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**THE ISSUE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AND EMIGRATION
OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF VAN AND BITLIS
PROVINCES OF WESTERN ARMENIA
AT THE END OF XIX AND BEGINNING OF XX CENTURIES**

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The study of problems related to the demography of Western Armenia is highly topical, because it covers the real goals of the anti-Armenian policy of the Ottoman authorities. The main trends of population movements, which were recorded in the provinces of Van and Bitlis at the end of XIX and beginning of XX centuries are discussed within the framework of the article. Movements, both within the country and to adjacent or more distant areas, were common to the Armenians of almost all provinces of Western Armenia, but Van and Bitlis were characterized by certain commonalities, which were especially related to more insecure and poor condition of the population of these provinces, as well as referred to the main directions of movements: the main destinations of emigration from Van and Bitlis were to Eastern Armenia, other parts of the Russian Empire and Persia. The article also touches on the reasons of emigration and also the labor migration, such as - insecurity, persecution, violence, massacres, forced Islamization, and direct consequences: decrease of the number of the Armenian population, depopulation of Armenian settlements, etc. The study was carried out using a historical-comparative approach, supported by historical-demographic and content analysis methods.

Keywords: *Western Armenia, Van, Bitlis (Baghesh), demography, emigration, hamidian massacres.*

Introduction

The territory of Western Armenia underwent great demographic changes over the centuries. Many Kurds were settled in the territory, some of the local Armenians

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were forcibly converted, and some left for other settlements. As the consequence of that process, many settlements with purely Armenian population were depopulated, and in some parts, Kurds and Turks became the majority. The final result of this state-directed policy of depopulation of the territory from Armenians were mass massacres of Armenians, deportation and the Armenian Genocide.

The process of expelling Armenians from Western Armenia had several directions. Firstly, the policy of Islamization of the local Armenian population was conducted for centuries, furthermore, the tax policy and socio-economic pressures against the Armenians contributed to labor migration and emigration. Already at the end of XIX century, there were many abandoned settlements inhabited only by Muslims. There are a lot of records on such settlements in the sources of the time. In this regard, the work of ethnographer V. Mirakhoryan is very valuable (1884, 1885a, 1885b) in which the author, visiting especially the settlements of the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Erzurum, recorded various information about the Armenian settlements, touched on the history and current state thereof. It is noteworthy that there were settlements that were no longer inhabited by Armenians, but kept their Armenian names, for example, the village named Khach was no longer inhabited by Armenians in the 1880s: 30 families of Kurdish residents lived here, although the name of the settlement remained the same (Mirakhoryan, 1885a, p. 21). Khrkants, Shkavakats, Ishkhan and other villages of Van province were inhabited by Kurds (Mirakhoryan, 1885a, pp. 38-39). The village of Sorb, one of the settlements in the Moks area, was deserted, although the Sorb monastery was preserved nearby (Attachments, 1884-1885, p. 156).

Formerly, the city of Vostan and many surrounding settlements were inhabited by Armenians. The Catholicos of Aghtamar confirmed this to the British geographer and traveler H. Lynch, noting that during his youth, Armenians lived there in large numbers (Lynch, 1901, p. 136). According to Lynch, after the migration of the Armenian families of Vostan their houses were occupied by Kurds, who, however, could not play the role of the Armenians. As a result, it was impossible to find even a little corn or even a horse's hoof here, because Armenians also mastered handicrafts (Lynch, pp. 123-124). Historian, demographer G. Badalyan completes the names of many depopulated settlements in Van and Bitlis provinces in his articles, and notes that standing or half-destroyed monuments were preserved in many places (2015; 2016).

