

ԱԲԵՏԻՍ ՅԱՐՈՒԹԻԻՆԵԱՆ

*Պատմական գիտ. թեկնածու,*

*ՀՊՄՀ*

ՍՏԵՈՊԱ ՊԵՏՈՅԵԱՆ

*Պատմական գիտ. թեկնածու, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ ՊԻ*

## ԱՐԵԻՄՏԵԱՆ ՅԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԺՈՂՈՎՐԴԱԳՐԱԿԱՆ ԿԱԶՄԸ ՍԷՅԼԱՆԻ ՄԵԿՆՈՒԹԵԼՄԸ<sup>1</sup>

Հրատարակումն անդրադառնում է 1895 թ. «Մուրն» ամսագրի յուլիսեան համարում տպագրուած «Տանկա-Հայաստանի ազգաբնակչութիւնները» յօդուածին եւ դրա հեղինակ Սէյլանին (Արշակ Մադոյեան)՝ ընդգծելով, որ 130 տարուայ ընթացքում թիֆլիսեան պարբերականի նիւթը չի կորցրել իր այժմէականութիւնը:

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## SEYLAN'S INTERPRETATION OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE OF WESTERN ARMENIA

*This study examines the article “The Ethnographic Composition of Turkish Armenia,” published in the July 1895 issue of the Tiflis journal Murch, together with the intellectual profile of its author, Seylan (Arshak/Vagharshak Madoyan). It argues that, despite the passage of nearly 130 years, Seylan’s concerns—especially his critique of Ottoman demographic reporting and his emphasis on education as a civilizational instrument—remain analytically productive for contemporary scholarship on Western*

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<sup>1</sup>\* Ստացուել է՝ 6.12.2025, գրախօսուել է՝ 6.01.2026: Էլ. հասցէ՝ avharutunyan@mail.ru: Խմբագիր՝ Գեորգ Սարեան:

*Armenia, late Ottoman governance, and identity politics. The article also introduces an English translation of Seylan's 1895 text to facilitate direct engagement with its arguments in their original conceptual setting.*

*In a related scholarly context, Bishop **Khoren Stepane**—best known as the first translator of **History of the Armenians** by **Movses Khorenatsi** into Eastern Armenian—offers a detailed commentary on one of the Songs of Goghtn describing the banquet organized by Argavan in honor of King Artashes. Stepane observes that the banquet song cited by Movses Khorenatsi may be read with the verses arranged according to a specific metrical structure, provided that the formulaic expression “they say” is omitted. He further notes that this interpretation was shared by **Galust Ter-Mkrtchean**, who attributed the proposed reading to a suggestion made by the philologist Mr. Seylan<sup>2</sup>. Among Armenian readers, the author known by the pen name Seylan is identified as Arshak (Vagharshak) Madoyean<sup>3</sup>. At various stages of his career, he also published under the pseudonyms Siluan, Halevor, and several others. Some of these were adopted within the Ottoman domains, others within the Russian Empire, reflecting a deliberate and calculated strategy aimed at evading censorship and political persecution. Despite such precautions—and although Seylan had long since died—in 1936 and again in 1937, agents of the **Cheka** reportedly raided the homes of his sons, Varuzhan and Gevorg Madoyean, demanding information concerning his alleged whereabouts.*

*At the same time, Seylan's vigilance proved insufficient to safeguard the entirety of his intellectual legacy. A substantial portion of his writings never reached the public sphere, having fallen victim to censorship, repression, and political circumstance; today, at least some of these works must be regarded as irretrievably lost<sup>4</sup>.*

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<sup>2</sup> **Movses Khorenatsi**, *History of the Armenians* (St. Petersburg, 1898), 390, n. 170.

<sup>3</sup> In the passport issued on June 12, 1909, Seylan himself signed his name, stamping his personal signature as **Arshak G. Madoyean**, indicating his given name, the initial of his father's name, and his family name. In the book «Բաղդի մէկ խաղը» (*The Game of Fate*), printed in Constantinople in 1890, the author is listed as Siluan, beneath which appear the initials V. M., i.e., **Vagharshak Madoyean**. Two years later, in 1892, on the title page of the volume «Խան-Միրան» (*Khan-Miran*), published by the Tiflis Armenian Publishing Society, the attribution reads: “Written by Seylan”. In 1904, in Alexandropol, in the volume «Լէոն-Կայսր» (*Leon-Kaysr*), and in the same year in Tiflis, in the work «Հայթա-Ֆիրատ» (*Hayta-Firat*), the author again appears under the pen name Seylan (See illustrations).

<sup>4</sup> **Seylan**, Nshmarner (*Notes*), comp., introd., and commentary by G. Madoyean and A. Khudaverdean (Yerevan, 1999), 8–9.

