

The Armenian Catholic Community in the Ottoman Empire during the Period of the First World War until its Destruction

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From the Creation of the Community
until the Outbreak of the First World War

At various historical periods in the life of the Armenian ecclesiastical community, such as during the Crusades or the Latin Catholic missions in the Ottoman Empire, many Armenian priests and laypeople developed an affinity with the Catholic Church, or even converted to it – a relationship that was sporadically and intermittently reinforced by various events¹. However, although there have been periods when this relationship became quite close for some Armenians, it had never taken on any institutional form and structure and had not led to the formation of an Armenian Catholic hierarchy. An important figure among these Armenian Catholics or those sympathetic to the Catholics was, among others, Mekhitar of Sebastia (February 7, 1676-April 27, 1749), a learned monk who founded the famous Benedictine order of the Mekhitarists². In the first half of the 18th century, a significant

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1. E.g., see Ch. A. Frazee, “The Formation of the Armenian Catholic Community in the Ottoman Empire”, *Eastern Churches Review* VII, 2 (1975), pp. 150-153.

2. M. Nurikhan, *Il Servo di Dio Abate Mechitar, sua vita e suoi tempi*, Roma – Venezia 1914; B. L. Zekiyán, *Mekhitar di Sebaste rinnovatore e pioniere*, S. Lazzaro, Venezia 1977; «Mekhitar de Sébaste», in: J. Assfalg, P. Krüger (eds.), *Petit dictionnaire de l’Orient chrétien*, Brepols, Turnhout 1991, p. 372. The Order of the Mekhitarists maintains important

percentage of Armenians belonging to the Armenian Patriarchate of Sis in Cilicia had converted to Catholicism. However, the issue of the creation of Armenian Catholic churches remained open, with the result that the question of where Armenian Catholics should worship remained unresolved: in the Latin churches of the missionaries or in the Armenian ones of the Gregorian Armenians? It should be noted that the latter, in order to discourage Armenians from approaching Catholicism, were proceeding to making accusations of treason and the creation of factions, which were provoking fierce reactions from the Ottoman Empire. What seemed urgent in order to resolve the issue and achieve the independence of the Armenian Catholics was the creation of a separate hierarchy³. The first unsuccessful attempt took place in 1714. A few years later, in 1737, when the position of the Patriarch in Constantinople became vacant, a prime opportunity arose for them to claim the election of a Catholic one. Ultimately, they did not succeed that year, as the Orthodox Gregorian Armenians had managed to fill the vacant position with their own candidate for patriarch. However, they succeeded in their efforts a little later; on November 26, 1740, the Archbishop of Aleppo, Abraham Ardzivian, was elected as the first Armenian Catholic patriarch. He was officially recognized by Pope Benedict XIV (1740-1758) on November 26, 1742, with the responsibility of gathering under his authority the scattered Catholic Armenians throughout the world⁴.

monastic centers on the island of San Lazzaro in Venice and in Vienna.

3. See Ch. A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans. The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453-1923*, Cambridge University Press, London – N. York, 1983, pp. 178-185. Neither the Gregorian Armenians nor the Latins perceived this independence under a positive light, as until then they had kept them under their control. See *op.cit.*, p. 184.

4. Sacra Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, *Oriente Cattolico, Cenni storici e statistiche*, Città del Vaticano 1974, p. 425; J. Whooley, “The Armenian Catholic Church: A study in history and ecclesiology”, *The Heythrop Journal* XLV, 4 (2004), pp. 416-434, here pp. 416-17; W. de Vries, *Handbuch der Ostkirchenkunde*, W. Nyssen, H.-J. Schulz & P. Wiertz (eds.), Band I, Patmos Verlag, Düsseldorf 1984, p. 244. Cf. and Mons. Mesrob Djourian, «L’Église Catholique Arménienne», in: G. Dédéyan (eds.), *Les Arméniens histoire d’une Chrétienté*, Privat, Toulouse 1992, pp. 100-101, and also Ch. A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans, op.cit.*, pp. 186-87. Rome wished for all the Catholics of the Ottoman Empire to come under the spiritual jurisdiction of the new Armenian Catholic Patriarch Ardzivian, yet the Sublime Porte was opposing to that solution; thus, the new Patriarch settled in Lebanon. However, apart from the Ottoman authorities, the Latin Catholics did not

It should be noted that the French ambassador had managed to renew France's Capitulations under Sultan Mahmud I, extending the privileges of French merchants and confirming the corresponding religious privileges of the "Levantine"⁵. Of course, the creation of the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate in Syria provoked tensions and strong reactions among the leaders of the Catholic community, while Abraham Ardzivian was recognized only by Rome and, in any case, his authority was extended only to the territories belonging to the Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. The Catholics of Constantinople remained under the authority of the Ottoman capital's Latin patriarchal priest, while a little later, in 1759, a vicariate was created for the Armenian Catholics of Constantinople and its wider area. At the same time, the conflicts between the Armenian Catholics and the Latin missionaries of the monastic orders – who wished to maintain their own separate churches – were continuing unabated. Furthermore, the Sublime Porte did not recognize Ardzivian's authority over all Catholics, and foreign states were unwilling to allow a religious leader of a foreign nationality to interfere in their internal affairs⁶.

With the Treaty of Adrianople, signed on 14th of September 1829, and with Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II under pressure, the right conditions were created for the situation to be resolved. Indeed, the official recognition of the Armenian Catholic Church as a separate community was granted by the Ottoman authorities shortly after the signing the Treaty of Adrianople (6/1/1830), replacing a period of harsh persecutions⁷. With the recognition of the Armenian Catholics in

want to be subject to this new jurisdiction. Thus, Rome adopted the administrative division of the Armenian Church, with the result that the provinces corresponding to the Catholic Patriarchate of Sis were subject to the jurisdiction of Patriarch Ardzivian, and those corresponding to the Patriarchate of Constantinople would be subject to the Latin archbishop and later, with its establishment, to the Armenian Catholic Archdiocese. Thus, the Armenian Catholics had two administrative centers: the first in Constantinople and the second one in Bzommar, Lebanon.