There were also many settlements inhabited only by Armenians at the time, but already in the middle of XIX century and especially in the 1880s, the same villages already had mixed population with Kurds, moreover, the number of Armenian families in those settlements had significantly decreased. Mirakhoryan

regretfully records that one of the ancient settlements of Van province - Berkri, had no longer its former luster in the early 1880s and turned into a ruin with a few houses inhabited by Armenians (Mirakhoryan, 1885b, p. 22). The history of Artamet settlement in Van is also remarkable: thus, before the war in 1877-1878, according to Armenian statistician, historian A-Do, the settlement had 400 Armenian families and 60-70 Turkish families, but already in 1909 the number of houses of Armenians decreased to 150, whereas Turkish families increased to 350 (A-Do, 1912, p. 21). The situation was the same in the city of Van. American missionary H. Allen wrote that Kurds were pouring into Van from all directions and that the outlying districts were under their control for years. The result was that the Christians gradually left these districts, and in the city the population reduced to minimum. "How long will this steady depopulation and impoverishment go on? A practical extinction of the Armenians in this province is possible as in no other part of the empire," the missionary adds (The Missionary Herald, 1898).

One such example is presented by A-Do on the settlements of Bulanigh of Bitlis province: the Latar village, which, had 300 Armenian families 20-30 years ago and was entirely inhabited by Armenians, in 1909 had only a 100 Armenian families. The point is that several sheikhs from Bitlis took possession of the lands of Armenians, persecuted them and forced them to leave the settlement, and gradually resettled Kurds there, whose number had already grown to 240 families during the mentioned period (A-Do, p. 145).

In fact, already at the end of XIX century both in the provinces of Van and Bitlis and in other provinces of Western Armenia, there were many settlements wherefrom the Armenian population had been completely expelled, and in other settlements, especially those with a small Armenian population, the proportion of the Muslims increased over time. The article focuses on the reasons for the decrease of Armenian population, as well as the main trend of demographic changes - emigration. Both Armenian and foreign sources, literature, as well as Western Armenian and Eastern Armenian press were studied and very valuable documents regarding the above-mentioned issues have been found. It should also be noted that historians G. Badalyan (2015; 2016) and R. Tatoyan (2022), have authored researches on the settlements and the number of the Armenian population of Van and Bitlis provinces.

The main causes of demographic changes

It is important to highlight the main reasons that contributed to the above mentioned process in the abovementioned settlements. First of all, it should be noted that the Western Armenians and especially the Armenians of Van, Bitlis, and

Erzurum were greatly affected by the Russo-Turkish wars, and therefore the situation of the Armenian population of these provinces at the end of XIX century was primarily related to the consequences of the war. Both during the war and in the following years, a number of settlements in these provinces, especially in Mush region, were in a semi-ruined state because of the raids of Kurds and regular troops (Poghosyan, 1985, p. 118). British traveler, geographer H. Tozer, testifies this fact writing about a village near Bitlis, which, like other settlements, was expropriated by the Kurds during the Russo-Turkish war, and according to the author, it was one of the greatest tortures (Tozer, 1881, p. 304.). Unfortunately, after the end of the war, the conquests and widespread horrors of the Kurds continued in some settlements, which were especially unbearable in the winter months, when the latter settled among the Armenians, forcing the Christians to provide them with everything without any payment. Tozer considers this circumstance to be the main reason for the misery of Armenians in Mush, because “neither the richness of the soil nor the industry of the people can keep off want, when parasites like Kurds lived for half a year at the expense of Armenians” (p. 285).

The situation of Armenians in Bitlis was worse than in other provinces, and this is testified by foreign witnesses. Armenians here were subjected to horrible trials, their houses were looted by the Kurds, they were miserable and almost hopeless (Hepworth, 1898, pp. 223-224.). In addition, regarding Mush, Tozer states that this region, besides being very dirty and miserable, was also the worst governed and oppressed region in Western Armenia (pp. 283-284). One of the American newspapers testifies in its publication on August 28, 1890 about the attacks and pressures against Armenians in Mush. It is particularly emphasized that the Armenians there were continuously subjected to terrible violence and that the bands of Kurds made raids on the frontier villages of the Armenians every night, and even set the crops on fire (“The New York Times”, 2018, p. 13). This fact is also confirmed in another issue published in the newspaper in 1890 (“The New York Times”, 2018, p. 17).