*Arshak Madoyean (January 24, 1861 – March 29, 1934) was born in Akhalkalaki into the family of a landed proprietor, Gevorg Madoyean<sup>5</sup>. He received his primary education in his hometown before continuing his studies at the Nersisian School in Tiflis. He subsequently pursued advanced education in Venice and later earned a first-class teaching certificate from the Getronagan Armenian High School in Constantinople.*

*Upon completing his studies, Arshak Madoyean returned to his homeland, where he was granted an audience with **Mkrtich A. Khrimian**, Catholicos of All Armenians. The Catholicos proposed that he travel either to Artsakh or to Sassoun in order to educate the children of those who had taken up arms in defense of their homeland, with the aim of fostering in them a deep attachment to their mother tongue and national heritage, alongside a sense of devotion to their native land.*

*This episode may be understood within the broader framework of Khrimian's cultural and educational program, which sought to preserve and revitalize the Armenian language under conditions of sustained political and social pressure. Seylan appears to allude to this initiative in the following passage: "From 1870 onward, through the efforts of Catholicos Mkrtich Khrimian and the immortal Archbishop **Nerses Varzhapetian**—and later through the devoted work of a group of young Armenians—the Armenian language reemerged".*

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<sup>5</sup> During one of the Russo-Turkish Wars of the nineteenth century, the wealthy notable of Ardahan, Martiros Melik-Baghdasarean, inspired by the victories of his Christian allies, rendered decisive support to the Imperial Russian Army. On his own estates, he quartered a cavalry squadron—one hundred sabers—providing, entirely at his own expense, sustenance and lodging for both soldiers and their mounts over the course of a full month.

Yet fortune did not long favor the land. With the withdrawal of Russian forces from Ardahan, Kars, and Karin (Erzurum), together with the surrounding Armenian districts, the local Armenian population faced a grave reckoning. To remain was to risk near-certain destruction; thus, in profound sorrow, many chose the path of exile. The Melik-Baghdasarean family, too, was compelled to abandon its ancestral homeland and depart alongside the retreating Russian forces.

In recognition of Martiros's loyalty to the Russian Crown, and as recompense for the lands lost to the enemy, he was granted new estates in the vicinity of Akhalkalaki. Family tradition preserves the memory of these holdings with particular clarity, especially the lands of Tashvanka and the surrounding territory, later the site of a Soviet-era airfield.

The descendants of this family, after leaving Ardahan, took a surname based on the name of their ancestor, Martiros, becoming the Martirosyans (i.e., descendants of Martiros). Over time, the pronunciation of this name gradually changed: first to Martoyan, and later to Matoyan and Madoyan. In due course, the mantle of clan leadership passed to Gevorg, the father of Seylan.

*Of the two paths proposed by the Catholicos, Seylan chose Sassoun, where he became both a witness to the awakening of the local population and a chronicler of the national liberation movement. There, he established modern schools and subsequently served in Smyrna, Karin, and Trabzon. In 1910, he joined a group of European scholars on an ascent of **Mount Ararat**<sup>6</sup>. Between 1920 and 1924, he taught in Javakhk, Tsalka, and Manglisi, and subsequently served as director of the archaeological station of the Akhalkalak district<sup>7</sup>.*

As an educator, Seylan attached exceptional importance to education—an emphasis clearly reflected in the present article, where he articulates a firm belief in the transformative power of learning and civilization. From the outset, he draws a sharp distinction between societies shaped by enduring cultural traditions and civilizational continuity, and those governed by nomadic and violent patterns of social organization, within which religious affiliation itself possesses limited explanatory force.

*In religious terms, Seylan characterizes the Turk as the historical offspring of the Arab, arguing that he inherited from his spiritual forebear primarily negative traits. As he writes, “It possesses neither the progressive, art-loving spirit of its forefather, nor his skillful hands and the genius of a poet; having misconstrued his narrow, scholastic, and religious—geographical views, it has transformed them into instruments of bloodshed. To form a clear conception, one need only imagine the son of a gifted, wise, yet war-loving father—a son who has inherited from him nothing but his vices”.*

*At the same time, Seylan insists that human behavior is not determined by ethnicity alone, but is profoundly shaped by civilizational environment and political context. Even the same ethnic group, he argues, may exhibit radically different patterns of conduct under different systems of governance. Referring to Kurdish tribal communities, he observes: “The eshirets living within Russian borders cannot commit the deeds of the Kurds of Turkey—not even a hundredth part of them. Therefore, it is the*

<sup>6</sup> See Horizon [Հորիզոն], August 11, 1910; Lumay [Լումայ], 1910, nos. 5–6, 101 (in Armenian).

<sup>7</sup> For Seylan’s biography, see: **G. Stepanean**, Kensagrakan bararan (Biographical Dictionary), vol. II (Yerevan, 1981), 261; **Seylan**, Sasoun (Yerevan, 1990), 3–24; Haykakan hamarot hanragitaran (Armenian Concise Encyclopedia), vol. 4 (Yerevan, 2003), 399; Ov ov e: hayer (Who Is Who: Armenians), biographical encyclopedia, vol. II (Yerevan, 2007), 447; **H. Petrosyan**, Seylan: kyanqy yev steghsagortsutyuny (Seylan: Life and Works) (Yerevan, 2011), 11–47; Hay gratputyun yev grqarvest (Armenian Printing and Book Art) (Yerevan, 2015), 955; “Azatagrakan sharzhumneri martikn u patmichy” (A Participant in and Chronicler of Liberation Movements), Banber Hayastani arkhivneri [Bulletin of the Archives of Armenia], 1987, no. 3, 145–154 (all in Armenian).

government that is the true perpetrator. Thus, the guilty one is the Ottoman, not the Kurd". Seylan concludes that education and reform, rather than repression, constitute the only viable path toward social transformation: "Enlighten and educate the Kurdish people, bathe their poetic soul in learning, and you will find a sound and wholesome nation".