5. For the Capitulations between the Ottoman Empire and the various European powers, see, among others, in: Io. K. Chasiotis, *Οί ευρωπαϊκές δυνάμεις και η Όθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία*, Vani Publications, Thessaloniki 2005, pp. 104-144.

6. Ch. A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, *op.cit.*, p. 188.

7. J. Whooley, "The Armenian Catholic Church: A Modern History until the Synod of

1830, and with the influence of the French, the first –albeit unofficial– representative body of all Roman Catholics in the Ottoman Empire was created⁸. On the 6th of July, 1830, with the Breve *Quod iamdiu*, Pope Pius VIII announced the election of the priest Anton Nurigian (Nurican) as archbishop and primate of the Ottoman Catholic Armenians, removing them from the jurisdiction of the Latin patriarchal vicar⁹. Certainly, Sultan Mahmud II did not positively received the election of a foreign citizen, especially an Austrian one, as archbishop, as he would have preferred an archbishop from among the local Catholics who had returned from exile after the persecution he had unleashed; thus, he

Rome of 1928”, in: A. O’Mahony (ed.), *Christianity in the Middle East: Studies in Modern History, Theology and Politics*, Melisende, London 2008, pp. 266-68, and J. Whooley, “The Armenian Catholic Church: A study in history...”, *op.cit.*, p. 418. Cf. and W. de Vries, *Handbuch der Ostkirchenkunde*, *op.cit.*, p. 244 as well as Mons. M. Djourian, «L’Église Catholique Arménienne...», *op.cit.*, pp. 102, 104. Also see, N. Setian, *Gli Armeni cattolici nell’Impero Ottomano: Cenni storico-giuridici (1680-1867)*, Don Bosco, Roma 1994, pp. 51-60. It is not within the scope of this article to dealing with the various problems that arose with the Ottoman authorities concerning the two representatives of the Armenian Catholics, one religious and one political, as well as the participation of the laity in the election of the Patriarch, which led to the famous schism during the period of Patriarch Hassoun. For the above, see J. Whooley, “The Armenian Catholic Church...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 418-21. For the persecutions, see, among others, Chr. Korten, “Private Partners: Cooperation between Russia and Rome in the Crisis of the Armenian Catholic Church, 1827-1830”, *The Slavonic and East European Review* 92, 4 (October 2014), pp. 653-673.

8. P. Maggiolini, “Bringing together eastern catholics under a common civil head”, *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 64, 3-4 (2012), pp. 263-70; M. Elçin (ed.), L. Christopher, «Σχέσεις μεταξύ ὀρθόδοξης καὶ καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη (15ος-20ὸς αἰ.)», *Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια Μείζονος Ἑλληνισμοῦ / The Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World*, Κωνσταντινούπολη, URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=11462> [4.1.2013]. Cf. K. Sc. Latourette, *The Great Century in Northern Africa and Asia A.D. 1800-A.D. 1914* in the series A History of the Expansion of Christianity, vol. VI., New York & London 1944, p. 48. For the Armenian Catholics in general, see D. Attwater, *The Catholic Eastern Churches*, Bruce Pub. Co, Milwaukee, Wis. 1935, pp. 205-209, and I. Silbernagl, *Verfassung und gegenwärtiger Bestand sämtlicher Kirchen des Orients: Eine kanonistische-statistische Abhandlung*, Verlagsanstalt vorm. G. J. Manz, Regensburg 1904, pp. 290-99 and, more specifically, for the Armenian Catholics in the Ottoman Empire, see also N. Setian, *Gli armeni cattolici nell’Impero Ottomano: Cenni storico-giuridici (1680-1867)*, *op.cit.*

9. *Bullarium Pontificium Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, Tomo V, Typis Collegii Urbani, Romae 1841, pp. 53-56, and for Anton Nurigian, *ibid.*, pp. 56-58.

did not recognize his title of archbishop¹⁰. Thus, on the 5th of January, 1831, the Sultan appointed the Armenian Catholic Hagop Çukuryan as *capo civile*, i.e., the national leader of the community. Consequently, according to the Ottoman administration, the Pope did not have civil and political jurisdiction over the Catholic Armenians, but only spiritual one¹¹. On the other hand, the Latin Roman Catholics, who had not been recognized as a separate millet, unlike the Armenian Catholics, were placed in 1844 under the direct control of the Pasha of Tophane, who was responsible for collecting taxes and issuing the necessary official certificates (*tezkere*)¹².

This dual structure, one principle for civil cases and one for the religious ones, was the reason why the Armenian Catholic community faced significant problems in the following years. The situation was further complicated by the fact that for many years the Armenian Catholics had two religious centers, one in Constantinople and one in Bzommar. Finally, on July 18, 1867, Pope Pius IX, with the papal bull “*Reversurus*”, merged the Province of Constantinople with the Patriarchate of Cilicia, transferring the seat of the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate to Constantinople, where Patriarch Hassun had had his seat

10. See G. Şahin, “XVIII. ve XIX. Yüzyıllarda Avusturya’nın Katolik Ermenilere Yönelik Politikalarına Dair Bazı Tespitler”, *Osmanlı Medeniyeti Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4, 6 (2018), p. 73.

11. V. Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1863: a study of its historical development*, Istanbul 1988, p. 38; N. Setian, *Gli Armeni cattolici...*, *op.cit.*, p. 83 ff.; Ch. A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, *op.cit.*, pp. 259-60; Ch. A. Frazee, “The Formation of the Armenian Catholic Community...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 162-163. Cf. and P. Gefaell, «Il ristabilimento del Patriarcato Latino di Gerusalemme (1847) e la vicenda del rappresentante diplomatico della Santa Sede presso la Porta Ottomana», *Il diritto ecclesiastico* 111, 1 (2000), p. 199. In his firman, the Sultan noted, among other things, that Catholics were obliged to live under the authority of Greek or Armenian patriarchs who had a different religion from theirs and were forced to go to church with them. Armenian patriarchs who had a different religion from them and were forced to go to Frankish [Levantine] churches, which was humiliating for them, and thus allowed them to perform their religious duties in their own separate churches, without having to go to those of the “Franks” [Levantines].