According to the military correspondent C. Norman, the Christians of Van fled spontaneously and escaped only after suffering terrible losses, especially when more than 380 young women and men were taken captive. At the same time, Norman writes: “After the most careful inquiries from Turkish officers and soldiers, as well as from the Armenians themselves, I state the fact, that the exodus from Van and Alashkert was purely voluntary on the part of the Christians, that it was solely because of the horrors and barbarities they were daily and hourly subjected to by the Kurds” (pp. 331-332). In this regard the author makes a strange claim, calling the mass deportation of Armenians voluntary and at the same time

refuting himself, giving reasons for this migration, which prove that the migration was not voluntary, but forced.

As in various villages and towns of Western Armenia, Kurds and other ethnic elements were settled in the territories of Van and Bitlis over time, which, especially in these provinces, was one of the most important reasons for Armenians to flee from their native lands. This time, it was deemed to be permanent residence. One of such settlements was, for example, Atkon, a coastal villages of Lake Van, which had 93 families, of which 90 were Armenians, the rest were Kurds. According to testimonies, in the early 1880s, 24 families of Circassians were settled there and occupied the best areas, disturbing the life of the local Armenians (Mirakhoryan, 1885b, p. 90). This was also one of the reasons for earlier migration of Armenians. For example, the main reason for the depopulation of Norduz district of Van province in XIX century was an unstoppable influx of a number of Kurdish tribes (ashirets) from Artosh (Hartosh) into the given territories starting from the 1840-50s (Badalyan, 2015, p. XXII). It is a fact that the tendency to resettle Muslims in various settlements of Western Armenia, including Van and Bitlis provinces, continued even at the beginning of the XX century. In 1913, A. Berezovsky-Olginsky (known as Olgenin), correspondent of the Russian newspaper wrote that during the winter months, hundreds of Muslim immigrants came to Turkish Armenia and the process was continuous (“Turqahayeri gaghtakanakan nor hosanq”, 1913).

After the war in 1877-78 and the subsequent raids, the Hamidian massacres, which also had disastrous consequences in Van and Bitlis provinces, became an important reason for the decrease of the number of Armenians and the depopulation of those settlements. Only in Van province, the number of victims varied between 20,000-30,000 (“Teghekagir Vaspurakani kotoratsin”, 1896, p. 581), in the case of Bitlis, unfortunately, there were no such general data, although the Armenians of that province went through the same horrors. The consequences of the massacres were not limited only to the number of victims. As a result of the massacres, famine prevailed everywhere, also diseases caused a certain number of deaths. According to the information presented by the missionaries during the Hamidian massacres, 176 villages in 7 regions near Van were completely looted, in which 6799 families with 54368 souls were counted (“The New York Times”, 2018, p. 359). More than 15,000 homeless and hungry people had poured into Van city (“The New York Times”, 2018, p. 355), others were left completely homeless, some had already starved to death.

One of the consequences of the massacres was also the activation of emigration and during this period, around 40 000 Armenians emigrated from Van

(Malkhasyan, 2015, pp. 115-116), though in this case, it is more accurate to call it deportation.

During the years of the Hamidian massacres, forced conversion had reached catastrophic volumes. There were reliable reports from Sparkert, Mamrtank, Khizan, Gargar districts of Bitlis that a complete conversion of the population was carried out there (“The New York Times”, 2018, p. 416; Tatoyan, 2022, pp. 26-27). The number of Armenians who were forced to convert in Van province was estimated at 30,000. (“Teghekagir Vaspurakani kotoratsin”, 1896, p. 585). It is noteworthy to mention the fact that in order to escape the massacres in the city of Van and its surroundings, some turned to Catholicism, and then they were allowed to return to the mother church. It is noteworthy that the correspondence, which references this issue, calls for conversion to Catholicism. The Apostolic Armenians resorted to this step to escape the severe famine prevailing in Vaspurakan. It is noted that at that time the Armenians who converted to Catholicism were returning to the Apostolic Church, although this did not mean that they were free from hunger (“Kronap'okhut'iunnery Vanum”, 1898), i.e. the causes of hunger had not disappeared, therefore the reason for converting to Catholicism was not hunger, but the fear of massacres.