The article further reveals that Seylan placed his greatest hopes in substantive reforms—changes capable, in his view, of transforming even the most brutal and violent social conditions into humane and civilized forms of life. Restricting his inquiry to the immediate subject at hand, he explicitly refrains from undertaking a detailed examination of falsified Ottoman statistics, focusing instead on identifying the ethnic composition of Western Armenia and the general disposition of its inhabitants. He expresses confidence that, once reforms broader than those initially proposed were to be implemented, the realities he describes would reveal themselves as "fearless Armenians—forces capable of restraining the barbarous Kurd and Turk, and fully capable, like ourselves, of embracing civilization".

Seylan's argument rests on a broader civilizational premise: that one of the most reliable indicators of a society's level of development lies in the transparency of its administrative practices, particularly in the accurate collection, preservation, and publication of demographic data. From this perspective, archival openness and truthful statistics emerge not merely as technical instruments of governance, but as fundamental measures of political and moral accountability.

The immediate impetus for Seylan's article was the publication by the authorities of the **Ottoman Empire** of official population statistics concerning Western Armenia, in which the numbers of Armenians and other non-Turkish communities had, in his assessment, been deliberately and artificially reduced. Although Seylan did not approach this subject as a professional demographer, his work as an educator necessarily required detailed familiarity with local population structures. The establishment of schools in the regions entrusted to him demanded precise knowledge of village composition, settlement patterns, and access to existing educational institutions in neighboring areas.

Given that Seylan's mission had been initiated directly under the auspices of the Catholicos, it is reasonable to assume that parish priests supplied him with essential information concerning population figures and their distribution across towns and villages. These clergy members, who bore direct responsibility for the moral and intellectual formation of youth within their communities, thus played an indirect yet

*significant role in the broader educational endeavor. Although Seylan does not provide explicit accounts of their pedagogical activity, he repeatedly emphasizes their participation in the self-defense of **Sassoun**, noting that the spiritual leaders of many settlements also assumed command of armed detachments formed from among their parishioners during periods of collective resistance*<sup>8</sup>.

By compiling and critically analyzing the available demographic data on various provinces of Western Armenia, Seylan demonstrates—through a coherent and methodologically consistent line of reasoning—that the actual Armenian population was incomparably larger than the figures recorded in the official Ottoman registers. This conclusion is of considerable scholarly importance. Yet Seylan does not confine his inquiry to demographic analysis alone. He proceeds to address another fundamental issue: the long-standing claim in Turkish historiography that “the Osmanlis never waged war against the Armenians, never encountered an Armenian prince, and that the Armenians were merely vassals or slaves of the Greeks”.

*Seylan decisively refutes these assertions by drawing attention to historical evidence indicating that several Armenian provinces—Vaspurakan (that is, Van and Gnuniq/Amik), Taron, Apahuniq (Bulanik), Khnus, and others—remained, for a prolonged period, inaccessible strongholds under the control of Armenian lords. Within this framework, he emphasizes that Armenian lands were described in Ottoman sources as *emanet ul Allah*, that is, as territories “entrusted to God”. Such a designation implies that these lands were not conceived as the Sultan’s absolute property, but rather as domains placed under his authority with a clearly defined obligation of protection and guardianship.*

*Beyond Seylan’s reflections on the transformation of the “beast into a human being” through education and enlightenment, the article also gestures toward the emergence of a vast and consequential sphere of activity in the legal domain—should it become possible to invoke international law with regard to Western Armenia (and, in the present day, **Artsakh** as well). Finally, Seylan’s study suggests that a positive resolution of the Armenian Question may one day arise from an entirely unexpected—indeed, almost unimaginable—source: the moment when, through genetic research and DNA testing, hundreds of thousands, or even millions, may come to realize that they*

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<sup>8</sup> Clergymen who took part in the liberation struggle were mentioned as Ter-Kaje (Brave Father). For references to them, see **Seylan**, *Sasoun: Historical and Ethnographic Sketch*, Yerevan, 1990, the commentary by the journal “Etchmiadzin”.

*are not the descendants of a so-called bloodthirsty horde, but rather of a cultivated and noble lineage—an idea developed in greater detail by Seylan in his Hayta–Firat volume.*

*In light of the considerations outlined above, the following section presents an English translation of Seylan’s original article, allowing the author’s arguments to be examined directly and in their full historical and conceptual context.*

**SEYLAN**  
(**ARSHAK MADOYAN / MADOYEAN**)

### **THE ETHNOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF TURKISH ARMENIA**

Having observed the fabricated reports disseminated in the press by the authorities of the Ottoman Empire concerning the population of Armenia—according to which scarcely one million Armenians are said to reside in the six vilayets—and noting the accumulation of numerous circumstances which, under the auspices of the exalted Sultan, obstruct a just settlement of the Armenian Question, I, having thoroughly studied Turkish Armenia and being well acquainted with the character, customs, internal antagonisms, and both the past and present condition of its inhabitants, consider it necessary to present an accurate depiction of Armenia in the full breadth of its ethnographic diversity.

It has long been among the “benevolent” practices of the Ottoman government to distort reality through deliberate falsification and to exert every effort to obscure and deny even the most incontrovertible facts.

The Ottoman authorities have endeavored to conceal their unprecedented barbarities, as well as the program devised since 1890, which found its dreadful execution in **Sassoun**. Even today, they continue to obscure the true number of Armenians, revealing only a portion of the population in order to prolong their reign of fearful despotism.