12. T. Şubasi, *Anglo-Ottoman relations and the reform question in the early Tanzimat period 1839-1852, with special reference to reforms concerning Ottoman non-Muslims*, doctoral dissertation, Birmingham 1995, p. 285.

since 1846. This event caused serious reactions within the Armenian Catholic community, leading to a schism that lasted for over a decade¹³. However, this was the beginning of the merging into a single political and spiritual authority for the Armenian Catholics¹⁴.

The patriarchal seat remained in Constantinople from 1867 until 1922, when, under the auspices of Mons. Hovhannes Nazlian, it was transferred to Beirut due to the prevalence of the Kemalist forces and the loss of international protection in Constantinople. The transfer was ratified by the patriarchal synod held in Rome in 1928¹⁵.

The Deterioration of the Armenians' Situation and the Implementation of the Genocide Plans

The status of the Armenians within the Empire had begun to deteriorate at the end of the 19th century. The national awakening and the ensuing claims of the Armenian millet were formally articulated in the Treaty of Berlin; these actions brought them into direct conflict with the Sublime Porte, a conflict that culminated in the massacres of 1894-96, to be followed by those at Adana, in 1909. There are scattered and frequent references in the Vatican archives to the period preceding

13. For the schism, see indicatively Ch. A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, op.cit., pp. 264-272.

14. B. L. Zekiyan, "Armenians and the Vatican during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Mekhitar and the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate. The challenge of Mekhitarian Ecumenism and Latin-Roman loyalty", *Het Christelijk Oosten* 52, 3-4 (2000), pp. 251-267. Apart from the merging of the two administrative centers, the papal bull *Reversurus* imposed Latin standards for the election of bishops in the Armenian Catholic Church, excluding lay people from the elections and exacerbating the discord among Armenian Catholics. For the schism see, among others, H. H. Schwedt, "Far behind in Turkey: The Pope and the Armenian Catholics schism (1870-1888)", *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 106, 4 (October 2016), pp. 250-272. For the Great Powers' role in relation with the schism, see Mariam Kartashyan, „Die Rolle der europäischen Imperialmächte für den Verlauf des armenischen Schismas (1871-1879/81)“, *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 106, 4 (October 2016), pp. 273-294.

15. B. L. Zekiyan, "Armenians and the Vatican...", op.cit., pp. 251-267. Cf. and W. de Vries, *Handbuch...*, op.cit., p. 244, and also Mons. Mesrob Djourian, «L'Église Catholique Arménienne», op.cit., p. 104.

the culmination of tensions between the Armenians and the Ottoman authorities, revealing the difficult life of the Armenians with frequent public humiliations and insults, aimed at terrorizing the Armenian population. Thus, the Armenian Catholic community had already been in a dire situation before the outbreak of the First World War.

An important factor that exacerbated the uncertainty surrounding the continued presence of Christian population within the boundaries of the Empire was the arrival of displaced Muslims from the Balkans and the Caucasus; this led to the intensification of the religious fundamentalism and chauvinism, turning the Muslims against the Christian populations. There have been many instances of slogans calling for the expulsion of Christians from the Empire¹⁶. Indeed, intense concerns about the fate of the Armenian Catholics were expressed very early on in Catholic archives. The Latin Catholic missionary and superior of the Capuchin mission in Trebizond, Fr. Lorenzo da Montemarciano, noted in his diary that the Turks were looking for an opportunity to solve the Armenian question once and for all. In this context, he noted that rumors were circulating that members of the Young Turks Committee of Union and Progress who had Constantinople as their basis had sent secret information distributed to the provincial governors for the indiscriminate massacre of all Armenians, starting with the city of Van¹⁷. All of the above were essentially foreshadowing an organized and systematic expulsion and massacre by the Young Turk and then Kemalist regimes – crimes that the international scientific community was going to characterize as the genocide of the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire¹⁸.

16. Fra Cirillo Giovanni Zohrabian, *A servizio dei fratelli: Memorie di Vita Missionaria*, parte 1: In Asia Minore, Convento Cappuccini, Palermo 1965, pp. 256-7, where he characteristically mentions that the fanatical mob shouted: “All infidels must leave the holy land of the Ottomans”.

17. Archivio Generale dell’Ordine dei Frati Minori Cappuccini (hereafter AGC), AC 149, p. Lorenzo da Montemarciano, *Memorie della Missione di Trebisonda del tempo della guerra mondiale*, ff. 29r-31r.

18. There is an extended literature related to the Armenian Genocide; among other studies, see R. G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, N.J. 2nd 1987; V. Dadrian, *Η Ιστορία της Αρμενικής Γενοκτονίας*, transl. Oh.-S. Agabadian, Stochastis Publications, Athens 2002; T. Akçam, *Μιά έπαισχυνη πράξη. Η Γενοκτονία των Αρμενίων και τὸ ζήτημα τῆς τουρκικῆς εὐθύνης*, transl.

Islamization

The destruction and extermination of the Armenian community was carried out in many different ways. One of the most characteristic methods of destruction, which is revealed in numerous archives, apart from the obvious one concerning the massacre of the civilian population, were the violent Islamization with the plundering of orphans or women, or the voluntary Islamization, carried out by Armenians, hoping their salvation. Indeed, the turmoil caused by First World War broke up and separated many families, while many children were left orphaned or were taken in by Turkish and other Muslim families. Catholic missionaries, learning of the fate of these children, tried in every way to free them, by either sending them to the Catholic orphanage or finding their families and reuniting them. Father Cirillo Zohrabian, a Capuchin missionary who worked in Pontus, reports several attempts made by missionaries to rescue women from the hands of the Turks or children who were destined to marry Muslims¹⁹. Furthermore, in a report that was sent by the Armenian Catholic Patriarch Monsignor Terzian to the Apostolic Delegate Monsignor Angelo Dolci, there were reports regarding significant number of Armenian Catholics from Samsun and Trebizond who were forced to convert to Islam²⁰. On the other hand, Fr. Lorenzo da Montemarciano noted in his diary that on June 26, 1915, a proclamation was issued, which was posted throughout the city and called on the Armenians to gather within five days in order to be transported to the interior. He described the tragic sight of the assembled men, women, and children