It is also important to refer to the socio-economic situation of the Armenian population of Van and Bitlis provinces, as well as the tax pressures, because they were also one of the reasons for labor migration and sometimes - emigration. Although there were some objective reasons for emigration, such as the scarcity of water, unfavorable conditions for farming or animal husbandry, as was the case with the Armenians of Timar of Van province (Mirakhoryan, 1885b, p. H), it should be noted that the Armenian population of Van and Bitlis was mostly poor as a result of heavy taxation and violence. For example, according to the record of robbery and persecution in 20 Armenian villages of Aljavaz district of Van province presented to the governor, Husein Pasha, one of the leaders of the Hamidiye regiment, along with his group, in the form of the fee, in addition to large amounts of land, houses and other property also took 300 cows, oxen, horses, buffaloes, 2700 sheep, goats, 5500 kiles¹ of grain, 2300 golds from the Armenians (A-Do, pp. 336-337). Unfortunately, such cases were numerous.

In general, few Armenians of Van were landowners. The main income of the Armenians in the villages was the horticultural harvest, with which they covered their expenses due to their hard work. At the same time, there were many poor settlements, for example, the Armenians of the village of Trlashen of Van had a debt of more than 1,500 gold and even if they sold all their land, they could not get rid of this debt burden. It is no coincidence that the village also had about 25

migrants in Constantinople (Mirakhoryan, 1885a, p. 268). Unlike the Armenians, the Muslims were mainly landowners, owners of large and irrigated fields, there were also officials among them.

Among the settlements of Bitlis province, the Armenians of Mush were the most oppressed and with no rights. Their houses were built next to each other as if they were piled on top of each other, which was the consequence of the violence that the Armenians here were constantly subjected to. The situation was the same in other settlements of Bitlis and especially in the villages of Sassoon, where in 1904 poverty increased, because the troops destroyed several villages of Talvorik (A-Do, p. 133).

Summarizing, it should be emphasized that in the case of Van and Bitlis provinces, the main reasons for the decrease of the number of Armenian population and emigration in the abovementioned period was first of all the Russo-Turkish war in 1877-1878, as a result of which many settlements were destroyed or damaged, then the continuous raids of Kurds after the war. This was also followed by the resettlement of the Muslim elements in the Armenian-inhabited settlements, and the anti-Armenian tax policy of the authorities, pressures and persecutions, and especially the Hamidian massacres.

The issue of emigration

At the end of XIX century and especially after the Hamidian massacres, one of the main trends in the demographic changes of Western Armenia became the movement of Armenians within the borders of Western Armenia and Ottoman Empire, and particularly emigration. The problem became so important that initiatives were taken by the society and intelligentsia to stop this flow. This found its reflection in the pages of Western and Eastern Armenian press.

The main direction of emigration of Western Armenians from Van and Bitlis, as well as Erzurum province, unlike the central provinces, was Eastern Armenia, the Caucasus and Persia.

When addressing the issue of emigration, it is very important to distinguish between emigration itself, which involved moving with families and settling outside the country, and sojourn or going abroad for work. These two trends have sometimes run parallel, sometimes dominated over one another. As for the reasons for these two processes, they were also sometimes identical, but mainly the desire for safety and security, and then social problems and poverty, motivated family emigration. The latter was the main reason for going abroad for work. It is no coincidence that there was a lot of confusion about these two trends and their

causes, especially in the reactions of the press. It had become extremely important to reduce the process of this depopulation.

To simplify the problem, we should note that especially during the massacres and the following period, emigration was deemed to be with families, or, to be more precise – it was a forced emigration. Meanwhile, in a few years before the massacres and already in the 1900s, the reasons for migration were mainly socio-economic, sometimes, of course, also violence and persecution, which in the case of the mentioned provinces seemed to be a topical issue at all times. Lynch writes that a certain familiarity with the outside world there was a consequence to labor migration of Armenian men since immemorial times, who after a few years, having accumulated some wealth, returned to their homeland (pp. 91-92).

