AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

IN SEARCH OF HAVEN AND SEEKING FORTUNE: THE ECONOMIC ROLE OF OTTOMAN ARMENIAN MIGRANTS IN BRITISH-OCCUPIED EGYPT (1882-1914)

by
BEDROS PUZANT TOROSIAN

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: In Search of Haven and Seeking Fortune: The Economic Role of Ottoman Armenian Migrants in British-Occupied Egypt (1882-1914)

When referring to economic activities in Egypt most historians highlight the role played by other non-Muslim minorities, namely, Greeks and Jews, while passingly mentioning the fact that Armenians were at most neighborhood shopkeepers – a term used by the British Agent and Consul-General, Lord Cromer.

This thesis reconstructs the multi-layered economic ventures of Ottoman Armenian migrants in British-occupied Egypt. By stark contrast to the early nineteenth century, when they figured principally as high government employees, the new immigrants, comparatively larger in number, but still constituting a small proportion of the total Egyptian population, eventually featured prominently in the many segments of the Egyptian economy not, to be sure, massively in agriculture, but certainly evident in the services sectors, as restaurateurs, medics, lawyers, architects, photographers, journalists, jewelers and, more modestly, craftsmen, mechanics, tailors, and shoemakers. They even ventured into an economic realm which, at the time was regarded as a European/Western preserve, namely industry, represented by their great successes in cigarette production for local and international consumption.

CONTENTS

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I follow the transliteration style employed by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Proper names are reproduced as they are conventionally written.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Much of the growing literature on Armenians in modern Egypt tends to shed light, almost exclusively, on early nineteenth century notable figures, who served under Muhammad ʻAli and later under Khedivial governments or foreign control. Moreover, when referring to economic activities in Egypt most historians highlight the role played by other non-Muslim minorities, namely, Greeks and Jews, while passingly alluding to the fact that Armenians were at most neighborhood shopkeepers – a term used by the British Agent and Consul-General, Lord Cromer. In his article "The Transformation of the Economic Position of the *Millet*s in the Nineteenth Century," Charles Issawi, for example, merely alludes to the economic role played by a rising Ottoman Armenian minority in Egypt during the British occupation. Other economic and labor historians, among them Roger Owen, Joel Beinin, and Zachary Lockman do not allot more than a passing reference to them as well. It was this fact, among others, not strictly academic, that drove me to investigate the economic role of the Armenian community in Egypt and conclusively verify whether it was as insignificant as the preceding authors, including Cromer, have suggested or demonstrate that it was more varied, more complex, and more rooted in the various segments of the Egyptian economy, even spilling beyond it, and becoming involved in a broader, world economy as was the case with tobacco and photography.

In my attempt to reconstruct the reality of Armenian socio-economic life in Egypt, and very much like a jigsaw puzzle, I gathered bits and pieces of information from a multiplicity of tapped and untapped, primary and secondary sources, mainly in

English, French, Armenian, and Arabic, encompassing periodicals, almanacs, memoirs, and other archival materials. Apart from their usefulness in re-conceptualizing the role of the Armenian minority in Egypt, these sources could conceivably be employed to unravel the multifarious aspects of modern Egyptian and broader world history.

A. Arabic Sources

Traditionally, Armenians and their history have rarely been attributed much importance in Arabic historiography. Fortunately, however, both interest in the Armenians and writing about them, has recently experienced marked advances, in particular in Egypt. In 2014, for example, Cairo University established a Center for Armenian Studies, to be followed soon after by the University of Damanhur. Quite apart from the political implications of the establishment of these centers, this development has resulted in the appearance of a string of academic publications, devoted to the study of the Armenian past in Egypt's modern history. This interest is best exemplified by the on-going work of the prominent new Egyptian historian Muhammad Rifʿat, who even before the establishment of the Center for Armenian Studies at Cairo University, has already authored two books in a new historiographic venture meant to re-introduce the role of the Armenian community into the historical record. Both books, respectively *Tārīkh al-jāliya al-armaniyya fī miṣr: al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashar* (History of Armenian Community in Egypt: The Nineteenth Century) and *al-Arman fī miṣr* (Armenians in Egypt, 1896-1961) represent a major breakthrough on account of their systematic recourse to the utilization of archival governmental records and files relating to Armenian individuals who were employed in Egyptian government service or in many of its authorities.

B. Armenian Sources

Owing to the laborious and systematic efforts of the personnel of the National Library of Armenia in Yerevan, a large number of Armenian primary sources are being digitized and hence are becoming more and more easily accessible for researchers and historians interested in all aspects of Armenian history. Among the Armenian sources that are currently available online were memoirs, periodicals, and almanacs. In terms of memoirs, I mainly relied on the retrospectively-written accounts of the two "Yervants," namely, Yervant Aghaton and Yervant Odian, both of them fleeing Sultan Abdül Hamid's oppressive policies in 1896, and eventually landing in Egypt. Apart from their many other uses, both accounts are important in terms of understanding the underlying reasons compelling Armenian immigration worldwide and to Egypt in particular. More important is the fact that they constitute an inner view of what it meant to be Armenian in Egypt and the strategies employed to achieve a modicum of success in their new country of adoption.

From the historiographical viewpoint, however, among all the Armenian sources available on the website of the Armenian National Library, the most important were the Armenian newspapers published in Egypt for example *Arshaluys* and *Miyutyun*. Though sometimes not available in their entirety, the recently digitized issues of the Egyptian Armenian press "…offer a wealth of information about the social, political, economic and cultural life of the past."[1] Indeed, without the material they incorporate about the varying socio-economic activities of Armenians in Egypt in fields such as medicine,

[1] Stephen Vella, "Newspapers," in *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century History*, ed. Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (London: Routledge, 2009): p. 192.

photography, and cigarette production and consumption, this thesis would be virtually impossible.

C. English and French Sources

In addition to these sources, the thesis also depended on recently discovered original archival material. As Michelle T. King has rightly put it, "that which the Archive preserves and hides, the historian brings to light."[2] As a history student, I was thrilled to unearth hitherto unexploited documents currently kept in the British Library and the United Kingdom National Archives relating to Onnig Diradour and his famous Cairo Photographic Store, as well as the Hadjetian Cigarette Company. These valuable sources, dating back to the years 1910-1911, primarily, consist of several personal correspondences, balance sheets, and company records bringing to light the successful economic experiences of two Ottoman Armenian families settled in Egypt and engaged in the more lucrative and Armenian co-dominated sectors of the Egyptian economy, notably, those of photography and cigarette production. What is important about these documents is that they underscore the often-neglected Armenian engagement in global trade. The Diradours, for instance, through trade in photographic equipment and products drew the attention of the giant Kodak company, which in the typical aggressive capitalism of the time, bought it out in pursuit of establishing a conglomerate that had aspirations for a global empire.

[2] Michelle T. King, "Working With/In the Archives," in *Research Methods for History*, ed. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012): p. 14.

The French-language almanacs and directories like the *Indicateur Égyptien*[3] and *L'Annuaire Égyptien*[4] (also called the *Egyptian Directory*) were equally useful. Four issues of the two sources are available online, covering the years 1897 to 1913. The *Egyptian Armenian Almanac*[5] comprising several years is also available online, and was indispensable for my project.

Although designed exclusively for businessmen and others seeking economic opportunity in Egypt, these sources, have been described as "quasi-encyclopedias,"[6] they are, in fact, "gold mines," for researchers on account of containing numerous advertisements and alphabetically arranged, detailed and extensive lists of a wide range of professions practiced by both indigenous and non-indigenous elements of Egyptian society including Armenians, at a time when the country was at the peak of its economic boom. Another benefit offered by the almanacs is that they empower the visualization of the geographical spaces in which people of diverse ethnicities and vocations operated.

Here, I must add that in the course of my research, I also looked into the American and British Consular Reports, which although useful in other respects, unfortunately, did not yield much information regarding Armenian individual or even collective economic activities in Egypt. Nevertheless, the material involved yielded much information about the economy of which the Armenians were a part. Moreover, I would have gathered ample information about the economic performance of Armenians

[3] Published by Stefano G. Poffandi from 1887 to 1911. See René Maunier, *Bibliographie Économique, Juridique et Sociale de L'Égypte Moderne (1798-1916)* (Cairo, 1918): p. 20.
[4] Published starting from 1886. Ibid.
[5] Published from 1914 to 1918, first in Cairo and then in Alexandria.
[6] Jean-Luc Arnaud, "Artisans et Commerçants des Villes d'Égypte à la fin du XIXe siècle. Une source peu exploitée: Les Annuaires," *Études sur les Villages du Proche-Orient XVIe-XIXe Siècles* (2001): p. 3, 7, 9.

had the various issues of English-language periodicals like the *Egyptian Gazette* and the reports of the British Chamber of Commerce been available.

In the current chapter, after discussing the types of the various primary and secondary sources which I consulted, the second chapter traces the historical roots of the advent of Armenians to modern Egypt, and then goes on to consider the complicated "push" and "pull" factors that caused the later Armenian migration. The third chapter attempts a closer analysis of the Armenian role in the many segments of the Egyptian economy such as agriculture, food industry, healthcare and medicine, transport, printing, crafts, and architecture. The fourth chapter focuses exclusively on Armenian successes in the tobacco and photography businesses, both locally in Egypt and abroad. The fifth chapter summarizes cultural and political trends among Armenian migrants, with a special emphasis on the role played by the AGBU. A brief conclusion ends the thesis.

CHAPTER II

ON THE ROAD TO EGYPT

A. Infiltration

The presence of Armenians in modern Egypt more or less dates back to the early nineteenth century. It coincided with the rise of Muhammad ʻAli Pasha, the new ruler of Egypt, to power. Naturally, to consolidate his rule in the country and achieve his ambitious project of establishing a "modern" Egyptian state, the Pasha needed personnel to assist him in the said process. At the time, the Pasha turned his attention towards the Armenians, then residing in Ottoman domains. The motivations for recruiting the latter were many. Among the important reasons were their acquaintances with what Rouben Adalian has described as "Oriental languages and traditions," non-affiliation with any of the major European powers[7], besides of course, their historic Ottoman recognition as *Millet-i- sadıka*.

Initially, in the early nineteenth century, the Ottoman Armenian migration to Egypt was a relatively slow and intermittent process. At first, Muhammad ʻAli brought in a few Armenian individuals from the different parts of the Empire, namely, Istanbul, Izmir, and Ağın, among other places. The newly arriving Armenians mostly hailed from the higher echelons of Ottoman Armenian society. In Egypt, they continued to preserve, even improve, their former status by serving in the new administrative structures as bureaucrats, financial advisors, and even, ministers. Among the early arrival to Egypt was Boghos Bey Yusufian from Izmir, who eventually held a prestigious position in the

[7] Rouben Adalian, "The Armenian Colony of Egypt during the Reign of Muhammad Ali (1805-1848)," *The Armenian Review* 33 (1980): p. 116-117.

Egyptian state. For many years, he served as Muhammad ʻAli's Minister of Commerce. In addition to Yusufian, the Pasha also benefitted from the services of other Armenians like Garabed *Agha* Kalusdian of Van, appointed as the director of the Būlāq Customs House, and banker Yeghiazar *Amirah* of Ağın. Apart from these, the Pasha also depended on the expertise of Armenian agronomists, craftsmen, and traders to raise Egypt's economic standing in the regional and global market.

By mid-century or so, the number of Armenians in Egypt did not exceed 2000, constituting the smallest non-Muslim minority of the country, but possessed some economic potency.[8] The British agent John Bowring clearly illustrated this fact in his extensive report of 1840. He wrote that "the Armenians, though not numerous are influential, and occupy many of the most elevated posts of government [in Egypt] … adding their great acquirements in languages fit them peculiarly for the important offices of secretaries and dragomans…"[9]

Naturally, realizing the accomplishments of their relatives in Egypt and perceiving Muhammad ʻAli Pasha's warm hospitality towards them, a number of Armenian families, ultimately, settled in the not too distant Ottoman province of Egypt, thereby joining their kinsmen residing there. Actually, this was the case with the aristocratic Nubarian and Abroyan families of Izmir. On account of their close blood ties with Boghos Bey Yusufian and upon the latter's strong recommendation, they too ended up in Egypt. Muhammad Rifʻat has pointed out that Yusufian also encouraged the migration of other Armenians from Izmir, which explains why their numbers, at first, far exceeded the number of those coming from other Ottoman provinces.[10]

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[8] Adalian, passim.
[9] John Bowring, *Report on Egypt and Candia* (London, 1840): p. 10.
[10] Muhammad Rifʻat al-Imām, *Tārīkh al-jāliya al-armaniyya fī miṣr: al-qirn al-tāsiʻ ʻashar* (Cairo: 1999): p. 80. In March 2014, the Library of Alexandria in Egypt commemorated the 170th death

The most famous among the early Armenian settlers of Izmir extraction was Nubar Nubarian. Like his relative Boghos Bey Yusufian, he too rendered very many services to the Egyptian state. Nubarian headed several Egyptian ministries such as Public Works, Foreign Affairs, and Commerce. Added to these, at a later stage in his life, Nubar even became Egypt's three-time Prime Minister (1878-1879, 1884-1889, 1894-1895) both under Ismā'īl and later the British, and is considered to be the founder of the Egyptian Mixed Court System.[11] We also know through Rif'at, who has consulted the records of Armenian employees in the Egyptian state archives, that around 32 Armenian bureaucrats served in the Egyptian administration throughout the nineteenth century.

Following these early developments, Armenian immigration to Egypt gradually diminished, only to resume in the later part of the nineteenth century.[12] Given the ample material on the earlier history of the Armenian community in Egypt, I need not discuss it any further. Instead, I will move towards a more detailed examination of the resumption of Armenian immigrations to Egypt in the late nineteenth century, considering that this thesis aims to highlight their later socio-economic successes starting with the British occupation of the country up to the eruption of WWI.

B. Later Nineteenth Century Armenian Immigrations to Egypt

Following the intermittent migrations of the early nineteenth century and later, Armenian immigration to Egypt gained a new impetus in the closing decades of the

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anniversary of Boghos Yusufian, the first Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs. See "Fī dhikra wafāt awwal wazīr kharijiyyat miṣrī," (accessed May 4, 2019), http://www.ancme.net/news/729

[11] Adalian, p. 117-133. See also Nubar Pasha's biography in French: *Memoires de Nubar Pacha* (Beirut: Librarie du Liban, 1983), also translated into Arabic.

[12] Rif'at, *Tārīkh al-jāliya*, p. 77, 428-429.

same century, particularly, after 1896, following the ambivalent policies of Sultan Abdül Hamid II vis-à-vis the Empire's Armenian *millet*. By stark contrast to the earlier period, this time, the newcomers came from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.[13]

The Armenian migrations of the late nineteenth century were not as massive as the contemporary Arabic press suggested or as some current historians want us to believe. All in all, a relatively small number of Armenians came to Egypt in 1896, probably not in excess of 3000 individuals. The main difference this time, however, was that the newcomers arrived collectively and were classified as "refugees." Nevertheless, they were fairly well-received in Alexandria. They were sheltered in the premises of the city's Armenian St. Boghos (Paul) Church, where they lived in tents and were cared for by local Armenian notables including members of the Abroyan, Nubarian and Tchrakian aristocratic families, women's auxiliary committees, European philanthropic societies, and the Armenian Prelacy's Relief Committee.[14]

Upon their arrival in Egypt, the newcomers occupied news headlines of the local Egyptian press. For the first time in modern Egyptian history, the Armenian presence in the country was questioned and turned into a subject of contention between those who evinced an accommodating stance and those who completely opposed it. The non-accommodating camp used the economic factor, at times in exaggerated terms, to defend their thesis. *Al-Fallāḥ*[15] newspaper, for example, regarded the flow of Armenians as a potential threat to the 'poorer' or working class Egyptians as well as to

[13] Anne Le Gall-Kazazian, "Les Arméniens d'Égypte (XIXe-Milieu du XXe): La Réforme à L'Échelle Communautaire," in *Entre Réforme Sociale et Mouvement National: Identité et Modernisation en Égypte (1882-1962),* ed. Alain Roussillon (Cairo: CEDEJ, 1995): p. 502.
[14] Muhammad Rifʿat al-Imām, *al-Arman fī miṣr, 1894-1961* (Cairo: 2004): p. 117-124.
[15] *al-Fallāḥ* was a political, scientific and literary weekly established in Cairo in 1885, published until 1908 under the supervision of Salīm and Eliās Ḥamāwī.

the general Egyptian economy. It seems that *al-Fallāḥ* was mostly worried about the fact that the new immigrants, added to an already inflated foreign presence, would in the long run displace the native Egyptian labor force altogether. To abort such an outcome, it called for expelling the recent refugees from the country.[16] Similarly, the *Miṣr* daily[17] also sympathized with the Egyptian workers, who in its opinion, were in peril of total displacement by the outpouring of foreign elements into the country. On one occasion, *al-Ḥimāya* newspaper openly stated that even under Ottoman sovereignty "Egypt was for the Egyptians."[18] As it turns out, the influx of Armenians to Egypt did not only cause dismay at the popular level, but also evoked some concern among the already established Egyptian Armenians. *Miyutyun*[19] (Union), the mouthpiece of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU),[20] counselled its compatriots not to migrate to Egypt. "You will be miserable. There are no jobs here. Those arriving before you suffer from the unbearable hot weather conditions during summer and unemployment…"[21] Quite the opposite, some Egyptian newspapers stood in solidarity with the "persecuted" Armenians and welcomed them in Egypt. *Al-Ra'y al-'ām* weekly,[22] for example, denounced the fanatical and intolerant attitude expressed by its counterparts. Another periodical called *al-Ittiḥād al-Miṣrī*, contrary to *al-Fallāḥ* openly called for the extension of Egyptian government welcome and assistance to the destitute Armenians

[16] Rif'at, *al-Arman*, p. 118.
[17] *Miṣr* was edited by Qayṣar and Samuel Tadrus al-Minkabādi in Cairo in 1895. Rif'at, *al-Arman*, p. 186.
[18] Ibid, p. 119, 139-140.
[19] The AGBU established its official organ called *Miyutyun* in January 1912. The journal began as a monthly publication and continued as such until 1916. Then, *Miyutyun*, became a bimonthly periodical as a result of the financial difficulties caused by the First World War.
[20] The AGBU was founded in Cairo in 1906 through the efforts of Boghos Nubar Pasha and others. It is discussed in some detail in Chapter 5. See the two-volume work about the AGBU, Raymond Kévorkian and Vahe Tachjian, eds. *The Armenian General Benevolent Union: One Hundred Years of History* (Cairo, Paris, New York, 2006).
[21] "To the Immigrants," (Armenian) *Miyutyun*, July 1913, p. 109.
[22] It was a literary and political weekly newspaper published in Cairo by two Lebanese brothers: Iskandar Shalhūb and Najīb al-Ḥāj starting in 1893 until 1908.

as a humanitarian gesture. According to Rifʿat, the Egyptian government, however, was reluctant to aid the refugees given the pervasive anti-Armenian sentiments in the country.[23]

With the steady migration of Armenians to Egypt, a number of Armenian Church institutions also began taking shape in the host country. Most of the arriving Armenians belonged to the Armenian Orthodox Church. As a result, a church council was established in Cairo that included both the religious and civil segments of the community.[24] In 1905 the Armenian Catholic community in Egypt was also granted its own organic regulation thanks to the arduous efforts of Yaʿqub Artin Pasha, himself a Catholic, and a high ranking official in the Egyptian bureaucracy from 1878 until his retirement in 1906.[25] Perhaps, owing to Egypt's status as a de jure Ottoman province, no legal complications confronted most of the incoming Armenians. They continued to be treated as Ottoman subjects up to World War I. Their religious leader, the Prelate was and served as the head of the community. Several institutions operated under his auspices including Church estates, neighborhood churches and schools in both Cairo and Alexandria.[26]

C. The "Push" and "Pull" Factors Leading to Later Armenian Migrations to Egypt

In the field of migration studies, scholars tend to draw a distinction between what they describe as "push" and "pull" factors. The former refer to the underlying

[23] Rifʿat, *al-Arman*, p. 119-121, 129.
[24] About the Armenian *millet* see Najat Abdulhaq, *Jewish and Greek Communities in Egypt, Entrepreneurship, and Business before Nasser* (London, New York: IB Tauris, 2016): p. 59.
[25] Anne Le Gall-Kazazian, "La Construction de L'Identité Arménienne dans le context Égyptien (1805-1930)," in *Modernisation et Nouvelles Formes de mobilisation sociale. Volume II: Égypte-Turquie*, ed. M. Wieviorka et al. (Cairo: 1992): p. 70.
[26] Rifʿat, *al-Arman*, p. 253, 255, 270, 272. He has noted that in the 1890s, 83 % of Armenians especially held what was described as the Ottoman nationality, while only 12 % were classified as locals, probably those who were long settled in the country.

causes that drive individuals to leave their ancestral homeland whether freely or under duress, while the latter relates to the inherent reasons, be they political, economic or climatic properties, that serve to attract emigrants to a given destination.

The earlier Armenian migrations to Egypt, mostly voluntary, were for the most part driven by Egypt's economic "pull" factors, represented, during the reign of Muhammad ʿAli, by steady demand for Armenians to serve in the *wālī*'s expanding administrative edifice and by his ambitious economic project. Immigration, therefore, took the shape of a slow infiltration which in terms of number, was hardly noticeable and provoked little reaction. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the situation was quite different. To the magnetic "pull" factors were added more compelling "push" factors which dramatically altered the character of Armenian migration to Egypt. In addition to a general desire to evade high taxes to which Armenians appear to have been subjected, they had to contend with rising anti-Armenian sentiments, occasioned by radical Armenian political tendencies and practices[27], and, most of all, by the evolving Hamidian oppression following 1894-1896, and by what appeared to be systematic Armenian victimization.[28]

But why did Armenians choose Egypt in particular among many other options? In other words, what were its distinctive "pull" factors? In reality, Egypt had always acted as a center of gravity pulling in people of diverse social, religious, political, and economic backgrounds.[29] Egypt's growing work opportunities and higher standards of living encouraged people of various nationalities, including Armenians, to settle there.

[27] The allusion here is to the Ottoman Bank incident in 1896.
[28] The reference here is to what are usually described as the Hamidian massacres of 1894-1896. To read about the Ottoman taxation policies during the 1890s, see Nadir Özbek, "The Politics of Taxation and the 'Armenian Question' during the Late Ottoman Empire, 1876-1908," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54/4 (2012): p. 770-797.
[29] Rifʿat, *al-Arman*, p. 117-118.