(Greek) Tina Plyta, Papazisis Publications, Athens 2007; T. Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2012; B. Balakian, *Ὁ Τύγρης φλέγεται. Ἡ Ἀρμενικὴ Γενοκτονία καὶ ἡ ὀλιγωρία τῆς Δύσης*, transl. (Greek) El. Maglinis, Kastaniotis Publications, Athens 2006; R. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*, I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, New York & London 2011. More specifically, on the study of the Armenian Genocide based on Vatican archives, see the recent publications of archives by G.-H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena (1894-1896, 1908-1925). I documenti degli Archivi della Santa Sede*, vol. I-VII, Valore Italiano, Roma 2013-2015.

19. Fra Cirillo Giovanni Zohrabian, *A servizio dei fratelli...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 337-42.

20. «Nota del Patriarca armeno cattolico Terzian al Delegato apostolico Dolci», in: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, *op.cit.*, vol. III, p. 90.

crying out their innocence and begging to be set free; he emphasizes that many embraced Islam, believing that in this way they would be exempt from exile²¹.

Efforts for the Armenian Catholics to be Exempted from the Harsh Measures

In recent years, many scholars have expressed the view that Armenians of the Catholic or Protestant faith were exempt from the measures of displacement and eventual extermination precisely because of their confessional identity and the consequent protection they enjoyed from the Great Powers. This position, along with a series of other cases²², was used as a key argument from the deniers of the Armenian Genocide. Taner Akçam based on the archival material he published, demonstrated that, despite the initial assurances of the authorities and the diplomatic efforts of the consuls, Catholic and Protestant Armenians did not escape the deportations²³. Unarguably, in some cases it appears that their deportation and exile had indeed been postponed due to the intervention of the Great Powers. Even the Turks' allies, the Germans and Austrians, reacted against the persecutions. In fact, the Germans had strongly protested, as evidenced by diplomatic communications on July 4 and August 9, 1915, causing trouble to the Young Turks²⁴.

21. AGC, AC 149, p. Lorenzo da Montemarciano, *Memorie della Missione di Trebisonda del tempo della guerra mondiale*, 33r-38r. The proclamation in pp. 33r-34v.

22. During the implementation of the plan for the extermination of the Christian communities, it is a fact that specific measures were taken for certain population groups to be exempted, mainly those who were useful to the state and government – craftsmen, merchants, workers, and civil servants; see F. DüNDAR, 'Ο Κώδικας τῆς σύγχρονης Τουρκίας. Ἡ μηχανικὴ τῶν Ἐθνοτήτων τῆς «Ἐνώσεως καὶ Προόδου» 1913-1918, transl. (Greek) N. Ouzounoglou, Liana Mystakidou, Alexandra Moysidou, Greekworks.com, Athens 2014, pp. 306-307.

23. T. Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime against Humanity...*, op.cit., pp. 373-383 and T. Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt & Company, New York 2006, pp. 175-178.

24. See Talat's concerns about the German and Austro-Hungarian governments' "frustration" and the promises made to them not to displace the Catholic Armenians in: T. Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime against Humanity...*, op.cit., p. 204.

However, this postponement lasted for a very short time, as in the end the Catholic and Protestant Armenians suffered the same fate as the Orthodox Armenians²⁵.

That terrifying wave of deportations and massacres resulted in the mobilization and reaction of even Pope Benedict XV, the Head of the Catholic Church. As Monsignor Dolci noted in his report to Cardinal Gotti, Prefect of Propaganda, the Pope protested to the Sultan himself in the midst of the massacres, demanding from him to put an end to the persecution of all Armenians, regardless of their religious confession. According to Monsignor Dolci, their situation seemed to be immediately improved²⁶. Mons. Dolci even intervened with diplomats and Enver Pasha to request the return of those Catholic Armenians who had been displaced²⁷.

From the archival material, preserved in the collections of the Vatican and various missionary orders that were active in the Ottoman Empire, it seems that a systematic effort had indeed taken place for the Catholic Armenians to be exempted from the extermination. Vatican officials, such as the apostolic delegate in Constantinople, the heads of the missionary orders, and the local missionaries themselves, seem to have made efforts to save them, especially when they realized that their fate was sealed. They tried to separate the Catholic Armenians from the Gregorian ones; these efforts were made by high-ranking officials. In a letter sent from Constantinople on July 29, 1915, to Cardinal Gotti, Prefect of Propaganda Fide, the apostolic delegate Monsignor Angelo Dolci notes that he had informed the Grand Vizier and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the members of the Entente but also the German and Austrian allies of the

25. T. Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime against Humanity...*, *op.cit.*, p. 374. For more details about the German protests, see W. Gust (ed.), *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern 1915/16: Dokumente aus dem Politischen Archiv des deutschen Auswärtigen Amts*, Springe 2005, pp. 76-97.

26. «Rapporto del Delegato apostolico al Cardinale Gotti, Prefetto della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide – ACO, Armeni del Patriarcato 1891-1926, rubrica no 105, 3, no 36941, 24 Novembre 1915», in: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, *op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 104-107.

27. «Rapporto del Delegato apostolico al Cardinale Gotti, Prefetto della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide – ACO, Armeni del Patriarcato 1891-1926, rubrica no 105, 3, no 37018, 12 Dicembre», in: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, *op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 108-109.

Ottoman Turks, that a distinction should be made between Catholic and non-Catholic Armenians, assuring them that the former were not involved in politics and were loyal subjects of the Empire. In the same letter, Dolci noted that he was also interested in those non-Catholic Armenians who had not exhibited any revolutionary activities, but he emphasized that his protests to the Germans and Austrians were ineffective, since, as he observed, they did not have the authority to persuade the Turkish parliament, which was driven by unbridled chauvinism²⁸. An often-repeated feature that can be found in the archives is the overemphasis on the obedience and loyalty of the Armenian Catholic community to the ruling class²⁹.