We can include some statistics on the number of labor migrants in a few villages. Thus, according to Mirakhoryan, about 40 Armenians from Aghga village (Mirakhoryan, 1885a, p. 199:), 80 - from 120 Armenian families of Artamet village (Mirakhoryan, 1885a, p. 239), from 35 Armenian families of Khorgom village - more than 15 (Mirakhoryan, 1884, p. 125), from 40 Armenian families of Ishkhanagom - 25 (Mirakhoryan, 1884, p. 130), from 90 families of Kem- 35 (Mirakhoryan, 1884, pp. 138-139) moved to Constantinople. It becomes obvious that there was one migrant from almost every, or at least one of the two families. Many of the Armenian labor migrants who left for Constantinople and other places, were ready to leave their relatives, their vast lands and go to work for the least amount. Many of them wandered for years under the burden of debts and at best, earned some living, returned to their homeland “bent and skeletonized” (Mirakhoryan, 1885b, p. F).

Despite all the difficulties of migration, however, the migration to mainly Constantinople and various central settlements of the Ottoman Empire, as well as to the Caucasus, had also become a fact of life for the Armenians of Mush and Bitlis. The 100-110 Armenian-inhabited villages of the Mush plain, each of which had an average population of about 70 families, had thousands of labor migrants both in Constantinople and in Russia (Mirakhoryan, 1884, p. 35). According to Mirakhoryan, there were about 400 people in Constantinople only from Khasgyugh² settlement, who longingly remembered their place of birth (1884, p. 46). The author also describes the gatherings that were organized to see off the migrants. At these moments, those who left and those who stayed said toasts, vowing not to forget each other, then long hugs and mourning followed (Mirakhoryan, 1885a, p. 212).

Traveler G. Pisson when writing about the villages on Baghesh road, also states that many Armenians from these settlements have left for Constantinople to

work, and some of them even knew English or Italian (Develay & Pisson, 1892, p. 68). There were also people who went to work in the more central cities of the neighboring states, for example, many of the Shatakh Armenians had to go to Diarbekir for some months due to their poor situation (A-Do, p. 63).

Already after 1894 other reasons for migration were recorded. One of the articles mentions that the reason for migration is the policy pursued by the Turkish administration in Armenia (The New York Times, p. 59). The emigration recorded in the years of specific massacres resulted in the decrease of the number of the Armenian population. For instance, hundreds of Armenian families (approximately 1,000 families or 8,000 people) from Aghbak region of Van province were forced to leave their homeland, mainly for the neighboring Salmast province (Persia) (Badalyan, 2015, p. XXVII). Migrants from the settlements of Agrak province of Vaspurakan also passed to Salmast, from where they rented cattle and found shelter in the villages of Muzhambar and Aljamulk (“Namak Parskastanits”, 1897).

Groups of Armenians who migrated from Mush, Khlat, Bulanykh after the massacres even reached Batum (“Kronap'okhut'iunnery Vanum”, 1898). Correspondences related to the topic of migration also refer to the difficult process they had before reaching a safe place of residence. During this time, many were attacked by the Kurds, some died, so many paid money to be able to reach a safe place unharmed. A similar group of emigrants from Mush consisted of 150 people who had to pay 2 silver mosques each on the way, so that the soldiers of one of the Hamidean regiment would escort the group to the border (“Kronap'okhut'iunnery Vanum”, 1898).

As for the number of emigrants from these two provinces, there are no clear figures in this regard. It can only be stated that the largest flow occurred after the massacres, when according to Lynch, about 50,000-60,000 Armenians migrated from the eastern provinces to Russia (Lynch, 412). Another important fact is that following the emigration recorded after the war in 1877-78, many Armenians who had fled from Van to Persia, returned to their homeland after the end of the war, (Lragir Azgayin, 1878) and the Hamidian massacres. The issue of the return of emigrants to their homeland was a subject of discussion, there were discussions on returning them to their homeland. In particular, such a decision was made in December of 1895, regarding to 18,000 Western Armenians who had fled the massacres (“The New York Times”, p. 322). In one of the reports of “Mshak” newspaper, it is also mentioned that the government made every effort for Turkey to accept the migrants back, but in vain. Therefore, it is noted that emigrants were given the right to live in the territory of the empire, accepting Russian citizenship, and those who wanted to go back to their homeland were provided with the

necessary support (Arakelyan, 1902). According to the correspondence on September 5, 1902, about 700 people were listed and gathered at the border to return to Western Armenia. Most of them were from the villages of Bulanikh, Mush, Khlat and mostly young people (Mnjoyan, 1902). However, even in this case, when Turkish-Armenian emigrants were returning to their homeland, new emigrants were arriving, some of whom, seeing hundreds of people returning to their homeland, joined them halfway (Mnjoyan, 1902).