At the turn of the century, Egypt, according to Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, possessed one of the most flourishing economies in the Eastern Mediterranean owing to its rapid integration into a world economy,[30] characterized by its "laissez-faire" economic system.[31]

Egypt was not only favorable for entrepreneurs seeking a fortune or workers looking for higher wages, but it also served as a haven for politically active Armenian revolutionaries agitating against the established Ottoman order. Egypt allowed individuals to more openly pursue their nationalist causes and sometimes diffuse "radical" ideas, by contrast to their own homelands, where they were unable to do so. In his retrospectively-written memoirs *Twelve Years Out of Istanbul*, Yervant Odian, himself an immigrant to Egypt, brings this fact to our attention. He recalls that the chief Hnchak[32] leaders of the *KumKapı* demonstration in Istanbul,[33] namely, Arpyar Arpyarian[34] and Harutyun Jangulian[35] settled on Egyptian soil in 1896, where they pursued their nationalist struggle.[36] Much like their Armenian counterparts, a number of Italian anarchists, Russian leftists, and Young Turks flocked to Egypt and followed a bewildering variety of political causes.[37]

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[30] Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010): p. 148.
[31] Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914* (London: Methuen, 1981): p. 224.
[32] One of the Armenian political parties founded in Geneva in 1887. See more about it in chapter 5.
[33] The *KumKapı* demonstration was organized by the Hnchak Party in 1890. The main objective behind it was to pressure the Sultan Abdül Hamid II regarding the implementation of reforms in the Armenian-inhabited provinces of the Ottoman Empire as dictated by the 61st article of the Treaty of Berlin (1878).
[34] Arpyar Arpyarian (Istanbul, 1851 – Cairo, 1908) was an Armenian writer, and a political activist.
[35] Harutyun Jangulian (Van, 1855 – 1915) was an Armenian political activist and a member of the Social Democratic Hnchak Party. Following his participation in the *KumKapı* demonstration, he was exiled to Acre, Palestine.
[36] Yervant Odian (1869-1926) was an Ottoman Armenian satirist, who relocated to Alexandria in 1897. See Yervant Odian, *Twelve Years Out of Istanbul, 1896-1908* (Armenian) (Beirut, 1937): p. 149-151.
[37] Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, "Fin de Siècle Egypt: A Nexus for Mediterranean and Global Radical Networks," in *Global Muslims in the Age Steam and Print*, ed. James L. Gelvin and Nile Green (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2014): p. 89.

One ought not to forget that this rapid movement of people became feasible thanks to the "major transport revolution" of the mid-nineteenth century allowing individuals and families to travel from one place to another in the Ottoman Empire. As Rifʿat has mentioned, most Armenians who wished to leave the Ottoman domains had merely to carry their baggage and head to the Ottoman capital Istanbul, where the Khedivial, Russian and Norwegian steamships awaited them.[38]

Unfortunately, it is not easy to tell the exact number of Armenian migrants relocating to Egypt in the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Various sources provide us with contradictory numbers. The Egyptian state censuses for the years 1907 and 1917 computed the number to be between 7,747 and 12,854. These fall short of the numbers presented by the Armenian sources like almanacs, newspapers, and Prelacy Archives which suggest that around 10,000 to 17,000 Armenians resided in the country during the same period. One thing, however, is certain: the number of Armenians in Egypt at the outbreak of WWI could not have exceeded 20,000.[39] Even so, as the coming chapters will show, they had a role in the Egyptian economy much larger than their small number suggests.

[38] Rifʿat, *al-Arman*, p. 117-118.
[39] Ibid, p. 241-242. By WWI, the number of Greeks in Egypt was between 56,735 and 82,658, while the Italians counted 40,198. See Abdulhaq, p. 66.

CHAPTER III

TOWARDS A BROADER OVERVIEW OF ARMENIAN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN EGYPT (1882-1914)

In his book *Modern Egypt*, the British Consul-General of Egypt, Sir Evelyn Baring, more famously known as Lord Cromer, wrote rather dismissively that the small Armenian community in the land of the Nile consisted "… for the most part of shopkeepers."[40] Though he did not say so explicitly, Cromer was implying that their economic role, if not petty, was too insignificant to merit great attention. The image which Cromer conjured was, in fact, incorrect as the incoming Ottoman Armenian migrants and refugees, escaping from the political storms of the mid-1890s, had already penetrated into the secondary and tertiary sectors of the Egyptian economy. It is true that very many of them were involved in the more "popular" professions such as tailoring and shoemaking among others, but it should also be pointed out that others worked in more sophisticated fields including medicine, engineering, architecture, photography, cigarette production, to name just a few professions, thus catering to the needs of both the "lower" and the "upper" echelons of the Egyptian society. Notwithstanding therefore their small numbers in Egypt, Armenians, in fact, figured at all levels of the economic ladder. This chapter means to provide a broader and a more detailed panorama of Armenian economic ventures in their new homeland and shed light on some important, but usually overlooked, aspects of Armenian economic activity at the dawn of the twentieth century. In this chapter, following an analysis of the

[40] Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, Vol. II (London, 1908): p. 219.

geographic concentration of Armenian businesses, subsequently, I will discuss the Armenian presence in agriculture, services, crafts, and printing.

A. The Geographical Distribution of Armenian Businesses in Cairo and Alexandria

Before discussing the various types of economic activities carried on by Armenians in Egypt, it would be helpful to visualize their geographical spread in both Cairo and Alexandria. How were the Armenian businesses organized and geographically distributed in Cairo and Alexandria? Did the Armenians have their own commercial or residential quarter in either of these two cities? Were they "ghettoized" or not? According to what Rifʿat has shown, most of the incoming Armenians, even though some of them had rural backgrounds, were heavily concentrated in the two cosmopolitan cities of Egypt, namely, Cairo and Alexandria. A smaller number of Armenians appear to have lived in the non-cosmopolitan and rural governorates of Lower and Upper Egypt. Relying on the Egyptian state census and on those of the Armenian Prelacy's, Rifʿat has concluded that in the period extending from 1896 to 1947 around 53.35 % of all Armenians lived in Cairo, 39.35 % in Alexandria, and a 7.3 % in all the remaining parts of Egypt.[41] Armenians lacked a distinct "Armenian Quarter" so to speak. ʿAli Mubārak Pasha's monumental work *al-Khiṭaṭ al-tawfīqiyya* published in 1882 attests to this fact.[42] Moreover, an article about Armenians in Egypt appearing in the Marseille-based *Armenia*[43] newspaper in 1894 maintained that Armenians lived among other peoples be they "Arabs, Greeks, Jews, Syrians, or

[41] Rifʿat, *al-Arman*, p. 244.
[42] I checked the second and third volumes of ʿAli Mubārak Pasha's *al-Khiṭaṭ al-tawfīqiyya al-jadīda li miṣr al-qāhira wa bilāduha al-qadīma wa al-shahīra* (Cairo, 1969-1970), where I did not come across any Armenian street or quarter.
[43] It was an Armenian newspaper published in Marseille by Megerditch Portukalian, following his expulsion from the Ottoman Empire in 1885.

Italians."[44] Hence, borrowing Gudrun Krämer's terminology, Armenians were not "ghettoized" or "segregated" in Egypt. In other words, using the terms of Krämer, it can be confidently stated that Armenians in the country never "moved out of place" for they were not confined to a 'place' to begin with. Of course, this did not prevent them from having their areas of residence close to their workplaces or in the neighborhood of communal institutions such as Armenian churches and schools. Just to give a concrete example, this happened to be the case in Bayn al-Surayn street in Cairo, where several Armenian shops and businesses existed in the proximity of the St. Asdvadzadzin (St. Mary's) Church and Cairo's Armenian Prelacy.[45]

Generally, Armenian businesses were located in either of the two cities' more central economic quarters. In Cairo, they were found in the following streets: Bayn al-Sūrayn, Mūskī, Azbakiyya, 'Abdīn, Clot Bey, among other places. Armenian businesses in Alexandria were mainly situated in Sherīf Pasha Street, and 'Attārīn Mosque Street. The probability of finding a larger number of Armenians practicing similar professions in a single location was higher in the larger and more specialized market places such as Sūq al-Kantu in Cairo[46], where several Armenian restaurant owners, photographers, shoe sellers, leather traders, existed side by side. Clearly, Armenians preferred to have their shops in the more cosmopolitan and prestigious districts of Cairo or Alexandria partly to increase their chances of benefitting from the presence of tourists, wealthy and

[44] A Traveler, "Towards Egypt," (Armenian) *Armenia*, November 17, 1894 and "To Egypt," (Armenian) *Armenia*, November 24, 1894.
[45] "Impressions (in the Street)" (Armenian), *Lusaper*, 18 November 1905. *Lusaper* was published in Cairo from 1904 to 1908.
[46] Sūq al-Kantu was located next to al-Mūskī street, before the Jewish Quarter. See the 1920s map of Cairo in Nancy Y. Reynolds, *A City Consumed: Urban Commerce, The Cairo Fire, and the Politics of Decolonization in Egypt* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012): p. 31.

middle class Europeans.[47] It is noticeable that several Armenian firms, at least in Cairo, overlooked fashionable hotels like the Shepheard's Hotel and important institutions such as the Imperial Ottoman Bank and the British barracks (in Qaṣr al-Nīl).[48]

B. Armenians in the Egyptian Economy

1. Agriculture and Landownership

The existing secondary sources shed some light on the earlier agricultural activities of Armenians in Egypt during the rule of Muhammad ʻAli, while their later accomplishments in that field remain overwhelmingly ignored. In light of recent archival disclosures, this section means to fill in the existing gaps by highlighting the Armenian attempts at "modernizing" and upgrading Egyptian agriculture in reliance on their wide knowledge and expertise previously gained in Europe.

Starting from the 1820s, a number of Armenian agricultural experts from Anatolia and Cyprus were invited to Egypt to assist Muhammad ʻAli in the introduction of new crops to expand the country's agricultural output. Initially, the Pasha attempted to boost the production of indigo in his domains. That is why he resorted to the assistance of some Armenian agronomists to help in its plantation in Egypt. These men were commissioned to cultivate better varieties of indigo brought from Cyprus, Kaiseri and other places. But, with the flow of cheaper Indian indigo, its production dramatically diminished, and was eventually abandoned. In the 1830s, perhaps, with a view to having an expanded role in the market, the Pasha strained to boost the

[47] Gudrun Krämer, "Moving Out of Place, Minorities in Middle Eastern Urban Societies 1800-1914," in *The Urban Social History of the Middle East, 1750-1950*, ed. Peter Sluglett (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2008): p. 218.

[48] See "Andon Tokatlian Tapissier et Décorateur," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, December 8, 1908. See also "Do Not Lose the Opportunity," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, June 15, 1907. *Azad Pem* was first published in Alexandria (1903-1906) and then in Cairo (1906-1907).

cultivation of opium in Egypt. To meet this goal, a number of Armenians were brought from Smyrna, the center of opium production in the Ottoman Empire, to work on land devoted exclusively to this crop. At the beginning, their efforts proved to be successful as the country produced around 15000 to 20000 uqa[49] of opium, but by the 1840s, the number, according to British agent John Bowring, suddenly dropped because of its "imperfect" quality.[50] Another Armenian called Yusuf Effendi al-Armanī, according to Rifʿat, is also credited for having introduced Maltese tangerines into the country; at a later stage that fruit, simply known as "Yusuf Effendi" was widely consumed in Egypt.[51]

Generally speaking, unlike affluent Greek and some Syrian families for that matter, Armenians usually abstained from investing in agricultural land ownership. Some plots of land acquired by Armenians in Egypt were granted as gifts to high-ranking Armenian civil servants working under Muhammad 'Ali's and later Khedivial governments. As Rifʿat has demonstrated, hardly any Armenian thought of purchasing agricultural property. In case they did, the area bought did not exceed a few hundred *feddan*s, the smallest being eight *feddan*s or sometimes less. Only the aristocratic Nubarian family steadily accumulated lands over an extensive period of time as a result of generous donations and successive purchases. As a matter of fact, during the rule of Khedive Ismāʿīl, the Nubarians held around 2944 *feddan*s, gifts received from the Khedive.[52] Nubar's son Boghos continued his father's legacy by purchasing more lands.

[49] 1 uqa equals 37.5 grams. See Charles Issawi, ed. *The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914: A Book of Readings* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1966): p. 517.
[50] Bowring, p. 23, 25.
[51] Rifʿat, *Tārīkh al-jāliya,* p. 121-124.
[52] Rifʿat, *Tārīkh al-jāliya*, p. 145, 147. It should be noted that Nubar Pasha was the founder of the Behera Land Company in 1881. See Gabriel Baer, *A History of Landownership in Egypt, 1800-1950* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1962): p. 68. For Aṭyān al-Nubāriyya, see "Aṭyān al-Nubāriyya," al-*Muqtaṭaf*, December 1904, p. 1070.

In 1898, he was almost the only Armenian who bought around 2007 *feddan*s of land belonging to al-Da'ira al-Saniyya.[53] In the main, properties acquired by Armenians fell in the districts near Cairo or Alexandria.[54] Here it is appropriate to note that although a leading figure in the Egyptian Ministry of Public Education, Ya'qub Artin[55] had a pivotal role in creating a growing body of literature relating to landownership in Egypt. In 1883, he authored *La Propriété Foncières en Égypte*, which has become a landmark publication relating to the history of private landownership in modern Egypt.[56]

It is obvious, from the preceding, that Armenians, unlike for example their Greek counterparts, were not much involved in cotton cultivation, its ginning derivative or sale. Still a few Armenian agronomists like Boghos Nubar and Yervant Aghaton put in much effort to improve Egyptian agricultural endeavors. Apparently, on account of his father's possession of vast agricultural fields, Boghos Nubar studied agricultural and mechanical engineering in France and Switzerland. Upon graduation and after his return to Egypt, Boghos embarked on a series of agricultural projects meant to introduce agriculture mechanization into the country. Indeed, the year 1898 proved to be an eventful year in Boghos' lifelong career. That year, he had a major hand in the creation of the first Egyptian agricultural body known as the Khedivial Agricultural Society, serving on its board as its vice-president for many years. In the same year, and thanks to his ingenious intellectual talents and mechanical skills, he commenced the construction

[53] 'Ali Barakāt, *Taṭawur al-milkiyya al-zirā'iyya fī miṣr wa aṯārahu 'ala al-ḥaraka al-siyāsiya (1813-1914)* (Cairo, Dār al-ṯaqāfa al-jadīda, 1977): p. 476. The total area of al-Da'ira al-Saniyya amounted to 500,000 feddāns. Its "sale" aimed to enable the Egyptian state to repay its debts to European creditors. See Samir Raafat, "Familiar Ground, the 19th Century Privatization of Daira Sanieh Doesn't Seem That Distant," *Business Monthly Magazine*, July 1997, (accessed April 21, 2019), http://www.egy.com/historica/97-07-00.php.

[54] Rif'at, *Tārīkh al-jāliya,* p. 146.

[55] Ya'qub Artin (1842-1919) was an Armenian educator and government official. He was a member of the Institut Égyptien contributing several articles to the *Bulletin de L'Institut d'Égypte*. He also authored *L'Instruction Publique en Égypte* (1890) and *Contes Populaires Inédits de la Vallée du Nil* (1895).

[56] According to Gabriel Baer, this is an important source for historians writing about the history of landownership in Egypt. See Baer, p. 14.

of the "Nubari" steam plowing machine.[57] Although its use did not spread in Egypt, it nevertheless generated considerable professional recognition. It was first displayed in the Egyptian section of the Paris Exposition in 1900. By this self-made invention and by contrast to reliance on animal power, Boghos intended to increase the efficiency of agricultural production by plowing more lands in a relatively shorter period of time. Actually, this new technology had the capacity of plowing around 1,980 square meters per hour or to put it differently approximately two hectares per day.[58] It soon gained the close attention of French agricultural scientists and became a subject constantly discussed in the meetings of the Paris-based French Academy of Agriculture. In 1902, in much appreciation and recognition of Nubar's "modernizing" endeavors, the Academy, upon the recommendation of French agricultural engineer and professor Maximillian Ringelmann,[59] awarded the "Olivier de Serres"[60] gold medal to Boghos, the foremost agricultural inventor of the year.[61] At a later stage, Nubar was also invited to join the Agricultural Mechanics and Irrigation committee of the Société Nationale d'Agriculture de France as a foreign member.[62] In addition to his plowing machine he, in 1905, after many years of experimentation, also launched a special new type of cotton crop, which became known as Nubari cotton. It had "… a more vigorous growth, the foliage being heavier than in the other kinds."[63] Soon after, the Nubari cotton together

[57] See the picture of the plowing machine in Appendix II.
[58] *Bulletin des Séances de la Société Nationale d'Agriculture de France*, 1902, p. 671-672. In 1905, the machine was priced at 40,000 francs. See "Séance du 5 Avril 1905, Presidence de M. Teisserenc de Bort," *Bulletin des Séances de la Société Nationale d'Agriculture de France*, 1905, p. 304-305.
[59] As of 1887, Max Ringelmann (1861-1931) worked as a professor at the École Nationale d'Agriculture in Grignon. In fact, although an agronomist, Ringelmann is also credited for coming up with a theory known as the "Ringelmann effect" in social psychology.
[60] Olivier de Serres (1539-1619) was a sixteenth-seventeenth century soil scientist.
[61] "Séance Annuélle du 17 Décembre 1902, Présidence de M. Prillieux," *Bulletin des Séances de La Société Nationale d'Agriculture de France*, Vol. 62, 1902, p. 796.
[62] "Séance du 8 Novembre 1905 Présidence de M. Teissérénc de Bort," *Bulletin des Séances de La Société Nationale d'Agriculture de France*, Vol. 65,1905, p. 752.
[63] *Egyptian Agricultural Products* (Cairo: Ministry of Agriculture, 1917): p. 49.

with other varieties of Egyptian cotton like Mit Afifi and Yoannovitch were planted in French Algeria and Tunisia and for a while in the United States.[64] But, much to the regret of the US Department of Agriculture, the Nubari crop failed to acclimatize to Arizona's climatic conditions.[65] Nor did it displace other Egyptian varieties. Nevertheless, his pioneering role as an agricultural expert was not overlooked. In 1905, on behalf of the Egyptian state, Nubar participated in the founding meeting of the International Agricultural Institute in Rome sitting on the same table with delegates from the British Empire, Belgium, France, Italy, Romania, Netherlands, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Canada, Spain, and Denmark.[66]

The memoirs of Yervant Aghaton entitled *My Life's Memoirs*, recently made available online in the National Library of Armenia, also attest to the role and contribution of a French-educated Ottoman Armenian agricultural engineer in Egypt, once holding the agricultural inspectorship of the Anatolian and Rumelian provinces of the Empire.[67] Like Boghos Nubar, Aghaton had also acquired his necessary expertise at the prestigious École Nationale d'Agriculture in Grignon in 1880. In late August 1896, following the Ottoman Bank incident and the mounting anti-Armenian sentiment in Ottoman territories,[68] Aghaton defected to Paris, where he already possessed close connections with a number of Armenian families including the famous Nubarians (known for staying in the French capital several times per year, usually, during the summer months). Due to the difficulties of finding permanent employment in France,

[64] For the plantation of the Nubari cotton in Tunisia and Algeria, see "Coton en Tunisie," *Bulletin Agricole de L'Algérie et de la Tunisie*, July 1911, p. 508 and "Le Coton en Algérie et en Tunisie," *Bulletin Agricole de L'Algérie et de la Tunisie*, July 1911, p. 632. See also Thomas H. Kearney, *Breeding New Types of Egyptian cotton* (Washington: US Department of Agriculture, 1910): p. 29.
[65] M.R. Fourtau, "Le Coton Égyptien Aux États Unis," *Bulletin de L'Union Syndicale des Agriculteurs d'Égypte*, November 1909, p. 199.
[66] *Institut Internationale d'Agriculture, Comité Permanent Mai-Décembre 1908* (Rome: 1909): p. 20.
[67] Yervant Aghaton, *My Life's Memoirs* (Armenian) (Geneva, 1931): p. 31, 34, 85.
[68] On August 26, 1896, in an effort to pressure the European powers a group of Dashnak partisans, one of the three Armenian political parties, attacked the Bank Ottoman headquarters in Istanbul.

Aghaton, subsequently relocated to Egypt upon Nubar Pasha's suggestion. In fact, the latter's son Boghos, although of a similar specialization, looked at Aghaton more as a friend rather than a competitor and hosted him in his house in Cairo for nearly six months.

As a new but a well-educated immigrant to Egypt, Aghaton in no time began a successful career. He gained the respect of both Armenian and Egyptian elites as well as forming close relations with other local agricultural specialists. Together with like-minded Egyptian agronomists, Aghaton laid the foundations for the Egyptian Agricultural Syndicate, which he headed for a number of years and in about 1909 was declared its honorary president.[69] By 1912, eight out of a total 147 members subscribed to the Syndicate were Armenians.[70] Boghos Nubar also supported the existence of the Syndicate which, he hoped, would assist the Egyptian peasants in having access to cheaper seeds and fertilizers as well as mechanical equipment to boost their productivity.[71] Aghaton gained even more fame by the dint of his French-language articles on a multiplicity of agricultural topics like cotton growing and irrigation matters published in the *Bulletin de L'Union Syndicale des Agriculteurs d'Égypte.*[72] First, he was appointed by Boghos Nubar as his land inspector, subsequently, he became general supervisor of the lands belonging to the widow of Takvor Pasha Hagopian. Then, Aghaton was invited to work as inspector in the vast lands of Prince Ḥusayn Kāmel, the second son of Khedive Ismā'īl and later Sultan of Egypt, and was paid £E 25 for his services. His name was also circulated by word of mouth among the aristocratic circles.

[69] Aghaton, *My Life's Memoirs*, p. 177.
[70] "Liste des Membres de L'Union des Agriculteurs Année 1911," *Bulletin de L'Union des Agriculteurs d'Égypte*, January 1912, p. 9, 11-14,
[71] Boghos Nubar, "Les Syndicats Agricoles en Égypte," *L'Égypte Contemporaine*, 1910, Vol. I, p. 197, 199.
[72] For a comprehensive list of Aghaton's articles about Egyptian agriculture see Maunier, p.178-180, 182-184, 186.