The Young Turks, wanting to get rid themselves of the pressure of the Catholic European powers, had proceeded with the unilateral abolition of the confessions at the outbreak of the war, attempting to achieve the direct representation of Catholic Ottoman subjects from within. In other words, they attempted to appoint Ottoman subjects of the Catholic faith as community leaders in order to mitigate external intervention. In a confidential letter sent on July 3, 1915 to the Spanish foreign minister, Erik Scav, the Spanish ambassador to Constantinople, Carl Ellis Wandel, mentioned, among other things, that the Young Turks had removed the protective status that Catholics had enjoyed for the last several centuries. They appointed a committee of 12 lay Catholic Ottoman subjects, loyal to them, to govern the Catholic community. Of course, the apostolic delegate refused to meet with the twelve-member delegation. In Catholic circles, there was hope that Germany and Austria would intervene on behalf of the Catholics, but it seems that this did not happen or did not have any significant effect on the behavior of the Young Turks. As both the German and Austrian ambassadors argued, their influence on the Young Turk government, which, as they pointed out, was acting so

28. «Rapporto del Delegato apostolico al Cardinale Gotti, Prefetto della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide – ACO, Armeni del Patriarcato 1891-1926, rubrica no 105, 3, no 36771, 29 Luglio 1915», in: G. H. Ruysen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, *op.cit.*, vol. III, p. 86.

29. See, for example, Archivio Segreto Vaticano (hereafter ASV), Segreteria di Stato, Guerra, fasc. 111, ff. 79r-80v, fr. Herzelin Meyer di Attendorn at the Apostolic Nunciature in Munich, Attendorn, June 11, 1917.

foolishly, was impossible³⁰.

Monsignor Dolci, in his letter to Cardinal Gotti, Prefect of Propaganda, sent on December 12, 1915, noted that, despite the fact that the separation between Catholic and Gregorian Armenians was emphasized and the government seemed to confirm such a distinction, ultimately the persecutions and murders confirmed the opposite. He accompanied his letter by a detailed list of victims per diocese³¹.

The archives reveal that, despite the many protests made by the German and Austrian diplomatic authorities, these had no serious results, or the exceptions made for the displaced persons were only partial, temporary, or local in nature. In order for the ineffectiveness of the diplomats of these powers to be overcome, an attempt was made to approach a neutral Catholic power; among others, the Catholic dignitaries appealed to Spain. Thus, on April 27, 1916, a similar appeal was made by Monsignor Angelo Dolci and a German priest to the Spanish Embassy. The inability of the Austrians and Germans to protect Catholics due to their close relations with the Ottoman Turks is also noted in this appeal. The fact that thirteen out of sixteen Catholic communities that existed among the Armenians outside Constantinople had completely disappeared reveals the latter's inability to protect Catholic Armenians³².

30. Danish diplomatic sources, DK/RA-UM/Gruppeordnede sager 1909-1945. 139. D. 1, "Tyrkiet - Indre Forhold". Pakke 1, til, The minister in Constantinople (Carl Ellis Wandel) to the Foreign Minister (Erik Scavenius), 31 Dec. 1916, Report No. 70, Constantinople, 3 July 1915. See <http://www.armenocide.net/armenocide/armgende.nsf/3a4b0a224f485c26c1256ad8001005f2/7b860cda40491648c125706b0045e6d6!OpenDocument&Highlight=2,Erik,Scavenius> [14.3.2023].

31. «Rapporto del Delegato apostolico al Cardinale Gotti, Prefetto della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide – ACO, Armeni del Patriarcato 1891-1926, rubrica no 105, 3, no 37021, 20 Dicembre 1915», in: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, op.cit., vol. III, pp. 109-112.

32. Danish diplomatic sources, DK/RA-UM/Gruppeordnede sager 1909-1945. 139. N. 1, "Armenien", The minister at Constantinople Carl Ellis Wandel to the Foreign Minister Erik Scavenius, Report No.113, Constantinople, 27 April 1916. See <http://www.armenocide.net/armenocide/armgende.nsf/3a4b0a224f485c26c1256ad8001005f2/5dc101950d5803c0c125706c0042a954!OpenDocument&Highlight=2,Erik,Scavenius> [13.3.2023]. For the interventions of the apostolic delegate Angelo Dolci in the diplomats, see also «Rapporto del Delegato apostolico al Cardinale Gotti, Prefetto della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide – ACO, Armeni del Patriarcato 1891-1926, rubrica no 105, 3, no 37336, 24 Aprile 1916, 37364, 28 Aprile 1916, 37389, 19 Maggio 1916», in: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La*

As we've mentioned above, in some cases, the protests and appeals of the diplomats resulted in temporary exemptions from deportation and extermination, which they nevertheless lasted for a short period of time. One such case was the temporary suspension of the deportation of Armenians from Aleppo and Mara, ordered by Cemal Pasha³³. After protests and pressure exerted from Germany and Austria, Talaat suspended the deportation and ordered the return of those who had been deported. At the same time, on August 19, 1915, he issued a secret circular exempting Protestant and Catholic Armenians from deportation. However, as it is noted in other telegrams, this specific exemption was intended precisely to mislead the Great Powers and the international community about the Young Turks' real purposes. In fact, in a telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to the governor of Ankara on May 27, 1916, it is clearly stated that Catholic and Protestant Armenians should be exempted for the "high interest of the State" in order to show that they had not adopted a policy of total extermination of the Armenians³⁴. Thus, there are several cases in which the order for the displacement of the Armenian Catholics was interrupted at various times – e.g., in Ankara³⁵. For the same reason, Talaat seems to have prevented the mass Islamization of 156 Protestant Armenian families in Sebastopol, by observing that this particular Islamization "does not help the state"³⁶. However, from the sequence of Talaat's telegrams, it appears that the orders for the temporary cessation of persecution and deportations of Catholics and Protestants were an attempt on his

Questione Armena..., *op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 118-122.