Unfortunately, the situation did not change significantly in the 1900s, as the wave of emigration continued, though not on the previous scale. The press again stated that every day Vaspurakan was emptying of Armenians, who left in groups for Persia, and from there for the Caucasus. In this case, the reason for emigration was again hunger, economic deterioration. In the letters written from Van, it was mainly the same emphasis: the burden of taxes and the general economic situation forced desperate people to leave in groups for Persia or Russia, and the government did not act as a barrier, on the contrary, it openly expelled people from the country ("Artagagh", 1906). In another article, the author writes that the migrants should not be blamed for migration, as violence and looting had made their life unbearable. Meanwhile, in the 1900s, according to the author, more or less tolerable conditions had been created, that is why the Armenian youth should have been obliged to stay in the homeland and contribute to its development (Sirvard, 1910).

The other direction of emigration from the settlements of Western Armenia in this period was the USA, which had an increase during the years of Abdul Hamid's reign. In 1876 less than two months after the restoration of the constitution, the new regime granted all Ottoman subjects (*bi'l-umum tebaa-i Osmaniye*) freedom "to travel and return to all places, both within the empire and abroad." For the first time, Armenians were free to migrate to North America (Gutman, 2016, p. 54). It is also a fact that the most significant factor driving Western Armenians to emigrate to the USA was the activities of American missionaries, especially in the central settlements of Western Armenia. At the same time, it is noteworthy that among the total number of emigrants from Western Armenia to the USA, the Armenians from Van and Bitlis provinces were a small number, although everyone here, including the high-ranking clergy, loved the missionaries (Tozer, 1881, p. 348). We believe that this was the result of the poorer lifestyle of the population, and the low level of education. Hence, the number of emigrants to the USA was incomparably larger.

Among the other migration destination of Armenians from the settlements of Bitlis province, although in smaller numbers, was the province of Aleppo and especially the city of Aleppo. In particular, H. Poghosyan writes that the people of Sasson did not migrate at all, like the Armenians of Mush and Van. However, some

of the people of Sasun went to Peliche, Aintap, Aleppo, and worked as bakers, millers and mule keepers. Since the ancient times, there was even a small colony of Armenians from Sasun in Aleppo, where they worked mainly in bakeries and the local Arab residents distorted the name of their birthplace calling the colony Susani (Poghosyan, 1985, p. 112).

A wave of new emigration to the Russian Empire started already in 1912 and 1913, when the main reasons were the fear of new massacres and security problems. Particularly in one correspondence it was mentioned that a new stream of emigration from Turkish Armenia to Russia had started and many families were crossing Kaghzvan and Sarighamish to Russia. They sold what they had and tried to reach the Russian border a day earlier for the violence and the severity of the fines, and having a premonition that as soon as spring came, new massacres, destruction and looting would begin (“Turqahayeri gaghtakanakan nor hosanq,” 1913). In this period, one of the reasons for emigration was also the avoidance of conscription, which was also commented on in the pages of the newspaper “Mshak” (Ter Rubinyan, 1913).

In general, according to the statistics of the Patriarchate in 1913 and 1914, 15,307 people from the Armenian population of Bitlis province, and about 30,000 people from Van province were mentioned as emigrants (Kévorkian & Paboudjian, 1992, p. 60). Moreover, according to R. Tatoyan's conclusion - the author of a valuable study on the Armenian population of Bitlis province, 12-13% of the entire Armenian population of Bitlis province were sojourners (Tatoyan, 2022, p. 39). We think that in the case of Van, this percentage was even more.

Summarizing, we can state that in general, the pace of emigration from Van and Bitlis provinces became active especially after the Hamidian massacres and continued with certain fluctuations until 1915. It became a worrisome problem from the demographic viewpoint.