Having personally traversed the whole of Armenia—particularly the provinces of Van, Baghesh (Bitlis), Karin (Erzurum), Trapizon (Trebizond), Erzinka, Kharberd, and Sebastia—I feel compelled to contribute to the unveiling of the truth. For the falsified statistics produced by the Turks strike fear into the informed and cast the uninformed into despair. The informed are terrified because they recognize such fabricated figures

as a continuation of the massacres themselves: through them, Europe is deceived. The uninformed, meanwhile, lose heart and faith, mistaking falsehood for truth, or at least for something perilously close to it.

In those statistics, the number of Armenians is represented as pitifully small, while that of the non-Armenian element is exaggerated many times over. This we know. And although Europe may receive our words with suspicion—because we are Armenians—we are nonetheless bound to speak.

By artificially reducing the figures and bending the law to serve its own purposes, the Ottoman government has effectively halved the Armenian population on paper. Let us explain how.

In accordance with a plan devised by Kiamil and Shakir Pashas, the *Hamidiye Teskere* (the Hamidian passport) was introduced in 1884. Through this measure, new avenues were opened for the oppression and extortion of the non-Turkish population by means of onerous taxes and levies. Only a portion of the Armenians of Turkey succeeded in registering in the lists compiled by Patriarch Nerses Varjabedean. The Ottoman authorities were fully aware that, on the basis of these lists, the number of Armenians had been drastically reduced.

The mountain Armenians and numerous rural settlements—amounting to nearly one third of the population—were omitted from the records altogether. Among the highland Armenians of Sassoun, Geval, Zeytun, and other mountainous regions, only a small number obtained the *Hamidiye teskere* (Hamidian permits), and even these were issued solely for the purpose of travel through towns.

As for the disastrous consequences of the *Hamidiye* system and the so-called *Beteli Esekerriyen* (military tax), we shall confine ourselves to a few brief remarks. In Armenia, a Christian husband would separate from his wife so as not to bring children into the world, fearing that the military tax of five roubles imposed for each innocent infant would become an unbearable burden upon a poor man's shoulders. Likewise, the tax levied in the name of a deceased father or brother continued to be exacted even if the individual had died ten years earlier. The authorities were fully aware of these practices; yet, in the face of the sword and the whip, no one dared even to speak of a death certificate.

Having stated this, we now turn to another vital question—one which, although fully known to the Sultan's government, is deliberately concealed from the world. It concerns nothing less than the true composition of the Turkish nation: the emergence

of those tribes which outwardly swell its ranks, each possessing its own historical past, yet marked by an unstable and uncertain present.

All this must be taken into account; that is to say, one must understand that the Armenians have been compelled to conceal their true numbers, and also recognize that half of what is designated as the Turkish element is, in origin, akin to us. Accordingly, the statistics of the Ottoman government must be approached with due caution, and its figures accepted only with the necessary reservations.

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The doctrine of Mohammed spread with remarkable rapidity, elevating Bedouin power to dominion. Yet, as it expanded into distant regions of the world and gradually diverged from the founder's original precepts, it left behind its offshoots—elements which, having survived to this day, have proven a scourge upon the earth, corrupting, and continuing to corrupt, the life of vigorous and capable nations.

Europe, though fully cognizant of this truth, nonetheless continues to nurture with care the deadly germs of that infection.

One such offshoot is the present, decaying Ottoman Empire, which, over the course of five centuries of dreadful rule, has drenched its path in the blood of countless Christians. It no longer retains even the faint impulse toward progress once discernible, in a spiritual and religious sense, in its forefather—the son of Hagar, the Arab. The blood-stained pages of Turkish history read as little more than maps of monstrous crimes, chronicles of savage conquest, and enduring records of barbarity without equal. It possesses neither the progressive, art-loving spirit of its forefather, nor his skillful hands and poetic genius; and, having misconstrued his narrow, scholastic, and religious—geographical views, it has transformed them into instruments of bloodshed. To form a clear conception, one need only imagine the son of a gifted, wise, yet war-loving father—a son who has inherited from him nothing but his vices. Thus, even without a magnifying glass, the true image of the Osmanlis stands revealed. Proof of this may be found even in their own *tarikhs* (chronicles), from *Güzel Hınıs* (“Beautiful Kh’nus”) to the writings of their modern literature and the style so notorious throughout the world.

During the Seljuk advance, the commander Tughril settled some ten thousand Turkoman families along the Armenian frontier. There they mingled with the Hagarenes—that is, the surviving Arab (early Muslim) elements from the earlier Arab incursions—and, in the centuries that followed, underwent a gradual process of mutual assimilation with successive conquerors. Through this fusion of diverse components,

a culturally Turco-Persian Muslim polity took shape, later known as the Sultanate of Rum, with Iconium as its capital.

In the region west of Armenia under consideration, the Muslim element—subjected over successive centuries first to Seljuk rule, then briefly to Khwarazmian incursions, and later to the domination of the Qara Qoyunlu and the Aq Qoyunlu—continued to exist within a tribal-feudal structure. Sultan Bayezid I (Yıldırım), despite the defeats he suffered in his clashes with Tamerlane, nevertheless succeeded in preserving the continuity of the state.

During the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (the Conqueror), the Ottoman polity steadily expanded its frontiers. The Ottomans first brought a large part of the Greek world under their authority and subsequently advanced into certain Armenian regions. At that time, some of these territories remained within the administrative framework of the Byzantine imperial system, in which Armenian local officials frequently exercised governing functions, while a considerable portion was still held by Armenian princely houses and noble families who had long resisted Arab domination and continued their struggle against successive waves of conquerors.