33. «Rapporto del Delegato apostolico al Cardinale Gotti, Prefetto della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide – ACO, Armeni del Patriarcato 1891-1926, rubrica no 105, 3, no 37389, 19 Maggio 1916», in: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, *op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 121-122.

34. F. Dündar, *Ό Κώδικας τής σύγχρονης Τουρκίας...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 307-308.

35. «Rapporto del Delegato apostolico al Cardinale Gotti, Prefetto della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide – ACO, Armeni, fasc. 2912/28, no 38461, 7 Luglio 1917», in: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, *op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 140-141. Cf. and T. Akçam, *A Shameful Act...*, *op.cit.*, p. 177, where, apart from Ankara, he also mentions Urfa and Aleppo.

36. F. Dündar, *Ό Κώδικας τής σύγχρονης Τουρκίας...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 310-311.

part to appease and essentially deceive foreign diplomats. Especially after Talaat was being pressured from German diplomats, this double game is most clearly evident in the telegrams sent by him in August 1915. In the first, sent on August 4, he requested the suspension of the deportation of Catholic Armenians, while in the second, which was sent on August 15, he requested the exemption of Protestants. Nevertheless, immediately after having sent the above telegrams, he sent a new one, in which he instructed that the first two telegrams should be ignored. Then, after continuing pressure, he sent another telegram on August 29, in which he again requested the cessation of deportations of Catholics and Protestants; he even showed the telegram to the German ambassador to convince him that all the necessary measures had been taken for their protection. However, immediately afterwards, on September 2, 1915, he sent a new telegram ordering the deportation of all Catholic and Protestant Armenians who had remained with their families. In fact, to ensure that his orders for deportation without exception were understood, he sent a new letter on October 24 confirming his previous orders for deportation³⁷. All the above indisputably demonstrate that the concern that the Young Turks theoretically showed for the exemption and salvation of Catholic and Protestant Armenians from persecution and extermination was in fact part of a plan to deceive the Great Powers, and the plan regarding the complete extermination of the Armenians to be remained hidden from them.

The near Complete Extermination of the Armenian Catholic Community

There is ample evidence confirming the fact that, at the end of the day, the Armenians' confessional identity did not play any decisive role in their salvation, and that Catholic or Protestant Armenians were not exempt from the genocidal policy. A true testament of this is the result of the Young

37. T. Akçam, "Deportation and Massacres in the Cipher Telegrams of the Interior Ministry in the Prime Ministerial Archive (Başbakanlık Arşivi)", *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 1, 3 (2006), p. 307.

Turks' policy itself – the extermination and destruction of the Armenian Catholic community, just as it happened with the Gregorian or Protestant ones. The Armenian Catholic Capuchin monk Cirillo Giovanni Zohrabian, who lived among them until the end, notes that the Catholic Armenians of Trebizond were subjected to the same methods of extermination as those used against the Gregorian ones; namely, endless marches into the interior of Anatolia, which led to the systematic death of the displaced persons³⁸.

Besides, the Armenian Catholic communities of Pontus had already been dissolved long before the end of the war. On August 6, 1917, Father Michele from Samsun requested that the Armenian Catholic Metropolitan of Trebizond, Monsignor Naslian, be informed that only a few Armenian Catholic families, which were living in absolute misery without the necessities for survival had remained alive³⁹. The situation was the same in most of the other areas – for example, we could mention here Fr. Herzelin Meyer di Attendorn's descriptions in his letter of June 11, 1917 to the apostolic nuncio in Munich about the persecution of the Armenians. In it, he described the destruction of Ankara's Armenian Catholic community, their exile, the burning of the Armenian Catholic neighborhood, the destruction of the community's archives and books, the forced circumcision of 300 young men in Damascus in January of the same year, and asked him to inform the Pope, requesting the latter's assistance. The fear that prevailed among Armenians, both Catholics and Gregorian, was widespread⁴⁰. Many similar reports have been preserved concerning the destruction suffered by

38. Fra Cirillo Giovanni Zohrabian, *A servizio dei fratelli...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 283-88, where he also mentions the fate of his family members who, despite being Catholic, were not spared from the massacres.

39. ASV, Arch. Deleg. Turchia, 103, fasc. 535, f. 54r, p. Michelle to Eccellenza Reverendissima, Samsun, August 6, 1917. Cf. and ASV, Arch. Deleg. Turchia, 114, fasc. 603, ff. 293v-294r.

40. ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Guerra, fasc. 111, p. 79r-80v, fr. Herzelin Meyer di Attendorn to the apostolic nuncio of Munich, Attendorn, June 11, 1917. He had received this information from Gregorio Bardahan, the exiled Armenian Catholic bishop of Ankara, when he met him in Damascus, who also asked him to inform the apostolic nuncio about the situation. On June 15, 1917, the apostolic nuncio in Munich forwarded to Cardinal Gasparri a letter from Fr. Herzelin Meyer di Attendorn concerning the persecution of Armenians by the Turks. See Segreteria di Stato, Guerra, Anno 1914-18, Rubr. 244, fasc. 111, f. 81r, Eugenio nunzio apostolico di Baviera to card. Gasparri, Munich, June 15, 1917.

the communities in Aleppo, Aydin, Maraş, and Mardin. More specifically, the Armenian Catholic Patriarch Terzian mentions in one of his reports the complete destruction of the Armenian Catholic community of Mardin, which was sealed with the massacre of Bishop Mons. Maloyan along with 700 believers⁴¹.

The Young Turks not only failed to take substantive measures to protect the Catholic Armenian population, but were particularly annoyed by the interventions of the Catholic European powers and the papal emissaries. In one report, sent on June 18, 1917, by Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, it is noted that in a meeting between Monsignor Dolci and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, asking for clemency for a specific group of Armenians who in exile without religious discrimination, the minister was annoyed, as he considered that Monsignor Dolci was interfering in the internal affairs of the state. In fact, because he had written the letter requesting clemency on official letterhead of the papal Apostolic Commission, he wanted to return it as totally unacceptable⁴².