Conclusion

In sum, it should be noted that in the case of Van and Bitlis provinces, the trends of population movements are generally consistent with the demographic processes taking place in Western Armenia. However, there were some general trends in population movements of these two provinces. First, the emigration destinations for the Armenians of these provinces were almost the same: territories of the Russian Empire, mainly Eastern Armenia, Tiflis, Batum, as well as Persia, and in some cases also other countries, while in the case of the other, more central states, the emigration destinations were the USA, also - within the country's more prosperous, port cities, etc. There were also common reasons for migration in other provinces of Western Armenia. Although when it comes to Bitlis and Van, the socio-

economic reasons for emigration were more pronounced, as people migrated from the settlements of these provinces due to starvation and the lack of basic conditions to sustain existence.

These processes during the entire XIX century resulted in gradual decrease of the number of Armenian population in previously Armenian settlements, and in many cases the settlements were already being inhabited only by Muslims. According to the data of 1912 by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, there were 180,000 Armenians in Bitlis province, and 185,000³ in Van province, while in 1882 the number of Armenians of Bitlis was 250,000, and that of Van province was 400,000 (Ter Hakobyan, 1914, September, pp. 808-811). Despite the fact that the data of the Patriarchate show a certain number of the Armenian population in Western Armenia, it becomes obvious that the decrease of their number was directly connected with both the immediate consequences of the massacres and the activation of emigration rates.

Notes

1. kiles – old Ottoman metric unit for kilograms.
2. The settlement had 400 Armenian families in the 1880s (A-Do, 104).
3. This number did not include the population of Hakyari region in Van.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflict of interests in this research.

Ethical standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

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ԱՐԵՎՍՏՅԱՆ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՎԱՆԻ ԵՎ ԲԻԹԼԻՍԻ ՆԱՀԱՆԳՆԵՐԻ
ՀԱՅ ԲՆԱԿՉՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՆԵՐՔԻՆ ՏԵՂԱՇԱՐԺԵՐԻ ՈՒ ԱՐՏԱԳԱՂԹԻ
ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ
XIX Դ. ՎԵՐՁԻՆ - XX Դ. ՄԿՁԲԻՆ

Արփինե Բաբլումյան

Արևմտյան Հայաստանի ժողովրդագրությանն առնչվող խնդիրների ուսումնասիրությունն ու լուսաբանումը խիստ արդիական է, քանի որ այն ամբողջացնում է օսմանյան իշխանությունների հակահայկական քաղաքականության էությունն ու իրական նպատակները: Հոդվածի շրջանակներում անդրադարձ է կատարվել բնակչության տեղաշարժերի հիմնական միտումներին, որոնք արձանագրվեցին Վանի և Բիթլիսի նահանգներում XIX դ. վերջին - XX դ. սկզբին: Տեղաշարժերը՝ ինչպես երկրի ներսում, այնպես էլ դեպի հարակից կամ ավելի հեռավոր տարածքներ հատուկ էին Արևմտյան Հայաստանի գրեթե բոլոր նահանգների հայությանը, սակայն Վանին ու Բիթլիսին բնորոշ էին որոշակի ընդհանրություններ, ինչը կապված էր հատկապես այս նահանգների բնակչության ավելի անապահով, չքավոր վիճակի, նաև տեղաշարժերի հիմնական ուղղությունների հետ. Վանից ու Բիթլիսից ընթացող արտագաղթի հիմնական ուղղություններն էին դեպի Արևելյան Հայաստան, Ռուսական կայսրության այլ հատվածներ և Պարսկաստան: Հոդվածում անդրադարձ է կատարվել նաև արտագաղթի ու արտագնա աշխատանքի մեկնման պատճառներին՝ անապահովություն, հալածանքներ, բռնություններ, կոտորածներ, բռնի իսլամացում և այլն, ու անմիջական հետևանքներին՝ հայ բնակչության թվաքանակի նվազում, հայաբնակ բնակավայրերի հայաթափում և այլն: Ուսումնասիրությունը կատարվել է պատմահամեմատական մոտեցմամբ՝ զուգակցված պատմա-ժողովրդագրական և բովանդակության վերլուծության մեթոդներով:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *Արևմտյան Հայաստան, Վան, Բիթլիս, ժողովրդագրություն, արտագաղթ, համիդյան կոտորածներ:*