Then, upon Prince Ḥusayn's recommendation his brother Prince Ibrahīm, and his sister Princess Niyamet, also appointed Aghaton as an inspector for their farms in Egypt that earned him an income of £E 100 per month. As the saying goes, one success leads to another. Ultimately, former Egyptian Prime Minister Riyāḍ Pasha and Khedive ʿAbbās Ḥilmī II relied on Aghaton to administer their lands in Aswan, where sugar cane and cotton were planted.[73] As Roger Owen has stated, the *fellah* in Egypt barely used chemical fertilizers. Aghaton, however, deviated from the norm. By utilizing chemicals like Nitrate and Super Phosphate, two crucial plant nutrients, he contrived to increase the fertility of the soil. At first, he experimented with these substances in the cotton and wheat fields of Boghos Nubar. Then, encouraged by the dramatic increase in the crop yields, he applied them on a larger scale including in Riyāḍ Pasha's lands.[74] Interestingly, Aghaton's land experiences were also reflected in his Armenian-language writings appearing in AGBU's *Miyutyun*. As a result of his continuing interest in the agricultural life of the Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire, he wished to convey, through his writings, the benefits of introducing new agricultural techniques among the Armenian peasants laboring in the Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire, whom he as a devotee of modernity, described as "backward" and "ignorant" people, relying on wasteful methods of agriculture and land rotation.[75]

Although, the Armenians in general tended to veer away from the agricultural sector, there were one or two instances in which the opposite was the case. The British Consular Report of 1904 notes that two out of a total of 67 students studying at the Egyptian School of Agriculture were Armenians, an exceptional fact given that members of the community avoided enrolling in state-run technical institutions where

[73] Aghaton, *My Life's Memoirs*, p. 151-186.
[74] Owen, p. 40, and Aghaton, *My Life's Memoires*, p. 184.
[75] Yervant Aghaton, "Advice to the Villager," (Armenian) *Miyutyun*, August 1912, p. 125-126.

Arabic was the official language of instruction. Had the names of these students been mentioned, it would have been possible to trace their future career paths.[76]

2. Services

a. Food Industry and Hotel Services

Much the same as any group of migrants leaving their ancestral homelands, Ottoman Armenians settling in Egypt carried with them their professions, traditions, and customs to their new destinations. Apart from establishing other types of Armenian-owned shops highlighted in the course of this chapter, bakeries, pastries, restaurants, cafés, and hotels were also on the list of Armenian businesses in Egypt. Pastry shops and restaurants, in particular, played a significant role in preserving the newcomers' ancestral culinary heritage, but also appealed to local Eastern tastes as well as that of the large "Ottoman" constituency in the country. By means of food, therefore, the Armenians contributed to cultural interaction and exchange. A certain Armenag Baldjian, originally from the Ottoman capital, revived homeland traditions by specializing in the Istanbul *çörek*,[77] especially, prepared for the Easter season and selling other kinds of sweets like *lokum* (Turkish delights), *Revani* (an Ottoman Turkish desert), *Acıbadem* (almond cookie), and the *Tavuk göğsü* (a Turkish milk pudding with shredded chicken breast), one of the delicacies served to the Ottoman monarchs in the Topkapı Palace.[78] In addition to these, popular European sweets like biscuits, cakes, patte d'amande (a confection made from sugar and almond) and marron glacé (chestnut

[76] *Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration, Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1904* (London: 1905): p. 77. At the time, Etmekdjian was a student at the Khedivial School of Arts in Egypt. In his article, he complained about Armenian indifference to the use of Arabic, a language requirement for admission into government employment. See Boghos Etmekdjian, "Egyptian Armenians: The Importance of Arabic and the State-Run Schools," (Armenian) *Lusaper*, July 31, 1906.
[77] A type of sweet
[78] "Çörek Çörek," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, April 27, 1907.

candied in sugar) were also prepared by Baldjian in his shop in Cairo's Clot Bey street, assisted by skilled Armenian assistants.[79] Besides preparing sweets in Egypt, other Armenians imported them directly from various Ottoman cities. A certain Boghos Ohanian was well-known for importing more than 30 kinds of Turkish sweets from the Ottoman port-city of Izmir to Cairo.[80] A visitor to the Armenian-owned "Stambol" grocery shop in Cairo also may have purchased the famous Haci Bekir[81] brand of *lokum*.[82]

Solely or in partnership with other Armenians or non-Armenians, new Turkish-style restaurants also emerged in the different quarters of the Egyptian capital as well as in Alexandria. M. Latchinian and A. Kosatl ran a restaurant in Wijhat al-Birka street in Cairo, well-known as an entertainment zone in the Egyptian capital.[83] Probably, owing to the spread of the food business in this particular street, other Armenian-owned restaurants having similar menus also came into being, in the process, creating some competition between contending Armenian restaurants. Karnig Dadurian and Megerditch Kalusdian opened the *Kebab* Royal Restaurant,[84] to be followed by Restaurant 'Abbās of Shahrigian and Palamudian making *Tandır kebabı* (cooked from lamb pieces), *işkembe çorbası* (a type of soup cooked in Istanbul made from tripe), and the *paça* (a dish of boiled cow or sheep parts).[85] Much the same as in Cairo, Armenian

[79] "Worker is Needed," (Armenian), *Azad Pem*, August 17, 1907. In a newspaper advertisement, Armenag Baldjian expressed his dire need of two workers who will be assisting him in his work.
[80] "Amdja Boghos G. Ohanian," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, November 29-December 12, 1908. *Arshaluys* was published in Cairo from 1899 to 1914.
[81] It is one of the popular firms in Istanbul producing *lokum* and various kinds of candies since 1777.
[82] "Stambol Grocery Store," (Armenian) *Nor Jamanagner*, December 1, 1906. *Nor Jamanagner* was published in Cairo in 1906.
[83] "Restaurant Montaza," (Armenian) *Lusaper*, 6 April 1905. See Nancy Y. Reynolds, "Entangled Communities: Interethnic Relationships among Urban Salesclerks and Domestic Workers in Egypt, 1927-1961," *European Review of History* 19/1 (2012): p. 120.
[84] "The Kebab Royal Restaurant," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, August 21, 1912.
[85] "A Pleasant Surprise in Cairo," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, May 14-27, 1914. In fact, another man by the name of Vartan Toros also sold *paça*. See "Vartan Toros Bazar Murur" (Armenian) *Lusaper*, January 26, 1905.

restaurants in Alexandria also cooked a wide variety of Turkish foods. Restaurant Nor Tar (New Century), for instance, advertised that it prepared a large number of Istanbul dishes,[86] whereas the Arevelian (Oriental) Restaurant, formed through the partnership of Garabed Dirhemdjian and Sarkis Husaynidjian, sold the Turkish *Döner* made from meat cooked on a vertical spit.[87]

Other than *kebab*, some Armenians as in the case of Andon Reshduni and his Hnchak comrade Vahakn, broke away from the norm by serving the eggplant *dolma* (stuffed eggplant) in their restaurant in Alexandria.[88] However, rather surprisingly, almost none of the sources mention the names of Armenian shops preparing the famous *bastırma*, which, later on, became widely consumed. Their preparation of Turkish foods and sweets must have attracted foreigners and local customers alike eager to try these "new" foods. Of course, it should not be forgotten that cooking such dishes was also a clear indication of the unchanging eating habits of Armenians expelled from their ancestral homeland, in the process, acting as carriers of Ottoman Turkish culture as mediated by their cuisine.

As in other parts of the Ottoman Near East, the number of cafés and hotels were also on the rise in Egypt. According to the official British census of 1907, around 4,203 people were involved in this male-dominant business in Cairo, while it was half that number (2,338 people) in Alexandria.[89] In fact, in the midst of continuous migration to Egypt, Armenians, of both genders, also started setting up their own cafés and hotels in the abovementioned cities. The Armenian Café (known as Qahvet al-Arman) in Cairo's Ezbek street, was among the first and most popular cafés established by Armenians in

[86] "Restaurant Nor Tar," (Armenian) *Punig*, September 28, 1901, p. 207. *Punig* was first published in Cairo from 1899 to 1901 and then in Alexandria from 1901 to 1903.
[87] "Oriental Restaurant," (Armenian) *Punig*, March 14, 1903, p. 232.
[88] Odian, *Twelve Years*, p. 151-152.
[89] C.C. Lowis, *The Census of Egypt Taken in 1907* (Cairo, 1909): p. 170.

Egypt as early as 1891 or even before,[90] to be followed by numerous others starting from the early twentieth century. In fact, cafés formed an integral part of the developing Egyptian public sphere.[91] The Grand Café Chicha in Cairo, run by Karnig Sirunian, acquired fame for serving the hookah, mocha, coffee and various kinds of spirits to its customers, who may have been deprived of these pleasures in local Egyptian coffeehouses.[92] As it turns out, Sirunian relied on his nationals to run his shop; he appointed Arshag Adjemian director of the café and S. Sarkissian as the accountant.[93] Revealing their renowned entrepreneurial inclinations, some Armenians preferred to adopt Europeanized names for their cafés with the intention of attracting Europeans in addition to their local clients. This holds true for the Cairo Café and Bar Aida, owned by Lutfian in Cairo. In addition to spirits, it also included different kinds of mezes on its menu.[94] This is also true for Café Central d'Abdine (owned by a certain Budakian), the celebrated Café Riche (belonging to a Madame Sirunian in Cairo; probably a relative of Karnig Sirunian).[95]

Besides cafés, Armenians also owned hotels in Egypt, although of a second or a third class level, as Yervant Odian noted and the French almanac of 1904 has confirmed.[96] Naming hotels after certain Ottoman cities in Anatolia (probably the names of areas where they came from) reflects Armenian attachment to their homeland and may also mirror their deeply embedded nationalist sentiments. For example, one comes

[90] Ibrāhīm ʻAbd-al Massīḥ, *Dalīl Wādī al-Nīl 1891-1892* (Cairo, 1892): p. 155, (accessed June 16, 2018), https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008895046
[91] Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation through Popular Culture* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011): p. 145.
[92] "Grand Chicha Café," (Armenian) *Bardez*, November 1, 1903. The name of the café also appears in the Egyptian directory of 1908. *Bardez* was published in Alexandria in 1903.
[93] *L'Annuaire Égyptien du Commerce de L'Industrie, L'Administration et la Magistrature de L'Égypte et du Soudan 1908* (Cairo: The Directory Printing Office, 1907): p. 435, 610.
[94] "Café and Bar Aida," (Armenian) *Avel*, September 5, 1908. *Avel* appeared in Cairo in 1908.
[95] *L'Annuaire Égyptien 1908*, p. 465, 519, 617, 1067.
[96] Yevant Odian, *Collection of Works* (Armenian) Vol. 4 (Yerevan: Haybedhrad, 1962): p. 476.

across names like Hotel Trebizond (owned by a certain M. Kevorkian in Alexandria), Hotel Samsun overlooking the Sea in Alexandria and Hotel Armenia (owned by Sarkis Bulbulian) in Cairo.[97] Owing to the dramatic growth of the tourist traffic in Egypt, Armenian hotel keepers, as in the case of the café owners, were also inclined to adopt Western names like Marie Boghossian's Hotel du Louvre.[98]

b. Health Care and Medicine

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Armenians also occupied a prominent position in the fields of medicine and pharmacology in the Ottoman Empire. In fact, several members of the Shashian dynasty of Istanbul, for instance, served as the personal physicians to the various Ottoman sultans.[99] Likewise, in Egypt, some Armenian physicians and pharmacists in addition to a few midwives and nurses made their appearance in the fields of medicine and healthcare, beginning in the early twentieth century, self-employed or finding employment in foreign medical institutions. Many of them carried their profession with them, while others gained their medical expertise through studying abroad and then coming to Egypt. Back then, Armenians aspiring to hold a degree in any field relating to the medical sciences attended universities either in Europe or in the United States. But when such options were unavailable, they studied instead at the Medical School of the Syrian Protestant College (SPC, now the American University of Beirut), one of the oldest, Western-style medical

[97] Stefano G. Poffandi, *Indicateur Égyptien Administratif et Commercial 1904* (Alexandria, 1904): p. 109. "Hotel Samsun," (Armenian) *Lusaper*, August 16, 1906. "Hotel Trebizond," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, September 10-23, 1908.
[98] "Hotel Louvre," (Armenian) *Lusaper*, March 14, 1908.
[99] Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, *Sisters of Mercy and Survival: Armenian Nurses, 1900-1930* (Antelias, 2012): p. 24-25.

institutions in the Ottoman Empire. Their virtual inability to use the Arabic language meant they could not study in the Egyptian Medical School, Qaṣr al-ʿAynī.

In fact, practicing medicine in Egypt was rather attractive for Armenian physicians trained in Western institutions, having in mind that the country lacked a well-established medical corps and because most well-to-do Egyptians refused "… to seek treatment at state-sponsored hospitals…"[100]

Armenian physicians constituted about 0.6 % of the total numbers of working Armenians in Egypt.[101] They were not organized into a union similar to the Armenian Medical Association of Constantinople founded in 1912.[102] In light of the documents consulted, it can be stated that the majority of the Armenian physicians in Egypt were either dentists or doctors of internal medicine. For example, Drs. George Evliyan,[103] Bedros Nicotemos,[104] Vahram Yaqubian,[105] Hovsep Vanlian,[106] Keledjian, Kh. Demirdjian were dentists, while Drs. Garabed Pashayan Khan,[107] Yetvart Arsharuni,[108] H. Gurunlian, A. Manugian, A. Gulmez,[109] and S. Ezekyelian[110] were doctors of internal

[100] Hibba Abugideiri, *Gender and the Making of Modern Medicine in Colonial Egypt* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010): p. 90.
[101] Rifʿat, *al-Arman*, p. 366-367.
[102] Churchill, p. 27.
[103] Dr. Evliyan studied dentistry in the USA.
[104] Dr. Nicotemos studied dentistry in Paris and practiced it there for several years before coming to Egypt.
[105] Dr. Yaqubian was a graduate of the University of Maryland in the USA after obtaining his BA from the SPC in 1897. Hratch Kestenian, "A Portrait of Armenian Student Life at the Syrian Protestant College 1885-1920" (MA diss., American University of Beirut, 2015): p. 96.
[106] A graduate from the Medical College of Constantinople.
[107] A graduate from the Medical College of Constantinople in 1888. He moved to Persia following his sentence to death by the Ottoman authorities, due to supporting the rising Ottoman Armenian nationalist movement. After some years in the service of the Persian Shah Mozaffar ad-Din Qajar, Pashayan went to Egypt, where he opened a clinic in Alexandria. There, he also established an Armenian school as well as a printing house. Following the overthrow of Sultan Abdül Hamid II, Pashayan returned to Istanbul and was subsequently elected as a member of the Ottoman parliament. "Doct. Pashayan Khan," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, April 23, 1904.
[108] A graduate from the Medical University in Paris, also settled in Alexandria.
[109] Dr. Gulmez studied internal medicine in Germany and then returned to Egypt. His clinic was located in Mūskī street. "Dr. A. Gulmez," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, December 26, 1906.
[110] Dr. Ezekyelian studied internal medicine in the USA. His clinic was located in Alexandria. See "S.V. Ezekyelian," (Armenian) *Punig*, April 2, 1902.

medicine. Some practiced other medical fields such as gynecology. Dr. Esther L. Jacobian was the only female Armenian gynecologist in Egypt, with her clinic located in Cairo.[111]

As for their work possibilities, Armenian doctors in Egypt had several career options. They could open their private clinics in Cairo or Alexandria (which was usually the case), treat patients in missionary-run dispensaries or in privately-owned pharmacies (most of the times belonging to their nationals) or work in hospitals. Of course, based on the available examples, it appears that when Armenian doctors opened private clinics, they did so in the important districts of Cairo or Alexandria. Drs. Kh. Demirdjian, V. Yaqubian, and Keledjian, incidentally all of them dentists, had their clinics in the vicinity of the Shepheard's Hotel, and may have been visited more regularly by foreigners than their own nationals or by other Egyptians.[112] Interestingly, as an editorial published in the Cairene *Nor Or* (New Day)[113] newspaper reveals, an Armenian patient in Egypt usually opted for the services of European rather than an Armenian physician considering the former as more "credible" and "trustworthy,"[114] despite the fact that they may have graduated from internationally acclaimed western institutions. By contrast, working class Armenians chose to visit the Armenian physicians and dentists who were probably less costly and on certain week days offered free consultation sessions for their "poorer" nationals in line with the dominant trend prevailing in Istanbul.[115]

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[111] "Dr. Esther L. Jacobian," (Armenian) *Lusaper*, April 4, 1908.
[112] "Dr. Kh. Demirdjian," (Armenian) *Lusaper*, December 6, 1904, "Dr. V. K. Yaqubian," (Armenian) *Lusaper-Arev*, January 8, 1910, "Dr. Keledjian," (Armenian) *Lusaper-Arev*, April 5, 1910. *Lusaper-Arev* was published in Cairo from 1909 to 1913.
[113] *Nor Or* was published in Cairo from 1900 to 1901.
[114] "Our Doctors," (Armenian) *Nor Or*, April 21 – May 4, 1901.
[115] A tradition practiced by Armenian physicians in Istanbul as well, who dedicated certain hours of their day to treat "poorer" patients free of charge. See "Dr. A. Undjian," (Armenian) *Gavrosh*, August 6, 1910. *Gavrosh* appeared in Istanbul starting in 1907.

On top of their regular clinic hours, some doctors like Arsharuni and Pashayan spent their afternoons in the Tokatlian Pharmacy in Alexandria, where patients could also consult Greek or Jewish doctors.[116] Dr. A. Manugian also allocated some of his free time healing patients visiting the Pharmacy d'Afrique, owned by an Armenian, again in Alexandria. [117] In Egypt, Armenians also ran pharmacies; among them were the Khatchadurian brothers, owners of the Constantinople Pharmacy, and Boghos Hagopian, owner of the Anglo-Egyptian Pharmacy (founded in 1904).[118] In addition to selling European and American readymade drugs, as most pharmacists of the time did, they, too, prepared medicine based on French and British pharmacopoeia.[119] As far as one can tell from British Consular Reports, to do so they must have been licensed chemists in line with the Egyptian Pharmacy Law of 1904 which prohibited non-licensed chemists from running pharmacies or preparing drugs.[120]

Other than working in their own clinics or in pharmacies, some physicians such as Dr. Abkar Dermarkarian, a graduate from the SPC Medical School in 1902, worked in the eye department of the British-run Old Cairo Medical Mission performing "… over a thousand eye-operations..."[121] Similarly, Dr. Garabed Uzunian, immediately after his graduation from the SPC, was employed in the American Mission Hospital in Cairo for four years (1905-1909) and then became a medical officer in the Sudan

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[116] "Pharmacy Paros," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, July 29, 1905. In addition to this pharmacy, there was also Pharmacy Ararat in Cairo in Bayn al-Surayn street owned by a certain K. Sarafian. See Poffandi, *Indicateur Égyptien 1904*, p. 109. V. Yanopoulo was the Greek doctor visiting the Tokatlian Pharmacy and Isaac Levi was his Jewish counterpart.
[117] "Dr. A. Manugian," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, June 27, 1906.
[118] Rif'at, *al-Arman*, p. 367-368.
[119] "Anglo-Egyptian Pharmacy," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, April 3, 1907.
[120] *Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration, and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1905* (London: 1906): p. 73. According to the report, 258 licensed chemists existed throughout Egypt, with the largest number in Cairo.
[121] "Cairo Medical Mission of the CMS," *Egyptian Gazette*, May 31, 1905. Also see *25th Anniversary of the Armenian Students Union at the American University of Beirut* (Armenian) (Beirut: Vahakn Printing House, 1933): p. 86.

Condominium government (1909-1913).[122] Besides serving in foreign institutions, some Armenian physicians also found employment in local governmental hospitals. Dr. George Ekmekdjian succeeded in working at the Egyptian and Sudanese military hospitals for decades.[123] Of importance was also Dr. B. Seropian, a graduate from the Medical School of the Paris University. He arrived in Cairo as late as 1907 with his French wife Jeanne Dubuc, incidentally also a graduate of the same university and a practicing midwife. Some 12 years after practicing in the French capital, Seropian was commissioned by the Egyptian Ministry of Public Instruction to prepare medical textbooks for use in Qaṣr al-ʿAynī hospital.[124] But, why Seropian was chosen for this task in particular is a question that still requires further examination. Naturally, as a newcomer, Seropian was incompetent in the Arabic language and that is why he had his works, namely, *Mabādiʾ ʿIlm al-Saḥḥa* translated into Arabic by two "Syrian" intellectuals; Amīn Taqīy al-Dīn and Anṭūn al-Jamayyil.[125] Another book written by Seropian and translated by al-Jamayyil was the *Mabādiʾ ʿIlm Waẓāʿif al-Aʿḍāʾ wa Tadbīr al-Saḥḥa*. At the same time, and up to World War I, Seropian contributed medical articles to AGBU's *Miyutyun*, on a multiplicity of topics including typhus, malaria, and other prevalent diseases of the time, this way raising health awareness among his nationals in Egypt and in the Armenian-inhabited Ottoman provinces, where the publication was circulated.[126] Needless to say, Seropian also allocated some of his

[122] Kestenian, p. 99.
[123] "Dr. George Ekmekdjian," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, September 28, 1907.
[124] Abugideiri, p. 86-87.
[125] Taqīy al-Dīn and al-Jamayyil were originally from Lebanon. They co-edited *al-Azhar* periodical in Egypt starting from 1911. Eventually, the latter became the director of the famous Egyptian *al-Ahrām* newspaper in 1932.
[126] Suren Bartevian, *The Golden Book of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (1906-1913)* (Armenian) (Cairo, 1913): p. 142.

busy time to his patients, who frequented his and his wife's shared home/clinic in Cairo.[127]

Given the high infant mortality rates midwives were also indispensable in British-occupied Egypt. Delivering children and diffusing public health awareness was among a midwife's primary duties. We do not know how many Armenian women actually studied in the School of Midwifery in Egypt created by Clot Bey in 1831-1832 under the patronage of Muhammad 'Ali.[128] It is, however, most likely that a certain Mary Boghos, a practicing midwife, attended that school.[129] According to the *Egyptian Directory* of 1913, in addition to the latter, there were three other Armenian midwives in Cairo.[130] The School of Midwives and Nurses that came to be known as such after 1898 was more under British direction compared, for instance, with the Qaṣr al-Aynī school. At a later stage, at least two Armenian women, namely, Rosa Kulundjian and Yeranuhi Aladjadjian, were trained as nurses in the SPC School of Nursing, graduating in the years 1908 and 1910 respectively, and then practicing their professions at the Victoria Nursing Home in Cairo.[131]

c. Insurance Firms

Starting from the nineteenth century, several British insurance companies began expanding throughout the vast British Empire and establishing new branches in the different parts of the globe, including the Ottoman domains, where generous capitulations were granted to foreign individuals and institutions. As Cornel Zwierlein

[127] "Dr. B. Seropian," (Armenian) *Lusaper*, December 3, 1907.
[128] Abugideiri, p. 116-117, 134, 150.
[129] "Mrs. Mary Boghos," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, November 17-29, 1899.
[130] *The Egyptian Directory 1913*, p. 1596, (accessed April 29, 2019), http://www.cealex.org/sitecealex/diffusion/etud_anc_alex/LVR_000084_IV_w.pdf
[131] *al-Kulliya*, December 1911, p. 62 and *al-Kulliya*, January 1912, p. 100.

informs us, in 1865, the Phoenix Assurance Company and the Sun Fire Office set foot in Istanbul, with the purpose of selling insurance policies against fire, a threat from which the imperial city had frequently suffered. But, contrary to their expectations, these companies gained a small number of clients during their early years of operation.[132]

Despite earlier setbacks, American fire and life insurance companies began to grow and eventually established subsidiaries in the various districts of the Ottoman capital as in other parts of the Empire. Later, particularly, in the late 1890s and 1900s, a number of European insurance firms came into being, usually run by non-Ottoman citizens. Nevertheless, and as conveyed by the contemporary Istanbul-based Armenian press, numerous Armenians were employed as general agents, directors, inspectors or representatives of these companies. It is rather difficult to identify the real causes behind the success of Armenians in this particular field. It is likely, however, that they benefitted from their modern education as well as linguistic skills. A certain Simon Kayserlian, first, served as the executive director of the French L'Union Insurance Company in Istanbul,[133] and at a later stage of his life, he was appointed the firm's general director in Turkey and Bulgaria.[134] Similarly, in addition to its foreign personnel, the New York Life Insurance Company appointed a certain A. Tchuhadjian as the general inspector for its main office in Turkey.[135] The Balkan Life and Fire Insurance Company with its headquarters in Sofia made use of the skills and abilities of

[132] Cornel Zwierlein, "The Burning of a Modern City? Istanbul as Perceived by the Agents of the Sun Fire Office, 1865-1870," in *Flammable Cities: Urban Conflagration and the Making of the Modern World*, ed. Greg Bankoff et al. (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012): p. 86, 92, 97.
[133] "Union Fire and Life Insurance Company," (Armenian) *Arevelk*, March 14, 1896. L'Union was founded in Paris in 1828. The capital of the fire insurance section of the company was around 93 million francs, while the life insurance section had a capital of 127 million francs. *Arevelk* appeared in Istanbul starting in 1884.
[134] "Union," (Armenian) *Arevelk*, September 25 - October 7, 1899.
[135] "La New York," (Armenian) *Arevelk*, August 26 - September 8, 1902.

