

THE ARMENIAN SETTLEMENTS OF KHARBERD PLAIN (in 1830–1870ss)

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The territory of Western Armenia had undergone tremendous demographic changes throughout centuries and as a result of it the ethnic proportion of the territory had changed. Numerous Kurds had penetrated and settled in the given territory, some part of the originally settled Armenians were Islamized and some migrated into other settlements. As a result many settlements which had previously been purely Armenian lost their native population while Kurds and Turks formed the majority. This policy of depopulation of Armenians from Western Armenia, adopted by the state led to mass massacres, deportations and the Armenian Genocide. That is why it is very important to investigate the ethnic and demographic situation in various provinces, regions (kaza), settlements in the period preceding the genocide. The given article aims at referring to the lifestyle, the number of the Armenian population in the settlements of Kharberd region and the town of Kapan Maden located near Kharberd, as well as studying the demographic changes recorded in the 1830–1870s.

The policy of social oppression and violence in the territory of Western Armenia and in other settlements of the Ottoman Empire continued in XIX century as well. It was both a state policy and actions against the Christian population by Muslims which led to worsening the quality of life of especially Armenians. According to the English missionary G. Badger, the life of the population was full of problems and hardships. As the author had been in Kharberd he described how the new Pasha stepped into the city. According to the author, it was the third appointment during that year and Pasha was accompanied by 300 people including mullahs, sheikhs and gendarmes¹. The population, particularly Armenians, had to take care of all of them. Besides, in the periods of wars, the

¹ **Badger G.**, The Nestorians and their Rituals with the Narrative of a Mission to Mesopotamia and Coordistan in 1842–1844 and of a Last Visit to those Countries in 1850, V. 1, London, 1852, p. 34.

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population had to provide food for the army settled in the given territories. The English engineer H. Barkley described the miserable condition of the army. He wrote: “We felt sorry for them, but we felt still more sorry for the villagers on their line of march, for it was self-evident that to exist the soldiers must plunder and rob wherever they went, and as winter had now begun, no fresh stores could be obtained to replace those taken”².

Alongside with all these social oppressions the Armenians had to put up with the religious pressure, which was very vividly conducted against religious institutions and cultural monuments. There were numerous episodes when the fanatic Turk population attacked one of the churches and tried to burn it, destroying ancient cross-stones and gravestones. One of examples of religious fanaticism was the episode in the village Yeghegi of Kharberd region. The local authorities gave a permission to Armenian population to build a church in Yeghegi. The Armenians started the construction and when they reached the arches the Muslims attacked and destroyed the church while it was nearly finished and the Armenians had spent three pouches of money. However the Armenians of Yeghegi did not give up and built a new church, this time it was wooden. The Muslims tried to burn the church, but fortunately the villagers managed to stop the fire³. Unfortunately these cases were many. The bishop Yeremia of Kharberd region in one of his letters from 1868 wrote about the facts of robbery in the churches and monasteries but the Patriarchate did not react to it. The bishop wrote: “We know from true sources that huge damages had been caused to my nation and many churches, monasteries had been robbed, but he (the patriarch – A.B.) never demanded covering of those damages”⁴. There had been similar cases also in other settlements of Western Armenia. The problem was so exacerbated that it was discussed in the General National Assembly and during one of the sessions on November 27, 1870, a commission had been formed for studying and reporting about painful episodes which had taken place previously. The commission having studied the compiled data and the protocols of the Patriarchate for the late 20 years prepared a bulletin. The main content of the bulletin was introduced to the General National Assembly during the session on

² **Barkley H.**, *A Ride Through Asia Minor and Armenia*, London, 1891, p. 299.

³ “Noyan Aghavni” (Noah’s Dove), in *Armenian*, Constantinople, N. 48, 1853, p. 4.

⁴ *Matenadaran, Archive of Catholicos*, f. 203, d. 999.

February 18, 1872. The bulletin was addressed to Sublime Port and highlighted the illegal activities of imperial authorities, religious discrimination against Armenians, fanatic disastrous episodes, social oppressions and attempts of Islamizing women and children by force⁵. Unfortunately the Sublime Port did not react to the bulletin and during the session of General National Assembly on September 10, 1876, some of the problems such as Islamizing and oppressions against churches and the Armenian population were discussed again⁶.

The following reasons and social instability led to new demographic modifications, changing the national proportion of the population of the given territory. The southwestern settlements of Western Armenia, such as Kharberd, Akn, Arabkir, Malatia and settlements in the neighborhood could not avoid the following changes.