Along with their destructive work, the Young Turks and, later, the Kemalist regime operated a mechanism of denying and concealing the real facts; due to pressure and protests, they attempted to misinform the international community. Father Lorenzo, who had been an eyewitness to the events of the Armenian Genocide, recorded in his diary and letters characteristic scenes from the preparations for the deportations, the separation of men from women and boys over the age of eight, and the sale of children in the public market. One of the characteristic incidents he recorded took place in the summer of 1915, when he eyewitnessed children being loaded onto two boats. A Turkish friend assured him that they were being taken to orphanages in Constantinople. After a while, though, the boats returned empty, leaving no doubt as to the fate of these children. Indeed, Father Lorenzo notes that in the days that followed, the shores were littered with the bodies of these children⁴³.

41. «Nota del Patriarca armeno cattolico Terzian al Delegato apostolico Dolci», in: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, *op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 90-91.

42. ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati, Archivio Storico, Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Austria-Ungheria, 1917, Pos. 1182, fasc. 484, ff. 56r-57r, Dolci to Gasparri, Constantinople, June 18, 1917.

43. Fr. Cirillo took this information from Fr. Lorenzo's notes. See Fra Cirillo Giovanni

The rest of the narrative reveals the consistent position of the Young Turks, regularly repeated in various archives: the denial of the facts. Thus, when the missionary suggested to the Turk Vali to collect the bodies and bury them at the mission's expense, the Vali's response was that there were no bodies on the beach, warning him not to tell anyone about his bold fantasies. Nevertheless, when darkness fell, they collected eighteen children's bodies and buried them in the monastery garden⁴⁴.

Ottoman officials were indeed trying to conceal the reality, using various excuses and lies, while they were continuing their systematic extermination. In response to the Spanish ambassador's protest against the persecution of the Armenians, the Minister of Foreign Affairs assured him, in accordance with their usual practice, that the populations living in the areas under Turkish administration were treated with leniency regardless of their religion. When the ambassador returned to the issue a few days later, the minister tried to convince him that, on the one hand, the Armenians were spreading propaganda in Europe in order to stir up public opinion and, on the other, that the Armenians living in the Empire, although they were Ottoman citizens, collaborated with Russian troops and treated barbarically the Turkish populations they were occupying along with the Russian army. The ambassador was convinced that the fate of the Christian population, and especially that of the Armenians, would not change for the better except with the end of the war, when the Great Powers would be able to intervene with greater force⁴⁵.

Even the Pope's interventions did not seem to have any real effect. More specifically, in response to the protests of Pope Benedict XV, which

Zohrabian, *A servizio dei fratelli...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 320-1.

44. T. Succi, *Santuario di Santa Maria di Trebisonda*, *Storia-Cronache-Aneddoti*, Lecce 2012, p. 36 and p. 6 and 14-5 of the archival source. At the point where the presentation of information from the Capuchin archive begins on page 38 *et seq.*, the pagination of the book is interrupted, and, in its place, begins an independent numbering, running for approximately thirty pages.

45. Danish diplomatic sources, DK/RA-UM/Gruppeordnede sager 1909-1945. 139. N. 1, "Armenien", The minister in Constantinople (Carl Ellis Wandel) to the Foreign Minister (Erik Scavenius), Report Nr. 38, Constantinople, 29 April 1918, <http://www.armenocide.net/armenocide/armgende.nsf/3a4b0a224f485c26c1256ad8001005f2/779d6cefd754317ac125728d006324d2!OpenDocument&Highlight=2,Erik,Scavenius> [12.3.2023].

he communicated in a letter to the Sultan on September 10, 1915, the latter adopted the usual tactic of justification, by noting that some specific deportations had indeed taken place, yet only concerning members of certain Armenian revolutionary committees. The same reaction was seen in a later protest by the same Pope to the Sultan on March 12, 1918, while, when, taking advantage of the political changes, he repeated the same protests to Mustafa Kemal in March 1921, the latter replied that everyone enjoyed the protection of the Turkish government⁴⁶. Indeed, Talaat, who is now known from the publication of relevant archives that the diplomats involved considered him to be lying and that they could not trust him⁴⁷, emphasized his grief for certain cases that exceptionally concerned Catholic Armenians, whom he declared to be innocent⁴⁸.

During the Kemalist period, the Armenians had already been largely exterminated and their communities destroyed. Despite this, the plan for total extermination was continued unabated in the following years, and the same happened with the reports and interventions of the Catholic European powers⁴⁹. The persecutions were continuing with the same intensity during 1922, to the point that Pope Benedict XV himself intervened, by sending a personal letter to Kemal. The result of the letter was identical to previous efforts; namely, favorable treatment of Catholics for a short period of time, but as soon as the noise from the Pope's intervention died down, the massacres and persecutions followed the usual course⁵⁰. According to Fr. Cirillo, despite the outcry of public

46. See Th. Kyriakidis, *Συμβολή στην έρευνα της Γενοκτονίας του έλληνορθόδοξου πληθυσμοῦ στον Πόντο*, Apostoliki Diakonia Publications, Athens 2015, pp. 99-101 and 127-128. See also «Lettera del Cardinale Marini al Delegato Apostolico Dolci – ACO, Armeni, fasc. 2801/28, no 5546, 30 Maggio 1921», in: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...., op.cit.*, vol. III, 373-375. Cf. and M. Carolla, *La Santa Sede e la Questione Armena (1918-1922)*, Mimesis, Milano 2006, p. 62 and pp. 220-21, document no 99.

47. See indicatively, T. Akçam, “Deportation and Massacres in the Cipher Telegrams of the Interior Ministry in the Prime Ministerial Archive (Başbakanlık Arşivi)”, *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 1, 3 (2006), p. 307.

48. «Rapporto del Delegato apostolico al Cardinale Gotti, Prefetto della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide – ACO, Armeni del Patriarcato 1891-1926, rubrica no 105, 3, no 37376, 30 Aprile 1916», in: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...., op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 120-121.

49. For the archival material related to the 1921 events, see: Congregazione per l'evangelizzazione dei popoli, Archivio Storico, Nuova Serie, vol. 692.