To this day, Ottoman scholars persist in asserting that the Osmanlis never waged war against the Armenians, never encountered an Armenian prince, and that the Armenians were merely vassals or slaves of the Greeks. How unfounded this vain assertion is may be clearly demonstrated by the testimony of history itself.

During the campaigns of Mehmed the Conqueror, the former glory of Cilicia had already collapsed, brought low by his predecessors and by the sword of the Sultan of Egypt. Our Catholicoi—wandering, persecuted, and torn between the Greeks, the Persians, the Arabs, and the few remaining Armenian princes—lived as though the nation itself were in its death throes. Yet several provinces—Vasurakan (that is, Van and Gnuniq/Amik), Taron, Apahuniq (Bulanik), Khnus, and others—remained inaccessible strongholds in the hands of Armenian lords.

This historical reality is reflected even in Turkish literature, notably in *Güzel Hıms*, where the course of the battles is recorded: the Armenians were subjugated by force of arms, while some of the other lords submitted of their own accord, and the Armenian lands were described as *emanet-ul-Allah*—that is, as territories entrusted to God.

Further testimony is furnished by Koloz Vardapet of Van in his *History of Vaspurakan*<sup>9</sup>, as well as by Yesayi Vardapet of the Monastery of Saint Karapet Monastery in his work *Eran Haykazn*<sup>10</sup>. Koloz substantiates, through concrete historical evidence, the submission of the rulers of Van and Amik, while these sources also bring to light a number of details whose traces are preserved in the volumes<sup>11</sup> of *Tarih-i Osmaniye (History of the Ottomans)*. By appointing Joakim of Bursa as Patriarch and treating the Armenians with favor, Sultan Mehmed II won over their sensitive hearts—long wearied by Greek domination—together with their sympathy and sincere loyalty. Accordingly, the native and displaced Armenian lords, since the Armenian nation was regarded as *emanet-ul-Allah*—a trust consigned to God—willingly bowed their heads before the throne of the Sultan.

By special *firmans*, the Sultans granted these lords privileges and honors. Thus, in Van, the Artsrunis—descendants of the kings of Amik—and in Mush, the Mamikonians, retained until the years 1700–1800 the titles of *topchibashi* (chief of artillery) and, as ancient feudal lords, received a portion of the land taxes. If these provinces had not been “entrusted” lands—if no *firmans* or written documents attested to their status as *avand (emanet, entrusted possession)*—why would the Ottomans have paid nearly half of the collected taxes to the descendants of the Arzruni, Temirean (now Turkified), Mamikonean, Yeramean, and other noble families?

The traces of these facts are preserved, and the people of those regions remember them to this day. By war were taken Amik, Van, Mush, and the rest—but from whom, and by whom? Which Turkish chronicler bears witness to this? These few testimonies, drawn from written records, show that the heart and soul of Armenia still throbbed with life when the Osmanlis arrived.

Yet the Armenian was led astray by the privileges bestowed upon him, dazzled by his own “Patriarch” and surrendered. Soon thereafter, the Turk read his requiem and began his reign of violence and barbarity. At that time, certain Armenian nobles resorted to apostasy. The names of the most prominent among them are presented below, as preserved in popular tradition. In every province, the cause of each noble’s

<sup>9</sup> It is related to Hovhannes Koloziyan’s extensive poem in Classical Armenian, “Chronicle of the Last Two Centuries of Van’s History”, the commentary by the journal “Etchmiatsin”.

<sup>10</sup> Published by M. K. Սարրևաւն (Saryean), 1879. The commentary by the journal “Etchmiatsin”.

<sup>11</sup> We regret that the books we have mentioned are not at hand; otherwise, by citing excerpts, we would have substantiated our words. Nevertheless, those who have studied Osmanian and Osmanian-Armenian literature can easily recall what we mean.

apostasy is well known and equally detestable. We have endeavored, as far as possible, to avoid hasty or biased judgment. After arranging the list, we reproduce the traditional narratives associated with each case.

### Cases of Apostasy and Forced Conversion

#### **A. Province of Karin (Erzurum)—Hamshen**

*Toward the end of the seventeenth century, the prince of Narman, known as **Keshishean**, together with eight to ten thousand of his followers, was compelled under duress to renounce his faith before the bloodthirsty **Lale Pasha**, governor of Ghararz (Erzurum) and Trebizond.*

#### **B. Region of Trebizond—Sürmene and Of**

*Thirty-eight or forty villages, both large and small, under the leadership of Prince **Altun**, were compelled to renounce their faith through the agency of the same Pasha.*

#### **C. Town and villages of Rize**

*Led by **Karapet Amira**, whose lineage still bears the name Karapet Oghlu, the population was terrorized by Lale Pasha and forced into apostasy.*

#### **D. Ardahan**

*Prince **Demirchioghlu**, together with seven hundred families and several villages, was compelled by Lale Pasha to embrace Islam and later became governor (pasha) of the province.*

#### **E. Shabin-Karahisar**

***Malaz-oghlu**, already Turkified, together with his clan.*

#### **F. Caesarea**

*Countless nobles and common people.*

#### **G. Cilicia**

***Narin Bey**, whose lineage later became a scourge upon the land—the first powerful Kurdish chief, numbering more than one hundred thousand.*

**H. Smyrna and Tikili (Troas, Pergamon, Aydın)**

A prince named **Chortvan**, whose lineage is now known as the **Chetmi** tribe, numbering more than one hundred thousand.