The data sources referring to those territories in the beginning of XIX century are not so many, but already in the middle of XIX century several records and missionaries' evidence, describing some settlements of Western Armenia, especially the social activities of Armenians, their number and other issues were published. In this article we have used sources written both by foreign and Armenian authors.

According to different sources, Armenians were original settlers of the given territories and the authors emphasized the great role of Armenians in different life spheres. Getting to Kharberd territory the English writer, traveler H. Tozer wrote: "We were now in the true land of Armenia – for in ancient times the province to the west of the Euphrates was called Lesser Armenia, and at the present day though numerous Armenian families are found in the country that we have traversed, yet, from this time onward we shall meet with them in much greater numbers"⁷. It was mentioned that Kharberd plain was well cultivated and the most fertile territory in the whole Western Armenia. "Nowhere in Asiatic Turkey had we seen any part half so fertile, or a quarter so well cultivated"⁸, - noted H. Barkley, adding that there was no uncultivated land in the whole plain,

⁵ Matenadaran, Archive of Izmirlyan Catholicos, f. 14, d. 616, p. 2.

⁶ Ibid, p. 1–9.

⁷ **Tozer Rev. H.**, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor*, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1881, p. 210.

⁸ **Barkley H.**, *ibid*, p. 299.

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there were Armenian farming villages in all directions of the plain. This quotation refers to the 1870s.

First of all the authors wrote about the city of Kharberd. In 1854 the British geologist Smith wrote in his notes that Kharberd was a big and prospering city with twostoreyed stone houses⁹. Nearly all witnesses wrote about the picturesque position, fruitful gardens and valleys of Kharberd. “The view from the top of the Kharpout hill was, without exception, the finest we had seen since leaving Brusa”¹⁰, - wrote H. Barkley.

Doctor B. Ferukhan (Qrtikyan) travelling to Babylon with Raghup Bey, the third quartermaster of Abdul Mejid sultan, wrote about the location of Kharberd city and the number of population in his notes. According to the data stated by Ferukhan, Kharberd was “a city built on a mountain having 6000 houses among which 4200 were Turks, 1140 – Armenians, 360 – Assyrians, Greeks and Protestant Armenians”¹¹. It must be mentioned that Ferukhan had been in Kharberd in 1847. According to the author, the houses in Kharberd were “one-storeyed and two-storeyed buildings made of bricks, the roofs were landfill, the roads were narrow, irregular and built with stone, there was a wide road leading to the city from Mezre but it was not covered with stone”¹².

The number of the population mentioned by Gh. Alishan differed from the given sources, and according to him, there were 1750 houses among which 300 were Armenians and 3000 houses in 80 villages of Kharberd plain¹³. Perhaps the data mentioned by Gh. Alishan referred to earlier periods. The American missionary Rev. C. H. Wheeler wrote that some 25000 inhabitants lived in Kharberd in the middle of XIX century¹⁴. H. Tozer wrote about the 1870s, according to him, Kharberd had 5000 houses among which 70 were Assyrians,

⁹ Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. An Anthology of Transformation 13th–19th Centuries, edited by V. Ghazarian, Waltham, Mass., , p. 382.

¹⁰ **Barkley H.**, *ibid*, p. 311.

¹¹ **Ferukhan B.**, Bey, Travel to Babylon and Armenia in 1847 (Chanaparhordutyun I Babylon and Hayastan yamitearn 1847), in Armenian, Armash, 1876, p. 45.

¹² *Ibid*.

¹³ **Alishan Gh.**, Teghagir Hajoc Mecac, in Armenian, Venice, 1855, p. 43.

¹⁴ **Wheeler Rev. C.H.**, Letters from Eden; or Reminiscences of Missionary Life in the East, Boston, 1868, p. 95.

500 were Armenians and the others were Turks¹⁵. It must be mentioned that by that time the city of Mezre had already been founded. Thus, the number of Armenians living in Kharberd had decreased as many of them had settled in Mezre. Possibly the city of Mezre is the same Ashagh Mezre settlement mentioned by Ferukhan, which was in one hour distance from Kharberd. According to the author, the governor of the province and the head of the army resided there. The village had 600 houses among which 500 houses were Armenians, and 100 houses were Turks¹⁶. There were also some houses of Catholic Armenians. The settlement had two mosques made of bricks and one made of stone, a hospital, two Armenian churches, one Roman church and a Protestant synagogue. We consider that Mezre was named as Pasha Maghra. According to the publications of the monthly journal “Noyan Aghavni” (Noah’s Dove), the military and political pashas resided there, that is why the trade was prospering in this territory¹⁷. Mezre had been a small village before becoming a central settlement. The notes by the German military-man H. Moltke Senior, who had been serving in the Turkish army as a consultant in the 1838–1839s, proves it and provides additional information about the settlement where the army was located, about the everyday life of the population and their quantity. According to Moltke, Mezre was a village. The commander of the Turkish army Pasha Hafez had organized a reception in the honor of Moltke¹⁸. Later the latter wrote that Pasha had presented him with fruits, dried fruits, boxes full of honey harvested by the population.

