armenian life in Musa Dagh), *Asbarez*, 28 August 2007, pp. 6, 13; interview with Gaydzag Khachadurian, 4 October 2001, Encino, California.

⁴⁸ Suren Papakhian, *Daronashunch Abramner* (Sentiments of the Daron spirit), Los Angeles: Nor Geank Publications 1987, p. 121.

⁴⁹ Serop Sherbetjian, "Port Sayiden Veratarts 1919in. Ange Minchev 1939e" (Return from Port Said in 1919, until 1939), unpublished MS, North Hollywood, California, pp. 47-48.

⁵⁰ Sahag Antreasian, *Darakirn u Hayrenike Tem Timats* (The expatriate and the fatherland face-to-face), Pasadena, California: Araks Press 1995, p. 132; Jebejian, p. 167; *Aztag*, 14 September 1929, 14 August 1936.

⁵¹ Armenian Relief Society Archives, Boston (now in Watertown), File ARS, SOKH, Syria, *Beginning-1929 [-1936]*, S. Selian and Toros Basmajian on behalf of the Syrian

- Armenian Relief Cross to the Armenian Red Cross Central Committee in Boston, 6 November 1931; Araradian, p. 47; Babigian, pp. 26, 177-178; *Aztag*, 28 February 1935.
- ⁵² Sherbetjian, pp. 46-47.
- ⁵³ For estimates of vacationers in Bitias during various seasons, see *Aztag*, 11 September 1929, 27 January 1930, 27 June 1936, 11 August 1938; *Husaper*, 30 May 1932, 30 July 1935.
- ⁵⁴ Araradian, pp. 165-167.
- ⁵⁵ *Yeprad*, 29 December 1928. See also the issues of 27 July 1929 and 14 August 1929.
- ⁵⁶ Babigian, pp. 208-211.
- ⁵⁷ *Aztag*, 28 and 29 August 1937.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 10 August 1933.
- ⁵⁹ Dr. Yacoubian, letter.
- ⁶⁰ Interview with Movses Makhulian, 10 August 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.
- ⁶¹ *Aztag*, 7 June-3 September 1932.
- ⁶² Interview with Margos Iprajian, 20 August 2001, Anjar, Lebanon. For a banquet at Hotel Aharon given in honor of an official French delegation visiting Bitias, see *Husaper*, 27 July 1935.
- ⁶³ Serop Keoseian, letter to the author, 22 May 1994; *Aztag*, 1 August 1935.
- ⁶⁴ Keoseian, letter.
- ⁶⁵ Jaquot, *Antioche*, III, pp. 509-510.
- ⁶⁶ Interview with Arakel Izanian, 28 December 1991, Sunland, California; interview with Movses Karkazian, 13 August 1988, Fresno, California.
- ⁶⁷ Rev. Aram Hadidian, letter to the author, 26 May 1977; interview with Khachadurian.
- ⁶⁸ Interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian ("Khashdagints") and Lusaper Makhulian-Jambazian, 23 November 1988, Thousand Oaks, California.
- ⁶⁹ *Yeprad*, 15 July 1931.
- ⁷⁰ Interview with Sherbetjian and Jambazian; interview with Karkazian.
- ⁷¹ *Husaper*, 27 December 1934.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*; interview with Sherbetjian and Jambazian; interview with Karkazian.
- ⁷³ Interview with Levon Shemmashian, 12 July 2001, Anjar, Lebanon.
- ⁷⁴ A comparison of hundreds of photographs from my private collection reveals differences in attires between the Bitias inhabitants and those in the rest of Musa Dagh. As for manners and communication styles, those are my personal observations of and comments by others on Bitias natives living in Anjar.
- ⁷⁵ *Husaper*, 27 December 1934; interview with Sherbetjian and Jambazian; interview with Karkazian. The central telephone was eventually relocated to the home of Kevork Sherbetjian ("Aziz").
- ⁷⁶ *Aztag*, 10 August 1933; interview with Khachadurian; Dr. Kabakian, letter.
- ⁷⁷ Dr. Kabakian, letter.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*; Dr. Yacoubian, letter; interview with Robert Igarian, Sima Sherbetjian, and Movses Sherbetjian, 27 March 1989, Los Angeles; *Husaper*, 30 July 1935, 15 January 1936.
- ⁷⁹ Dr. Yacoubian, letter.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁸¹ Dr. Kabakian, "Hrachige [Dasnabedian]," p. 6; interview with Khachadurian.
- ⁸² Dr. Yacoubian, letter.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*