**I. Van**

The **Temireans**, also known as the **Apoghoseans**, together with their beys and pashas, who remain adherents of **Mkrtich Khrimian** (Khrimian Hayrik).

**J. Rshkotan, Manuqan, Khotsutsvan, Khoriman**, and other Kurdified groups discussed in Sasoun.

Taking these names as factual evidence, we emphasize that in Eastern Turkey—that is, Western Armenia—fully half of what is called the Turkish population was formerly Armenian. Though many may have renounced their ancestry, they have not forgotten their sacred saints. Even today, in Rize, Of, Sürmene, Narman, Sassoun, and Hamshen, Armenian or mixed Armenian speech survives.

Nor is the **Chetmi** a true Muslim. Though his name sounds Turkish, he is a worshipper of the Cross. Each year on Holy Thursday, the sheikh dons a black veil instead of the green turban and distributes bread and wine to the clan. Osman prays in the mosque, yet in secret he prays in the church and traces the sign of the Cross upon his brow.

It is precisely such Muslims who constitute a large portion of the population figures of Turkish Armenia—the very statistics published in the press with grotesque mockery.

We do not even mention here the individuals and families in various cities who, for diverse reasons, were compelled to renounce both nation and faith. Their names are frequently published in the fanatical journal *Mizan*. The number of such persons throughout Turkey is estimated to exceed ten thousand.

Thus, according to the notes recorded in my travel notebook, in the vilayet of Karin alone there exist as many secret Armenians as openly Armenian inhabitants, together with an equal number of Yezidis, Kızılbaş, Zoroastrians<sup>12</sup>, Turkomans, Druze, and Greeks. If all these facts are taken into consideration, the Turkish population could not possibly amount to even forty percent.

<sup>12</sup> In the original text, it is written as “զրապիւֆ” (Zrapyuf), and a little later as “չըրապիւֆ”, neither of which corresponds to any known religious or ethnic group. Therefore, we consider the reading “զարթիւֆ” / “զարթիւշտ” (Zartyuf / Zartyusht) to be the most probable.

*Is it not, then, sheer deception to represent the Armenians as so few precisely in that vilayet where they alone equal the Turks in number—without even counting the aforementioned elements, who, being oppressed no less than the Armenians and bearing irreconcilable enmity toward the Turks, spare not even their own sacred things in the fury of their passions?*

*Had we foreseen that the statistics would be falsified to such an extent, and had we devoted ourselves specifically to this matter, we would now possess precise data and could, with irrefutable evidence, demonstrate that—for example—in the province of **Karin** there are not 501,000 Muslims and 131,000 Christians, but rather 300,000 known Christians (Armenians), 150,000 keskes (half-Armenian, half-Turkified), a certain number of Yezidis, 15,000 Turkomans, and 65,000 genuine Muslims (Sunnis). The remaining number belongs to the tribes of Shah Hussein (Shi 'a), who are more favorably disposed toward the Armenian, praying for him rather than for the servants of the Padishah.*

*The same condition prevails throughout all the vilayets. In Erzurum, the Turk forms a majority only within the city itself, not in the villages. For the Turk—by nature predatory—has always shunned rural life: he has neither sown nor reaped, but has merely consumed throughout the centuries. Thus, he has gathered and concentrated in the towns and larger settlements.*

*In the vilayet of **Mush**—though it is itself a deception to call it a vilayet, for it is merely a part of Baghesh (Bitlis), comprising only two districts—it is asserted that there are 505,000 Muslims and 69,000 Christians. In the city of Mush, however, for every five Muslims there are three Armenians, and scarcely any of another element. The vast plain of Mush, moreover, is covered with hundreds of Armenian villages: the smallest numbering no fewer than sixty households, the largest not less than five or six hundred. By contrast, there are scarcely ten Turkish villages in the entire expanse.*

*The same holds true for **Bulanik**, in both of its divisions. **Sassoun** contains one hundred and fifty villages: thirty are inhabited by fanatical Kurds; sixty are mixed or Armenian-speaking villages, recently alienated in name only and belonging to the Balak, Batikan, and Sliwan tribes; the remainder are purely Armenian. Where, then, may one ask, do the 505,000 Muslims reside? Perhaps those who went into exile are not included in this falsified count; nor the surviving relatives of the victims of 1894, nor the fifty villages—large and small—that were annihilated. Also absent are the Catholics, the Protestants, and the Assyrians.*

*Let us assume, then, that the number of Armenians is sixty-nine thousand. But in that case—where do the five hundred and five thousand Muslims of Mush live, if the Armenians have not been counted among the Kurds? Where are they—in Marnik? in Morgh? in Avzut? in Rahva? Have they suddenly sprung up like thorns from the ground, while the Armenians have withered away like mushrooms, their leaves fallen like flowers? But who is there to feel shame? When has the Turk ever spoken with honesty or candor? Thus it is in all the provinces: through falsified statistics, they deceive the world.*

*To remain within the limits of our inquiry, we shall refrain from a detailed examination of these falsified statistics. Our sole aim is to make evident the elements inhabiting Armenia and their general disposition. We may confidently believe that, once reforms somewhat broader than those originally envisaged are introduced, all that we have described will reveal itself to be nothing other than fearless Armenians—forces capable of restraining the barbarous Kurd and Turk, and no less capable than ourselves of embracing civilization.*

*Can the Qizilbash of **Dersim** or Ghuzudjan—the descendants of Shah Hussein, who to this day defeat Ottoman battalions, and who from 1890 to the present year have prevailed over the proud Circassian Zekki Pasha without ever bowing before the tyrant—truly be called Turks?*

*These, presumably, are the peoples counted among the majority population figures which the authorities of the **Ottoman Empire** present to the world—despite their full awareness that these groups in fact stand in opposition to the Turk and harbor goodwill toward the Armenians. Included among them are also the valiant Khoromans, who, on the very day of Armenia's liberation, will raise the banner of the Cross upon the summits of their proud mountains—mountains whose dark thickets have, for five centuries, been strewn with the severed heads of the Padishah's vaunted warriors.*

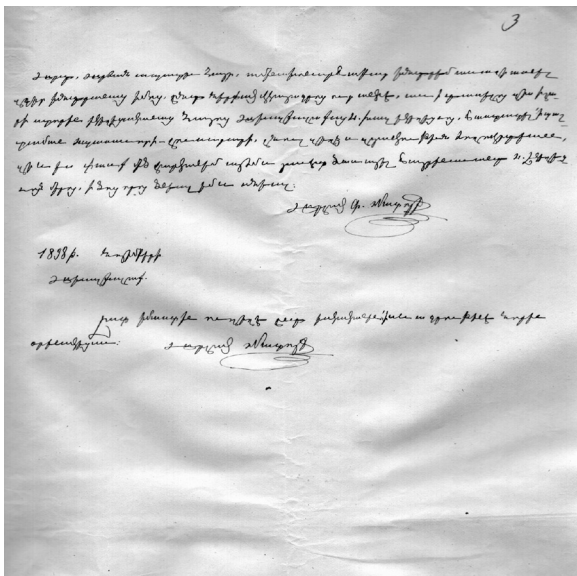
*As for the Kurds, little further emphasis is required. They are commonly depicted as fierce, predatory, semi-nomadic, and at times violent tribes; yet whenever the authority of the ruling power weakens, they gradually adopt more civilized ways—abandoning oppression and plunder and turning instead toward the customs and social forms of the surrounding populations. This may be demonstrated not only through reasoning, but also by indisputable realities. What were the Kurds of Yerevan half a century ago, and what are they today? What were, seventeen years ago, the once unruly Turkoman tribes of Chldr and Eortulu, formerly regarded as savage and bloodthirsty—and what have they now become?*



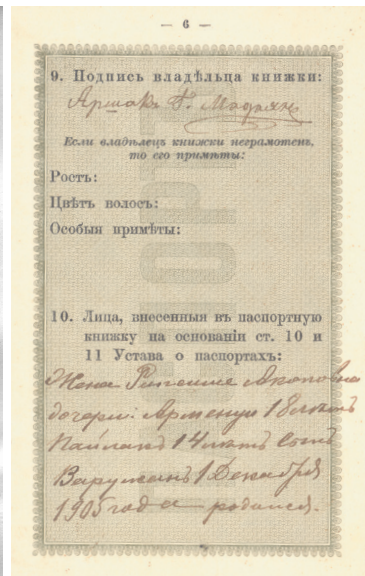
Seylan (seated, far left)



Seylan, a graduate of the Nersisyan School.



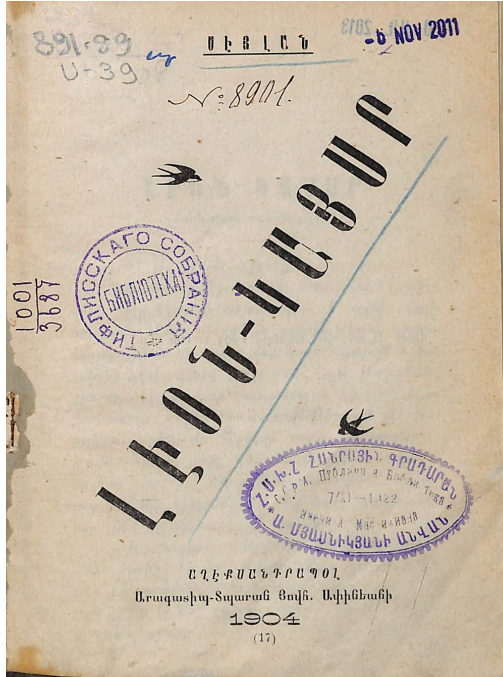
The signature page of Seylan's letter addressed to Catholicos Mkrtych Khrimyan (Hayrig).



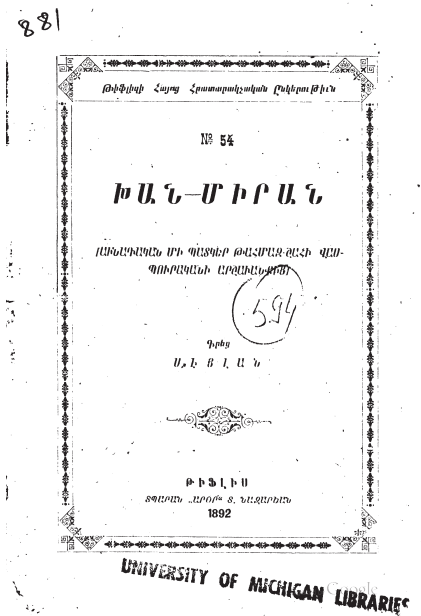
The page of Seylan's passport with his personal signature.