50. Congregazione per l'evangelizzazione dei popoli, Archivio Storico, Nuova Serie, vol.

opinion and the Pope's appeal, the situation had gotten so out of hand that any time you left your house, it meant uncertainty and often death. Terror was reigning everywhere, while rumors of imminent massacres were rampant⁵¹.

Of course, we should note here that all Christian communities suffered the same fate, including the Maronites and Melkites. In all these cases, the Young Turk authorities were systematically attempting to deny their responsibility for the destruction of the Christian communities. Thus, in the reports of the Spanish consulate in the summer of 1916 concerning these communities, as was the case with the Armenians and the Greeks, when Monsignor Angelo Dolci protested, Foreign Minister Halil Bey denied the facts. Only when Dolci proved that his information was accurate did the minister wonder how the information he had reported had been made public; afterwards, he promised to take up the matter in collaboration with his colleagues. Despite all these assurances, Wandel was convinced that the persecution would not stop⁵².

Indicative of the total destruction of the Armenian Catholic community is the letter sent on August 26, 1920 by the Administrative Committee of the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate of Constantinople (Commissione Amministrativa del Patriarcato Armeno Cattolico di Costantinopoli) to Cardinal Marini, in which, after lamenting the dire economic situation in which the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate found itself, he also provided a list of the facilities that had been destroyed or seriously damaged during the war, as shown in the table below⁵³:

692, Angelo Dolci to Van Rossum, Constantinople, August 18, 1921, f. 426r-v.

51. Fra Cirillo Giovanni Zohrabian, *A servizio dei fratelli...*, op.cit., pp. 372-4.

52. Danish diplomatic sources, DK/RA-UM/Gruppeordnede sager 1909-1945. 139. D. 1, "Tyrkiet-Indre Forhold". Pakke 1, til 31, The minister in Constantinople (Carl Ellis Wandel) to the Foreign Minister Erik Scavenius, Dec. 1916, Report Nr. 127, Constantinople, June 24, 1916, <http://www.armenocide.net/armenocide/armgende.nsf/3a4b0a224f485c26c1256ad8001005f2/1416d0b6462561fec12576320048053c!OpenDocument&Hig hlight=2,Erik,Scavenius> [13.3.2023].

53. ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati, Archivio Storico, Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Austria-Ungheria, 1918-1920, Pos. 1341, fasc. 535, f. 14r, Commissione Amministrativa del Patriarcato Armeno Cattolico di Co-stantinopoli to card. Nicolo Marini, segretario della S.C. "Pro Ecclesia Orientali, Pocio-Catino, August 26, 1920. (Allegato II.), Lista degli stabilimenti distrutti o seriamente danneggiati durante la

<i>Bishoprics</i>	<i>Churches</i>	<i>Chapels</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Manses</i>	<i>Monasteries</i>
Adana	2	-	2	2	-
Angora	4	2	2	5	1
Cesarea	2	1	3	2	-
Costantinopoli	1	-	-	1	-
Diarbekir	7	-	3	2	-
Erzerum	35	51	30	29	-
Karput	4	1	5	3	-
Malatia	5	1	8	1	-
Marasc	2	-	4	2	-
Mardin	3	2	-	2	-
Melchitariste di Venezia	2	-	5	2	-
Melchitariste di Vienna	1	-	2	-	2
Musc	6	-	4	5	-
Sivas	4	-	6	2	1
Suore Imm. Conc.	-	5	8	-	8
Trebisonda	3	2	4	3	3
Allepo	5	1	2	6	-
Total:	86	66	88	67	15

guerra nelle Diocesi del Patriarcato Armeno Cattolico. For a more comprehensive list, see: G. H. Ruyssen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, *op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 509-510.

According to the data of the Armenian Catholic Church, 19 provinces, 156 churches, 110 missions, 148 schools, 32 monasteries, and 6 seminaries were destroyed, while 570 priests and clergymen died, in addition to thousands of believers⁵⁴.

According to Georges Henri Ruysen's analytical documentation – a scholar who thoroughly studied the Vatican archives on this specific issue –, it becomes clear that the Armenian Catholic bishops and clergy were systematically slaughtered and murdered, while many of them died on the endless death marches in the interior of Anatolia. From the lists of victims published, there is no doubt that there was no difference between the extermination of the Armenian Catholics and that of the rest of the Armenian people⁵⁵. Of a total of 98,500 Armenian Catholics recorded before the war, only 13,500 survived it⁵⁶.

Conclusion

As it is clear from the above, the Ottoman aim to exterminate the Armenians did not exclude Protestants or Catholics, despite the strong intervention of the Catholic Great Powers and the Vatican. In some isolated cases, the intervention postponed the persecution of the Armenian Catholics for a short period of time, but in no case does it appear from the data, both from the archival material and from the

54. https://www.armeniancatholic.org/archives/insideea41.html?lang=en&page_id=23113 [14.4.2023].

55. For a detailed account, see: G. H. Ruysen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, *op.cit.*, vol. III, where massacres and murders are documented and a comprehensive list is provided on pp. 218-223 and 498-508.

56. «Rapporto del Delegato apostolico al Cardinale Marini – ACO, Armeni, fasc. 722/30, no 2232, 12 Giugno 1919», in: G. H. Ruysen (ed.), *La Questione Armena...*, *op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 277-278. The total number of Armenian Catholics after the war is of course derived only from three metropolises, namely Mardin, Ankara, and Maraş. However, if one compares the numbers of these metropolises before the war, the extent of the destruction is unquestionable. For example, in the Metropolis of Mardin, out of 10,000 Armenian Catholics, only 3,000 remained alive after the war, of the 10,000 in the Metropolis of Ankara, 4,000, and of the 8,000 in the Metropolis of Maraş, 6,500.

resulting persecutions, that the Armenian Catholics were saved because of their different doctrine and enjoyed the protection of the Catholic Church and the Great Powers. The Armenian Catholic community during First World War and afterwards throughout the territory of the Ottoman Empire was almost completely destroyed, as it was the case with the rest of the Armenian people.