- ⁸⁴ Jebejian, p. 167.
- ⁸⁵ *Hayrenik* [Fatherland] (Boston), 19 June 1931.
- ⁸⁶ *Aztag*, 10 August 1933. For the lyrics and notes of this folksong, see Verjine Svazlyan, *Musa Ler* [Musa Dag] (Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences, 1984), pp. 118-124, 134.
- ⁸⁷ Toros Toranian, *Agnarg Suriahay Taderagan Badmutian yev Terasan Parsegh Apoviani Hushere* (A glance at the history of the Syrian Armenian theater and the memoirs of actor Parsegh Apovian), Beirut: Sevan Press 1973, p. 115. Apparently, Apovian had visited Musa Dag previously as well. See *Husaper*, 2 June 1927.
- ⁸⁸ Shushanig Chaparian Papakhian, letter to the author, 15 August 1989.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*; *Piunig*, 7 May 1924; M. M. Keoroghluian, "Bitiastan khaberler" [News from Bitias], *Nor Avedaper* (New herald), 2: 10 (26 May 1929): 367; *Ararad* (Beirut), 4 March 1938.
- ⁹⁰ For the celebration of the Holy Mother of God feast in Musa Dag in general, consult Krikor Guzelian, *Musa Leran Azkakrutiune* (The ethnography of Musa Dag), Yerevan: "Kidutiun" Publishing House of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia 2001, p. 260; Zora Iskenderian, "Doner u Donakhmputiunner" (Holidays and festivities), in Mardiros Kushakjian and Boghos Madurian, eds., *Hushamadian Musa Leran* (Memorial book of Musa Dag), Beirut: Atlas Press 1970, pp. 181-182; Balekjian, p. 191; Harutiun Der-Balian, "Hamerk Aleksandreti mech. Ech me Im Husheres" (Concert in Alexandretta: A page from my memoirs), *Nor Geank* (New life), Glendale, California, 26 February 1998, p. 19. For Musa Dag folk dances, consult N. K. Tahmizian, *Yerajeshdutiune Haygagan Giligiayum* (Music in Armenian Cilicia), Yerevan: ASSR "Kidelik" Association 1989, pp. 7-8; Mardiros Kushakjian, "Joghovrtayin Yerkn u Bare Musa Leran mech" (The folk song and dance in Musa Dag), in Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, pp. 221-227; Armen Mantagunian, *Musa Leran Bareghanagner* (Folk dance music of Musa Dag), compact disc produced by the Musa Ler Association of San Francisco, California, 2005.
- ⁹¹ Sherbetjian, p. 51.
- ⁹² *Husaper*, 4 October 1924, 29 November 1927; *Aztag*, 15 and 17 October 1924; Suren Papakhian, "Jebel Musa-Musa Dag", *Hayrenik*, 14 September 1955, p. 2; Hovhannes Bajakian, *Kiughagan Badgerner* (Village scenes) (Beirut: n. p., 2002), pp. 185-187.
- ⁹³ *Aztag*, 24, 28, 29 September 1932, 13 October 1932. For issues pertaining to the monument since its conception, see *idem.*, 16 November 1929, 2 August 1933; *Husaper*, 16 September 1924; *Piunig*, 24 September 1924; *Yeprad*, 5 September 1931; Sherbetjian, p. 50-51.
- ⁹⁴ Interview with Misak Blutian, 12 June 1989, Hollywood, California.
- ⁹⁵ Interview with Sarkis Asadur Kasamanian and Sarkis Serop Guzelian, 28 January 1989, Hollywood, California.
- ⁹⁶ Boghos Madurian, "Hayreni Gdurin dag" (Under the roof of the fatherland), in Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, p. 463; interview with Antranig Kerekian, 9 June 1989, Van Nuys, California.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁸ Interview with Sherbetjian and Jambazian; interview with Karkazian.
- ⁹⁹ For Yoghunoluk, interview with Hajian; for Kabusiye, interview with Kasamanian and Guzelian.