Arshag Undjian and A. Gureghian, acting as the firm's agent and inspector respectively.[136] Likewise, K. Fredian was commissioned to act as the representative of La Phoenix Autrichien Insurance agency in the Ottoman Empire,[137] and S. Manugian held the directorship of the Bulgaria fire insurance firm.[138] It is noteworthy that much the same as in the Ottoman capital, in the early twentieth century, branches of the above-mentioned insurance agencies also made their way into Egypt. In fact, in 1902, according to the estimates provided by the French almanac *Indicateur Égyptien*, out of a total of 135 insurance firms functioning in Alexandria and 79 in Cairo, three were managed by Armenians in the former and two in the latter. Generally speaking, the companies administered by Armenians in Egypt were in no way connected to the ones in Istanbul with the exception of the Rossia agency (based in St. Petersburg), whose agents or inspectors in the Ottoman capital, Izmir and Cairo during the turn of the century were Armenians; A. Hurmuz, M. Morukian and Ohan Dervishian respectively.[139] In his turn, Mihran Khan Kalfayan, originally from Istanbul, perhaps benefitting from his position as the Persian consul in Alexandria, acted as the general representative of the Dutch Salamander Fire Insurance Company[140] until his death in 1913.[141]

What is more important is that Henri Bey Demirdjian, once active in Egypt, started a series of business initiatives including the general agency of both branches of

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[136] "Balkan," (Armenian) *Arevelk*, July 31 - August 13, 1901.
[137] "Le Phoenix Autrichien," (Armenian) *Arevelk*, September 7-20, 1902.
[138] "Bulgarian," (Armenian) *Arevelk*, November 21 - December 4, 1901.
[139] Stefano G. Poffandi, *Indicateur Égyptien Administratif et Commercial 1902* (Alexandria, 1901): p. 79, "Rossia Insurance Company," (Armenian) *Arevelk*, September 14-26, 1899, and "Rossia Insurance Company," (Armenian) *Ashkhadank*, July 17-30, 1913. *Ashkhadank* was published in Izmir starting in 1909.
[140] It was stationed in Amsterdam.
[141] "Salamander L'Alliance," (Armenian) *Punig*, August 31, 1901. "The Newly Elected Ones," (Armenian) *Azad Khosk*, June 16, 1906, p. 121. The Salamandar insurance company had a capital of 3,125,000 francs. *Azad Khosk* was published in Alexandria from 1902 to 1908.

L'Urbaine Insurance Company in Cairo and Alexandria, while leaving the Port Said branch to a Frenchman called Gustave Riche.[142] At a later stage, he even became the president of the General Union of International Insurance Companies in Egypt.[143] By 1907 other insurance firms also came to rely on Armenians in managing their state of affairs in Egypt. For instance, Armenag Beylerian and M. Guesserian assumed the general agency of La Sécurité and Union de Paris insurance companies in Alexandria.[144] Added to these, an individual carrying the family name Ohanian acted as the vice general representative of the American Mutual Life Insurance Company in Cairo.[145]

d. Transport

Armenians exhibited a keen interest in the Egyptian State Railways from its inception in 1853. At first, in view of their close relations with the cream of Egyptian society, the highest administrative ranks in the Railways seemed to be reserved for several of the Armenian notables residing in Egypt. Nubar Pasha Nubarian was the first to preside over all the public transport and railways in Egypt from 1857 to 1858, to be followed by his son Boghos, who was appointed as the "national" director of the railways from 1867 until 1879. Sometime later, Armenians reappeared as railway directors particularly, from 1886 until 1898. Takvor Pasha Hagopian (1886-1888), Ya'qub Artin (1888-1891) and Boghos Nubar for a second time (1891-1898) were in charge of the Egyptian railways. Armenians alongside Greeks and Italians occupied other high-ranking administrative positions in the Alexandria tram company as ticket

[142]Poffandi, *Indicateur Égyptien 1902*, p. 79, 239, 351, 360. *L'Annuaire Égyptien 1908*, p.312
[143] Demirdjian was probably a French citizen due to his membership in the French Chamber of Commerce in Egypt and acted as a wine dealer in Alexandria.
[144] *L'Annuaire Égyptien 1908*, p. 1025-1026.
[145]Poffandi, *Indicateur Égyptien 1902*, p. 79. See also "Mutual Life Insurance Company," (Armenian) *Arevelk*, November 8-21, 1901.

vendors, telegraph officers or as inspectors.[146] Karnig Tchebukdjian, the vice-president of the Alexandria Tramway and Ramleh Railway companies, a position he held for around eight years, is reputed to have employed around 300 ticket vendors from among the newly arriving Armenian refugees. Their pay was so abysmally low that they, according to On Barak as well as Beinin and Lockman, were driven with others to go on strikes as happened in 1908.[147] A similar incident also occurred three years later in 1911. The *Near East*, in fact, reported that in Alexandria alongside Egyptian, Greek, Italian, and Austrian workers, Armenians, "… of whom there is an appreciable proportion in the service of the company…," also joined the strikers.[148]

3. *Printing*

Generally speaking, Armenian involvement in printing activities dated back to the late eighteenth century with the publication of *Aztarar* (Intelligencer) in 1794, the first Armenian language periodical, in Madras, British India, where a prosperous and a vibrant Armenian minority existed.[149] This was to be followed by other pioneering Armenian publications in different parts of the globe including the Ottoman Empire. In fact, in the nineteenth century, Istanbul was already transformed into what can be described as an Armenian cultural center with the establishment of numerous printing

[146] Rif'at, *Tārīkh al-jāliya*, p. 190, 192-193. On Barak, *On Time: Technology and Temporality in Modern Egypt* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2013): p. 74, 167.
[147] Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Communism, Nationalism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882-1954* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987): p. 64. Karnig Tchebukdjian (1865-1911) moved from Istanbul to Alexandria at age sixteen, and eventually was appointed as the vice president of the Alexandria Tramway and Ramleh Railway companies. He also headed the Constitutional Ramgavar Party (founded in 1908) in Alexandria and served as the secretary of the AGBU branch there. See "Obituary of Karnig Tchebukdjian, the Secretary of the AGBU Chapter in Alexandria," (Armenian) *Miyutyun*, February 1912, p. 24. See also "Karnig Tchebukdjian," (Armenian) *Azad Khosk*, June 16, 1906. Barak, p. 167.
[148] "The Tramway Strikes at Cairo and Alexandria," *The Near East*, August 23, 1911, p. 364.
[149] Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2011): p. 87.

houses and periodicals there. This legacy was passed on to Egypt at a later stage, itself undergoing what is generally known as the nahḍa and a print revolution.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Armenians flocking to Egypt, mostly involuntarily, experienced what can be described as a 'mini' Renaissance pioneered by such immigrant intellectuals as Mary Beylerian,[150] Yervant Odian, and Smpad Purad, who moved to Egypt in the mid-1890s.[151] Soon after their arrival, Armenian journalism in Egypt experienced a dramatic growth, partly occasioned by the revocation of Egypt's censorship law of 1881 and by the prevalence of what has been described as Egypt's liberal moment.[152] In direct or indirect consequence to these developments, up to WWI, around 27 Armenian printing houses came into being in both Cairo and Alexandria, which published around 173 books; some of them translations of English-language novels into Armenian such as Shakespeare's *Othello* and several Sherlock Holmes' novels.[153] As far as one can judge, the printing houses not only catered to the needs of the Armenian community, but also met the demands of other ethnic groups including Arabs, Greeks, and Europeans given the multi-language printing facilities they offered.[154] Aside from printing houses, around 43 Armenian daily, weekly and monthly political, literary and satirical periodicals made their appearance. Among these were *Nor Gyank* (New Life), *Punig* (Phoenix), *Hayeli* (Mirror), *Arev* (Sun) appearing in either Cairo or Alexandria. In addition to publishing

[150] Mary Beylerian (1877-1915) was the founder of the Armenian feminist *Artemis* periodical in Alexandria in 1902.
[151] Smpad (1862-1915) moved to Cairo in 1895, where he published several periodicals until his return to Istanbul in 1908.
[152] Relli Schechter, "Press Advertising in Egypt: Business Realities and Local Meaning, 1882-1956," *The Arab Studies Journal* 10/11 2/1 (2002): p. 46.
[153] The printing houses were owned by Sarkis Tarpinian, Yeghishe Torossian, Onnig Haleblian, K. Nazarethian and others. See Suren Bayramian, *The Armenian Book in Egypt 1888-2011: A Bibliographical List* (Armenian) (Cairo, 2012): p. 3-18.
[154] "Printing House Askanazian," (Armenian), *Bardez*, June 26, 1904. See also "Onnig Haleblian" (Armenian), *Neshdrag*, February 1, 1908. *Neshdrag* appeared in Cairo in 1908.

Armenian periodicals, some presses also printed magazines edited by Armenians in other languages like *Yeni Fikr* (by Diran Kelegian in Ottoman Turkish) and *La Justice* (by Levon Fehmi in French).[155] In his book *The Arabic Press in Egypt*, Martin Hartmann confirms that as early as 1899 or even before an Armenian called Iskandar Karkur was the founder and editor of the local *al-Zirā'a* magazine.[156]

With the exception of AGBU's *Miyutyun*, most of the Egyptian Armenian newspapers and magazines were the product of individual rather than collective initiative. It was only after the First World War that Armenian political parties officially began setting up their organs in Egypt.

Judging by the short lifespan of many of the Armenian periodicals, it is apparent that a number of them suffered from lack of adequate financial resources. The more successful ones, however, served as regular advertising outlets for several renowned foreign firms, including the Syrian Sidnawi, the Jewish Stein department stores, and the American Singer Sewing Machine Company. In one of his articles, Levon Larents,[157] a contributor to *Azad Pem*,[158] commented on the early death of several Armenian publications, noting that in many instances, newspapers, in general, had meager financial means or were unable to collect subscription dues, without which no publication, in the long-run, could survive.[159] Ironically, positive political developments resulted in the impoverishment of the Egyptian Armenian press. Inspired by the slogan "liberty, fraternity and equality" of the Young Turk Revolution, some intellectuals such

[155] Rif'at, *al-Arman*, p. 570.
[156] Martin Hartmann, *The Arabic Press in Egypt* (London: Luzac and Co., 1899): p. 44.
[157] Larents (1875-1915) was originally from Samatya district. He studied at Robert College in Istanbul and then following his brief stay in the USA, he moved to Alexandria.
[158] It was first issued in 1903 in Alexandria through the efforts of Yervant Odian, but it subsequently turned into the organ of the Reformist Hnchak Party in Egypt in 1906. See Suren Bayramian, *The Armenian Press in Egypt: A Bibliographical List* (Armenian) (Cairo, 2005): p. 28.
[159] L.L., "The Egyptian Armenian Press in 1906," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, February 9, 1907.

as Purad Smpad, Parsegh Shahbaz, and V. Kuchukian closed their journals and returned to Istanbul in order to experience at first hand the new age of freedom.[160]

4. Artisans, Craftsmen and Architects

Despite, as this thesis has already shown, earning their living through practicing diverse professions, the famous *Karl Baedeker* traveler handbook, the number one guidebook for European tourists visiting Egypt, chose to describe Armenians as "wealthy goldsmiths and jewelers."[161] However, after the influx of new migrants, Armenians started appearing in other fields of economic activity as well. Rifʿat's estimates indicate that artisans and craftsmen constituted approximately 45.8 % of the total Armenian labor force in Egypt.[162]

Much the same as their nationals engaged in other economic ventures, the craftsmen and artisans of diverse occupations were also scattered throughout the various districts of Cairo and Alexandria. In other words, they did not seem to have gathered in a single spot with the exception of Cairo's ṣāgha street or Alexandria's France street.[163] Apart from becoming jewelers, a considerable number of Armenians also featured as watch vendors, tailors, dressmakers, shoemakers and haberdashers. All of the Armenian craftsmen and artisans did not merely serve the needs of the working classes; some of them thanks to the strategic geographical locations of their shops, succeeded in grabbing the attention of the European haute monde in Egypt. For example, a shoemaker called Aram had a shop facing the luxurious Savoy Hotel and was frequently visited by

[160] Bayramian, *The Armenian Press*, p. 14.
[161] Karl Baedeker, *Egypt Handbook for Travellers* (Leipzig, 1898): p. lix.
[162] Rifʿat, *al-Arman*, p. 343, 345, 351.
[163] The name of a street appearing in the *L'Annuaire Égyptien 1908*, p.1046-1047.

European customers.[164] Added to this, their skills and tendency to keep pace with and imitate European trends contributed to their success. The Belayan and Shishmanian tailors in Cairo claimed American tailoring styles in their workshop.[165] The Egavian brothers in al-Maghrabī street in the Egyptian capital also designated themselves "American tailors."[166] Some Armenian women, like other urban Egyptian women, featured in the dressmaking business that allowed them to earn their daily living.[167] Thanks to the available examples, it becomes obvious that some Armenian girls chose to establish dressmaking workshops in Cairo, as in the case of the Azkabedian, and the more reputed Malezian sisters.[168] Perhaps, owing to their cheaper prices and similar quality product, European residents preferred to buy their dresses from the Malezian sisters as an alternative to buying them in Paris, the center of the fashion world, and the more expensive at the time.[169] Like dressmakers in Istanbul, the Malezian sisters familiarized themselves with the recent trends through travelling to European capitals or by using English or French-language fashion journals and catalogues becoming more accessible during the British occupation of the country such as *The Lady's Magazine*, *Journal des Demoiselles*, and *the Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine.*[170] In the early twentieth century, some Armenians, namely, the Ariyans and the Khatchadurians also featured as skilled fez makers in Cairo, renowned for their high quality products.[171]

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[164] Alishan E., "Armenian Craftsmen," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, January 18, 1907.
[165] "Belayan-Shishmanian Company," (Armenian) *Nor Or*, February 21 – March 6, 1901.
[166] *L'Annuaire Égyptien 1908*, p. 443.
[167] Judith E. Tucker, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): p. 86.
[168] *L'Annuaire Égyptien 1908*, p. 453.
[169] Alishan, "Armenian Craftsmen." In fact, Chalcraft states that the local tailors and dressmakers produced cheaper cloths and dresses compared to the ones imported from abroad. See John T. Chalcraft, *The Striking Cabbies of Cairo and Other Stories: Crafts and Guilds in Egypt, 1863-1914* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2004): p. 113-114.
[170] See Nancy Micklewright, "London, Paris, Istanbul, and Cairo: Fashion and International Trade in the Nineteenth Century," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 7 (1992): p. 127, 132.
[171] *The Egyptian Directory 1913*, p. 1614.

Armenians also practiced shoemaking in Cairo and Alexandria. By that time, in addition to the large influx of European shoes into Egypt, the local shoemakers also increased the production of European-style shoes selling them at lower prices.[172] To reduce financial risks, some Armenian cobblers might have chosen to establish joint workshops in collaboration with their male siblings such as the Khatchikian and Ghazarian brothers in Alexandria, the Der Sdepanian, Kassardjian and Chahrossian brothers in Cairo. Besides repairing old shoes, they also made new ones. With the intention of gaining more fame, some Armenian cobblers also adopted French names for their shops like Au Soleil, Lion d'Or or Au Petit Parisien.[173] As Armenian newspaper advertisements reveal being responsive to the modern fashion trends in Egypt, Armenian tailors, dressmakers and cobblers, also put ready-made European-style dresses and shoes, ties, hats and socks on display.[174] Just like the tailors and cobblers, Armenian watch vendors and mechanics also performed repairs along with selling brand new products. A client visiting Levon Gumushian's shop in Cairo's "main commercial hub"[175] Mūskī street, for instance, could have asked him to repair his/her watch and when this proved to be impossible, could have bought a new one encrusted with nickel, silver or diamond. It appears that he attempted to please all tastes and a diversity of social classes; his prices ranged between 22 to 130 piasters for nickel watches, 50 to 200 piasters for the silver, and 120 to 2500 piasters for diamond watches.[176] Of course, Gumushian is just one example of an Armenian watch vendor in Cairo, there were several others as well like K.E. Selvadjian, whose shop incidentally was also situated in

[172] Chalcraft, p. 114
[173] *L'Annuaire Égyptien 1908*, p. 461, 476, 492, 539, 1109.
[174] "Hampar Tavit Merchant-Tailor," (Armenian) *Medrag*, May 1, 1908. *Medrag* appeared in Alexandria in 1908.
[175] Samir Raafat, "The House of Cicurel," *al-Ahram Weekly*, December 15, 1994, (accessed February 12, 2019), http://www.egy.com/judaica/94-12-15.php
[176] "Levon Gumushian," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, November 17-29, 1899.

Mūskī street.[177] It is also worth mentioning that back then, some watch sellers also repaired gramophones and performed jobs that in some ways seemed to overlap with the profession of the jewelers, given that they too traded in less costly jewelry, earrings and rings.

Another sector in which Armenians showed mastery was repairing sewing machines, especially, at a time when the renowned American Singer brand had invaded numerous homes and tailor shops in the Middle East.[178] As a former employee of one of the branches of the Singer Company, conceivably in Anatolia where most of the given company's agents were located, Sarkis Tashdjian (in Cairo), became proficient in mending machinery carrying this trademark. This earned him an extra living for he was employed in a Greek-owned arms-repairing and modification joint. This bit of information also indicates that not all Armenians ran their private shops, but some of them were employed by others; in this case by members of other minority groups.[179]

According to the *Egyptian Directory* of 1913, some Armenians carried the profession of blacksmiths with them to Egypt. Two of the most prominent Armenian figures in this field were Sarkis Madjarian and Sarkis Kaikdjian, both of them specializing in the manufacturing of iron doors. What is interesting, however, is that Madjarian even proudly advertised himself as the first importer of iron doors to Egypt in 1896, following his escape from Istanbul, where he originally practiced the same profession for more than 20 years (starting in about 1877).[180]

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[177] See, "K. Selvadjian," (Armenian) *Punig*, September 1, 1899, and also *L'Annuaire Égyptien 1908*, p. 614. In fact, the shop had an advertisement in Arabic in the *L'Annuaire Égyptien*, see Appendix I.
[178] Uri M. Kupferschmidt, "The Social History of the Sewing Machine in the Middle East," *Die Welt des Islams* 44/2 (2004): p. 201-204.
[179] "Sarkis H. Tashdjian," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, September 24-October 7, 1908.
[180] *The Egyptian Directory 1913*, p. xxi, xxiii.

Armenians in Egypt also managed to penetrate what can be described as the fields of applied sciences and arts like engineering and architecture. Unfortunately, the sources consulted do not contain much information about the accomplishments of such Armenian engineers like Ya'qub Dzaghikian, Agop Boyadjian, J. Margosoff.[181] One exception, however, was engineer-contractor Agop Hagopian, moving to Egypt in 1897, where he immediately established a "workshop for mechanical repairs" in Cairo starting in 1897. Besides various restorations, he tried to promote his recent invention, namely, what he described as the Agopian's artesian well-system, which, it appears, had gained much fame in England and Ottoman Turkey.[182]

Garo Balian, a graduate from the Imperial School of Fine Arts and a scion of the famous aristocratic Balian family of Istanbul, whose members served as court architects under six Ottoman sultans for more than three generations, was one of the renowned Armenian architects in Egypt. At present, sadly, there is more literature on Balian's ancestors in Istanbul than about him. Nevertheless, there is enough information to allow us to reconstruct what was a brilliant career in Egypt.[183] Garo Balian's picture and his short biography appearing in Arnold Wright's *Twentieth Century Impressions of Egypt* attest to this fact. We know that he permanently relocated to Egypt in 1903 after his residence in Bulgaria for about seven years, where he had designed a number of landmark buildings and monuments, most importantly, Sofia's Military Club and the

[181] *L'Annuaire Égyptien 1908*, p. 466, 1106, 1186-1187 and Poffandi, *Indicateur Égyptien 1904*, p. 110.
[182] *The Egyptian Directory 1913*, p. xvii.
[183] To learn more about the Balians, see Hagop Barsoumian, "The Armenian Amira Class of Istanbul," (Columbia University, PhD Diss., 1980). See also Alyson Wharton, *The Architects of Ottoman Constantinople: The Balyan Family and the History of Ottoman Architecture* (London: IB Tauris, 2015). In fact, some of Garo Balian's (1872-1948) correspondences with Ahmad Shafīq Pasha, one of the co-founders of the Egyptian University, are preserved in the Special Collections of Durham University. Check the link (accessed February 13, 2019), http://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ark/32150_s18049g504c.xml

Monument of Liberty in Roustchouk commemorating the war between Bulgaria and Serbia.[184]

Although a non-native young man and despite the fierce competition in Egypt, Balian participated in important architectural projects and possessed well-established contacts with local and foreign elites. During his early years in Egypt, Balian worked in the offices of Dimitri Fabricius Pasha, the Khedive's chief architect. Together they designed the buildings of several educational and commercial institutions such as the Egyptian University (later known as the King Fu'ad University) and a number of buildings owned by the Belgian Société Belge-Égyptienne de L'Ezbekiyye (an urban land company) among others. After Fabricius' death in 1907, Balian set up his own architectural office and continued his 'extraordinary' career in Egypt.[185] Apparently, his fame extended throughout Cairo and, especially, among the leading Jewish merchants, namely, Moreno Cicurel and the Chemla brothers, who, in competition with one another, commissioned Balian to build their multi-storied emporiums in one of Cairo's main thoroughfares.[186] Added to these, Moise Solomon Green entrusted the design of three buildings to Balian.[187] An article published about Balian in 1912 also informs us that he designed a building for the renowned cigarette producing Matossians in Cairo,[188] who, at a later stage, commissioned him to design a kiosk for them to be used for displaying their various products in the Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition of Cairo

[184] *Garo Balian: An Ottoman Court Architect in Modern Egypt: An Exhibition of Photographs of the Works of the Architect, 23 February-24 March 1994, the Sony Gallery, Adham Center, the American University in Cairo* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1994): p. 4.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Arnold Wright and H.A. Cartwright, eds. *Twentieth Century Impressions of Egypt: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources* (London, 1909): 362. Samir Raafat, "The House of Cicurel," *al-Ahram Weekly*, December 15, 1994, (accessed February 12, 2019), http://www.egy.com/judaica/94-12-15.php
[187] Samir Raafat, "Souk el Tewfikia,"*Cairo Times*, 29 October 1998, (accessed April 18, 2019), http://www.egy.com/landmarks/98-10-29.php
[188] Suren Bartevian, "Garo Balian," (Armenian) *Hosank*, 22 May 1912, p. 250, (accessed April 22, 2019), http://tert.nla.am/archive/NLA%20AMSAGIR/Hosanq/1912/1912(16).pdf

in 1926.[189] Out of his curiosity in and passion for Islamic art, at some point in 1915, Balian even composed a 253-page book (in Armenian) carrying the title *Egypt and Arab Architecture* published in the Egyptian capital.[190] This important book is not yet digitized and hence is currently not easily accessible.[191]

[189] "The Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition, Cairo," *Architecture*, September 1926, p. 143.

[190] The book was printed by Cairo's Zareh Beberian publishing house, (accessed April 5, 2019), http://haygirk.nla.am/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=53646&query_desc=kw%2Cwrdl%3A%20%D5%A5%D5%A3%D5%AB%D5%BA%D5%BF%D5%B8%D5%BD

[191] At a later stage, Balian also designed the Saint Theresa Armenian Catholic Church, 'Amr Ibrāhīm Villa in Zamalek (in 1922), the Egyptian Museum of Ceramics (in 1925) as well as the Armenian Orthodox Church in Zagazig. Thus, as Nairy Hampikian states, "Balian left an undeniable mark on the building heritage of Cairo." See "One Constructor, One Conservationist," *al-Ahram Weekly*, April 30 - May 6, 2009, (accessed April 12, 2019), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/Archive/2009/945/fe3.htm. See also "Photo Essay: Egypt's Armenians," (accessed April 12, 2019), https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/61405. Balian should also be remembered for designing the Ya'qubian building, one of the prestigious and opulent buildings in downtown Cairo built in the 1930s, and around which 'Ala' al-Aswany wrote a best-selling novel called *'Imārat Ya'qubian* in Arabic in 2002. In addition, he also served his people in the Ottoman provinces by designing the AGBU's Teachers' College in Van and its Kelegian Orphanage in Dörtyol (Alexandretta).

CHAPTER IV

A LITTLE ARMENIAN KINGDOM OF CIGARETTES AND CAMERAS: EGYPT DURING THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*

In 2007, writing nostalgically about Egypt's long-dead cosmopolitan past, Bruce Fleming noted that many of the cigarette manufacturers in the country used to be of Armenian, Greek, and Jewish origins.[192] This also holds true for Bulgaria, where an Armenian of Ottoman extraction named Megerditch Tomassian was the "founding father" of the country's tobacco industry.[193] Apart from cigarette production, photography was also another occupation in which Armenians excelled for many decades, not only in Egypt but also in the entirity of what became the Middle East. Beginning with the last two decades of the nineteenth century, with the voluntary or involuntary migration of Ottoman Armenians from their ancestral towns and cities in Anatolia, a large number of cigarette producers and photographers also made their way to Egypt. What is significant is that their large number was disproportionate to their small demographic configuration, thereby, constituting, as it were, what can be described as a "little kingdom" within the actual Egyptian kingdom (i.e., the Khedivate).

This chapter does not aim to provide a comprehensive history of tobacco or photography in Egypt. It is rather an attempt to elaborate the less-studied role of Armenians in, and their contribution to, these two sectors of the Egyptian economy, in

[192] Bruce Fleming, "In the Brief Egyptian Spring," *The Antioch Review* 65/4 (2007): p. 643.
[193] See Relli Shechter, "Selling Luxury: The Rise of the Egyptian Cigarette and the Transformation of the Egyptian Tobacco Market, 1850-1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (2003): p. 60, and Mary C. Neuburger, *Balkan Smoke: Tobacco and the Making of Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016): p. 51.

light of newly identified and still untapped primary sources. In addition, this chapter also seeks to give voice to the often-neglected, but essential, subalterns employed by Armenian-owned cigarette factories.

A. Cigarettes

1. From Small Tobacco Merchants to Entrepreneurs: The Birth of Armenian Cigarette Workshops and Factories in Egypt

The manufacture of cigarettes by Armenians in Egypt preceded the massive migration of Ottoman Armenians by more than a decade. What were the actual cause(s) that led to the relocation of several Armenian cigarette producers from Anatolia to Egypt? First, in 1872, the Ottoman state established the Tobacco Monopoly Administration to manage the proceeds generated by the lucrative tobacco trade, a position it maintained until 1877. Then, following the Empire's bankruptcy in 1875 and its devastating defeat in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the tobacco monopoly was ceded to the European-controlled Ottoman Public Debt Administration (OPDA, founded in 1881), created exclusively to administer the state's revenues in order to regularize repayment of the debts previously incurred by the Ottoman government. Finally, in 1883, the OPDA bequeathed its tobacco monopoly rights to the Ottoman Régie Company formed by a consortium of European financial institutions (the Ottoman Bank, the Crédit Ansalt, and the Bleichröder banks).[194]

As Donald Quataert has noted, the Régie proved to be both beneficial and deleterious to different segments of Ottoman society at the same time. Apart from creating a wide range of employment opportunities for thousands of Ottoman subjects

[194] Can Nacar, "The Régie Monopoly and Tobacco Workers in Late Ottoman Istanbul," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34/1 (2014): p. 207-208.

(approximately 4000-4500 people), the inauguration of the Régie also delivered a significant blow to the already-operating tobacco cultivators, cigarette manufacturers, money lenders, and cigarette retailers of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.[195] It came to control every single step of the tobacco production cycle from growing the crop to the point of determining the prices of manufactured cigarettes in the market.[196] This brought about a wave of hostility and aversion against the said company's self-interest, both in terms of prices and the obligation of collecting debts formerly incurred by the Ottoman government, compelling local tobacco cultivators to sell their harvests at cheap prices and closing down more than 300 cigarette factories in Anatolia in favor of its own.[197] These developments no doubt explain why at this particular moment in time several Armenian tobacconists chose to settle on Egyptian soil, encouraged to do so by the country's more liberal political and economic environment, the availability of abundant and inexpensive labor force, as well as its suitable climate for the processing of a variety of cigarette types.[198]

Apart from the other Armenian cigarette producers, the Matossians and Melkonians came to Egypt immediately after the formation of the Régie, in 1882. Hovhaness Matossian was among the first Ottoman Armenians to settle in Egypt and get involved in the tobacco industry there. Drawing on his experience as a young tobacco merchant and a cigarette producer in Bafra, Samsun, and Tokat in Northern Anatolia, he founded the Matossian Tobacco Commercial House in Alexandria.

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[195] Donald Quataert, *Social Disintegration and Popular Resistance in the Ottoman Empire, 1881-1908: Reactions to European Economic Penetration* (New York, London: New York University Press, 1983): p. 15-18. In 1899, the Régie employed around 8814 people.

[196] Joan Chaker, "Eastern Tobacco and the Ottoman Régie: A History of Financiers in the Age of Empire," (MA diss., American University of Beirut, 2012): p. 64.

[197] Quataert, p. 20 and Nacar, p. 208.

[198] Shechter, "Selling Luxury," p. 54. By 1911, only 12 cigarette producing factories functioned in Anatolia dispersed between Istanbul, Samsun, Smyrna and Salonica. See Quataert, p. 17-18. Georges Lecarpentier, *L'Égypte Moderne* (Paris: P. Roger, 1925): p. 81.

Observing his brother's economic successes, Garabed, Matossian's younger brother, left his ancestral homeland in 1886 and took up residence in Egypt. He established a separate business in Cairo known as the Garabed Matossian Tobacco Company. Almost a decade later, in 1896, most probably, to guard against financial risks in a highly competitive market, both businesses were amalgamated giving birth to the O. and G. Matossian Co. headquartered in Cairo with an initial capital of £E 100,000 divisible into 10,000 shares, which were distributed solely among the members of the Matossian family. The company in time turned into one of the most famous Armenian cigarette factories inside or outside Egypt. Its capital rocketed to £E 150,000 and its branches spread well beyond Cairo, in places like Tanṭa and Aṣyuṭ.[199]

In 1882, like the Matossians, the two affluent brothers Krikor and Garabed Melkonian of Kayseri also moved to Egypt. Strikingly, in a period not longer than six years since their arrival, the Melkonians succeeded in establishing a cigarette factory in Cairo as well as tobacco shops in various parts of the country creating, in the process, many job opportunities for the locals and their own nationals. This, of course, was also true for the other Armenian factories as well. Other than the Matossians and the Melkonians, and due to political push factors, the Gamsaragans also chose to transfer their tobacco trade to Egypt from Istanbul, where they had run a tobacco business since 1856. Their decision to depart was mostly influenced by the rising intolerance of Armenians in Ottoman domains but also due to Egypt's expanding economy. In 1894, immediately after their arrival in Egypt, the two sons of Khatchadur Gamsaragan, namely Armenag and Dikran, established a cigarette factory in Zagazig in Lower Egypt

[199] "Hovhaness Bey Matossian," (Armenian) *Arev*, February 23, 1927. The Egyptian government decorated Matossian with the Nile order and conferred upon him the first and second levels of *bey*ship. According to Rifʿat, 15 years before Matossian's arrival in Egypt, the Sarkissian factory was the first Armenian cigarette producer, established in 1867. See Rifʿat, *al-Arman*, p. 326. *Arev* was published in Alexandria starting in 1915.

replacing, as it were, their former factory in Smyrna which had functioned until the formation of the Ottoman Régie in 1883.[200]

Together with the Armenian émigrés from the Ottoman territories, Neshan and Hapet Hadjetian brothers of Arapgir (in the Malatya province) also ended up on the banks of the Nile at a young age.[201] Their cigarette factory came into being in 1896 through the efforts of Neshan. Soon, they also opened a shop in the prestigious district of Azbakiyya nearby the Shepheard's Hotel. In addition to selling their cigarettes, the Hadjetians also imported a variety of European cigars and Persian *tembek* to be sold in their store.[202] Beside these firms, there were many smaller Armenian factories such as the Sanossians in Cairo, the Megerian-Manugian-Arabdjian again situated in the Egyptian capital[203] as well as Kevork Ipekian's factory in Alexandria.[204] Most of the Armenian-owned firms were in family related hands throughout their years of operation.

In certain instances, some cigarette factories came into being when former employees of some renowned Armenian companies, decided to go at it on their own, but failed in the end, leaving hardly any traces. Two exceptions, however, merit attention. G. Dudian began his career as the chief tobacco blender in the Matossian firm, but joined forces with a certain Aslan and together they set up a new factory that produced different types of cigarettes. A measure of their success is indicated by the fact that they maintained major premises in Cairo which served as an outlet for their

[200] "Egyptian Armenian Excellence in the Tobacco Industry," (Armenian) *Yekibdahay Daretsuytse 1914*, p. 181, 183-184.
[201] Neshan Hadjetian came to Egypt in 1896 (at age 30), while his brother Hapet followed in 1898 (at age 25). They were both married and worked as tobacco merchants. The latter also had the privilege of carrying British citizenship. Mrs. Armin Kredian generously provided these data based on the census conducted by the Armenian Prelacy of Cairo in 1906.
[202] "N. and A. Hadjetian Brothers," (Armenian) *Azad Pem*, December 5, 1906.
[203] Rif`at, *al-Arman*, p. 327.
[204] "Egyptian Armenian Excellence," p. 184-185.

hand-made and machine-made products.[205] The second was Harutyun Tchaylakian. In 1882, he too landed on Egyptian soil with his maternal uncles Krikor and Garabed Melkonian. After many years of work in their factory, he established his separate firm, which did not survive beyond one year owing to stiff competition, and the devastating consequences of the great economic depression of 1907. In the end, Tchaylakian had no other choice but to end his venture and to rejoin the Melkonian factory. Its owners Garabed and Krikor apparently appreciated his valuable expertise, and hence appointed their prodigal nephew as their factory's managing director.[206]

Towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, around half a dozen Armenian cigarette factories were to emerge in Egypt seeking to meet the growing local and international market demands. Unfortunately, Relli Schechter has failed to provide us with a comprehensive list of Egyptian cigarette factories and on that account the names of most Armenian cigarette factories in Egypt, except for a few, still remain unknown.

Apart from running cigarette factories, Armenians also established smaller-scale tobacco and cigarette distribution shops in Egypt. Hovhannes Pembedjian is a good example in this respect. In addition to producing cigarettes in his small workshop, Pembedjian also traded various brands of Egyptian and British-American cigarettes in his shop in Cairo.[207] Owing to a deficiency in cigar production in Egypt, and eager to meet the growing upper class demand for them, the V. and S. Prudian, brothers in

[205] "Dudian Aslan and Co.," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, March 22- April 4, 1900.
[206] "Harutyun Tchaylakian," (Armenian) *Yekibdahay Daretsuytse 1919*, p. 81-82.
[207] "A Big Workshop of Eastern and Egyptian Cigarettes," (Armenian) *Bardez*, November 1, 1903.

Alexandria, imported the commodity, known as the Sultaniyye cigars, produced by the Adjemian-Gunchegulian company in Istanbul.[208]

2. The Egyptian Armenian Cigarette in the Local and the Global Market

As cigarettes gradually evolved into a universal icon of modernity the rate of their consumption increased considerably in the nineteenth century both in Egypt and worldwide.[209] During the same period, the Egyptian cigarette, in particular, also gained popularity and fame both locally and globally. The British, for example, in their home country and colonies, preferred it over the American blends to the point of "deifying it into a God itself."[210] In the face of the ever-increasing demands, the numerous factories in Egypt had to work day and night to supply the needs of the local and the global markets. Most of the Egyptian cigarettes were initially made from locally cultivated or imported tobacco from the Ottoman Empire; however, the signing of the Greco-Egyptian Treaty in March 1884 signified a major breakthrough as larger quantities of Greek tobacco leaves became readily available. Imports further escalated after June 25, 1890 with the banning of tobacco cultivation in Egypt. Shechter claims that this happened in anticipation of greater and more immediate financial returns.[211] At the turn of the century, the sale of tobacco and cigarettes, all in all, contributed to around 10 % of total Egyptian treasury receipts, the export of cigarettes exceeding the export of all

[208] "Maintaining Your Health Despite Smoking the Sultaniyye Cigar," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, June 1-14, 1910.
[209] Shechter, "Selling Luxury," p. 53. Actually, there were around 37 cigarette factories only in Cairo in 1914 most of them concentrated in the hands of Greeks and Armenians. See Achille Sékaly, "La Commerce Du Tabac Au Point de Vue de L'économie Égyptienne," *L'Égypte Contemporaine*: Cinquième Année (January 1914): p. 351.
[210] Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture, 1800-2000: Perfect Pleasures* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000): p. 27-28, 32.
[211] Shechter, "Selling Luxury," p. 56.

other manufactured commodities including textiles.[212] It is remarkable that for the first time in modern Egyptian history the periphery started supplying the global center (i.e. the West) with locally manufactured finished products.

Quite to the contrary to what Shechter, Beinin, and Lockman have suggested the Egyptian Armenian cigarette was not only meant for local consumption. Available sources show that Armenian cigarette manufacturers not only met local Egyptian demand, but also catered to overseas markets.[213] It is not a mere coincidence that, according to British Consular Reports, the amount of Egyptian cigarette exports dramatically increased from 230,800 kg in 1895 to 702,800 kg in 1905, which is by about 150%.[214] We can safely assume that the Armenian cigarette manufactories must have contributed to this rapid rise in cigarette export. In fact, some Egyptian Armenian cigarette brands easily penetrated British and French markets, in particular those produced by the Matossians, who besides being "one of the chief cigarette and tobacco manufacturers in Egypt" were a major competitor of the Greek-owned Melachrino and Gianaclis brands.[215] The Matossians proudly announced that they acted as "purveyors of [cigarette] to the [British] Army of Occupation"[216] and also distributed their Sun "gold-tipped" brand in Paris and other European capitals.[217] With the intention to further

[212] Relli Schechter, *Smoking, Culture and Economy in the Middle East: The Egyptian Tobacco Market 1850-2000* (London: IB Tauris, 2006): p. 79 and Schechter, "Selling Luxury," p. 55. About the necessity for reintroducing tobacco plantation in Egypt, see A. Sékaly, p. 358.
[213] Shechter, *Smoking, Culture and Economy*, p. 79. See Beinin and Lockman, *Workers on the Nile*, p. 50.
[214] *Report on the Finances, Administration, and Condition of Egypt and the Progress of Reforms* (London: 1895): p. 8 and *Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration, and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1905* (London: 1906): p. 30.
[215] "Egyptian Cigarettes and Tobacco," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 59/3034 (January, 1911): p. 201.
[216] *The Lands of Sunshine: A Practical Guide to Egypt and Sudan* (Cairo: Whitehead Morris and Co., 1908): p. 109.
[217] The evidence for this statement is confirmed by an announcement appearing in 1908 in the Paris-based *New York Herald* advertising that the "gold-tipped" Sun brand of the 'Egyptian' Matossian cigarette is available in "all the Paris tobacco shops."

promote the same cigarette brand and to increase its consumption by people of both genders, an advertisement in a widely distributed paper published the following:

… when a stylish Parisian woman asks you for cigarettes, give her, if you would like her to smile sweetly at you, a box of the exquisite Matossian Egyptian Cigarettes, with gold tips, "Sun" brand.[218]

Another evidence for the circulation of the luxurious Matossian cigarettes abroad was apparent from the fact that the Matossians had a special box made from tin specially used for export purposes. Until the First World War and after, the Matossians remained one of the most important Armenian firms in Egypt and in fact when asked to join the American Tobacco Trust Company, Hovhanness Matossian refused the offer.[219]

Like the Matossians, perhaps, envious of and eager to emulate their rival's economic accomplishments, the Hadjetians, too, aspired to spread their cigarette beyond the narrow borders of Egypt into the far-flung British Empire. In 1910, Hapet Effendi Hadjetian, a naturalized British citizen, travelled from Egypt to Great Britain in order to establish a representative office for the Hadjetian Tobacco and Cigarettes Company in the British capital. In doing so, they aimed to sell their brand of Egyptian cigarettes to "English and Colonial consumers" and "open out to the World market," under the directorship of the Englishman Walter G. Crombie, as stated in the firm's English-language announcement in the Armenian periodical *Arshaluys*.[220] On January 11, 1911, the nominal capital of the company in London, located in Conduit Street, amounted to £500. Existing records suggest that the company did not reap considerable returns. In fact, using the terms of the original documents, the British branch located in London

[218] "New Cigarettes," *The New York Herald*, October 14, 1908, and "Egyptian Cigarettes," *The New York Herald*, November 4, 1908. See the advertisement in Appendix I.
[219] "Egyptian Cigarettes and Tobacco," p. 202. About the negotiations of the American Tobacco Millionaire Mr. Schinasi with Matossian, see "Gamsaragan Freres, Ltd." *The Near East*, March 20, 1914, p. 653.
[220] "The Hadjetian Freres of Cairo," (English) Arshaluys, December 22 – January 4, 1911. See the advertisement in Appendix I.

was wound up by the 'British Supreme Court' for its failure to pay its debt amounting to £148.5 to a certain Mr. Tillotson, apparently a partner of the Hadjetians.[221]

Apart from competing for securing a place in the global market, Armenian and other Egyptian tobacco firms did their utmost, whether legally or illegally, to boost their trade in the local market as well. As Shechter has noted, the Gamsaragans, for instance, were the third largest manufacturers and suppliers of cigarettes in Lower and Upper Egypt. They were mostly known for their widely consumed "Abu Nigme" cigarette. However, in 1896, as it appears from Arabic and Armenian periodical advertisements, some competitors tried to produce and sell an imitated version of the same cigarette brand. To avoid further counterfeits, as a last resort, the Gamsaragan brothers reported the issue to the Egyptian courts.[222] A few years later, a similar incident happened with the Matossians. Driven by the desire to take advantage of the reputation of the Matossian firm and hence amplify their profits, the Sanossians, another small Armenian cigarette factory, utilized a trademark very similar to that of the Matossians. This generated great confusion among the loyal customers of the Matossian firm, who unconsciously bought the Sanossian cigarettes causing a sudden drop in the sales of the latter company.[223] In any event, as it turns out, there were also other attempts to undercut the sales of the Matossians. In 1896, some natives, perhaps eager to damage foreign economic interest in Egypt, circulated rumors to the effect that the Matossian

[221] See the File of Proceedings in the Matter of Hadjetian Ltd. in the United Kingdom National Archives, reference: J13/5899.
[222] Shechter, *Smoking, Culture and Economy*, p. 51, 86. See also *al-Ahrām* December 26, 1896 and "Announcement of the Gamsaragan Brothers," (Armenian) *Lusaper-Arev*, June 14, 1910.
[223] *Jurisprudence des Tribunaux de la Réforme en Égypte Recueil Officiel Arréts de la cour d'Appel d'Alexandrie, Année Judiciare 1899-1900* (Alexandria, 1901): p. 413.

cigarettes were detrimental to health for carrying plague germs. *Al-Muqaṭṭam*, however, citing the opinions of Egyptian doctors, contested these claims.[224]

Facing all challenges, the Matossians continued to produce around 11 different brands of cigarettes such as "Mulūkī," "Abū Rīha," among others, with prices ranging between 35 to 120 piasters per uqa.[225] The Melkonians, on the other hand, came next to the Matossians in the Egyptian market and sold the famous "Ma'dan" cigarette in both retail and wholesale.[226] As part of their advertising campaigns, the Gamsaragans regularly advertised their prices in local Egyptian newspapers, while others like the Matossians and the Hadjetians attempting to reach a larger number of foreign customers as well as members of the Egyptian elite, preferred to advertise in foreign-language media like the *Indicateur Égyptien*, and the Paris-based *New York Herald* among others.[227] By contrast, the Melkonians do not appear to have resorted to advertising their products until the end of World War I.

3. Labor Strikes in Armenian Cigarette Factories in Egypt

Starting in the 1980s, there grew a body of literature dealing with labor history in the Middle East. Speaking about Egypt, most historians tend to identify the year 1899 as the 'real' starting point for labor activism in the country on account of the long-lasting and fairly well-organized strikes taking place in multiple cigarette factories mostly located in Cairo. The causes behind the eruption of labor unrest in Egypt and the formation of labor unions is due to a mixture of internal and external factors. Both Anthony Gorman and Ilham Khuri-Makdisi attribute these developments to the

[224] "Dukhān Mātossian," *al-Muqaṭṭam*, July 6, 1896.
[225] "I'lān O. wa J. Mātossian wa sharikāh," *al-Muqaṭṭam*, April 10, 1897.
[226] Shechter, *Smoking, Culture and Economy*, p. 81, 83.
[227] Shechter, "Selling Luxury," p. 66.

presence of foreign, migrant workers in Egypt, mostly Italians and Greeks, affiliated to radical global networks. These individuals, inspired by famous Russian anarchist philosopher Mikhail Bakunin's line of thinking, defied capitalism and institutional hierarchies regarding them as mere tools for "repression" and "authoritarian rule." Relying on modern media, they disseminated Bakunin's revolutionary ideas among Egypt's multinational workers via publishing some newspapers like *La Tribuna Libera* and *L'Operaio*, as well as circulating manifestos conveying similar political messages. Galvanized by this militant literature, and alienated by growing competition, tobacco workers opted to go on strikes in defense of their collective rights.[228] According to Beinin and Lockman, first, workers were not guaranteed long-term employment. Second, they had very long working hours (around 10 to 15 hours per day), and no vacations even on Sundays. In other words, the laborers were deprived of basic necessities, let alone life's pleasures. As might be expected, all these elements played a role in the labor upsurge in Egypt spearheaded by the cigarette workers.[229]

These cigarette workers' strikes have attracted the attention of current historians as they signaled the first major proletarian/capitalist confrontation, in which workers, irrespective of their national differences, were united.[230] My aim here is not to write a full account of labor activism in Egypt, but only bring to the fore the occasions in which Armenian workers were involved. As strikes erupted in the various Egyptian cigarette factories in Cairo in December 1899, the multi-national pool of workers of Armenian-owned manufactories also became involved in them. Around 900 cigarette workers

[228] Anthony Gorman, "Foreign Workers in Egypt, 1882-1914: Subaltern or Labour Elite?" in *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2008): p. 237, 242-243. Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, p. 149.
[229] Lockman and Beinin, *Workers on the Nile*, p. 32, 33, 37, 40, 55.
[230] Zachary Lockman, "Worker" and "Working Class" in Pre-1914 Egypt: A Rereading," in *Workers and Working Class in the Middle East*, ed. Zachary Lockman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994): p. 88-89.

throughout Cairo, among them Armenians, partook in the ongoing strikes with the ultimate hope of pressuring the factory owners to raise their wages and prohibit the arbitrary dismissal of manual laborers.[231] Among the numerous Armenian cigarette factories, only some of the events occurring at the Matossian firm during 1899 and early 1900s are recorded for it was the largest Armenian company employing around 1,200 to 1,500 workers[232] or because no significant events cropped up at the other Armenian firms. It is to be noted, however, that the first labor union, the precursor of later formed internationalist associations in Egypt, championing the rights of cigarette rollers actually emerged at the Matossian plant.[233]

Keeping pace with the technological advancements taking place in the British Empire, the Matossians also shifted from small to large-scale production.[234] Just like their Greek competitors, they, too, made use of around 15 tobacco-cutting machines, all manufactured in England.[235] Beginning towards the late 1890s, they tended to hire less expensive Egyptian workers as substitutes for Armenians because the latter, in the eyes of the Matossians, seemed to be hard-to-please.[236] But, still, some of their nationals continued to be employed in the factory along with Syrians, Greeks, and Egyptians, all in all, constituting around 200 people. The Matossian brothers, like any other group of

[231] Raʿuf ʿAbbās Ḥamīd Muhammad, *al-Ḥaraka al-ʿummāliyya fī miṣr, 1899-1952* (Cairo: 1967): p. 51. Rifʿat al-Saʿīd, *Tārīkh al-ḥaraka al-ishtirākiyya fī miṣr, 1900-1925*, fifth edition (Cairo, 1981): p. 177.
[232] "Egyptian Cigarettes and Tobacco," p. 202.
[233] Lockman, "Worker" and "Working Class," p. 88-89.
[234] Shechter, "Selling Luxury," p. 55-58. As in Egypt, in Britain, large groups of girls and women used to roll the cigarettes; however, starting from 1883, the British relied on modern machinery to boost their cigarette production. In fact, James T. Bonsack is claimed to have been the first to purchase a cigarette rolling machine in Britain and thus contribute to what is described as the 'Second Industrial Revolution.' See Hilton, p. 84, 86.
[235] "Egyptian Cigarettes and Tobacco," p. 202.
[236] "The Issue of Strike," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, December 25, 1899 – January 6, 1900.

capitalists, desired a return to normalcy. As a result, through police intervention, they got rid of all the troublesome and riotous workers.[237]

A few years later, in December 1903, the second wave of strikes broke out again in the cigarette factories in Cairo. But, this time, the situation was much tenser. The factory owners refused to raise wages, and, moreover, announced a general cut in monthly payments. As a result, severe violence exploded in some firms. It was in such circumstances that a labor union, although a weak one, materialized at the Matossian factory. This set the precedent for the emergence of the International Union of Cigarette Workers and Rollers in the Egyptian capital in 1908.[238]

What is significant is that the process of establishing labor unions and organizing strikes broke rigid interethnic boundaries, paving the way for closer cooperation and collaboration between workers of diverse ethnic origins. Thus Armenian, Greek, Syrian, and Egyptian laborers were united. Emulating the workers' union at the Matossian factory, people of other professions also formed associations to protect their collective rights in the face of mounting capitalist exploitation. Before long, workers' unions of many sorts came into being: among them were the carpenters', blacksmiths', mechanics', cooks', engravers', shoemakers', tailors', and railway workers'. Such were the developments that eventually forged a working class consciousness in Egypt.[239] In fact, as Makdisi has pointed out, strikes were "contagious" and regarded as a legitimate means to resist continual capitalist exploitation.[240]

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[237] See Gorman, p. 252, 258.
[238] Ibid, p. 244.
[239] Muhammad, p. 62. Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, p. 141.
[240] Yavuz Selim Karakışla, "The Emergence of the Ottoman Industrial Working Class, 1839-1923," in *Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic 1839-1950*, ed. Donald Quataert and Erik J. Zücher (London, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1995): p. 22, 27, 30. Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, p. 147.

B. Cameras

1. Armenian Photographers in Anatolia, the Levant, and Egypt

Apart from cigarette production, Armenians also pioneered in the field of photography. As Stephen Sheehi has put it, the history of Armenian photography in the Middle East is a topic that merits an investigation on its own. A disproportionately large number of Armenians were involved in this domain starting from its formative years in the mid-nineteenth century, when, after the termination of the Crimean War in 1856, it was first introduced by veteran Europeans.[241]

Within a short period of time and driven by various, yet to be explored considerations, Armenians scattered across different Ottoman cities and towns came to establish extensive photography networks, and in some instances even ethnically monopolize the business for long decades to come. Thus, they contributed to the European-initiated "Westernization/Modernization" project. As Sarah Graham-Brown has argued, among the obvious motives that propelled nineteenth-century Armenians to become photographers was their intimate connections with Europeans and European culture as well as their earlier mastery of various crafts such as metalworking, engraving and miniature painting.[242] As a result, 163 photographers of Ottoman Armenian descent

[241] Stephen Sheehi, *The Arab Imago: A Social History of Portrait Photography, 1860-1910* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016): p. xxxvi. Currently, a group of art historians in collaboration with the Armenian Ministry of Culture are in the process of establishing an online database containing entries on Armenian photographers in different parts of the world, including the Middle East. The website allows researchers to find brief biographical information, photographic albums, and bibliographies pertaining to Armenian photography. See http://www.lusarvest.org/en/ (accessed February 27, 2019). See also Badr El-Hage, "The Armenian Pioneers of Middle Eastern Photography," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 31 (2007): 25.

[242] Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988): p. 38, 54-56.

were found in Anatolia and the Eastern Mediterranean including Egypt by the outbreak of WWI.[243]

Learning the basics of their profession from Europeans practicing it in Istanbul, the Abdullah[ian] Freres (Viken, Hovsep and Kevork) of Istanbul ranked among the first and oldest Armenian photographers in the Middle East. What is remarkable is that within a relatively short period of time, the Abdullah brothers, owing to their growing reputation, became the royal photographers of the Ottoman court, a prestigious position accorded by Sultan Abdül Aziz and continuing to be maintained under Sultan Abdül Hamid II. In fact, in 1874, the Abdullah Freres were granted "…the exclusive copyright on all photographic portraits of the imperial Ottoman family."[244] They were even commissioned by the Sultan to compile around 58 photographic albums summarizing the Empire's latest achievements to be forwarded to the heads of Western states including France, Great Britain, the USA, and Germany. Obviously, in one way or another, the famous Abdullah brothers decisively influenced the later body of emerging Armenian photographers in the Near East. This particularly holds true for Yessayi Garabedian, the later Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, who before joining the Armenian ecclesiastical order, apprenticed photography in their studio. At a later stage in his life, despite his high church ranking, Garabedian established a training workshop within the premises of the St. James Armenian Monastery in Jerusalem, which eventually played a crucial role in the spread of photography in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is claimed that ultimately around five generations of Armenian photographers matriculated from this academy including Garabed Krikorian of

[243] Engin Özendes, *Photography in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1923* (Istanbul: Yem Yayn, 2013): p. 58-85. Armenian photographers were to be found in the Ottoman capital, in large provincial capitals as well as in the main cities of Anatolia.
[244] Brown, p. 55, 56.

Jerusalem, in his turn the mentor of Khalil Ra'ad, more commonly known as the first Arab photographer in Palestine.[245] Another famous family of photographers in the Levant was that of the Sarrafian brothers: Abraham, Boghos, and Samuel, natives of Diyarbakir, but later, in 1897, relocating to late Ottoman Beirut, as a consequence of the turbulent political conditions in Anatolia.[246]

Like cigarette manufacturers, some Armenian photographers came to Egypt in the late 1880s. The majority, however, moved to the country as a result of the Empire's deteriorating political atmosphere. They mostly resided and worked in Cairo, while, only one or two Armenian photographers operated in Alexandria. In the Egyptian capital one finds the studios and workshops of M. Adjemian, Arakel Artinian, Carlo Bukmedjian, Sedefgian, Utudjian, A. Salkimian, Gober Benlian, the Abdullah brothers, and, of course, last but not least, Gabriel Lekegian.[247] As in the case of the cigarette manufacturing industry, so too in photography, following some years of apprenticeship, in prestigious Armenian studios like that the of the Abdullah Brothers or Lekegian's, people opted to establish their own studios. Gober Benlian, originally from Istanbul, mastered the secrets of photography by working with the Abdullah brothers in his original hometown, and later on with Lekegian in Cairo for over 12 years. Then,

[245] Dickinson Jenkins Miller, "The Craftsman's Art: Armenians and the Growth of Photography in the Near East (1856-1981)," (MA diss., American University of Beirut, 1981): p. 21-22 and Brown, p. 55-56. For more information on Khalil Ra'ad and his activities during WWI, see Salim Tamari, "The War Photography of Khalil Raad: Ottoman Modernity and the Biblical Gaze," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 52 (2013). It should also be noted that in addition to establishing a workshop, Garabedian also published around four technical manuals on photography in particular how to "treat, expose, develop and print negative plates." A certain Mitry, who later on moved to Cairo, also learned photography in Jerusalem under the apprenticeship of Krikorian.

[246] Sheehi, p. xxxvi and Miller, p. 83. The Sarrafian brothers' studio remained in operation in Beirut until Samuel's (1884-1941), the youngest brother's, death in 1941.

[247] For a more general treatment see Özendes, p. 80, 82, Stefano G. Poffandi, *Indicateur Égyptien Administratiff et Commercial 1897* (Alexandria, 1896): p. 148 and Poffandi, *Indicateur Égyptien 1904*, p. 333. Lekegian remained in business until his retirement in 1918, when he sold his shop along with its equipment, furniture, and clichés to the later established Kodak company in Egypt. See the file belonging to Kodak Company (Egypt) in the British Library, reference: Kodak A1682.

suddenly, in about 1900, he decided to open his studio in a location not too far from the Lekegian studio in the vicinity of Shepheard's Hotel.[248]

Much the same as their counterparts in the Ottoman center, most of these photographers also established their workshops in locations close to luxurious European hotels. It seems that there was much demand for photographers in Cairo.[249] That is why, incidentally Lekegian, Utudjian, and Salkimian, for example, established themselves in the vicinity of the fashionable Shepheard's Hotel, in the process, creating some conceivable competition between each other. Aside from foreign tourists, the cream of Middle Eastern society (among them Armenians), as well as foreign and local notables, also revealed a strong desire to be frequently photographed.[250] In fact, this seems to be the reason why two of the Abdullah brothers, namely, Kevork and Hovsep, established a branch of their main Istanbul-based studio in Cairo in 1886 complying with the invitation of Khedive Tawfīq, who wanted, as far as one can tell, and similar to his suzerain Sultan Abdül Hamid, to benefit from these court photographers' accomplished photographic skills. As a matter of fact, in 1891, these two Armenian photographers traveled with the Khedive and his wife Emine Hanim to Luxor in Upper Egypt, where they took photos of them in front of the ancient Egyptian Karnak temple complex dating back to the fourteenth century BC. However, due to Egypt's dry and hot climate as well as his worsening health conditions, Kevork was forced to return to his hometown Istanbul, while his nephew Abraham came to replace him.[251] Not long after this event,

[248] "Gober Benlian," (Armenian) *Arshaluys*, February 5-17, 1900.
[249] Miller, p. 26. See "Copy of Letter from Mr. H.M. Smith to Mr. Gifford," December 29, 1910, p. 8, reference: Kodak A1682.
[250] Brown, p. 57-58. When the prices of photo portraits became cheaper in the twentieth century, the more "popular" segments of the Near Eastern society also started buying photos or had themselves photographed in studios. Michele Hannoosh, "Practices of Photography: Circulation and Mobility in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean," *History of Photography* 40/1 (2016): p. 10.
[251] Özendes, p. 162, 164, 167. Apart from photographing local notables, the Abdullah brothers, when in Istanbul, also took photos of prominent foreign figures like Prince Albert Edward of Wales, Emperor

in 1895, the Abdullah brothers sold their shop to other famous photographers, namely, Sebah and Joaillier, subsequently, returning to Istanbul in 1900. Unfortunately, nothing is known about their later photographic activities.[252]

Neither Lekegian's origins, his earlier career nor the causes that drove him to move to Egypt are known. However, what we are sure of is his widespread fame and thriving career in Egypt. Shortly after his arrival in Cairo in 1887, Lekegian, who claimed to have mastered photography in Europe[253] eventually became "Cairo's leading photographer,"[254] and took pictures of Armenian, Egyptian and British notables and dignitaries in his Cairo studio including Boghos Nubar Pasha,[255] Lord Edward Cecil[256] and Egyptian Princess Nazli Hanim, a descendent of Muhammad 'Ali's dynasty.[257]

Among the other services provided by Armenian photographers in Egypt were photo development, producing miniatures, resizing existing pictures, coloring photos, and retouching.[258] Most of them claimed to follow what they described as American photographic techniques and methods.[259] But, interestingly, being one of the oldest

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Napoleon III of France and his wife Eugenie and Emperor Franz of Austria, among others, when these were visiting the Ottoman capital. See Sheehi, p. 9.

[252] Özendes, p. 164-165, 169, 176. The Abdullah brothers also took pictures of natural and archeological sites in Egypt. Kevork spent around 39 days in Upper Egypt for this purpose. It is said that after leaving Egypt, the Abdullah photographers converted to Islam. Miller, p. 18. See more about the Abdullah brothers in Sheehi, *The Arab Imago*.

[253] It is said that Lekegian learned modern photographic techniques during his stay in Europe. Lekegian also expressed his willingness to giving private lessons to all those interested in photography during his free time. See "I'lān khuṣuṣī li haḍarāt ḍubbāṭ al-jaysh al-miṣrī," *al-Muqaṭṭam*, July 28, 1892.

[254] "Cairo's Leading Photographer," *Supplement of the Near East*, January 24, 1913, p. 18.

[255] The son of former Egyptian Prime Minister Nubar Pasha.

[256] *The Leisure of an Egyptian Official* written by Sir Edward Cecil was posthumously published in London in 1921. On the first page there was the portrait of him taken by Lekegian.

[257] These photos appeared in A.B. de Guerville's book *La Nouvelle Égypte* (Paris, 1905). Around 10 other photos taken by Lekegian are available online on the Jafet Library website, (accessed February 27, 2019), http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/jafet/blatchford/html/index.html. Other pictures are available online: see https://www.willemwitteveen.com/pdf/, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/collection-of-views-of-egypt-including-cairo-and-the-pyramids#/?tab=about, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1299582/funerary-complex-of-mamluk-sultan-photograph-lekegian-gabriel/, http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/mirage/cl11-223.htm, (accessed April 15, 2019).

[258] "Gober Benlian," and "H. Utudjian and Co. American Photography Studio," (Armenian) *Lusaper*, December 13, 1904.

[259] "H. Utudjian," and "American Studio," *Azad Khosk*, August 17, 1907.

photographers in Egypt, Lekegian, apart from his work in the studio, also seemed to be involved in important projects owing to his close ties with British colonial and Egyptian government circles. Like the Matossians, Lekegian also advertised himself as the 'photographer of the British Army of Occupation.' The Cairene *al-Muqaṭṭam* newspaper announced that he had produced photo albums of the Anglo-Egyptian army available for sale.[260] Added to this, Lekegian accompanied the army at times of peace and war, sometimes to the point of endangering his own life. In 1889, Lekegian accompanied that army to the Sudan, where he was commissioned to capture photos of the Battle of Toski, which ultimately ended with Anglo-Egyptian victory over the Mahdist rebels. A few years later, these shoots made their appearance in multiple publications. In 1891, it was announced that around 95 of these photographs, relating to natives, Egyptian and Sudanese scenery and the battle itself, had been transmitted by Sir Francis Reginald Wingate, a leading British general during the battle, to the London-based Royal Geographical Society. Much the same as the later-established American National Geographic Society, the organization meant to expand the geographical sciences and to represent the wilds of Africa.[261] In the final analysis, these photographs mostly served Wingate himself, since they enabled him to decorate his books *Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan* (published in 1891) and *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp* (published in 1892) including many of Lekegian's pictures, "… remarkable for their clearness, and the amount of detail they show."[262] Aside from these publications, some other pictures also appeared in other books like A.B. de Guerville's *Le Nouvelle Égypte* (published in 1905) and S.H. Leeder's *Veiled Mysteries in Egypt and the*

[260] Miller, p. 23. See "I'lān khuṣuṣī."
[261] "Photographs," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 13/11 (1891), p. 700 and Michelle L. Woodward, "Between Orientalist Clichés and Images of Modernization," *History of Photography* 27/4 (2003): p. 364.
[262] "Photographs," p. 700.

Religion of Islam (published in 1912). They represented scenes from the exotic but backward East. Most of the pictures dealt with mosques, palaces, streets in Cairo, veiled women, children, peasants, craftsmen, traditional technologies in irrigation and plowing, scenes from village life, Egyptian historic sites and so on. Thanks to his photographic expertise Lekegian even received a gold medal during the International Photography Exhibition held in Paris in 1892.[263]

2. The Economic Ventures of Onnig Diradour and the Birth of the Kodak Company in Egypt

Besides practicing photography, some members of the Armenian minority in Egypt also acted as importers of various photographic films, equipment and cameras from abroad. Onnig Diradour, whose commercial activities will be discussed in some detail in the coming paragraphs, was one of the dominant figures, who actually grabbed the attention of the Kodak company to the market potential of the Middle East.

In her MA thesis "The Craftsman's Art: Armenians and the Growth of Photography in the Near East (1856-1981)," Dickinson Jenkins Miller sheds light on the prosperous economic ventures of Onnig Diradour in his hometown Istanbul, while paying less attention to his later, more crucial business successes in Egypt. By relying on documents I have uncovered in the British Library, this section of the thesis will explore the story behind the birth of the Kodak Company in Egypt. Combining balance sheets and ledgers, bills of exchange as well as memoranda of sale, these sources will illuminate our understanding of early Armenian involvement in photography, the rise of Diradour as principal salesman and dealer of photographic equipment in Istanbul and

[263] See Lekegian's carte de visite in Appendix II.

Cairo, and the negotiations which ultimately led to the takeover of his company by the giant Kodak conglomerate.

In his early days in Istanbul, it appears that Onnig Diradour devoted more time developing his trade in photographic equipment then in taking pictures, acting, we are told by the *Annuaire Oriental*, as the representative of ten multinational photographic companies in the Ottoman domains.[264] Judging by the wide variety of camera-related products available at the Diradour store, located in Istanbul's Samatya quarter, a photographer planning to furnish his studio had almost no other option but to pay a visit to the man's shop, where he could find all the necessities of his profession.

Despite his success in the Ottoman capital, at some point after the first outbreak of violence against Armenians in the capital, Diradour relocated to Cairo. There, he pursued the same profession in his newly rented shop which became known as the Cairo Photographic Store situated in Opera Square in the neighborhood of many foreign consulates and luxurious hotels – Shepheard's, Continental Savoy, and Metropole.[265]

Not long after his arrival, he gained the upper hand in what can be described as the trade in Kodak products, a fact quickly recognized by Hedley M. Smith, Kodak's Paris manager touring Egypt at the time. According to his report to his home office, Diradour controlled nearly 60% of the Kodak trade in Egypt distributing Kodak merchandise in the deep south of the country.[266] As the report of the Diradour store for the year 1911 indicates, it did not only sell photographic equipment retail and wholesale, but also catered to the needs of the higher echelons of Egyptian society (both native and foreign). We do know that Lekegian and a number of Greek and Austrian

[264] Özendes, p. 44-45 and Dickinson, p. 50-51.
[265] In 1910-1911, Diradour paid £E 9000 for rent. See "The Balance Sheet of 1910-1911: 1 June 1910-31 May 1911." Reference: Kodak A1682.
[266] See "Copy of Letter from Mr. Smith to Mr. Gifford," 6 January 1911, p. 1. See Poffandi, *Indicateur Égyptien 1904*, p. 84. See "Balance Sheet 31 Mai 1911." Reference: Kodak A1682.

photographers, namely, Piromali and Fiorillo as well as Paul Dittrich were among Diradour's loyal customers. In addition, members of the Khedivial family like Sa'id Ḥalīm Pasha,[267] Prince Ibrāhīm Ḥalīm, several high British officials like Lord Edward Cecil, and a number of foreigners including Germans and Frenchmen also appeared on his long list of clients. In 1911, he had around 145 customers from all nationalities including Egyptian nationals.[268]

Struck by Diradour's marked success and, more important, Kodak's market potential, Smith toyed with the idea of appointing him as Kodak's exclusive agent in Egypt and possibly in nearby Syria and Palestine.[269] But the company, more interested in multiplying its profits rather than magnifying Diradour's role and wealth, opted for outright ownership. Following several encounters with Kodak representatives in Paris and London, Diradour, somewhat reluctantly, sold his business to the newly established Company in return for part ownership of the founding shares and the position of Egyptian director for a period of five years. Diradour, and three other Armenian relatives Arshag and Yervant Ferman[ian] and Hrant Nassibian, had 40% of the shares, while 60% were held by the new Company represented by Kodak Limited, Williams Jones Williams, and Armand Notté.[270] Thus Diradour and his Cairo Photographic Store, passed into oblivion, Kodak, now the virtual owner of the new Kodak Company (Egypt) went on to become a world conglomerate firm worth, in 1996, 31 billion dollars.

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[267] Sa'īd Ḥalīm Pasha (1865-1921) the grandson of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha served as the Grand-Vizier of the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1917.

[268] See "Copy of Letter from Mr. Smith to Mr. Gifford," 6 January 1911 and "Copy of Letter from Mr. H.M. Smith to Gifford," 12 January 1911. Fiorillo served as the photographer of the engineers working in Aswan. He bought the bulk of his goods from Diradour, who gave him an 11% discount. See "Kodak (Egypt) Soci**é**t**é** Anonyme Balances Taken Over from O. Diradour 1 Nov. 1911." Reference: Kodak A1682.

[269] See "Correspondence from H.M. Smith to O. Diradour," 22 May 1911, p. 1. Reference: Kodak A1682.

[270] "Kodak (Egypt) Preliminary Act of the Company," p. 1, 6, 10. "Kodak (Egypt) (Soci**é**t**é** Anonyme)" *Supplement Au Journal Officiel*, 2 September 1912, p. 1-2-3. Except for Diradour, all the directors of the firm in Egypt were foreigners. The starting capital of the company was 12000 E.P., it took over the assets belonging to Diradour's Cairo Photographic Store. Reference: Kodak A1682.

CHAPTER V

BETWEEN THREE NATIONALISMS: OTTOMAN, ARMENIAN, EGYPTIAN

Due to the ambivalent policies of Sultan Abdül Hamid II and the equally unstable strategies adopted by the Committee of Union and Progress regarding the minority question, roving Ottoman Armenian revolutionaries and intellectuals facilitated the process of circulating and disseminating political ideas among their nationals in Egypt. This steady activity, of course, prepared the ground for the eventual establishment of Armenian political parties in Egypt and other foreign countries.

While it, as a rule, was concerned about the predicaments of Ottoman Armenians, and keenly followed the evolution of Ottoman imperial politics, the Armenian minority in Egypt tended to evince little interest in what can be described as local Egyptian politics. In reality, at a time of mounting Armenian nationalism, all that mattered for Armenians whether in Egypt or other countries of refuge was the vexed issue of administrative reforms in the six Armenian *vilayet*s of Eastern Anatolia.[271]

In an attempt to push for such an end, a group of Armenians in Cairo established, in 1886, what they called the Progressive Movement, one of the first Armenian proto-political organizations in the country. In sum, around 250-300 Armenians joined its ranks from both Cairo and Alexandria. Like other Armenian political parties established later, the Progressives pinned high hopes on European powers, who they hoped, would exert diplomatic pressure in favor of Armenians in the

[271] For more information, see Lousie Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement* (Berkeley, 1963) and Anahide Terminassian, *Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984).

Ottoman homeland. In late 1888, when some diplomats from Tsarist Russia visited the country, they asked for Russian interference to find a final resolution for the Armenian Question. At a later date, a letter was handed to Prince, later Tsar, Nicholas II, incidentally touring Egypt, to request his father Tsar Alexander III, to pursue more energetically the, yet unaccomplished, Armenian reforms. Predictably, the Progressive Movement's militant inclinations alienated the Egyptian Armenian notables who were unremittingly criticized for their rather accommodating attitude to existing Ottoman authorities. In the long run, however, the entrenched class of Armenian notables proved more durable and the progressive movement, as it were, effectively came to an end.[272]

From 1890 onwards, Armenian political parties, began setting up branches in Egypt. The Hnchak Party[273] was, perhaps, the first to have taken this step. In 1896, following its First General Congress in London, where a controversy had arisen over its socialist program, a group of Hnchak intellectuals, opposed to and disapproving of the recently adopted socialist doctrine, split from the Party and formed a new political movement known as the Reformed Hnchaks (*Veragazmyal Hnchakianner*). They selected Cairo as their new headquarters. From that point on, a struggle broke out between the dissident and the loyal members of the Hnchak Party in Egypt, ultimately, leading to mutual political assassinations. Arpyar Arpyarian, one of the principal figures of the Reformed Hnchak Party, was murdered by his political foes on February 12,

[272] Hovhannes Topuzian, *The History of the Armenian Colony in Egypt (1805-1952)* (Armenian) (Yerevan, 1978): p. 148-150.

[273] The Social Democratic Hnchak Party was formed in Geneva, Switzerland in 1887 by a group of young Russian Armenian university students. The Party's aim was to overthrow the 'absolute monarchial order in the Ottoman Empire' and replace it with a 'constitutional democratic regime' as well as liberate what it described as Ottoman Armenia. The SDHP advocated Marxism and believed in revolution as a means to protect the rights of the Armenian proletariats. See Hratch Bedoyan, "Armenian Political Parties in Lebanon," (MA diss., American University of Beirut, 1973): p. 5-22.

1908, in the Egyptian capital on his way home.[274] In retaliation, the proponents of Arpyarian killed three Hnchaks, namely, a certain Sakuni, Krikorian, and Smigian,[275] but failed in their attempts on the lives of Sabah Kulian and Avedis Nazarpegian, two Hnchak leaders. In sum, around five people were killed from both camps.[276] The rival Dashnaks[277] continued to have a meager presence in Egypt until 1908 lacking both large number of adherents and adequate leadership in the country, as suggested by Hovhannes Topuzian.[278]

Challenging the already-established power of the Armenian notables in Egypt, Armenian political parties recruited largely from new immigrants attracted to their more radical form of politics. In May 1899, at a time when a series of international peace treaties were being signed at The Hague Convention, Armenian political parties in Egypt attempted in vain to raise the Armenian Question in the gathering at The Hague. However, much to their dismay, they were prevented to do so on account of Maghakia Ormanian, the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul, who almost always stood as an obstacle in the face of party activity, fearing the wrath of the Ottoman Sultan Abdül Hamid II and possibly losing his exalted position. This resulted in a wave of protests among the Armenian public. By intimidation, the pro-Dashnak faction banned the Armenian priests in Cairo and Alexandria from mentioning his name during Sunday masses.

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[274] Agop J. Hacikyan et al. eds. *The Heritage of Armenian Literature: From the Eighteenth Century to Modern Times* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2005): p. 453. In the months following his assassination, a monument was erected on his grave in Cairo by his political partisans, from the revenues generated by the sale of his small and large photos produced by photographer Utudjian in Cairo. See "Arpiar's Photo," (Armenian) *Lusaper*, April 4, 1908.

[275] See Eugene Papazian, *Autobiography and Memoirs (Relating to National Matters)* (Armenian) (Cairo, 1960): p. 15. Papazian was born in Smyrna in 1887. His parents moved to Alexandria in 1895 escaping Hamidian rule. He just mentions the surnames of the killed Hnchak leaders without giving their first names.

[276] Topuzian, p. 151-153.

[277] The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) or the Dashnaktsutyun was founded in 1890 in Tbilisi, Russian Empire. In its Manifesto of 1890, the ARF aimed to secure 'economic and political freedom of Turkish Armenia.' The party used violent revolutionary activity as a means to reach its goals. See Bedoyan, p. 8-9, 25, 27.

[278] Topuzian, p. 159.

Actually, they succeeded in doing so in Alexandria, the hub of not only Armenian, but also Greek and Italian revolutionaries and radical thinkers. Cairo, however, remained the stronghold of the Armenian notables, who kept on supporting the Patriarch. When a rowdy group belonging to the poorer segment of the Armenian population interrupted a church service by calling for a repudiation of the Patriarch, the Armenian notables had no choice but to request Egyptian police protection. This turbulent state of affairs generated tensions between the notables and the revolutionaries that lasted from June to October 1899. Eventually, after the arrest of approximately 20 people by the Egyptian authorities, the protestors submitted to the will of the Armenian aristocracy, and put an end to their campaigns.[279]

Before the large-scale influx of Armenian revolutionaries, political activists, and intellectuals into Egypt during the late 1890s, the various institutions of the Egyptian Armenian Apostolic Church in both Cairo and Alexandria were dominated by a few Armenian notables hardly anyone questioning their authority.[280] Immediately after their arrival, the politically active newcomers, who formed a majority in Alexandria, wanted to take over, much to the dismay of the old Armenian aristocracy, who always tried to marginalize them. This, in reality, was an extension of earlier class struggles taking place in mid-nineteenth century Istanbul between the *amirah*s, a wealthy class of Armenians in government service on one hand, and the *esnaf*s (Armenian craftsmen) as well as the Western-educated Armenian intellectuals on the other, who always demanded further inclusion in the community's decision making processes.[281] As in

[279] Krikor Basmadjian, *Patriarch Ormanian and the Egyptian Armenian Colony* (Armenian) (Cairo: 1973): p. 28-29, 33, 44, 46, 49.
[280] "From the Egyptian Armenian Life," (Armenian) *Puzantyon*, April 17-29, 1899. *Puzantyon* was published in Istanbul starting in 1896,
[281] Rober Koptaş, "Armenian Political Thinking Before and After the Young Turk Revolution," *Haigazian Armenological Review* 35 (2015): p. 52-53.

Istanbul, after many years of ongoing conflict, eventually in 1908, the internal affairs of Armenians in Egypt started to be governed by the regulations set by the Armenian National Constitution of 1863 (*Nizâmnâme-i Millet-i Ermeniyân)*, thereby putting an end to what two prominent Reformed Hnchak intellectuals Vahan Tekeyan and Yervant Odian referred to as the old "*amirah* claims."[282]

Around the same time, in 1908, this time influenced by the developments in the Ottoman capital, specifically, following the Young Turk Revolution and the restoration of the Constitution, a conglomerate of former Hnchak, Dashnak and Armenagan breakaway individuals[283] laid the foundations for the Constitutional Ramgavar Party in Alexandria. This new party stood in opposition to the more radical revolutionary activities of its Hnchak and Dashnak counterparts. By then, however, regardless of their ideological differences, all of the Armenian political factions thought along the same lines, at least with regards to national issues; namely seeking internal autonomy rather than absolute independence in the Armenian-inhabited Ottoman provinces comprised of Erzurum, Sivas, Van, Bitlis, Harput, Diyarbakir, and Trebizond.[284]

What is more important is that all of these parties were disinclined to become involved in Egyptian national politics. Nevertheless, some Egyptian Armenian individuals reacted fiercely against the activities of more radical Egyptian nationalists, siding instead with the British occupiers of the country. There is no source on which to base the claim that the Armenians of Egypt actively resisted the British occupation. In

[282] Topuzian, p. 140.
[283] The Armenagan Party was founded in Van in 1885. It aimed to secure the autonomy of the Armenian-inhabited provinces in the Ottoman Empire. However, it was soon dissolved, and some of its members had relocated to Egypt.
[284] Topuzian, p. 157-159. The Ramgavars had two clubs in Egypt; one in Cairo and the other in Alexandria established in 1912. See Suren Bayramian, *Armenian Communal Structures in Egypt* (Armenian) (Cairo, 2017): p. 93, 150. In 1921, the Armenagan, Constitutional Ramgavar, and the Reformed Hnchak parties united giving birth to the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (known as the Ramgavar Party) in Allies-occupied Istanbul. See Bedoyan, p. 10.

fact, the record suggests that they rather tended to "collaborate" or, at worst, "negotiated" with the British about their shared interests. In fact there is evidence to show that Armenians were eager to economically and politically associate themselves with the colonizers. This explains why the Matossians and Lekegian did not hesitate to advertise themselves as being in the service of what they described as "the British army of occupation." In the early 1900s, during the rise of Egyptian nationalist, anti-imperialist movements under the guidance of Musṭafa Kāmel, some Armenian intellectuals, perhaps, concerned about their people's privileged economic status, considered nationalist agitation as menacing the country's prosperity and peace. Yervant Odian, for instance, viewed Kāmel's al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī as a "radical anti-Christian movement" and a threat to his community's, and Egypt's, economic well-being. Similarly, in 1910, while commenting on the general political life in Egypt and discussing the murder of Egyptian Prime Minister Buṭrūs Ghālī Pasha, Levon Megerditchian,[285] at the time, one of the leaders of the Constitutional Ramgavar Party, launched vituperative attacks against the Egyptian nationalists. He disgruntledly wrote in the Istanbul-based *Puzantyon* that "unfortunately, the microbe of politics aims to disrupt our peaceful life" and condemned the nationalists' attempt to canonize Naṣīf al-Wardānī, the assassin of Buṭrūs Ghālī. In Megerditchian's opinion, Egypt stood at the peak of its affluence under the British rule. Kāmel's nationalist rhetoric merely served to impair the existing order of peace and prosperity.[286]

[285] Despite his family's financial difficulties, Megerditchian studied at the Robert's College in his birthplace, Istanbul. As one of the leading Hnchak personalities, he left the Ottoman capital in 1896 and stayed for a while in Athens, eventually, moving to Egypt upon the encouragement of his comrade Andon Reshdouni. In Egypt, Megerditchian worked as a French and English-language teacher. In 1908, he left the Hnchak Party and became one of the founders of the Constitutional Ramgavar Party and a leading member of the AGBU. See "Levon Megerditchian (Biographical Notes)," (Armenian) *Arev*, May 7, 1932.
[286] Topuzian, p. 179, 181-182. Butrus Ghālī Pasha acted as the minister for foreign affairs and was the first Coptic prime minister in modern Egyptian history. He was killed in 1910 because of his pro-British attitude for presiding over the Dinshaway trial, reactivating the Press Law of 1881, confirming the Anglo-

His speech in fact coincides with typical colonial justifications. Paradoxically, Armenians in Egypt while opposed to Egyptian nationalism still grabbed every opportunity to put forward their national demands in Ottoman domains to the point, at times, of collaborating with dissident Arabs seeking autonomy from Ottoman rule. In 1913, a number of Egyptian Armenian political leaders and dignitaries met in the Egyptian capital to form a United Front. Their primary intention was to eliminate all Armenian political enmities and foster unity for the purpose of pressuring the European Powers for the implementation of radical reforms in the Armenian provinces of the beleaguered Ottoman Empire.[287] On June 8 of the same year, an interparty meeting took place in Cairo's celebrated Printania Theater under the presidency of Dikran Gamsaragan[288] in the presence of Armenian and Arab thinkers including Edgar Agnuni[289] and the renowned Muslim reformer Sheikh Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍa, the latter as the representative of the "Syrian" community. The speeches delivered during the gathering accentuated the importance of Arab-Armenian cooperation in defense of both peoples' political rights and called for the immediate realization of the "long-promised" reforms.[290] Here, it should also be noted that there was a split in the community's political stance vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire. While the Armenian

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Egyptian Condominium Agreement, and reviving the Suez Canal Concession. To read more about the underlying causes for his assassination, see Samir Seikaly, "Prime Minister and Assassin: Butrus Ghali and Wardani," *Middle Eastern Studies* 13/1 (1977). Unlike some Armenians, in 1896, Count Zizinia of Greek origins collaborated with Muṣṭafa Kāmel and even offered him his theater in Alexandria to deliver a speech about Egyptian independence. See Alexander Kazamias, "Cromer's Assault on 'Internationalism': British Colonialism and the Greeks of Egypt, 1882-1907," in The Long 1890s in Egypt: Colonial Quiescence, Subterranean Resistance, ed. Marilyn Booth and Anthony Gorman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014): p. 272.

[287] Topuzian, p.164.

[288] Dikran Gamsaragan was born in Istanbul in 1866 moving to Egypt in 1894. He and his brother Armenag owned and ran the Gamsaragan cigarette factory. Gamsaragan died in France in 1941.

[289] Agnuni was one of the prominent figures of the Dashnak party. In 1904, on behalf of his party, he participated in a meeting with the Young Turks in Paris. In 1907, Agnuni was appointed as a delegate to the Armenian-Turkish federative council. In 1913, Agnuni paid a short visit to Egypt to attend the assembly held in Cairo on behalf of the Dashnak Party.

[290] Topuzian, p. 165-166 and "The Armenian Question," *The Near East*, June 20, 1913, p. 182.

political parties sought foreign intervention to solve the Armenian Question, other Armenians in Egypt worked side by side with different Ottoman subjects (Turks or Arabs) agitating for reform without endangering the Ottoman fatherland. In fact, Cairo's Ottoman Club (founded in 1910) was brought to life for the purpose of championing Ottomansim. Its trilingual bylaws (Arabic, Armenian, and Ottoman Turkish) is a proof of its members' desire to bury religious and ideological differences for the sake of the *Vatan*. However, existing literature does not identify the Club's other activities nor are we informed about its membership.[291]

Besides political organizations, migrating Armenians also created patriotic, educational, philanthropic, religious, sports, women's, and youth societies and unions in both Cairo and Alexandria. Throughout the years 1882-1914, around 64 such, some of them short-lived, nonpolitical associations operated in Egypt, all, in one way or another, dedicated to the preservation of Armenian identity, in what was an expanding Armenian world diaspora. Added to these, an Armenian also had the opportunity to join church societies, in Cairo as elsewhere, functioning under the auspices of the Armenian Catholic and Evangelical churches. For charitable purposes, former natives of some Ottoman provinces recently taking refuge in Egypt even established regionally-organized orphan care societies to assist the orphaned children in their respective places of origin in Anatolia such as Van, Ağın, Arapgir and Sivas. Eventually, in 1905, all of these groups amalgamated, giving birth to the United Orphan Relief Society in Cairo that expanded its operational scope and provided assistance to a larger number of Armenian orphans located in a number of Ottoman cities.[292]

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[291] *The Bylaws of the Ottoman Club in Cairo* (in Arabic, Armenian, and Ottoman Turkish) (Cairo, 1910): p.2.

[292] Bayramian, *Armenian Communal Structures*, p. 58-183. See Rifʿat, *al-Arman*, p. 551-552.

Among the various nonpolitical institutions, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, founded in Cairo on April 15, 1906, merits special attention. It is the only Union that is still functional today and, since the onset of World War II, is headquartered in New York. Its visionary leaders originated mainly from different cities and towns in Anatolia, with the exception of its founding father Boghos Nubar who was born in Egypt.[293] On account of continuing close ties and in recognition of the fact that Armenians were facing what appeared to be an existential threat, prominent Egyptian Armenians like Ya'qub Artin, Yervant Aghaton, Megerditch Margosoff[294], Krikor Yeghiayan[295], Hovhannes Hagopian[296], established the Armenian General Benevolent Union, and for many years served on its first Board of Directors.[297]

Examination of Yervant Aghaton's book written in 1931 narrating the foundation of the AGBU indicates that, initially, the main purpose behind establishing the Union was to revive the long-dead Armenian Benevolent Society (ABS) of Istanbul founded in 1861 by his father Krikor Aghaton.[298] Although having a humanitarian outlook similar to the ABS, the AGBU, however, grew into a more transnational organization. Soon, its sphere of influence expanded beyond the borders of Egypt all the way to Europe and the USA, in addition to the Ottoman provinces. As a matter of fact, on the eve of WWI, it possessed around 142 chapters spread in various world capitals. Thus, paradoxically, the smallest immigrant Armenian community, namely the

[293] Kévorkian and Tachjian, *The Armenian General Benevolent Union*, Vol. I, p. 17. Among the famous Armenians who headed the AGBU was Calouste Gulbenkian, better known as Mr. Five Percent, from 1930-1932.
[294] A physician.
[295] An attorney.
[296] A high-ranking bureaucrat in the Egyptian Ministry of Interior.
[297] Kévorkian and Tachjian, p. 20.
[298] The Armenian Benevolent Society, according to Aghaton, served only for two years. See *The Origins and History of the Benevolent Societies in Istanbul in 1860 and in Cairo in 1906* (Armenian) (Geneva: 1931).

Egyptian one, began the process of upholding what was to become world Armenian diaspora.

From its inception, the AGBU was loyal to the principle of "promoting the moral and intellectual development of the Armenian population of the Ottoman provinces" as well as improving the poor living conditions of the Armenian peasants in Anatolia by providing them with the necessary agricultural guidance and equipment whenever possible, thereby perpetuating their attachment to their ancestral homes.[299] In *Miyutyun*, the mouthpiece of the AGBU, the essentiality of the "soil" in preserving a group's national identity was repeatedly stressed. Despite its somewhat condescending view of the Armenian peasants, the AGBU's elite idealized the role of the peasant in the Ottoman homeland.[300] The AGBU also strained to instill European ideas and raise Armenian national consciousness in the minds of the "backward" peasants believing that their provincial compatriots had to follow in the footsteps of the "Anglo-Saxons" to book their admission to the ranks of "civilized nations."[301] Megerditch Antranikian of the AGBU's Central Board considered reason to be of paramount importance as opposed to reliance on providence and prayer, which the Ottoman Armenian peasants, he said, commonly resorted to.[302]

With a view to spread nationalist ideas, Mikael Natanian, who was well-travelled throughout Cilician Armenian villages, forcefully pressed the AGBU the duty of establishing more Armenian schools in the provinces to enhance the young Armenian

[299] Kévorkian and Tachjian, p. 19-26. See Bartevian, *The Golden Book*, p. 118-119.
[300] Mikael Natanian, "From the Worries of the Provinces," (Armenian) *Miyutyun*, November 1912, p. 172. Natanian (1867-1954) was AGBU's educational inspector in Cilicia.
[301] Yervant Aghaton, "Two Words to Our Other Brothers," (Armenian) *Miyutyun*, May 1912, p. 66 and Michael Gurdjian, "The Anglo Saxon Character," (Armenian) *Miyutyun*, January 1912, p. 9-10.
[302] Megerditch Antranikian, "Agricultural Union" (Hoghakordzagan Miyutyun), *Miyutyun*, October 1912, p. 151. Antranikian (1851-1938) was AGBU's first treasurer and one of its founders.

generations' sense of belonging and raising their educational level.[303] That is why, by 1914, the Union ran about 38 Armenian primary and secondary-level schools in the provinces including Karaduran (Kessab), Kebusiye (in Antioch), İzmit, Maraş, and Diyarbakir.[304] From 1911 up to the First World War, the AGBU also operated a secondary Teachers' College in Van. This institution aimed to prepare well-educated prospective teachers for the various Armenian provincial schools to foster the children's education.[305]

In times of catastrophes, the AGBU also conducted humanitarian relief work by distributing food and clothing as well as establishing orphanages to shelter the orphaned children. Following the Adana massacres of 1909, for instance, it earmarked up to 5000 E.P. for the victims as a compensation for their losses. At the same time, it looked after approximately 310 Cilician Armenian refugees temporarily stationed in Egypt.[306] Besides, the AGBU, at least in its birth place, succeeded in fostering social, religious, and political harmony between its various members. Downgrading socio-economic, denominational, and cultural differences, it embraced both the affluent and the less-affluent, the employer and the employee, the Armenian Catholics and their Apostolic counterparts, and so on. To give an example, Hovhaness Matossian (an Armenian Catholic), the owner of the famous Matossian cigarette factory in Egypt, was a member of the AGBU along with his competitors Armenag and Dikran Gamsaragan, both of them Armenian Orthodox.[307] Actually, in 1912, in one of his articles appearing in AGBU's *Miyutyun*, Yervant Aghaton exhorted his provincial peers to follow in the footsteps of the Egyptian Armenians by putting denominational differences aside. The

[303] Natanian, "From the Worries of the Provinces," (Armenian) *Miyutyun*, August 1912, p. 125.
[304] Kévorkian and Tachjian, p. 33.
[305] "AGBU's Normal School in Van," (Armenian) *Miyutyun*, October 1912, p. 161.
[306] Kévorkian and Tachjian, p. 19-26.
[307] Bartevian, *The Golden Book*, p. 68, 90.

Armenian Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants formed a single Armenian entity and had to act as a single body and soul, if they were to overcome the perils that threatened their existence.[308]

[308] Yervant Aghaton, "Two Words to Our Other Brothers," (Armenian) *Miyutyun*, May 1912, p. 66.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

By positioning Armenians in their local Egyptian context, this thesis has reconstructed the multi-layered economic ventures of Ottoman Armenian migrants in British-occupied Egypt and, in the process, disproving all the claims made regarding their minimal role in Egypt's economy. Armenians voluntarily or involuntarily, moved to Egypt, carrying with them a whole bundle of skills, customs, and political grievances from their ancestral hometowns. By stark contrast to the early nineteenth century, when they figured principally as high government employees, the new immigrants, comparatively larger in number, but still constituting a small proportion of the total Egyptian population, eventually featured prominently in the many segments of the Egyptian economy not, to be sure, massively in agriculture, but certainly evident in the services sectors, as restaurateurs, medics, lawyers, architects, photographers, journalists, jewelers and, more modestly, craftsmen, mechanics, tailors, and shoemakers. In many cases these activities did not represent a rupture but a form of continuity of earlier skills and competence carried over with them. They also ventured into an economic realm which, at the time was regarded as a European/Western preserve, namely industry, represented by their great successes in cigarette production for local and international consumption. This thesis, therefore, rehabilitates the economic role of the Armenian minority, which although not as large as that of the Greeks or Jews, nevertheless played an important role in the survival of the community itself and for the evolving Egyptian economy as a whole.

By focusing on the fact of their striking economic role and collective achievement, this thesis has not adequately treated the cultural reality of an expatriate community which, regardless of its diasporic state of being, nevertheless, insisted on its distinctive "Armenianness." But this thesis, however, indirectly alluded to this fact. In Egypt, the diminutive Armenian community developed a lively cultural life centering on church and school, on the book and the newspaper, on music and song, on literary, sports and patriotic societies and, not least, on food. In time, this tiny Egyptian community was to have a considerable impact on the cultural and national life of Armenians living well beyond Egyptian borders, thanks partly to the tireless activities of the AGBU which was spawned in Egypt.[309] Though not at its center, this thesis has demonstrated that the study of Armenian culture, in its formative exilic stage in Egypt is possible because the sources, dispersed though they may be, are available.

Although essentially dealing with the actual socio-economic achievements of a numerically vulnerable Armenian community, this thesis, without saying so explicitly, is fundamentally political, surveying the socio-economic fate of a community in exile, that came into being because of the inability of two political entities, Turkish and Armenian, to co-exist in the same political space. Even so, this study has not dwelt on the political setting that necessitated migration or the political consequences that derived from Armenians finding refuge in a de jure Ottoman entity but under informal British Occupation. But what the thesis has done is to indicate that such a study is indeed necessary and feasible, both for the overall political framework as well as the 'interior' Armenian politics that obtained. There is ample scope, for instance, to examine the 'political' struggle between Armenian clergy and Armenian laity, the class

[309] After WWI, the AGBU played a major role in Armenian relief work and education.

conflict within the immigrant community as well as the internecine, frequently bloody, struggle between rising immigrant Armenian political parties, over strategies leading to the reclamation of a recently lost homeland and, finally, the difficult task of reconciling conflicting political ideologies. Once, and if, that is done, then, in all probability, a more complete, and historically grounded account of the opening pages of the world Armenian diaspora in Egypt will become available.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

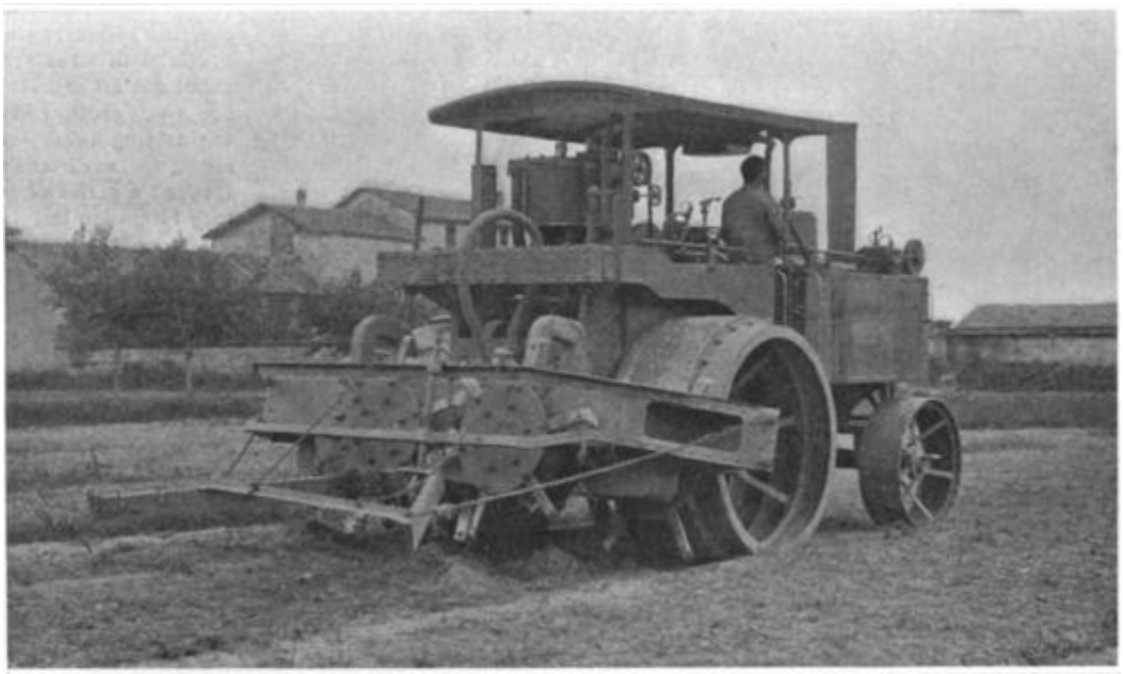
ILLUSTRATIONS

Lord Edward Cecil and Captain Owen. Source: *La Nouvelle Égypte*, p. 67.

Princess Nazli Hanim. Source: *La Nouvelle Égypte*, p. 177.

Boghos Nubar Pasha. Source: *La Nouvelle Égypte*, p. 211.

Boats on the Nile.
Source:
http://lusadaran.org/collection/image/?image=179&artist=Lekegian%2C%20Gabriel,
(accessed April 29, 2019).



The Nubari Plowing Machine. Source: “An Egyptian Steam Cultivator,” *Scientific American*, February 13, 1909.

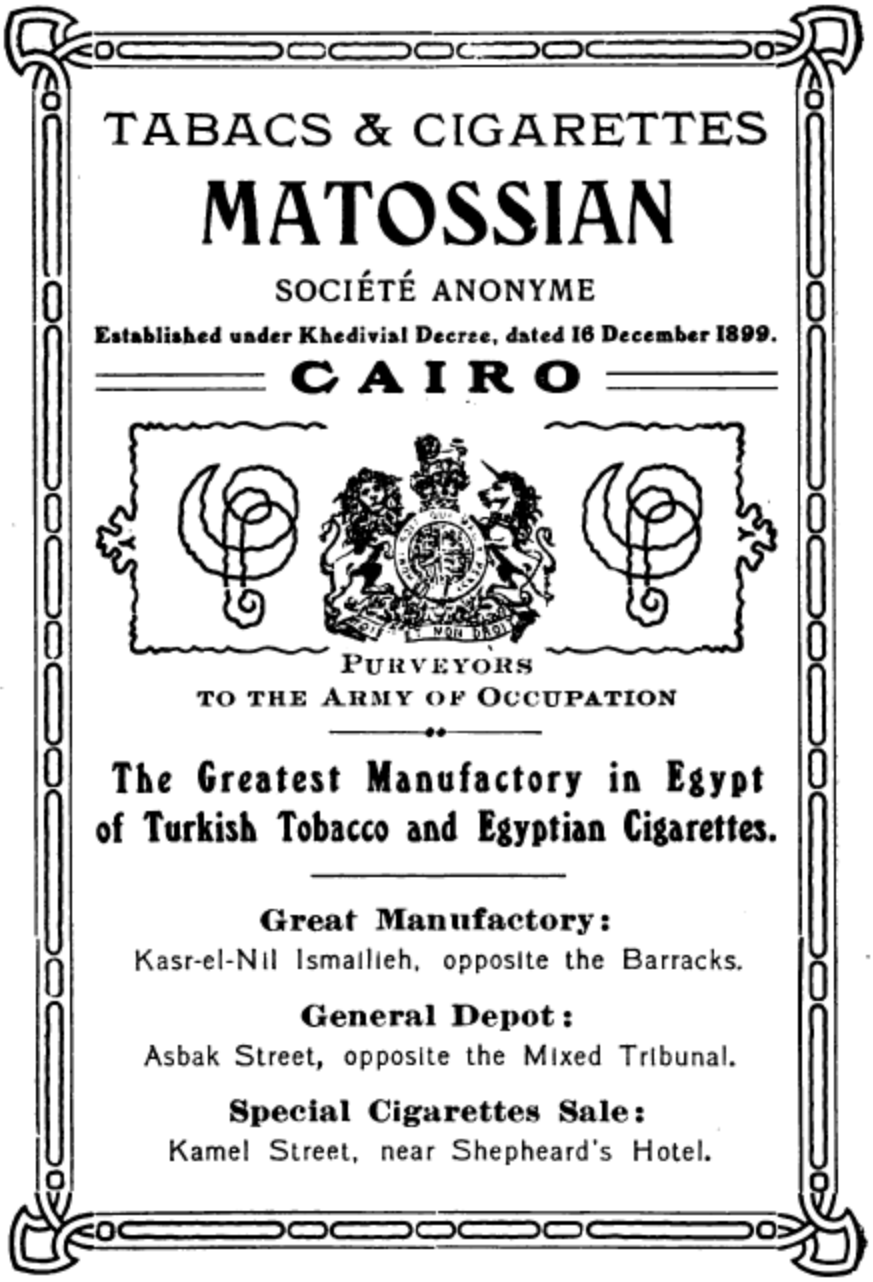
Saint Theresa Armenian Catholic Church in Heliopolis designed by architect Garo Balian in 1925.
Source: https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/61405, (accessed April 30, 2019).

The Matossian Kiosk. Source: "The Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition, Cairo," *Architecture*, September 1926, p. 143.

APPENDIX II

ADVERTISEMENTS

Source: *Al-Muqaṭṭam*, April 3, 1896.



Source: *The Lands of Sunshine: A Practical Guide to Egypt and the Sudan*. Cairo: Whitehead and Morris Co., 1908.

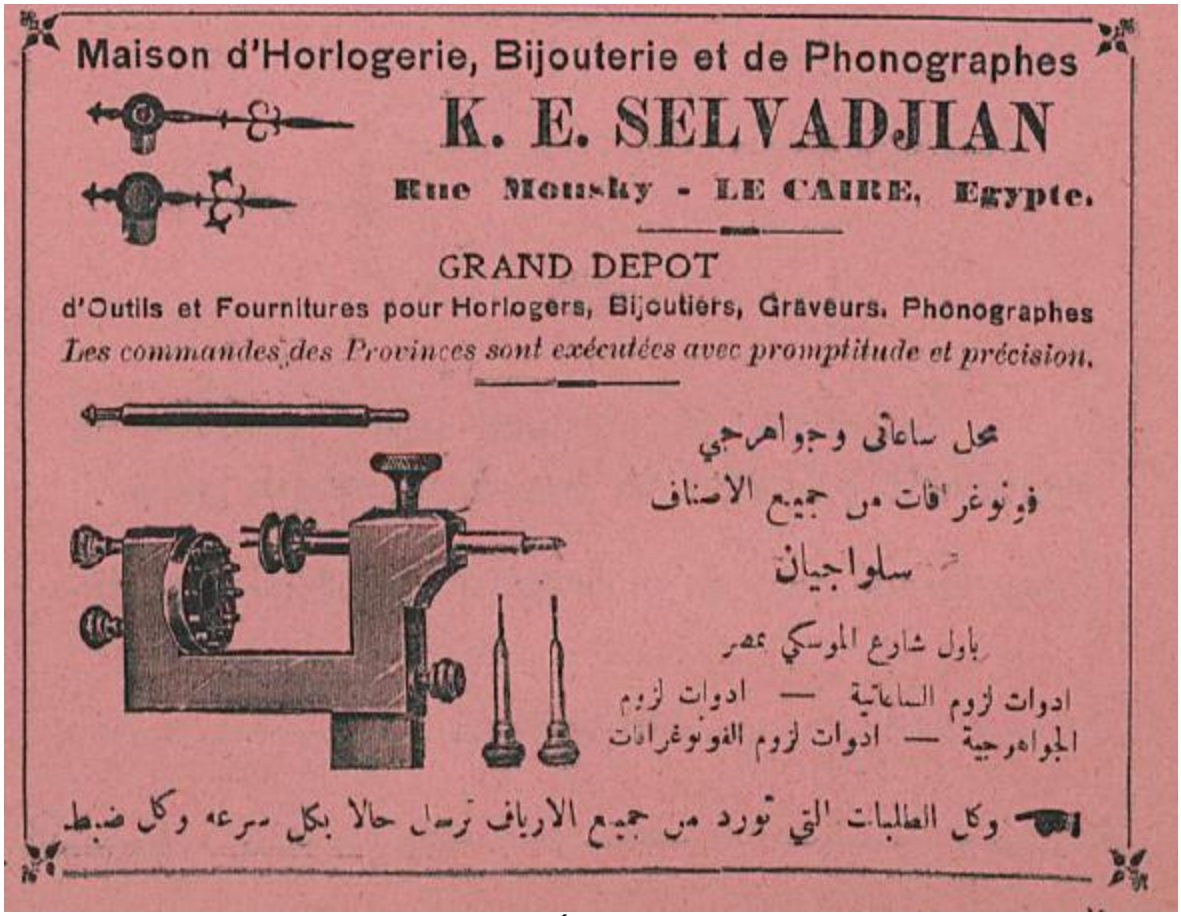
EGYPTIAN CIGARETTES.

When a stylish Parisian woman asks you for cigarettes, give her, if you would like her to smile sweetly at you, a box of the exquisite Matossian Egyptian Cigarettes, with gold tips, "Sun" brand.
—*(Communicated).*

Source: *The New York Herald*, November 4, 1908.

Source: *Arshaluys*, December 22-January 4, 1911.

Source: *Arev*, July 5, 1915.



Source: *L'Annuaire Égyptien 1908*, p. 1433.

SIMON KAÏKDJIAN

Rue Saptieh, LE CAIRE (Egypte)

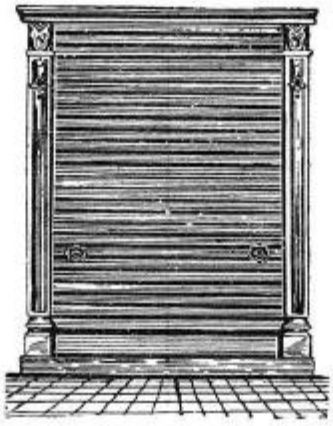
Téléphone No. 1708

SUCCURSALE à Bab-el-Hadid

TUYAUTERIE EN FER

Pompes, Accessoires, etc.

Pièces de rechange pour usines à vapeur et articles sanitaires

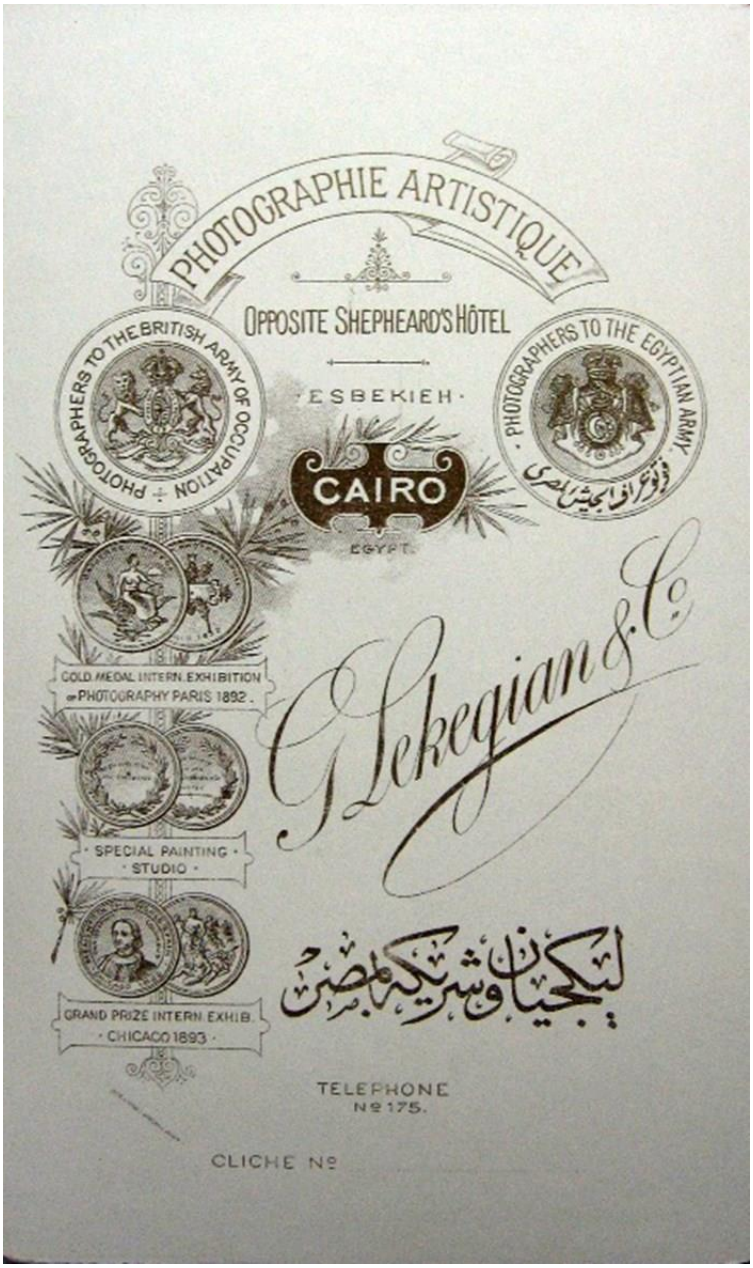


Atelier spécial pour portes roulantes SILENCIEUSES

Source: *The Egyptian Directory 1913*, p. XXI.

Source: *The Egyptian Directory 1913*, p. XXIII.

Source: *The Egyptian Directory 1913*, p. XVII.



Source: http://www.lusarvest.org/practitioners/lekegian-gabriel/, (accessed April 15, 2019).

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Periodicals

al-Kulliya (Beirut)
al-Muqaṭṭam (Cairo)
Arev (Alexandria)
Arevelk (Istanbul)
Arshaluys (Cairo)
Avel (Cairo)
Azad Khosk (Alexandria)
Azad Pem (Alexandria, Cairo)
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