According to the statistical data compiled in 1878, there were 5120 Armenians living in Kharberd city and 2050 Armenians living in Mezre¹⁹. We think that compared with the data compiled about the preceding years the number of the Armenian population living in the two cities in 1878 had not been so high. But later it had increased due to people who had immigrated from other settlements.

Tozer wrote that the villages of Kharberd plain had been almost totally populated by Armenians. The American missionary K. H. Wheeler mentioned

¹⁵ **Tozer Rev. H.**, *ibid*, p. 223.

¹⁶ **Ferukhan B.**, *ibid*, p. 46.

¹⁷ “Noyan Aghavni” (Noah’s Dove), in Armenian, Constantinople, N. 48, 1853, p. 4.

¹⁸ **Alboyajyan A.**, History of Armenians in Malatia (Patmutyun Malatio Hayoc), in Armenian, Beirut, 1861, p. 388.

¹⁹ Museum of Literature and Art, T. Azadian f., d. 44/ III.

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about some settlements of Kharberd plain in his book. Particularly he wrote about the village of Barjanch where 1000 Armenians and 1500 Turks lived in the 1860s²⁰. According to the author, there were 2500 Armenians and 12 houses of Turks in the village of Khuylyu²¹, 800 Armenians and 800 Turks living in the village of Khokh²². In the 1870s there were 300 houses of Armenians, living in Khuylyu 60 of which were houses of protestant Armenians²³.

The complete and detailed data about the number of the Armenian population in the Armenian villages of Kharberd plain were published in 1853 in two editions of the newspaper “Noyan Aghavni”. The list included nearly all villages of Kharberd plain, but there were no data about some settlements such as Tsovq, Veri Khokh, Qesrik and so on. It must be stated that the author mentioned village Tsovq-Kyoljuk, but there are no data about the number of the Armenian population. In our opinion, the information recorded in the monthly newspaper was realistic. At the same time there were some settlements included in the list which had not been mentioned in the statistics compiled in 1878. The latter gave a complete review of the settlements of Kharberd region. According to the data referring to 62 settlements, the number of Armenians was more than 40000. Besides Armenians, there were 740 Assyrians, 35676 Turks, and 32036 Kurds in the settlements of Kharberd region²⁴. Based on statistics Armenians had 63 churches.

Here is the table in which the data from two lists are combined.

settlement	number of Armenians, 1852	number of Armenians, 1878	Number of Turks, 1878	Total, 1878
Khoulagyugh	95 houses	1302 souls	0	1302souls
Chorgyugh	20	381	0	381
Hnagrak	98	239	32	271
Arpavout	62	611	152	763
Chotan	15	-	-	-
Arzouruk	9	191	100	291
Saray	10	90	120	210

²⁰ **Wheeler C.H.**, Ten Years on the Euphrates or, Primitive Missionary Policy Illustrated, Boston, 1868, p. 134.

²¹ Ibid, p. 137.

²² Ibid, p. 249.

²³ “Avetaber” (in Armenian), № 32, Constantinople, 1877.

²⁴ Museum of Literature and Art, T. Azadian f., d. 44/ III.

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Ghshla	3	-	-	-
Bazmashen	200	1721	0	1721
Qeorbe	125	1255	0	1255
Ekopi Mrgha	7	-	-	-
Harsek	20	211	260	471
Tsarouk	20	179	184	363
Hatseli	15	123	152	275
Garnakert	10	301	0	301
Ghourbet Mezre	8	49	50	99
Ynkuztak	5	21	426	447
Arkhli	8	-	-	-
Akhorik	3	-	-	-
Ashvan	100	611	0	611
Sursuri	185	1362	0	1362
Huseynik	300	2460	632	3092
Morenik	62	811	21	832
Harsik	400	-	-	-
Khrkhik	12	65	154	219
Barjanch	105	1319	1006	2325
Vardatil	72	521	126	647
Gaylu	25	201	130	331
Tlancik	21	111	236	347
Eniche	9	101	0	101
Erdmnik	72	516	30	543
Chataloghli	8	151	18	169
Datem	121	1450	46	1496
Khuylyu	222	2011	39	2050
Shntil	80	771	68	839
Karmri	100	651	594	1245
Vari Khokh	8	91	392	483
Yeghegi	73	1019	478	1497
Pasha Maghra	72 ²⁵	2050	1642	3692
Hoghe	325 ²⁶	1186	530	1716
Muri	72	301	48	349
Geghvank	150	301	400	701
Gomq	152	1111	0	1111
Aghnsi	67	451	111	562
Shemsi	52	321	0	321
Choteli	25	261	121	382
Asoghik	61	-	-	-
Aghimla	33	-	-	-
Khrach	30	203	44	247