- ¹⁰⁰ Madurian, p. 463
- ¹⁰¹ Interview with Sherbetjian and Jambazian; interview with Karkazian.
- ¹⁰² For John Barker's association with Musa Dag, see Vahram Leon Shemmassian, "The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dag: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840-1915," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996, pp. 37-41.
- ¹⁰³ Interview with Movses Filian, 12 September 1977, San Francisco, California; Dr. Yacoubian, letter.
- ¹⁰⁴ "Varbed Lusangarich me" (A master photographer), in Teotig, ed., *Amenun Daretsuytse 1928* (Everyone's almanac 1928), 22nd year, Paris: Masis Press 1928, pp. 549-550. Derunian's pictures in my private collection are published as postcards and depict Alexandretta, Soghukoluk, Beylan, Kirik Khan, Antioch, and Yoghunoluk in Musa Dag.
- ¹⁰⁵ See *Aztag*, 24, 28, 29 September 1932.
- ¹⁰⁶ Interview with Tateos Bakkalian, 14 August 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.
- ¹⁰⁷ Interview with Shemmassian.
- ¹⁰⁸ Interview with Sherbetjian and Jambazian.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Aztag*, 18 June 1938.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid., 17 July 1938, 11 and 26 August 1938; *Yeprad*, 7 August 1938.
- ¹¹¹ *Zartonk* [Awakening] (Beirut), 16 August 1938.
- ¹¹² *Aztag*, 26 August 1938.

**ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՄՈՒՍԱ ԼԵՌԸ 1920-30ԱԿԱՆՆԵՐՈՒՆ ԻՐԲԵՒ ԱՄԱՌԱՆՈՑ՝
ԱԼԵՔՍԱՆՏՐԷԹԻ ՍԱՆՃԱՔԻՆ
(Ամփոփում)**

ՎԱՀՐԱՄ ՇԵՄՄԱՍԻԱՆ

Հիմնուելով յուշագրություններու, անձամբ կատարուած հարցազրոյցներու, արխիւային նիւթերու, մամուլի մէջ լոյս տեսած լրատուութիւններու եւ զրօսաշրջական բնոյթի գիրքերու վրայ, Շեմմասեան կը վերականգնէ Ալեքսանտրէթի Սանճաքի Մուսա Լեռան ամառանոցային պատկերը՝ 1920-30ականներուն:

Ըստ հեղինակին, տեղի հայ բնակչութեան չորս հիմնական բնակավայրերէն (ծովափնեայ Ալեքսանտրէթ քաղաքը իր չրջակայքով, Քրքիսանն ու Բիհանիէն, Մուսա Լեռն ու Անտիոք քաղաքը եւ Քեսապն ու չրջակայքը) ամառանոցային բնոյթի զարգացում ապրեցան Ալեքսանտրէթ քաղաքի չրջակայքն ու Մուսա Լեռը: Անդին, Քրքիսանն ու Բիհանիէն չունեցան նման բախտաւորութիւն, մինչ Քեսապ ամառանոցային զարգացում ապրեցաւ 1939էն ետք:

Հեղինակը անդրադառնալէ ետք Ալեքսանտրէթի չրջակայքի հայկական ամառանոցային վայրերուն՝ Նարկիզլիքին, Աթրքին, Պէյլանին ու Սողուքուքին, կը ծանրանայ Մուսա Լեռան եւ մասնաւորաբար՝ Պիթիասի ամառանոցային առաւելութիւններուն վրայ: Շեմմասեան կը հաւաստէ, որ չրջանը ունէր նաեւ այլ՝ պատմական հրապոյր մը: Մուսա Լեռը, ուր տեղի ունեցած էր նոյնանուն հերոսամարտը, չէր գտնուեր թրքական գերիշխանութեան տակ:

Հեղինակը կարելի մանրամասնութեամբ կը պատկերէ Պիթիասի ամառանոցային վերելքը, կ'անդրադառնայ ճանապարհաշինութեան, երկրագործութեան բարիքներուն, կը նկարագրէ այնոր ամառանոցային կեանքն ու պայմանները, մօտակայ պտոյտի եւ զրօսնելու վայրերը, աղբիւրները, մատակարարուող կենցաղային դիւրութիւնները, պանդոկները, կեցութեան այլ հնարաւորութիւնները, ժամանցի վայրերը, գեղարուեստական երեկոները, եւն: Շեմմասեան կը հաւաստէ որ մեծ թիւով հայ եւ օտար ամառագնացներ կու գային Հալէպէն, Պէյրութէն, Եգիպտոսէն, Սուտանէն, Իրաքէն:

Պիթիասի եւ անմիջական չրջակայքի այս ամառանոցային եռուն կեանքը իր կտրուկ աւարտը ունեցաւ, սակայն 1939ին, երբ Թրանսական Հոգատար Իշխանութիւնները չրջանը (քացի Քեսապի գօտիէն) կցեցին Թուրքիոյ: