A History of Ottoman Kurdistan in the Long 19th Century

Zozan Pehlivan, Department of History, University of Minnesota Twin Cities

https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.766

Published online: 17 June 2025

Summary

The history of late Ottoman Kurdistan is marked by significant changes in the region's social, political, economic, and environmental landscapes. The Ottoman state and the environment are the significant actors of these transformations. Conversely, the diverse communities in the region, encompassing different ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural identities, as well as varying occupations determined by their relationship with land and animals, responded to these changes brought by the Ottoman state and the environment, ultimately shaping the extent of the historical transformation in the region. On the one hand, the encroachment of the Ottoman state resulted in the abolishment of the region's Indigenous governing practices and institutions, while frequent and intensive episodes of climatic anomalies of the late 19th century caused harvest failure, water shortages, drying pastureland, and the perishing of millions of livestock. These political and environmental dynamics had both short- and long-term consequences on the region's society, politics, economy, demography, landscape, animal population, and, most importantly, intercommunal relations. While portraying the region's late 19th century, the article also establishes the linkages from a longue durée perspective by showing continuities and ruptures from the Ottoman Empire to modern Turkey and how the ghost of late Ottoman Kurdistan has hung over major political crises in the modern Middle East.

Keywords: Kurdistan, Ottoman Empire, Kurds, Armenians, pastoralism, climate crisis, violence

Subjects: Agrarian/Rural, Environmental, Middle East

Ottoman Kurdistan, as a geographic space, refers to the historical lands of Armenians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriacs, and Kurds—the last of which is the largest stateless ethnic community (forty million people) in the Middle East . Where is Ottoman Kurdistan? It is a large area of 335,000 square kilometers—equivalent in size to the Italian Peninsula—stretching between the Southern Caucasus to the Taurus and Zagros mountain ranges.[1] This large geographic space could be identified as an "ecological threshold"[2] constituting a diverse range of topographies and numerous micro-environments, including small mountain ranges, high plateaus, tectonic mountains, fertile large plains, deep river valleys, and hundreds of large and small rivers. The Euphrates and Tigris rivers are two freshwater bodies that feed small and large northern plains but fertile southern Mesopotamia. Besides these freshwater bodies, the largest water body of the region, Lake Van, is located on the region's eastern border with Iran. The variation within each of these zones and the immense difference in elevation of the northern and southern portions not only affect the temperature and precipitation patterns but also determine the flora and fauna of the region. While the mountainous north's altitude varies between 2,000 and 3,000 meters above sea level and received approximately 1,077 millimeters of precipitation, the southern parts are located 1,200–600 meters above sea level and received about 450 millimeters of rain. Besides these differential

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

elevations, the amount of precipitation was subject to global climatic oscillations.[3] The divergence of precipitation is not only in amount but also in type. While snowfall is the characteristic type of precipitation in the mountainous north, rainfall in winter and spring seasons determines the precipitation regime of southern plains and pasturelands. This ecological diversity, on the other hand, characterizes human and nonhuman forms of adaptations to this diverse environment.

The main actors determining the geographic boundaries of this ecological diversity and connecting southern portions to the north, the pasturelands to the villages, towns, and cities, are the millions of pastoralists and their herd animals migrating annually between summer and winter pastures for grazing purposes. At this juncture, it is the pastoralists and their transhumance migration that determine the geographic and territorial boundaries of Ottoman Kurdistan.[4] Moreover, this ecological understanding of the region differs from the existing descriptions of Kurdistan in the historiography, most of which are imagined through an ethno-religious and nationalist gaze. This reconsideration of the region's boundaries is vital for our understanding of the social, economic, political, and environmental dynamics of late Ottoman Kurdistan while revealing how other actors and factors affect, and perhaps reshape, the livelihood here.

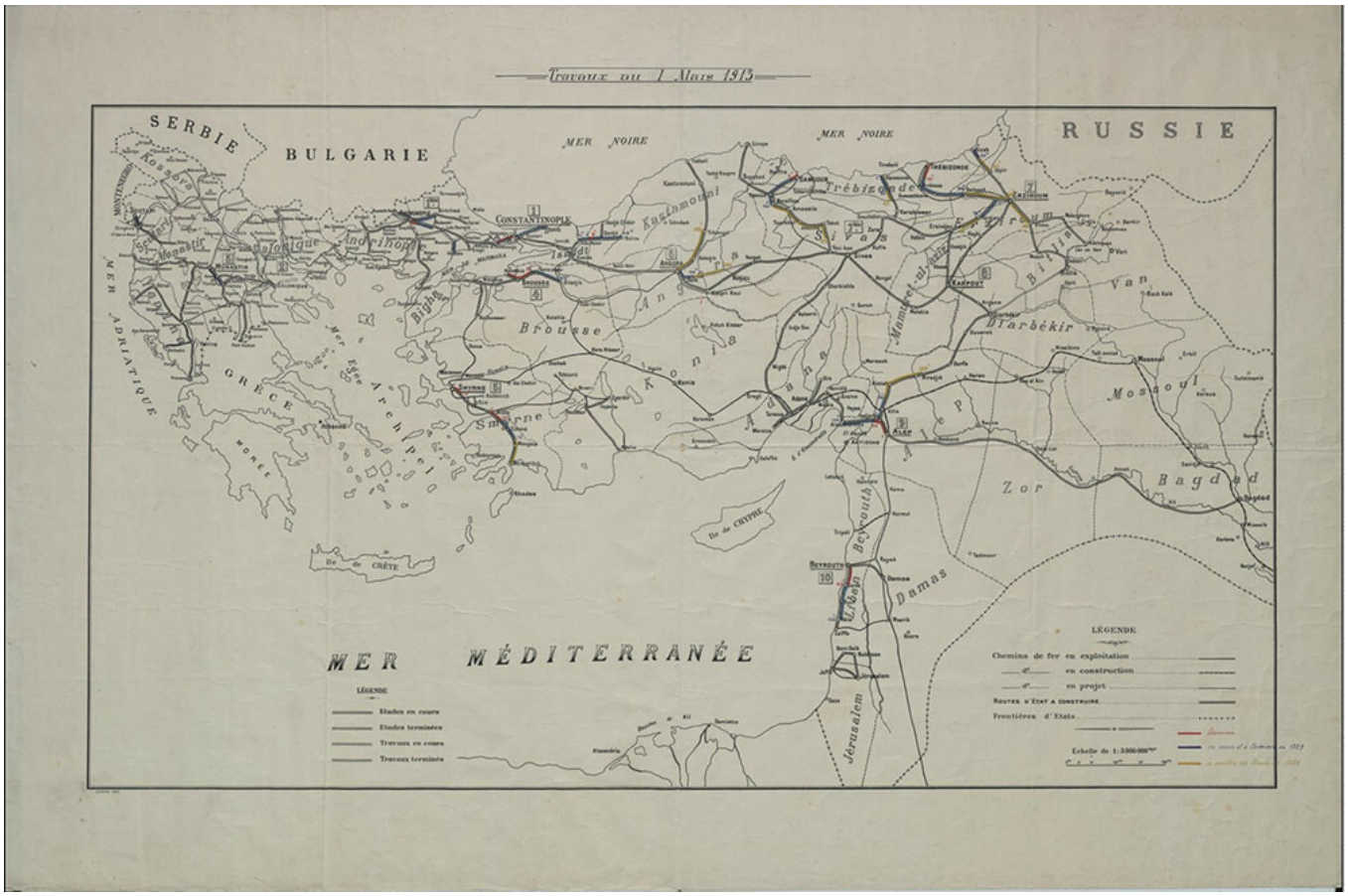

Figure 1. The road networks of the Ottoman Empire, including in construction (1913)

Source: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), HRT.h, 140/1, Courtesy of Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Kurdistan's geographic position (see figure 1) at the crossroads between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean played an essential role in its history. Up until the opening of the Suez Canal (1867), which connected the Red Sea to the Mediterranean and thus shortened the historical trading journey between South and East Asia and Europe, Kurdistan was a leading transition hub on historical trade routes.[5] The city of Diyarbekir was one of the most important commercial "entrepots" and redistribution centers in the area.[6] Pastoralists, on the other hand, were essential participants in this trading system as carriers, service providers, security guards, and, most importantly, trading partners. During the 19th century, three revolutionary technologies transformed the diverse geographies of the Ottoman Empire: telegraph, railway, and steam-powered vessels. From the early 1860s onward, the telegraph line connected Kurdistan to Istanbul, the imperial capital of the Ottoman Empire, and global metropoles.[7] The transformation that occurred in communication technology, however, did not occur in the transportation sector as the railway did not reach the region until the 1930s. This situation ensured the continuation of long-distance caravans across the region.[8] Although Kurdistan was not located in a coastal area, steamship technology brought about changes in the mobility of goods and people.[9] The employment of steamers in the ports of the Black Sea increased the level of internal migration as many Armenian- and Kurdish-speaking people began to seek seasonal job opportunities in the imperial capital. Further south, the *keleks* (rafts) were employed on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. From the 1830s onward, the usage of steamships between the Baghdad and Basra portions of the "twin rivers"[10] not only increased the magnitude of cheap British manufacturing goods in the Kurdistan market but also augmented the volume of exports of wool, mohair, and hide from the region.

A history of late Ottoman Kurdistan from a socioeconomic and environmental perspective is the major subject of examination. Reading and writing the history of the region through these lenses will allow one not only to track the level of historical transformation in the region but also to understand how political and environmental factors played intertwined roles in this process. First, a socioeconomic and demographic portrait of the region will be depicted. The next part will explore how the centralization policies of the Ottoman Empire remade local and regional power dynamics. Third, the climatic fluctuations of 1879–1894 and their short-term consequences on agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, trade, and state policies will be examined. While analyzing the long-term consequences of drought and severe cold episodes on agricultural and herding economies, the later portion will demonstrate how differential experiences of these crises by peasants and pastoralists transformed intercommunal relations and triggered the rise of "slow violence" across Ottoman Kurdistan.[11] The last and final section reveals how the involvement of the Ottoman state transformed a period of "slow violence" into a state-sponsored collective violence with the recruitment of select Kurdish pastoralists into a paramilitary force. In conclusion, an overview will establish the linkages and slippages from a longue durée perspective while emphasizing continuities and ruptures from the Ottoman Empire to modern Turkey and how the ghost of late Ottoman Kurdistan has been hanging on one of the major political problems in the modern Middle East, the Kurdish question in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Ottoman Kurdistan in 1800s: A Multicultural Society with a Portable Capitalist Economy

In the mid-19th century, Kurdistan's population was about 2.5 to 3 million.[12] In terms of occupation, about 50 percent of the population were agrarian with agropastoral tendencies. Approximately 40 percent were pastoralist, and the remaining 10 percent were urban and craftsmen and traders. One can argue that the ecological diversity of the region furnished adequate socioeconomic and environmental conditions for the flourishing of different modes of subsistence, interdependency between groups, and their lifestyles. Speakers of Armenian, Arabic, Kurdish, or Turkish comprised the majority of the population, while a considerable amount of the population was constituted by Assyrians, Nestorian, Syriacs, Greeks, and Jews. As has been represented in figure 2, ethno-religious distribution of the population differentiated from one province to the other. At this conjecture, up until the Armenian Genocide in 1915, Kurdistan was multicultural, multi-religious, and multilingual. In terms of religious identity, though Sunni Muslims and Christians constituted the majority of the population, a considerable portion of the region's inhabitants were Alevi and Yezidi Kurds and Turks.

Figure 2. A demographic portrait of the Bitlis Province, 1881.

Source: Courtesy of the National Archives, London. The National Archives (TNA), Foreign Office (FO): 925/2822.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Kurdistan's economy was based on agriculture and animal husbandry and related industries. Since peasant and pastoralists constituted the majority of the population, the economy of the region revolved around these two sectors. Though a considerable amount of land was under irrigation, mainly large plains located on nearby rivers and streams (see figure 3), up until the early 20th century rainfed agriculture was the dominant form of cultivation in the region. Besides the staple crops of wheat and barley, large amounts of lentils, beans, chickpea, millet, rye, rice, sesame, millet, and various vegetables and fruits were produced across the region. Historical records indicate that winter and spring sowings were the common practices as the winter snow protected crops for their germination process while abundant rainfall in the spring allowed plants to grow faster and thus be ready for the early summer harvest. In this regard, Kurdistan had two sowing and harvest seasons.[13] In the northern, central, and southern portions of the region, wheat, barley, and beans are sown in autumn and harvested in early summer depending on the geographic and climatic location of the area, and the other sorts of corn and vegetables are sown in spring and harvested in summer and fall.

Figure 3. Agricultural map of Central and Southern Kurdistan.

Source: Courtesy of the National Archives, London. TNA: FO 195/2283. Also cited in Zozan Pehlivan, *The Political Ecology of Violence: Peasants and Pastoralists in the Last Ottoman Century*, p. 94.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

In Kurdistan, sheep and goats were the most important domestic animals while cattle, camels, horses, mules, donkeys, and water buffaloes were also raised substantially. These livestock were bred in large numbers for their meat, milk, wool, mohair, and hide and similarly for their energy for plowing soil and carrying goods. Cattle were employed chiefly for plow purposes while water buffaloes were kept for their nutritious and fatty milk, beef, as well as energy. Across the region, horses, mules, and donkeys were the beasts used in pack transport work, particularly in hilly and mountainous portions of the region where neither wheeled transport nor camels were of any use. Here, camels were extensively used for long-distance trading journeys in the plains and transregional commerce.[14] Furthermore, as has been emphasized, the physical environment, abundance of grasses and water as well as temperature and precipitation, determined the configuration of livestock across the region. In this environmental setting, sheep, goat, and camel are the dominant breed in the hot and dry southern portion of the region while cattle, water buffaloes, and horses are the chief beasts of burden in the northern and eastern parts thanks to nutritious grass species covering the ground, abundant water, and favorable climatic conditions that turned the northern pasturelands into an ornamented sanctuary.

According to environmental historian Alan Mikhail, animals were among the most important sources of wealth accumulation in premodern Ottoman Egypt.[15] A similar historical trend was common among the residents of Kurdistan. The economic importance of livestock meant that both peasants and pastoralists possessed a considerable number of animals as they represented one of the most significant forms of private property and wealth accumulation, second only to land. Although the statistics regarding Kurdistan's livestock population are incomplete and inconsistent, some available figures from the early 1860s Diyarbekir and 1870s Erzurum, geographically and demographically the two largest provinces in the region, reveal how significant animal husbandry was in the 19th century.[16] At the time, there were about eight to ten million head of sheep, goats, cattle, water buffaloes, mules, horses, donkeys, and camels in the region.[17] A distribution of them to the human population indicates that every household of Kurdistan possessed at least eight to ten livestock in the mid-19th century. Here, it is important to underscore the key significance of animal husbandry for the millions of pastoralists. Unlike peasants whose socioeconomic well-being relied on multiple forms of economic substance—including arable lands, agricultural production, animal husbandry, and small-scale proto-industry—pastoralists heavily depended on herd animals not only providing food and shelter to these mobile communities but also constituting the foundation of their economic wealth, social capital, and sociopolitical power.

In the Ottoman Empire, Kurdistan was an important center of livestock trade up until the last quarter of the 19th century thanks to richness in herd animals and geostrategic location.[18] Besides exporting a large number of sheep and goats to Istanbul (the historical capital of the empire) for provision of its large meat market, the cities of Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, and Cairo were supplied with large quantities of livestock of Kurdistan. Available statistics indicate that about half a million sheep, goats, and camels were annually exported to Syria and Egypt.[19] Though sheep and goats were mainly slaughtered for meat provision of cities there, the cattle were predominantly utilized for plowing. Camels and horses were the chief beasts of burden traded in considerable numbers. Accordingly, many camels were exported to central Anatolia while specially bred horses were frequently shipped to British India, where they were used by the British Army for colonial expansion

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

and warfare.[20] In addition to livestock, various raw materials, particularly wool and mohair, were traded in considerable amounts. For example, during the American Civil War, the scarcity of American cotton in the European market was compensated with the importation of wool and mohair from Ottoman Kurdistan, Anatolia, Syria, Mount Lebanon, and other places.[21] At the time, pastoralists of the region implemented new techniques to compensate for the growing demand for fine wool and mohair in Europe, mainly in France, England, and Austria. These trading items continued to convey a considerable amount of cash to the residents. In fact, Veli Yadırgı's study on 19th-century commercial statistics of Ottoman Kurdistan also demonstrate a "gradual revival" in the 1860s and 1870s thanks to the "arrival of relative security."[22] The economic flourishing continued up until the global financial crisis of the 1870s, whose impact mounted with the occurrence of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877–1878, triggered serious social, economic, and political disturbances throughout the region.[23]

Besides the livestock trade, tanning, textile manufacturing, and silk production[24] were the significant proto-industrial forms of production employing a large number of workers throughout the region.[25] While tanning required small-scale industrial complexes and skilled labor, textile manufacturing and silk production were mainly run by the labor of women and children. Both in rural and urban spaces, thousands of looms were used to weave cotton, wool, and silk yarns. According to economic historian Donald Quataert, by the early 1870s, the province of Diyarbekir and its surrounding area were experiencing "a great manufacturing revival."[26] Similarly, the province of Harput was another important center of manufacturing and silk industry. Up until the early 20th century, there were about three hundred silk looms and 1,700 cotton looms in Diyarbekir.[27] Women and children constituted the major source of labor in this profitable economy as they were feeding cocoons.[28] In addition to very fine-quality cotton and wool fabric, a type of coarse cloth, used mainly for house items, was woven by women in their own homes. Besides fabric, a considerable number of carpets of high and inferior quality were manufactured in the region.

State Policies toward the Resettlement of Pastoralists

What was happening in the political arena of Ottoman Kurdistan during the 19th century? To answer this question, one needs to comprehend the multifaced history of the Ottoman Empire in the long 19th century (from the 1780s to 1914). Historians have described this period as an era of centralization, institutionalization, and reform, accompanied by financial deficiencies, political crises, and wars.[29] In Kurdistan, the centralization of state authority commenced with the abolishment of the autonomous and hereditary Kurdish rulers in late 18th and early 19th centuries. Starting in the late 18th century with the growing development of state capacity across diverse geographies of the empire, the Ottoman central administration began to implement centralization policies. Though arguably the consequences of those policies across the empire were different, the growth of the state's institutional capacity in provinces like Kurdistan, Iraq, Syria, Albania, and the Arabian Peninsula consistently increased.[30] Centralization attempts meant that the Ottoman government could impose its governmentality into the region.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Through centralization, the Ottoman administration intends to access direct control while extrapolating human and nonhuman resources of the region. With the declaration of the Tanzimat Decree (1839–1876), which aimed to modernize the administrative, institutional, and legal structure of the empire while increasing the political participation of subjects, the abolishment of the Soran dynasty in Rewanduz, the destruction of Babanzadeler of Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq, and the destruction of the Kurdish Emirate of Botan in 1846 in Cezire, the Ottoman central government completed the *conquest* of Kurdistan.[31] In the imperial capital, the reconquest was understood as a historical victory, and medallions were handed to all high-ranking military and civil officials.[32] Meanwhile, Sultan Abdülmecid (1839–1861 r.) received the title of the *True Conqueror of Kurdistan* (*Kürdistan'ın Fatih-i Hakikisi*).[33] The celebrations marking the moment of reconquest enabled the subjugation of Kurdistan's geography which was now ready for the application of Tanzimat reforms. The reorganization of the provincial administration; the establishment of local councils; reforms in taxation, conscription, education, and land ownership; and the establishment of revolutionary telegraph technology were some of the policies implemented in the region. At the time, the institutional capacity of the state increased across Ottoman Kurdistan despite financial difficulties, lack of trained bureaucrats, and poor infrastructure.[34]

With the demise of these hereditary rulers, major socioeconomic and political changes occurred across the region. Some scholars, including Martin van Bruinessen and Sabri Ateş, have argued that this process triggered the atomization of Kurdish society in the region. According to economic historian Veli Yadırgı, the demise of the Kurdish hereditary rulers and the "centralist restructuring of the Ottoman Empire" caused an "immense insecurity" in Ottoman Kurdistan.[35] Furthermore, Ateş and Janet Klein identify this process as retribalization of Kurdish society. According to van Bruinessen, the demise of Kurdish hereditary rulers triggered fundamental social and political changes in the region. Van Bruinessen has argued that—with the demise of the Kurdish hereditary rulers—the tribal elites, landlords, and religious Sheiks began to consolidate their authority by filling the existing power vacuum in the region.[36] As they gained more and more power, these new elites began to suppress peasants and other pastoralist groups to gain economic benefits and political power while registering large quantities of land in their name after the declaration of the Ottoman Land Code (*Arazi Kanunnamesi*) in 1858.[37] The changing power dynamics and land ownership would also have short- and long-term impacts on the regional economy, labor relations, and property ownership.

As will be shown in the next section, besides political and institutional changes, social, technological, and, most importantly, environmental transformations have contributed to the economic decline of the region. On a global scale, as has been underlined, the opening of the Suez Canal directed the trade between the Mediterranean- and Indian Ocean World from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea and thus diminished the importance of long-distance overland routes while increasing the economic power of sea routes. For Kurdistan, the opening of the Suez Canal impacted the long-distance overland merchant caravans which were historically supplied by pastoralists speaking Arabic, Kurdish, or Turkish who were providing security, carriage, food, and draft animals to caravanners. This situation meant economic weaning for the historical entrepôts like Diyarbekir in Kurdistan, Aleppo in Syria, and Mosul and Baghdad in Iraq.[38] On a regional scale, on the other hand, the extreme drought and severe cold episodes of 1879, 1880, 1887–1889, and 1891–1893

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

instigated a fundamental decline in animal husbandry and related economic activities, including livestock trade, meat and dairy produce, wool and mohair production, tanning industry, and manufacturing.[39]

After the abolishment of the Kurdish hereditary rulers, the next transformation was the forced sedentarization (*iskan* in Ottoman Turkish) of pastoralists. With the declaration of the Tanzimat Fermanı, the reform movement in 1839, and the expansion of the state institutions in the provinces, the state capacity increased across the region. Growing state capacity meant that the state was able to resettle the region's mobile nomadic communities. The resettlement of pastoralists, of course, was not a unique Ottoman policy that was implemented in Kurdistan. The Ottoman administration implemented similar policies and approaches toward the other nomadic groups in Anatolia, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen.[40] As has been shown by historian Yonca Köksal, the Ottoman administration followed two major approaches in order to resettle nomads; the first one was negotiation and mediation.[41] Here, the state contacted the leaders of the nomadic confederations to encourage them to resettle and began to cultivate the land which would increase agricultural revenues for the empire's central treasury. Mediation and negotiations consolidated social hierarchies among the pastoralists as the Ottoman state directly contacted their elites rather than encouraging the other members of the community. When mediation did not work and pastoralists resisted the resettlement, coercion became the fundamental apparatus of the state.[42] In Kurdistan, both policies—mediation and coercion—were implemented. Different pastoralist groups were encouraged to resettle in different parts of the region as the Ottoman administration distributed gifts and titles to the leaders of their communities as incentives. According to historian Yener Koç, while mediation and gifting practices were very common on the eastern frontier of Kurdistan, coercion and violence were more commonly implemented in the central and southern portions of the region.[43] This included consistent distribution of titles, gifts, and, most importantly, the provision of monthly salaries to the nomadic leaders to solidify their loyalty and encourage them to resettle in the region.[44]

In frontiers like Kurdistan where local dynasties, urban notables, and pastoralist leaders coexisted and interacted with neighboring imperial powers, the Ottoman state followed a strategic policy to manage power dynamics while implementing the reforms. With the abolishment of local chief dynasties, the state turned to the sedentarization of Kurdish-speaking pastoralists who had been perceived as a source of public disorder, underdevelopment, economic destruction, and generally the archenemy of the peasants, the main group of taxpayers and supplier of conscription. However, sedentarization was not an easy process, as pastoralist leaders expanded their hegemony and became more significant political actors in the region after the abolishment of Kurdish hereditary dynasties.[45] The hilly and mountainous geography of the region, its poor infrastructure, the growing power of pastoralists, and their intertwined relations with the other imperial powers challenged the policy of sedentarization. In areas like central Anatolia and Cilicia, inhabited by large pastoral nomadic confederations, the reformist central government employed both mediation and coercion strategies.[46] Coercion or mediation was determined not only in response to whether pastoralists had resisted but also by examining their geographic environment and hierarchical structure. According to Yonca Köksal, coercion was used for the pastoralists scattered in a mountainous geography who had a more egalitarian social structure, while mediation was implemented for groups that were geographically concentrated and had greater hierarchical social

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

structures.[47] The Ottomans applied similar tactics in Kurdistan.[48] The resettlement was critical for revenues, conscription, political control, and surveillance. To encourage pastoralists leaders to resettlement, the state suborned them with honorific titles, expensive gifts, political positions, monthly salaries, and land titles in the years following the Ottoman Land Code of 1858.[49] This was a win-win situation: The leaders consolidated their political and economic hegemony over their nomadic confederations, while the Ottomans increased political control over the human and nonhuman resources of Kurdistan.

The Years of Crises and Violence

In Kurdistan, the last quarter of the 19th century was defined by crisis triggered by the Ottoman-Russian War, drought, severe cold, harvest failure, loss of animals, disease, famine, migration, conflict, and intercommunal violence. While the region was ravaged by war in 1878 that resulted in migration and economic crisis, a series of environmental disasters began to appear in the region. Starting with a very strong episode of drought in 1879 which was continued with a severe cold spell in the winter and spring of 1880, Kurdistan was devastated with a series of environmental crises that repeated every five or six years, in the last two decades of the 19th century. The short- and long-term implications of these crises for state, society, economy, and communal relations transformed the history of late Ottoman Kurdistan in multiple ways. This part of the article will first analyze the character of such environmental crises, their timing, and their short- and long-term implications for agricultural production, animal husbandry, and the volume of trade in the region. Then it will examine Ottoman policies in times of environmental disasters and their implications for agriculturalists and their agrarian economy. The third and last portion will map out the web of relations between Ottoman provisions and the environmental crises.

In the 19th century, across Asia, Southern Africa, and Latin America, a series of climatic anomalies have occurred. These anomalies—associated with El Niño Southern Oscillation, a climatic phenomena impacting global atmospheric circulation triggers the occurrence of drought and cold episodes in various parts of the globe—have caused harvest failure, animal mortality, the rise of food prices, migration, and famine across the globe.[50] In Kurdistan, El Niño–related climatic fluctuations caused the occurrence of extreme drought and severe cold events in 1844–1846, 1879–1880, 1887–1889, and 1891–1894.[51] These climatic fluctuations caused harvest failure, shortage of grasslands, rise of food prices, loss of animals, famine, migration, and eventually death of people.[52] In 1879, severe drought resulted in a complete harvest failure, increasing food prices tremendously. The British Vice-Consul Captain Emilius EmiliusClayton's analysis from October 1879, while located on the borderland with Qajar Iran, demonstrates the rate of increase in food prices in the early days of great famine in 1879–1880:

> The price of wheat in the market of Van is at present between three or four times the average price of the preceding five years. Previous to the war the price of wheat was between 25-30 piastres the chap, during the war the price rose very considerably, but last year it fell again to 40 piastres. Now, however, the price is 120 piastres the chap.[53]

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

As widespread famine increased the level of anxiety and social tension across Kurdistan, many peasants abandoned their native lands in search of food. By the spring of 1880, as depicted in figure 4, the city of Diyarbekir, was hosting thousands of starving people as local administrators, the representers of the European consuls, and missionary organizations were feeding them with rations of soup and bread. In fact, the drawing in figure 4, which shows a group of starving peasants — marked with number 3—from the province of Van, located over 300 kilometers northeast of Diyarbekir, illustrates the severity of the famine in 1880. Despite these humanitarian efforts, about ten thousand people died of famine while many others suffered from malnutrition-related illness.[54]

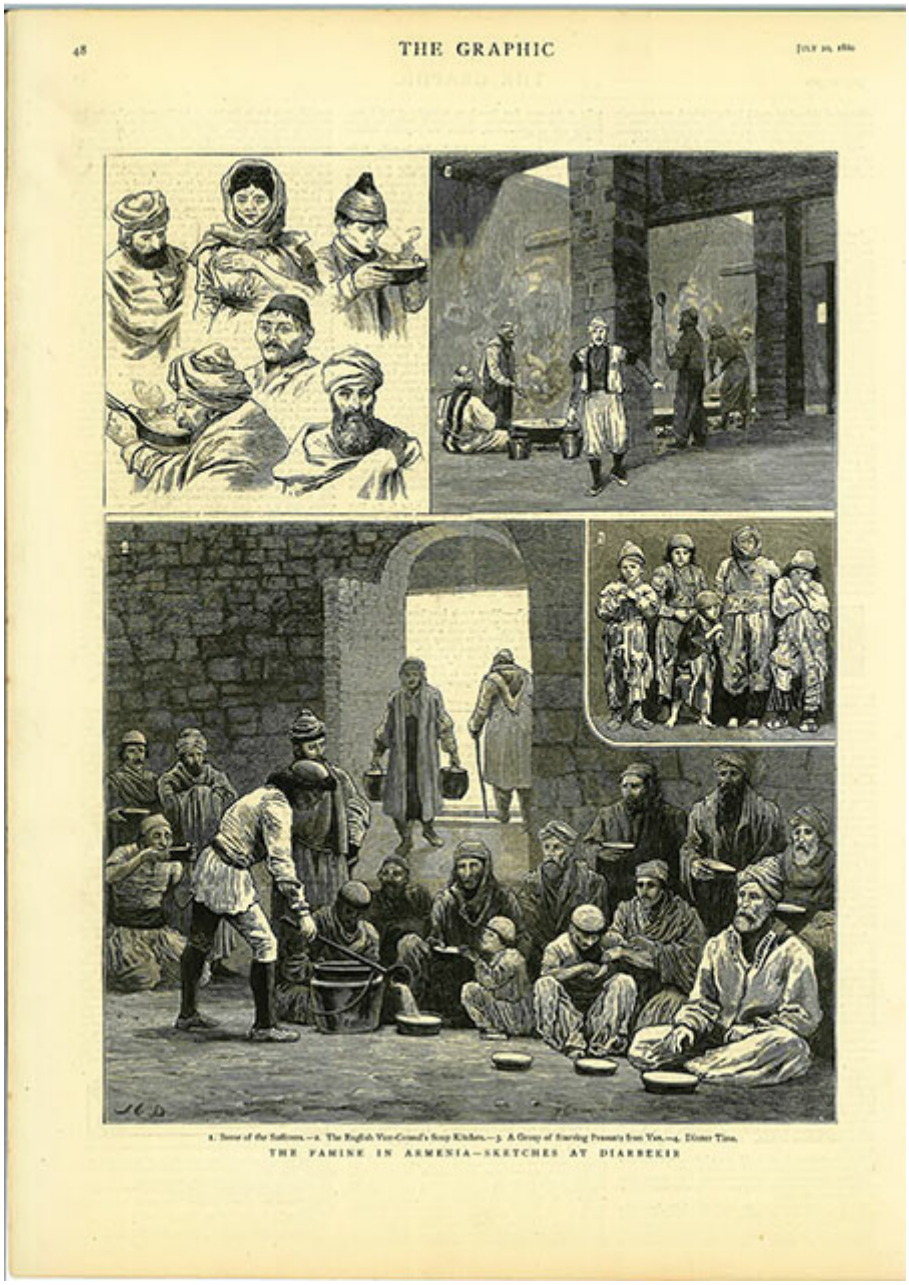

Figure 4. A soup kitchen in Diyarbekir during the Great Famine in 1880.

Source: *The Graphic*, July 10, 1880. Courtesy of author's archive.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Climate fluctuations affected not only humans but also animals, both domesticated and wild. In Kurdistan, the rate of death among the livestock population was extremely high. In some parts of the region, particularly in southern and eastern provinces, the rate of death among sheep and goats was more than 50 and 70 percent, respectively.[55] The high mortality rate was the most immediate consequence of climate fluctuations among herd animals. There were other short- and long-term consequences as well. Historical documents provide detailed explanations in considering the diverse effects of drought and cold spells on the livestock population of the region. Accordingly, the very strong drought of 1879 caused major shortages in water and grasses, resulting in malnourished livestock which would have direct effects on the next generation of herd animals as young and pregnant ones became more susceptible to zoonotic diseases. Since the density and frequency of these climatic episodes were excessive, the recovery process for livestock and their owners became more and more difficult as herd animals needed longer time, usually between eight and ten years depending on the rate of loss, to reach their pre-crises figures.[56]

Peasants constituted the majority of the empire's taxpayers, so in times of environmental disasters, the Ottoman government prioritized peasants over pastoralists by implementing various relief policies, including the distribution of seeds, to the ones in need, postponing their taxes, uplifting import tariffs on grains, and so on. In addition to the classic principles of Ottoman *provisionism*,[57] with the growth of the institutional capacity of the state and changes in transportation and communication technology, the structure of Ottoman relief programs changed and the number of relief methods multiplied by the sceond half of the nineteenth century. At the time, in addition to implementing historical policies of seed distribution and postponement of taxes, the state began to implement a new policy by providing agricultural loans to peasants in need with very low-interest rates through the Agricultural Bank (*Ziraat Bankası*), established in 1888.[58] Thanks to these loans, peasants not only were able to purchase seed to sow their farms after consuming their seed during the crisis but also could replace their draft animals that either were sold or died during the environmental devastations. Historical studies indicate that, during periods of environmental stress, the Ottoman peasantry either slaughtered their animals to supply themselves or sold them before the livestock starved to death. In this regard, the low-interest loans were extremely important for peasants to recover their loss, during and after environmental disasters. This situation meant the occurrence of a divergence in Ottoman relief efforts.

As has been stated, the state's priority was to keep existing peasants on their land while consistently trying to resettle more pastoral nomads in order to put more land under cultivation and increase imperial revenues. While the state provided relief measures for peasants, it did not offer any aid to the region's pastoralists. As a result, hungry people resorted to plundering grain shipments on the Tigris or traveling to major administrative cities in search of food. Some pastoralists took a different approach, which eventually led to the spread of slow violence across Ottoman Kurdistan. According to environmental historian Zozan Pehlivan, stealing peasants' livestock, looting granaries, grazing starving animals on peasants' farmlands, and competing with peasants for available pastures were the major contributors to slow violence[59] in late Ottoman Kurdistan.[60] Despite the state's neglect of the pastoralists' suffering during times of environmental stress, the Ottoman administration implemented a new policy to control Kurdistan's pastoralists. In 1891, Sultan Abdulhamid II and his administration established a new paramilitary force, known as Hamidiye Light Cavalry Regiments

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

(*Hamidiye Alayları*), from the select Kurdish pastoralist groups, belonging to the Sunni sect of Islam.[61] This preference could be interpreted as part of Abdulhamid II's larger ideological agenda. As has been shown by Ottoman historians, the Sultan was very keen to turn the so-called "heretic"[62] communities of the Ottoman Empire, particularly Alevis and Yezidis, into Sunni Muslim subjects.[63] On one hand, the establishment of these paramilitary units would serve Abdulhamid's pan-Islamist policy, aiming to unify the Muslims of the world as a Caliph[64]; on the other hand, they would increase the integration of Kurdish people—whose ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identities were different from those of Turks—to the Ottoman Empire.[65] Besides these political and ideological purposes, the state had some practical objectives to accomplish. According to historian Janet Klein, the control of eastern borderlands was one of the main reasons behind the establishment of Hamidian regiments. With their physical abilities and local and geographic knowledge, Kurdish pastoralists would be the perfect military force to sustain absolute control of the borders. There was another important factor perhaps that encouraged the establishment of these regiments: the activities of the Armenian revolutionary movement among the Armenian peasants in the region and the fear of an independent Armenia in Kurdistan. As a result of these political fears, anxieties, and ideological pragmatism, Abdulhamid II turned the select Kurdish pastoralist groups into the state's paramilitary forces while furnishing them with uniforms, salary, gifts, arms, exemptions from taxes and conscription, and, most importantly, exclusion from the jurisdiction of civil courts and provincial administers as they were obliged only to the fourth Army and its commander, Zeki Pasha.[66]

In Kurdistan, the militarization of select Kurdish pastoralists increased the level of socioeconomic and political tension in the region. With the combined effects of the environmental crises that triggered struggles to access limited natural resources, including animals, pastures, and water, and thus caused major deteriorations in the region since 1879, the level of social anxiety tripled. Furthermore, as has been argued by scholars, Abdulhamid II's ideological motivations and political anxieties toward the rise of an independent Armenia in the heart of Ottoman Kurdistan influenced his governing practices in the late 19th century.[67] To increase the control and surveillance capacity of his administration, for example, the sultan directed available resources into the development of transportation and communication technology. As argued by Bahadır Çelebi, Abdulhamid II used the telegraph line as a technology of surveillance, supplied by the thousands of informers (*hafiye* in Turkish) in the peripheries of the empire.[68] On the provincial level, the economic motivations of Muslim businessmen, landlords, and notables against growing Armenian bourgeoisie and entrepreneurs created a perfect storm for the rise of an orchestrated violent series of pogroms, known as the Hamidian Massacres of 1894–1896, targeting Ottoman Armenians across the empire.[69] Since Armenians constituted a considerable portion of the population of Ottoman Kurdistan, thousands of Armenians in rural and urban areas of the region were killed while their houses, shops, churches, and schools were plundered and burned down.[70] It is important to note that the plunderers were a mix of urban and rural Muslim elites, landlords, and commoners motivated by economic, political, and ideological interests. Although some members of the Hamidiye Light Cavalry participated in the anti-Armenian pogroms, others, like the head of the Milli Kurds, Ibrahim Pasha, rescued thousands of Armenians in the vicinity of the Diyarbekir province while thousands of Armenian-owned shops, industrial workshops, and houses were plundered, and people inside were killed, and set on fire in the city of Diyarbekir.[71] The account of

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Catholic priest Habib Jarwe demonstrates the brutal violence and the targeting of Armenian-owned shops in the city of Diyarbekir. According to Jarwe, "all of Diyarbekir became a giant oven."[72] Similar looting, plundering, burning, and murdering pogroms occurred in the other major provinces of Kurdistan, including Bitlis, Erzurum, Harput, and Van, and their vicinities.[73]

The anti-Armenian pogroms of 1894–1896 were a form of violence undertaken by almost every segment of the Muslim population that had joined mob groups to gain social, political, and, most importantly, economic benefits. In this regard, prominent urban and rural figures, Kurdish pastoralists, Ottoman officials, and ordinary masses became part of this collective violence. As has been shown by historians, almost all of the pogroms were orchestrated by prominent Muslim individuals, such as urban notables, landlords, local officials, military personnel, and judges.[74] Indeed, it was these local figures who encouraged Kurdish pastoralists to organize their attacks and kill the Armenians and "promised them to give necessary weapons."[75] The position of Hamidiye regiments and their role in the spread of violence were also very critical. Although some members of Hamidian regiments, such as the cavalry units under the leadership of Milli Ibrahim Pasha of Viranşehir, protected the Armenians in their vicinities, some other regiments played a vigorous role in the Armenian pogroms.[76] The monetary benefits of looting, and confiscation of Armenian land and livestock, were important motivating factors for them to commit this violence. The massacres resulted in mass murder, immeasurable economic loss, and the destruction of Armenian material culture in the region. It also created a large wound marking intercommunal relationships between diverse ethnoreligious communities in the region that continued into the early 20th century. The beginning of the First World War and the subsequent Armenian Genocide by the nationalist government in 1915 transformed the demography, economy, culture, and environment of Kurdistan. The Armenian Genocide not only caused a demographic decline across Ottoman Kurdistan. As has been shown by Uğur Ümit Üngör, social and intellectual capital, knowledge production, and skilled labor tremendously declined after the Armenian Genocide.[77] The expulsion of hundreds of thousands of industrious, urbanized, educated, and agrarian Armenians brought decades of poverty, desperation, and underdevelopment whose implications are still apparent in Turkey's Kurdish provinces.

A Continuity from Empire to Republic

In Ottoman Kurdistan, the 19th century began with the encroachment of the state through centralization policies that would trigger a series of sociopolitical changes, including the demise of Kurdish hereditary rulers, the application of Tanzimat reforms, the establishment of provincial and urban assemblies, and forced sedentarization of pastoralists. Though the implications of these policies varied across the region, they have left significant marks on Kurdistan's political, social, economic, and environmental fabric. As has been shown, agriculture and animal husbandry constituted the major sectors of the region's economy. Under the usual climatic circumstances, the regional economy flourished. In the 1850s and 1860s, in Kurdistan, the volume of export trade grew remarkably as England, France, and Austria began to substitute American cotton with wool and

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

mohair during the American Civil War. In addition to livestock trade with Egypt and Syria, a large flow of cash was conveyed to the hands of residents, mainly entrepreneurs and pastoralists, the chief livestock breeder, and main producers of wool and mohair.[78]

The 1870s global financial crisis, the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877–1878, and the occurrence of a series of major drought and severe cold episodes during the last two decades of the 19th century transformed the region's economic, political, and environmental conditions. The harvest failure, dried pasturelands, loss of millions of livestock, and widespread famine caused migration, abandoned villages, socioeconomic anxiety, and tension. While the region was experiencing the fourth wave of climatic fluctuations in 1891–1894, the Ottoman administration under Sultan Abdulhamid II implemented a new policy by recruiting select Kurdish pastoralist groups into paramilitary regiments, giving them ammunition, legitimacy, and state impunity for their violence. These groups then participated in diverse forms of coercive violence—including kidnapping; murdering; plundering farms, houses, and tents; and confiscating peasants' and pastoralists' livestock. Such events became part of the everyday life of Kurdistan's residents in the last decade of the 19th century. Furthermore, the level of such violent events was transformed with the organization of pogroms against the Armenians in 1894–1896.

The pogroms of 1894–1896 wrecked the historically renowned multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual, and diverse world of Ottoman Kurdistan. The bloody violence, plunder, and looting organized by Turkish and Kurdish speakers of the region against their Armenian neighbors spelled the end of an earlier history of coexistence in the mountains, pastures, and plains of Kurdistan. As in other parts of the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East, the 20th century would begin with crisis and violence that represented the culmination of tension that had been accumulating in the last quarter of the 19th century.

The Armenian Genocide of 1915, demographic destruction of Armenians in their historical homeland, the loss of the Great War, and the emergence of a nation-state in Turkey compounded the major sociopolitical and economic problems of the 19th-century Ottoman Empire. In spite of a top-down nation-state-building process—involving assimilative policies and demographic engineering—the Kurdish question continues to be the major political problem of early 21st-century Turkey. The Kurdish Freedom Movement and its claims for sovereignty and territorial or regional autonomy for Kurdish provinces cannot be grasped without an understanding of the consequences of the abolishment of Kurdish hereditary rulers and *atomization*[79] of Kurdish society in the 19th century. Furthermore, in spite of its abundant natural resources, fertile land, fresh water, and mines, Turkey's Kurdish area is the most underdeveloped region of the country . The Armenian Genocide in 1915, the forced sedentarization of the pastoralists and various campaigns of population removals in the 1920s and 1930s left the region in poverty and embedded forms of violent disparities that are visible in every aspect of life in the region.[80] To understand the region in the early 21st century, it is necessary to grasp its transformation in the 19th century.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Discussion of the Literature

Historiographically, Ottoman Kurdistan is one of the most understudied geographies of the Ottoman Empire. This neglect is mainly associated with two historical phenomena: the Armenian Genocide and the Kurdish question in modern Turkey. For decades, these politically sensitive subjects prevented scholars from working on the social, economic, cultural, and political history of early modern or modern Ottoman Kurdistan. This politically motivated understanding of historical writing has also influenced the development of a particular type of scholarship that examined the history of this portion of the Ottoman Empire in the context of violence against Armenians in the 1890s and the Armenian Genocide in 1915. Interestingly, this scholarship has examined the intercommunal violence between Kurdish- and Armenian-speaking inhabitants of the region through sectarian and ethnoreligious lenses or inherently "violent," "uncivilized" mobile pastoralists' hatred against sedentary and civilized agrarian communities.[81] While focusing on the political motivations of the Ottoman administration and the days of pogroms and how they took place, this scholarship did not explain the socioeconomic and environmental conditions of the region prior to the pogroms. Furthermore, such neglect, on the other hand, has consistently perpetuated elusive typologies and racist societal characterizations of Kurdish-speaking people of the region. However, a new generation of historians began to challenge this conventional grand narrative of Kurdistan by focusing on the everyday lives of its people, their socioeconomic and cultural interactions, intercommunal relations, economic production, property relations, and the environment.[82] This new scholarship suggests that sectarianism, nationalism, and civilizing discourse against Kurdish-speaking Muslims in general and the pastoralists in particular was not the primary factor influencing intercommunal relations or ethno-religious violence. The modern history of Kurdistan or the "Ottoman East," with its diverse social, cultural, linguistic, economic, and environmental aspects, is more complex than has been depicted by conventional narrative and requires a comprehensive analysis to understand the roots of violence between Armenian- and Kurdish-speaking people and the involvement of Ottoman states.

Links to Digital Material

Houshamadyan *<https://www.houshamadyan.org/introduction/what-is-houshamadyan.html>*

Istanbul University Rare Book Library Collection *<http://katalog.istanbul.edu.tr/client/tr_TR/default_tr/search/results?te=&lm=IUNEK>*

Kurdish Digital Library of Kurdish Institute of Paris

Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives *<https://projectsave.catalogaccess.com/>*

United Kingdom, Foreign Office: Confidential Print Turkey 1841–1957 records *<https://archive.org/details/turkey-1841-1957/FO%20424_1/>*

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Further Reading

Ade, Mafalda. “Diyarbekir in the Late Ottoman Period from the Perspective of Foreign Merchants in Aleppo.” In *Osmanlı `dan Cumhuriyet `e Diyarbakır*, edited by Bahaeddin Yediyildiz and Kerstin Tomenendal, Vol. I, 211–221. Turkey, Ankara: Türk Kültürü`nü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 2008.

Ahmed, Abdel Ghaffar M., et al. *Post-Drought Recovery Strategies among the Pastoral Households in the Horn of Africa: A Review*. Ethiopia, Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa, 2002.

Ateş, Sabri. *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Atmaca, Metin. “Politics of Alliance and Rivalry on the Ottoman-Iranian Frontier: The Babans (1500–1851).” PhD diss., Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, 2013.

Aykan, Yavuz. “On the Legal Status of Yezidis: Law, Geography and Confession-Building in Early Modern Kurdistan (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries).” In *Entangled Confessionalizations? Dialogic Perspectives on the Politics of Piety and Community Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–18th Centuries*, edited by Tijana Krstic and Derin Terzioglu, 673–700. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2022.

Balakian, Peter. *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response*. New York: Harper Collins, 2003.

Barkan, Ömer Lütfi. “Türk Toprak Hukuku Tarihinde Tanzimat ve 1274 (1858) Tarihli Arazi Kanunnamesi.” In *Türkiye’de Toprak Meselesi*, ed. Ömer Lütfi Barkan, 291–392. Istanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1980.

Blench, Roger, and Zoë Marriage. *Drought and Livestock in Semi-Arid Africa and Southwest Asia* [Working Paper, 117]. London: Overseas Development Institute, March 1999.

Bloxham, Donald. “The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1916: Cumulative Radicalization and the Development of a Destruction Policy.” *Past & Present*, no. 181 (2003): 141–191.

Bruinessen, Martin van. *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*. London: Zed, 1992.

Çeker, Orhan. *Arazî Kanunnâmesi*. Istanbul: Ebru Yayınları, 1985.

Çelebi, Bahadır. “Osmanlı Devleti’nin Merkezileşmesinde Telgrafın Rolü: 1855–1909.” PhD diss., Istanbul üniversitesi, 2020.

Çetinsaya, Gökhan. “Abdülhamid Döneminde Kuzey Irak`da Tarikat, Aşiret ve Siyaset.” *Divan İlmi Araştırmalar*, no. 7 (1999): 153–168.

Çetinsaya, Gökhan. *The Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890–1908*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Ceylan, Ebubekir. *Ottoman Centralization and Modernization in the Province of Baghdad, 1831–1872*. Bogazici University Press, 2006.

Cheterian, Vicken. *Open Wounds: Armenians, Turks and a Century of Genocide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Çiçek, M. Talha. *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East: Ottomans and Arab Nomads in the Modern Era, 1840–1914*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Çiftçi, Erdal. “Fragile Alliances in the Ottoman East: The Heyderan Tribe and the Empire, 1820–1929.” PhD diss., Bilkent University, 2018.

Çizakca, Murat. “Tax-Farming and Financial Decentralization in the Ottoman Economy, 1520–1697.” *Journal of European Economic History* 22, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 219.

Cole, Camille Lyans. “Precarious Empires: A Social and Environmental History of Steam Navigation on the Tigris.” *Journal of Social History* 50, no. 1 (2016): 71–101.

Cora, Yaşar Tolga. “Transforming Erzurum/Karin: The Social and Economic History of a Multi-Ethnic Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century.” PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2016.

Cora, Yaşar Tolga, Dzovinar Derderian, and Ali Sipahi, eds. *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2016.

Dadrian, Vahakn N. *Warrant for Genocide: Key Elements of Turko-Armenian Conflict*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999.

Dadrian, Vahakn N. “The 1894 Sassoun Massacre: A Juncture in the Escalation of the Turko-Armenian Conflict.” *Armenian Review* 47, nos. 1–2 (2001): 5–39.

Davis, Mike. *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*. London: Verso, 2001.

Der Matossian, Bedross. *The Horrors of Adana: Revolution and Violence in the Early Twentieth Century*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022.

Der Matossian, Bedross. “The Ottoman Massacres of Armenians, 1894–1896 and 1909.” In *Cambridge World History of Genocide*, Vol. II, edited by Ned Backhawk et al., 609–633. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

Der Matossian, Bedross. “The Taboo within the Taboo: The Fate of ‘Armenian Capital’ at the End of the Ottoman Empire *<https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.4411>*.” *European Journal of Turkish Studies: Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey* (2011).

Derderian, Dzovinar. “Nation-Making and the Language of Colonialism: Voices from Ottoman Van in Armenian Print Media and Handwritten Petitions (1820s to 1870s).” PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2019.

Deringil, Selim. “Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdulhamid II (1876–1909).” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23, no. 3 (1991): 345–359.

Deringil, Selim. *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1908*. London: I. B. Tauris, 1998.

Deringil, Selim. “‘The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed’: Mass Conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895–1897.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 2 (2009): 344–371.

Dolbee, Samuel. *Locusts of Power: Borders, Empire, and Environment in the Modern Middle East*. Studies in Environment and History. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Duguid, Stephen. “The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 9, no. 2 (1973): 139–155.

Eldem, Edhem. “‘Banka Vakası’ ve 1896 İstanbul Katliamı.” In *1915: Siyaset, Tehcir, Soykırım*, edited by Fikret Adanır and Oktay Özel, 176–198. Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015.

Eppel, Michael. “The Demise of the Kurdish Emirates: The Impact of Ottoman Reforms and International Relations on Kurdistan during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 2 (2008): 237–258.

Ertem, Özge. “Önce Ekmekler Bozuldu: 1880 Diyarbakır Ekmek İsyani.” *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 194 (February 2010): 74–79.

Ertem, Özge. “Sick Man of Asia Minor in an Ailing Empire: Famine, Villagers and Government in Missionary Accounts (1873–1875).” *International Review of Turkish Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 72–94.

Fattah, Hala. *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745–1900*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997.

Gaunt, David. “Two Documents on the 1895 Massacres of Syriacs in the Province of Diyarbekir: A Discussion.” *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines* 10 (2018): 187–201.

Genç, Mehmet. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Devlet ve Ekonomi*. İstanbul: Ötüken, 2000.

Gölbaşı, Edip. “Turning the ‘Heretics’ into Loyal Muslim Subjects: Imperial Anxieties, the Politics of Religious Conversion, and the Yezidis in the Hamidian Era.” *Muslim World* 103, no. 1 (2013): 3–23.

Gölbaşı, Edip. “1895–1896 Katliamları: Doğu Vilayetlerinde Cemaatler Arası ‘Şiddet İklimi’ ve Ermeni Karşıtı Ayaklanmalar.” In *1915: Siyaset, Tehcir ve Soykırım*, edited by Fikret Adanır and Oktay Özel, 140–163. Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015.

Gölbaşı, Edip. “The Official Conceptualization of the Anti-Armenian Riots of 1895–1897: Bureaucratic Terminology, Official Ottoman Narrative, and Discourses of Revolutionary Provocation.” *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines*, no. 10 (2018): 33–62.

Gözel, Oya. “The Implementation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 in Eastern Anatolia.” Master thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2007.

Gratien, Chris. *The Unsettled Plain: An Environmental History of the Late Ottoman Frontier*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022.

Hovannisian, Richard G., ed. *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998.

Husain, Faisal. *Rivers of the Sultan: The Tigris and Euphrates in the Ottoman Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

İbrahim Yılmazçelik. “Yüzyıl Ile XIX: Yüzyılın Ilk Yarısında Diyarbakır Eyaletinin İdari Yapısı ve İdari Teşkilatlanması.” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 18, no. 29 (1996): 217–232.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Jongerden, Joost. “Elite Encounters of a Violent Kind: Milli İbrahim Paşa, Ziya Gökalp and Political Struggle in Diyarbekir at the Turn of the 20th Century.” In *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870–1915*, edited by Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij, 55–84. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012.

Jongerden, Joost, and Jelle Verheij, eds. *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870–1915*. Vol. 51. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012.

Karaman, Oktay. *Hatunoğlu Kurt İsmail Hakkı Paşa’nın Diyarbekir Valiliği*. Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitisu, 1999.

Karaman, Oktay. “Diyarbakır Valisi Hatunoğlu Kurt İsmail Paşa’nın Diyarbakır’daki Aşiretleri Islah ve Iskan Çalışması (1868–1875).” *History Studies: International Journal of History* 4 (2012): 227–249.

Kardam, Ahmet. *Cizre—Bohtan Beyi Bedirhan: Direniş ve İsyan Yılları*. Turkey, Ankara: Dipnot, 2011.

Klein, Janet. *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011.

Koç, Yener. “Nomadic Pastoral Tribes at the Intersection of the Ottoman, Persian, and Russian Empires (1820s–1890s).” PhD diss., Boğaziçi University, 2020.

Koç, Yener. “A Tribal Confederation at the Intersection of the Ottoman, Russian and Qajar Empires: The Zilan Confederation and the Empires (1810–1860).” *Middle Eastern Studies* 59, no. 2 (2023): 181–198.

Kodaman, Bayram. “Hamîdiye Hafîf Süvarî Alayları (2. Abdülhamîd ve Doğu-Anadolu Aşiretleri).” *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, no. 32 (1979): 427–480.

Köksal, Yonca. “Local Intermediaries and Ottoman State Centralization: A Comparison of the Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Ankara and Edirne (1839–1878).” PhD diss., Columbia University, 2002.

Köksal, Yonca. “Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 3 (May 2006): 469–491.

Köksal, Yonca. *The Ottoman Empire in the Tanzimat Era: Provincial Perspectives from Ankara to Edirne*. London: Routledge, 2019.

Köksal Özyaşar, Yonca and Can Nacar. *Anatolian Livestock Trade in the Late Ottoman Empire*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2024.

Kuehn, Thomas. *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849–1919*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011.

Lewis, Pauline Lucy. “Wired Ottomans: A Sociotechnical History of the Telegraph and the Modern Ottoman Empire, 1855–1911.” PhD diss., University of California, 2018.

Li, Lillian M. *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market, and Environmental Decline, 1690s–1990s*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

McCabe, J. Terrence. “Drought and Recovery: Livestock Dynamics among the Ngisonyoka Turkana of Kenya.” *Human Ecology* 15, no. 4 (1987): 371–389.

McDowall, David. *A Modern History of the Kurds*. London: I. B. Tauris, 1996.

Melson, Robert. “A Theoretical Inquiry into the Armenian Massacres of 1894–1896.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, no. 3 (1982): 481–509.

Mikhail, Alan. *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Mikhail, Alan. “Unleashing the Beast: Animals, Energy, and the Economy of Labor in Ottoman Egypt.” *American Historical Review* 118, no. 2 (2013): 317–348.

Miller, Owen. “Sasun 1894: Mountains, Missionaries and Massacres at the End of the Ottoman Empire.” PhD diss., Columbia University, 2015.

Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Olson, Robert. *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989.

Ortaylı, İlber. “Yüzyıl Sonunda Suriye ve Lübnan Üzerinde Bazı Notlar.” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 4, no. 04 (1984): 89–113.

Ortaylı, İlber. *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*. 8th ed. İletişim Yayınları; Araştırma-İnceleme Dizisi, 565. 90. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Özbek, Nadir. “The Politics of Taxation and the ‘Armenian Question’ during the Late Ottoman Empire, 1876–1908.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 4 (2012): 770–797.

Özbek, Nadir. *İmparatorluğun Bedeli: Osmanlı’da Vergi, Siyaset ve Toplumsal Adalet (1839–1908)*. Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2015.

Özcoşar, İbrahim. *Merkezileşme Sürecinde Bir Taşra Kenti: Mardin, 1800–1900*. Turkey, Mardin: Artuklu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009.

Pamuk, Şevket. “The Ottoman Empire in the ‘Great Depression’ of 1873–1896.” *Journal of Economic History* 44, no. 1 (1984): 107–118.

Pamuk, Şevket. *Uneven Centuries: Economic Development of Turkey since 1820*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018.

Pehlivan, Zozan. “Abandoned Villages in Diyarbekir Province at the End of the ‘Little Ice Age’, 1800–1850.” In *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, edited by Ali Sipahi, Yasar Tolga Cora, and Dzovinar Derderian, 223–245. London: I. B. Tauris, 2016.

Pehlivan, Zozan. “El Niño and the Nomads: Global Climate, Local Environment, and the Crisis of the Pastoralism in Late Ottoman Kurdistan.” *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 63, no. 3 (2020): 316–356.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Pehlivan, Zozan. *The Political Ecology of Violence: Peasants and Pastoralists in the Last Ottoman Century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2024.

Polatel, Mehmet. *Armenians and Land Disputes in the Ottoman Empire, 1850–1914*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2025.

Polatel, Mehmet. "The Complete Ruin of a District: The Sasun Massacre of 1894." In *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian, and Ali Sipahi, 179–198. London: I. B. Tauris, 2016.

Polatel, Mehmet. "The Armenian Massacre of 1895 in Bitlis Town." *Kurdish Studies* 9, no. 1 (2021): 59–76.

Quataert, Donald. "Dilemma of Development: The Agricultural Bank and Agricultural Reform in Ottoman Turkey, 1888–1908." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6, no. 2 (1975): 210–227.

Quataert, Donald. *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution*. Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Quataert, Donald, ed. *Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500–1950*. SUNY Series in the Social and Economic History of the Middle East. Schoharie, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994.

Rogan, Eugene L. *Frontiers of State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Salzmann, Ariel. *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire: Rival Paths to the Modern State*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2004.

Sipahi, Ali. "Narrative Construction in the 1895 Massacres in Harput: The Coming and Disappearance of the Kurds." *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines*, no. 10 (2017): 63–96.

Tabak, Faruk. "Local Merchants in Peripheral Areas of the Empire: The Fertile Crescent during the Long Nineteenth Century." *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 11, no. 2 (1988): 179–214.

Tezcan, Baki. "The Development of the Use of 'Kurdistan' as a Geographical Description and the Incorporation of This Region into the Ottoman Empire in the 16th Century." In *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization*, edited by Kemal Çiçek, Vol. 3, 540–553. Turkey, Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000.

Toksöz, Meltem. *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Making of the Adana-Mersin Region, 1850–1908*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010.

Toulmin, Camilla. *Livestock Losses and Post-Drought Rehabilitation in Sub-Saharan Africa*. LPU Working Paper 9. Ethiopia, Addis Ababa: International Livestock Centre for Africa, 1985.

Ülke, Cemal. "Kürdistan Eyaleti'nin İdarî Yapisi (1847–1867)." Master thesis, Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi, 2014.

Üngör, Uğur Ümit. *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913–1950*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Verheij, Jelle. "Diyarbekir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895." In *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870–1915*, ed. Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij, 85–145. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Verheij, Jelle. "'The Year of the Firman': The 1895 Massacres in Hizan and Şirvan (Bitlis Vilayet)." *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines*, no. 10 (2017): 125–160.

Yadırgı, Veli. *The Political Economy of the Kurds of Turkey: From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Yılmazçelik, İbrahim. *Yüzyılın Ilk Yarısında Diyarbakır, 1790–1840: Fizikî, İdarî ve Sosyo-Ekonomik Yapı*. Turkey, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1995.

Notes

1. For a geographic, demographic, administrative, and political description of Kurdistan, see Erdal Çiftçi, "Fragile Alliances in the Ottoman East: The Heyderan Tribe and the Empire, 1820–1929" (PhD diss., Bilkent University, 2018), 53. For a debate over the description of Kurdistan as a space, see Baki Tezcan, "The Development of the Use of 'Kurdistan' as a Geographical Description and the Incorporation of This Region into the Ottoman Empire in the 16th Century," in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization*, ed. Kemal Çiçek, vol. 3 (Turkey, Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), 540–553.

2. Zozan Pehlivan, "El Niño and the Nomads: Global Climate, Local Environment, and the Crisis of the Pastoralism in Late Ottoman Kurdistan," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 63, no. 3 (2020): 316–356.

3. Pehlivan, "El Niño and the Nomads."

4. Pehlivan, "El Niño and the Nomads," 322–323.

5. İbrahim Yılmazçelik, *Yüzyılın Ilk Yarısında Diyarbakır, 1790–1840: Fizikî, İdarî ve Sosyo-Ekonomik Yapı* (Turkey, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1995); İbrahim Yılmazçelik, "Yüzyıl Ile XIX; Yüzyılın Ilk Yarısında Diyarbakır Eyaletinin İdari Yapısı ve İdari Teşkilatlanması," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 18, no. 29 (1996): 217–232; and Mafalda Ade, "Diyarbekir in the Late Ottoman Period from the Perspective of Foreign Merchants in Aleppo," in *Osmanlı `dan Cumhuriyet `e Diyarbakır*, ed. Bahaeddin Yediyildiz and Kerstin Tomenendal, vol. I, III vols. (Turkey, Ankara: Türk Kültürü `nü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 2008), 211–221.

6. Faruk Tabak, "Local Merchants in Peripheral Areas of the Empire: The Fertile Crescent during the Long Nineteenth Century," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 11, no. 2 (1988): 179–214.

7. Bahadır Çelebi, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Merkezileşmesinde Telgrafın Rolü: 1855–1909" (PhD diss., Istanbul üniversitesi, 2020); and Pauline Lucy Lewis, "Wired Ottomans: A Sociotechnical History of the Telegraph and the Modern Ottoman Empire, 1855–1911" (PhD diss., University of California, 2018).

8. Tabak, "Local Merchants in Peripheral."

9. Camille Lyans Cole, "Precarious Empires: A Social and Environmental History of Steam Navigation on the Tigris," *Journal of Social History* 50, no. 1 (2016): 71–101.

10. I borrow the term twin rivers from Faisal Husain, *Rivers of the Sultan: The Tigris and Euphrates in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

11. Zozan Pehlivan, *The Political Ecology of Violence: Peasants and Pastoralists in the Last Ottoman Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2024); and Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

12. According to official Ottoman Statistics for 1897, the approximate population of Ottoman Kurdistan—including Bitlis, Diyarbekir, Erzurum, Mamuretulaziz, and Van—was about 2,500,000 million individuals. Tevfik Güran, ed., *Osmanlı Devleti'nin ilk istatistik yıllığı, 1897* [The first statistical yearbook of the Ottoman Empire], vol. 5 (Turkey, Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 1997), 15–19. Pehlivan, "El Niño and the Nomads," 322. For a classic study on Ottoman population, see Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). For a critical analysis on the Ottoman population and the state's ideological motivation toward the census records, see Fuat Dündar, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question (1878–1918)* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010).

13. TNA, War Office (WO), 33/2761, 24 "Confidential: Military report on Mesopotamia (Iraq), Area 8 (Western Kurdistan) Compiled by the General Staff: British Forces in Iraq (1923)."

14. TNA, WO, 33/2761, 24.

15. Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), particularly the introduction and chapter 1. For the transformation in the ownership of animals to land, see Alan Mikhail, "Unleashing the Beast: Animals, Energy, and the Economy of Labor in Ottoman Egypt," *American Historical Review* 118, no. 2 (2013): 318.

16. Pehlivan, "El Niño and the Nomads," 330.

17. TNA: FO 195/799, no. 9, encl. 1., Constantinople, July 13, 1864, Taylor to Bulwer, "*Trade of Diarbekir and Koordistan for the year 1863*," dated Diarbekir, March 31, 1863. Cited in Pehlivan, "El Niño and the Nomads," 330; TNA: FO 195/799, no. 9, encl. 1., Constantinople, July 13, 1864 Taylor to Bulwer, "*Trade of Diarbekir and Koordistan for the Year 1863*," dated Diarbekir, March 31, 1863. Erzurum Vilayet Salnâmesi, Defa 6, sene 1292, 156–158.

18. Pehlivan, "Political Ecology of Violence," chap. 2. For a recent study on the livestock trade in Erzurum province, see Yonca Köksal Özyaşar and Can Nacar, *Anatolian Livestock Trade in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2024), 55–74.

19. TNA: FO 195/799, no. 9, encl. 1., Constantinople, July 13, 1864, Taylor to Bulwer.

20. For more on this subject, see Hala Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745–1900* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997).

21. TNA: FO 195/799, no. 9, encl. 1., Constantinople, July 13, 1864, Taylor to Bulwer.

22. Veli Yadırgı, *The Political Economy of the Kurds of Turkey: From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 141.

23. Şevket Pamuk, *Uneven Centuries: Economic Development of Turkey since 1820* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018); and Şevket Pamuk, "The Ottoman Empire in the 'Great Depression' of 1873–1896," *Journal of Economic History* 44, no. 1 (1984): 107–118.

24. TNA, WO 106/6246, 21

25. Donald Quataert, ed., *Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500–1950*, SUNY Series in the Social and Economic History of the Middle East (Schoharie: State University of New York Press, 1994), xxx.

26. Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 68.

27. TNA, WO, 33/2761, 24.

28. Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing*, 69.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

29. Ariel Salzmann, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire: Rival Paths to the Modern State* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2004); Selim Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdulhamid II (1876–1909)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23, no. 3 (1991): 345–359; Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1908* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998); İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, 8th ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001); Murat Cizakca, "Tax-Farming and Financial Decentralization in the Ottoman Economy, 1520–1697," *Journal of European Economic History* 22, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 219; Yonca Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 3 (May 2006): 469–491; Ebubekir Ceylan, *Ottoman Centralization and Modernization in the Province of Baghdad, 1831–1872* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2006); Nadir Özbek, "The Politics of Taxation and the 'Armenian Question' during the Late Ottoman Empire, 1876–1908," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 4 (2012): 770–797; and Çelebi, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin."

30. İlber Ortaylı, "Yüzyıl Sonunda Suriye ve Lübnan Üzerinde Bazı Notlar," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 04, no. 04 (1984): 89–113; Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); İbrahim Özcoşar, *Merkezileşme Sürecinde Bir Taşra Kenti: Mardin, 1800–1900* (Turkey, Mardin: Artuklu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009); and Gökhan Çetinsaya, *The Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890–1908* (London: Routledge, 2006).

31. Metin Atmaca, "Politics of Alliance and Rivalry on the Ottoman-Iranian Frontier: The Babans (1500–1851)" (PhD diss., Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, 2013); Ahmet Kardam, *Cizre—Bohtan Beyi Bedirhan: Direniş ve İsyan Yılları* (Turkey, Ankara: Dipnot, 2011); Michael Eppel, "The Demise of the Kurdish Emirates: The Impact of Ottoman Reforms and International Relations on Kurdistan during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 2 (2008): 237–258; Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed, 1992); and Stephen Duguid, "The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia," *Middle Eastern Studies* 9, no. 2 (1973): 139–155.

32. For an example of specially designed medallions for the reconquest of Kurdistan, see Cemal Ülke, "Kürdistan Eyaleti'nin İdarî Yapısı (1847–1867)" (master's thesis, Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi, 2014), 73.

33. Ülke, "Kürdistan Eyaleti'nin," 25, 69.

34. Nadir Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli: Osmanlı'da Vergi, Siyaset ve Toplumsal Adalet (1839–1908)* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2015); and Özbek, "Politics of Taxation."

35. Yadırgı, *Political Economy of the Kurds*.

36. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 216–235; David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 45–52. David McDowall would make a similar statement regarding the connection of between the demise of Kurdish rulers and the rise of religious sheikhs in the region.

37. For the implementation of the Land Code in the Ottoman Kurdistan and its consequences on the rise of large-scale land ownership in the region, see Oya Gözel, "The Implementation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 in Eastern Anatolia" (master thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2007); Orhan Çeker, *Arazî Kanunnâmesi* (Istanbul: Ebru Yayınları, 1985); Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 4–5; and Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Türk Toprak Hukuku Tarihinde Tanzimat ve 1274 (1858) Tarihli Arazi Kanunnamesi," in *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi*, ed. Ömer Lütfi Barkan (Turkey, Istanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1980), 291–392.

38. Tabak, "Local Merchants in Peripheral."

39. Pehlivan, "El Niño and the Nomads."

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

40. Samuel Dolbee, *Locusts of Power: Borders, Empire, and Environment in the Modern Middle East*, Studies in Environment and History (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2023); M. Talha Çiçek, *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East: Ottomans and Arab Nomads in the Modern Era, 1840–1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Oktay Karaman, "Diyarbakır Valisi Hatunoğlu Kurt İsmail Paşa'nın Diyarbakır'daki Aşiretleri Islah ve Iskan Çalışması (1868–1875)," *History Studies: International Journal of History* 4 (2012): 227–249; Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849–1919* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011); Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq*; and Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Abdülhamid Döneminde Kuzey Irak`da Tarikat, Aşiret ve Siyaset," *Divan İlmi Araştırmalar*, no. 7 (1999): 153–168.

41. Yonca Köksal, *The Ottoman Empire in the Tanzimat Era: Provincial Perspectives from Ankara to Edirne* (London: Routledge, 2019); and Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation."

42. Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation."

43. Yener Koç, "Nomadic Pastoral Tribes at the Intersection of the Ottoman, Persian, and Russian Empires (1820s–1890s)" (PhD diss., Boğaziçi University, 2020), 24, 296–297.

44. Koç, "Nomadic Pastoral," 24, 195, 232, 258; and Çiftçi, "Fragile Alliances in the Ottoman East."

45. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*.

46. Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation"; Yonca Köksal, "Local Intermediaries and Ottoman State Centralization: A Comparison of the Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Ankara and Edirne (1839–1878)" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2002); Chris Gratien, *The Unsettled Plain: An Environmental History of the Late Ottoman Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022); and Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Making of the Adana-Mersin Region, 1850–1908* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010).

47. Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation."

48. Koç, "Nomadic Pastoral Tribes"; Oktay Karaman, *Hatunoğlu Kurt İsmail Hakkı Paşa'nın Diyarbekir Valiliği* (Turkey, Erzurum, Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 1999); Çiftçi, "Fragile Alliances in the Ottoman East"; and Karaman, "Diyarbakır Valisi Hatunoğlu."

49. Yener Koç, "A Tribal Confederation at the Intersection of the Ottoman, Russian and Qajar Empires: The Zilan Confederation and the Empires (1810–1860)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 59, no. 2 (2023): 10–11.

50. Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001); and Lillian M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market, and Environmental Decline, 1690s–1990s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

51. Pehlivan, "El Niño and the Nomads."

52. TNA, A&P, 1880 [C.2537] Turkey. No. 4 (1880), Captain Everett to Major Trotter, Erzeroum, October 11, 1879; zilanli Kurds in Beyazid, Trotter to Salisbury, Erzeroum, November 1, 1879, 134–135.

53. TNA, A&P, 1880 [C.2537] Turkey. No. 4 (1880), Van, October 9, 1879, Captain Clayton to Major Trotter.

54. Özge Ertem, "Sick Man of Asia Minor in an Ailing Empire: Famine, Villagers and Government in Misionary Accounts (1873–1875)," *International Review of Turkish Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 72–94; and Özge Ertem, "Önce Ekmekler Bozuldu: 1880 Diyarbakır Ekmek İsyani," *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 194 (February 2010): 74–79.

55. Pehlivan, "Political Ecology of Violence," 136–178.

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

56. Camilla Toulmin, *Livestock Losses and Post-Drought Rehabilitation in Sub-Saharan Africa*, LPU Working Paper 9 (Ethiopia, Addis Ababa: International Livestock Centre for Africa (ILCA), 1985); J. Terrence McCabe, "Drought and Recovery: Livestock Dynamics among the Ngisonyoka Turkana of Kenya," *Human Ecology* 15, no. 4 (1987): 371–389; Roger Blench and Zoë Marriage, *Drought and Livestock in Semi-Arid Africa and Southwest Asia*, Working Paper (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1999); and Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed et al., *Post-Drought Recovery Strategies among the Pastoral Households in the Horn of Africa: A Review* (Ethiopia, Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa, 2002).

57. According to the economic historian Mehmet Genç, provisionism is one of the most important principles of the Ottoman economy. Genç defines provisionism as an economic policy that prioritizes supplying major commercial and administrative cities with food and raw materials for state-owned industries and initiatives. Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve Ekonomi* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2000).

58. For a short history of agricultural bank, see Donald Quataert, "Dilemma of Development: The Agricultural Bank and Agricultural Reform in Ottoman Turkey, 1888–1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6, no. 2 (1975): 212–217.

59. Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism*.

60. Pehlivan, "Political Ecology of Violence," 227–272.

61. Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

62. Edip Gölbaşı, "Turning the 'Heretics' into Loyal Muslim Subjects: Imperial Anxieties, the Politics of Religious Conversion, and the Yezidis in the Hamidian Era," *Muslim World* 103, no. 1 (2013): 3–23.

63. Gölbaşı, "Turning the 'Heretics' into Loyal"; Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*. For the legal status of Yezidi people in the early modern Ottoman Empire, see Yavuz Aykan, "On the Legal Status of Yezidis: Law, Geography and Confession-Building in Early Modern Kurdistan (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)," in *Entangled Confessionalizations? Dialogic Perspectives on the Politics of Piety and Community Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–18th Centuries*, ed. Tijana Krstic and Derin Terzioglu (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2022), 673–700.

64. Duguid, "Politics of Unity."

65. Bayram Kodaman, "Hamîdiye Hafîf Süvarî Alayları (2. Abdülhamîd ve Doğu-Anadolu Aşiretleri)," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, no. 32 (1979): 443–445; and Duguid, "Politics of Unity."

66. Kodaman, "Hamîdiye Hafîf Süvarî Alayları," 451; and Duguid, "Politics of Unity," 151–152.

67. Pehlivan, "Political Ecology of Violence"; Çelebi, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin"; Mehmet Polatel, "The Complete Ruin of a District: The Sasun Massacre of 1894," in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian, and Ali Sipahi (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 179–198; and Selim Deringil, "'The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed': Mass Conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895–1897," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 2 (2009): 344–371.

68. Çelebi, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin."

69. For a review of anti-Armenian pogroms of 1890s and diverse motivations of the perpetrators, see Bedross Der Matossian, "The Ottoman Massacres of Armenians, 1894–1896 and 1909," in *Cambridge World History of Genocide*, ed. Ned Backhawk et al., vol. II (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 609–633; and Bedross Der Matossian,

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

"The Taboo within the Taboo: The Fate of 'Armenian Capital' at the End of the Ottoman Empire <https://journals.openedition.org/ejts/4411>," *European Journal of Turkish Studies: Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, no. 37 (2011).

70. For a theoretical and conceptual discussion of anti-Armenian pogroms, see Deringil, "Armenian Question Is Finally Closed"; Edhem Eldem, "'Banka Vakası' ve 1896 İstanbul Katliamı," in *1915: Siyaset, Tehcir, Soykırım*, ed. Fikret Adanır and Oktay Özel (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015), 176–198; Robert Melson, "A Theoretical Inquiry into the Armenian Massacres of 1894–1896," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, no. 3 (1982): 481–509; and Edip Gölbaşı, "The Official Conceptualization of the Anti-Armenian Riots of 1895–1897: Bureaucratic Terminology, Official Ottoman Narrative, and Discourses of Revolutionary Provocation," *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines*, no. 10 (2018): 33–62.

71. Jelle Verheij, "'The Year of the Firman': The 1895 Massacres in Hizan and Şirvan (Bitlis Vilayet)," *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines*, no. 10 (2017): 125–160; Jelle Verheij, "Diyarbekir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895," in *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870–1915*, ed. Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 85–145; Joost Jongerden, "Elite Encounters of a Violent Kind: Milli İbrahim Paşa, Ziya Gökalp and Political Struggle in Diyarbekir at the Turn of the 20th Century," in *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870–1915*, ed. Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 55–84; and Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij, eds., *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870–1915*, vol. 51 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012).

72. Cited in David Gaunt, "Two Documents on the 1895 Massacres of Syriacs in the Province of Diyarbekir: A Discussion," *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines* 10 (2018): 187–201.

73. Mehmet Polatel, "The Armenian Massacre of 1895 in Bitlis Town," *Kurdish Studies* 9, no. 1 (2021): 59–76; Gölbaşı, "Official Conceptualization"; Ali Sipahi, "Narrative Construction in the 1895 Massacres in Harput: The Coming and Disappearance of the Kurds," *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines*, no. 10 (2017): 63–96; Polatel, "Complete Ruin of a District"; and Edip Gölbaşı, "1895–1896 Katliamları: Doğu Vilayetlerinde Cemaatler Arası 'Şiddet İklimi' ve Ermeni Karşıtı Ayaklanmalar," in *1915: Siyaset, Tehcir ve Soykırım*, ed. Fikret Adanır and Oktay Özel (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015), 140–163.

74. For an overview of massacres and the role of different actors on the organization of pogroms, see Matossian, "Ottoman Massacres of Armenians."

75. Gaunt, "Two Documents," 195.

76. Verheij, "Diyarbekir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895"; and Jongerden, "Elite Encounters of a Violent Kind."

77. Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913–1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 247.

78. Pehlivan, "Political Ecology of Violence," 112–135.

79. Sabri Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 316–322.

80. For a history of the de-development of the Kurdish region in Turkey, see *Veli Yadırgı, The Political Economy of the Kurds of Turkey: From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 151–213.

81. Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003); Donald Bloxham, "The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1916: Cumulative Radicalization and the Development of a Destruction Policy," *Past & Present*, no. 181 (2003): 141–191; Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide: Key Elements of Turko-Armenian Conflict* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999); Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The 1894 Sassoun Massacre: A

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025

Juncture in the Escalation of the Turko-Armenian Conflict," *Armenian Review* 47, nos. 1–2 (2001): 5–39; Vicken Cheterian, *Open Wounds: Armenians, Turks and a Century of Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); and Richard G Hovannisian, ed., *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998).

82. Bedross Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana: Revolution and Violence in the Early Twentieth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022); Dzovinar Derderian, "Nation-Making and the Language of Colonialism: Voices from Ottoman Van in Armenian Print Media and Handwritten Petitions (1820s to 1870s)" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2019); Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian, and Ali Sipahi, eds., *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2016); Zozan Pehlivan, "Abandoned Villages in Diyarbekir Province at the End of the 'Little Ice Age', 1800–1850," in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, ed. Ali Sipahi, Yasar Tolga Cora, and Dzovinar Derderian (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 223–245; Yaşar Tolga Cora, "Transforming Erzurum/Karin: The Social and Economic History of a Multi-Ethnic Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2016); Owen Miller, "Sasun 1894: Mountains, Missionaries and Massacres at the End of the Ottoman Empire" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2015); and Polatel, "Complete Ruin of a District."

Related Articles

Modern Iraq

Ottoman-Safavid Relations: A Religious or Political Rivalry

Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Asian History. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).
Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 27 June 2025