²⁵ “Noyan Aghavni” (Noah's Dove), № 48, 1853, p. 4.

²⁶ Ibid, № 49, 1853, p. 2–3. There is information about Hoghe and the adjacent villages in this number.

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Elemlig	20	115	0	115
Akhor	132	261	0	261
Munzur oghlu	52	511	0	511
Habusi	172	1221	0	1221
Kenevik	25	133	324	457
Zardarich	52	211	410	621
Ijme	163	1121	422	1543
Shkhachi	150	603	258	861
Sary Gamish	110	535	314	849
Vardenik	22	35	110	145
Gonagalmaz	34	243	78	321
Sarbrcik	20	-	-	-
Tsovq	-	517	0	517
Sinan	-	63	20	83
Ayvos	-	1001	152	1313
Ipil	-	75	16	91
AyuPaghi	-	21	90	111
Mollaqendi	-	8	514	522
Qesrik	-	2511	770	3281
VeriKhokh	-	911	556	1467
Havuk	-	101	36	137

The journal “Noyan Aghavni” wrote about village Harsik where 400 houses of Armenians lived, but in our opinion this data may be incorrect; instead there was no information about village Qesrik which was populated by a great number of Armenians. It must be stated that the journal did not refer to the number of Armenians in the cities of Kharberd and Mezre. However based on the comparative studies of these two sources, we can conclude that they are true and real, besides, the two sources mentioned a lot of settlements, which in the 1870s were populated only by Armenians. Generally there were 60 Armenian villages around Kharberd and Mezre cities where in 1878 the number of the Armenian population had significantly increased compared with 1853.

Besides the city of Kharberd and the villages of Kharberd plain there were also records about the settlements which were later included in the territory of Kharberd province. Among those settlements was Kapan Maden to which we will refer now for it was in the neighborhood of Kharberd kaza. In 1847, having passed through Kapan Maden, Ferukhan wrote that the territory had been rather rich with forests, but they were often cut down irregularly and no new trees were planted, thus the territory was desolated²⁷. Probably it was connected with the usage and launch of mines which made the territory interesting for the

²⁷ Ferukhan B., *ibid*, p. 41–42.

contemporaries. All the authors wrote that Kapan Maden had been a popular center but the situation had changed when the works in the mines had stopped. Later the territory of Kapan Maden was mentioned as a settlement with ruins. G. Arch. Srvandztyants wrote. "Kapan Maden was very famous some 30 years ago. A great governor resided there who governed Dersim, Kharberd and Tigranakert with their regions (kaza)"²⁸. According to Srvandztyants, at the end of the 1870s there were not many people living in the settlement, all the Greeks who had settled and worked in the mines had left and there were only 100 houses of Armenians²⁹.

There are several other authors who recorded the number of Armenians in the above mentioned settlement. We will refer to them by chronology. According to Ferukhan, there were 750 houses of population in Kapan Maden among which 200 houses were Turks, 380 houses were Armenians and 170 houses were Greeks, the town had in total 7000 population and the majority of them were miners³⁰. Already in 1852 entrance to Kapan Maden opened a very gloomy view with hundreds of ruined houses. The churches St. Astvatsatsin and St. Karapet were still standing³¹. The air in Kapan Maden was very dirty, people were pale, "they were walking half-dead as if they had come out of graves but bearing their pain without complaining". The number of Armenians had been 800–900 houses, while in 1852 there were less than 200 houses. There were 300 houses of Turks³². The English missionary, orientalist G. Badger, who had been in Kapan Maden in the same period, wrote that there were 400 houses of Armenians who had two churches. Besides Armenians there were also 20 houses of Greeks³³.

The information presented by G. Badger and Ferukhan about the number of Armenians nearly match, while the figures introduced by "Noyan Aghavni" are fewer. We intend to think that in the 1840–50s there were 400 houses of Armenians living in town Kapan Maden and working in foundry.

²⁸ **Srvandztyanc G. Arch.**, Toros Aghbar (Brother Toros), in Armenian, Constantinople, 1884, p. 66.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 68.

³⁰ **Ferukhan B.**, ibid, p. 41–42.

³¹ "Noyan Aghavni" (Noah's Dove), № 49, 1853, p. 2–3.

³² Ibid.

³³ **Badger G.**, ibid, p. 32–33.

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According to H. Tozer, the exploitation of mines in Kapan Maden had been stopped eight years before his visit and there remained only eight houses of Greeks³⁴ in the case that there had been many Greeks living in Kapan Maden who had worked as miners, while Armenians had been involved in foundry. Unfortunately the author made no records about the number of Armenians. H. Tozer considered Kapan Maden to be an important center and many tombs with beautiful engravings and the facades of standing or ruined houses were a vivid evidence for that. Once H. Tozer and the people traveling with him had been an Armenian's guests who lived with his old father. Seeing the furniture of the rooms and the number of servants, the author concluded that the family was very rich while they had not seen such a rich house since they had left Svaz³⁵. In 1870, the periodical "Punj" published information according to which, Kapan Maden was a half-ruined mountainous town with 300–400 houses among which 100 houses were Armenians³⁶.

Thus summarizing, we can insist that Kapan Maden had been an important settlement in the 1840–50s due to mines and foundries, and there were hundreds of Armenian and Greek families living there. But when the mining and foundry works stopped, the population started to migrate, and the town lost its importance. In the 1870s, it was already a half-abandoned territory with mainly Turk population and only 100 houses of Armenians.

It must be mentioned that though the information about the activities of the Armenian population in the mentioned region of Western Armenia is not so rich, it is quite realistic. The above-mentioned sources are important and valuable, besides most of the authors are foreigners. At the end we record that in the 1870s the Armenian population formed the majority in most settlements of Kharberd plain and many of the villages were inhabited only by Armenians.

³⁴ **Tozer Rev. H.**, *ibid*, p. 212.

³⁵ *Ibid*.

³⁶ "Punj", in Armenian, Constantinople, № 500, 1870.

ԽԱՐԲԵՐԴԻ ԴԱՇՏԻ ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ԲՆԱԿԱՎԱՅՐԵՐԸ (1830–1870-ական թթ.)

ԲԱԲԼՈՒՄՅԱՆ Ա.

Ամփոփում

Արևմտյան Հայաստանի տարածքում դարերի ընթացքում ժողովրդագրական տեղաշարժերի հետևանքով, փոխվել էր բնակչության էթնիկ համամասնությունը: Հայ բնակչության նկատմամբ իրականացվող սոցիալական, կրոնական ճնշումների, բռնությունների քաղաքականությունը շարունակվում է և XIX դարի ընթացքում, ինչի հետևանքով մի շարք բնակավայրերում նվազում է հայ բնակչության թվաքանակը. նրանց մի մասն իսլամացվում է, մի մասն էլ հեռանում է այլ բնակավայրեր:

Հոդվածում անդրադարձ է կատարվում Խարբերդի գավառակի բնակավայրերի, ինչպես նաև Խարբերդին մոտ գտնվող Կապան Մադեն գյուղաքաղաքի հայ բնակչության կենսակերպին, թվաքանակին, տարածքում արձանագրված ժողովրդագրական փոփոխություններին 1830–1870-ական թվականների ընթացքում: Արձանագրվում է, որ նշված ժամանակաշրջանում Խարբերդի դաշտի ավելի քան 60 բնակավայրերի մեծ մասում գերակշռում էր հայ բնակչությունը, գյուղերից շատերը զուտ հայաբնակ էին:

АРМЯНСКИЕ НАСЕЛЕННЫЕ ПУНКТЫ ХАРБЕРДСКОЙ ДОЛИНЫ (в 1830–1870 гг.)

БАБЛУМЯН А.

Резюме

В Западной Армении на протяжении многих веков менялось этническое соотношение населения. Политика социального, религиозного притеснения и гонений в отношении армянского населения имела место и в XIX в., что привело к снижению численности армянского населения в ряде населенных пунктов: часть армян была исламизирована, остальные переселились в другие населенные пункты.

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В статье рассматриваются вопросы, касающиеся численности армян Харбердского региона и населенного пункта Капан Маден, а также демографических изменений в этом регионе в 1830–1870 гг. В указанный период в более чем 60 населенных пунктах Харбердской долины армянское население составляло большинство. Во многих селах региона жили исключительно армяне.