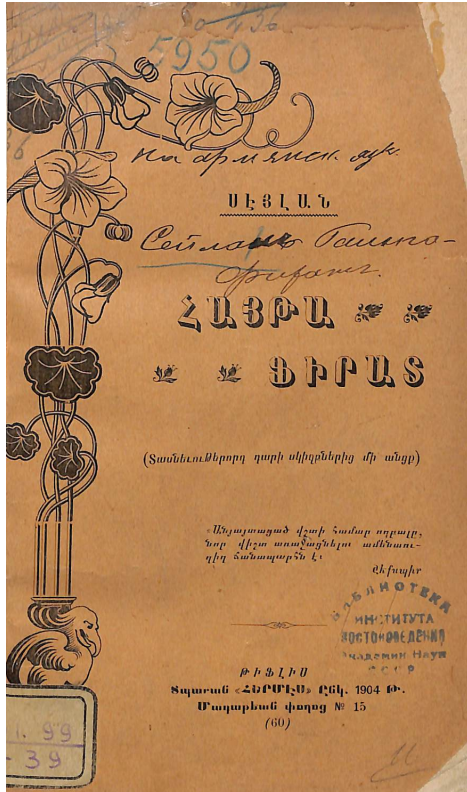
Title page of the book Baghti mek khaghē  
(The Game of Fate), 1890.



Title page of the book Leon-Kaysr  
(Leon-Emperor), 1904.



Title page of the book Khan-Miran, 1892.



Title page of the book Hayta-Firat, 1904.

*Under Turkish rule, murder and devastation were constant in those regions, giving rise to bandit leaders who turned the land into a theater of medieval barbarity. But when the region passed into Russian hands—when the fez disappeared together with the name of its sovereign caliph; when law and justice took firm hold—then order prevailed, and those same former bandits came to enjoy full security of honor, property, and life.*

*The eshirets living within Russian borders are incapable of committing even a hundredth part of the deeds attributed to the Kurds of Turkey. Hence, it is the government that is the true perpetrator. The guilty party, therefore, is the Ottoman—not the Kurd. Enlighten and educate the Kurdish people; bathe their poetic soul in learning, and you will discover a sound and wholesome nation. Yet instead of the fruits of education, they were offered arms and organized under the name Hamidiye.*

*Consequently, the Armenian of Western Armenia finds himself surrounded by peoples who, in equal or even greater numbers, despise the Turks—the Khoromans, the Keskes, the Yezidis, and the Zoroastrians. They call the Armenian Isa gjulu (“the Rose of Jesus”) and the Turk muzir iman (“the corrupted, false faith”). They welcome the Armenian into their homes and families, while granting the Turk—out of necessity—a separate place. They pity and sympathize with the Armenian and wish him a good future; toward the Turk, however, they feel a hatred handed down from generation to generation.*

*As proof of this, one need only point to Dersim—its long-standing rebellion, known both to the Sultan and to diplomatic circles. That it constitutes a branch of the Uzun-Hasanian line is a fact the Ottoman fears and conceals. Seeking its destruction, the authorities each year offer up victims under the pretext of glorifying the Holy Rasul.*

*Therefore, let reforms be introduced; let security be ensured; let the administrative system be reformed from its very foundations; and let there be an authority independent of the Sultan and accountable to Europe. Within six months, the true number of Armenians will be revealed, and genuine statistics will be laid bare before the world.*

*The atrocities in Sassoun were once denied, yet all came to light and were confirmed beyond doubt. Even now the number of Armenians is denied—but this, too, will be revealed.*

*Let the dawn of a new, life-quickenning era break. The enemy sees only Muslims in the cities, yet there are those who outwardly appear Turkish but are Armenian at*

*heart. Outwardly imams, inwardly priests—despoiled Ottomans, baptized Abrahams—will return to their mother’s embrace and celebrate the long-awaited sunrise.*

## ՀԻՄՆԱԲԱՌԵՐ

Turkish Armenia, Ethnographic composition, Armenian Question, Ottoman Empire, Fabricated statistics, Hamidiye Teskere, Forced conversion, Western Armenia, Demographic distortion, Sassoun massacres.

## РЕЗЮМЕ

Настоящая статья посвящена анализу публицистического сочинения Аршака (Вагаршака) Мадояна, известного под литературным псевдонимом Сейлан, «Этнографический состав Турецкой Армении», опубликованного в июльском номере журнала «Мурч» за 1895 год. Автор исследования рассматривает биографическую и общественно-интеллектуальную деятельность Сейлана, прослеживает причины использования им различных псевдонимов и обращает внимание на связь его публицистики с образовательной и просветительской миссией, поддерживаемой католикосом Мкртичем Хримяном.

Особое внимание уделяется критике сфальсифицированных османских статистических данных по населению Западной Армении, а также аргументации Сейлана, согласно которой реальное число армян значительно превосходило показатели, приведенные в официальных регистрах. Сейлан связывает демографические и социальные процессы со структурой властвования Османской империи и делает вывод о решающем значении цивилизационной среды и образования для трансформации общественного поведения, в том числе курдского и туркоманского населения.

Статья показывает, что спустя почти 130 лет положения и методологические подходы Сейлана не утратили своей актуальности и продолжают представлять интерес для современных исследований истории Западной Армении, демографии, идентичности и колониальной политики Османской империи.

