The Armenian Rebellion at Van

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Justin McCarthy
Esat Arslan
Cemalettin Taşkıran
Ömer Turan

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CHAPTER I

The Ruins of Van

On July 24, 1919, two Americans, Captain Emory H. Niles and Arthur E. Sutherland, Jr., arrived by horseback at the city of Van. Niles and Sutherland were the first outsiders to see Van since the end of World War I. The region they traveled through was barren, in many places devoid of human life. "The country," they wrote, "is one of bare mountains and ruins."[1]

The two Americans estimated that there were five thousand inhabitants in the city of Van and slightly more than one hundred thousand in the entire province. Except for approximately seven hundred Armenians, the population of the city was entirely made up of Muslim refugees who had fled during the war and returned when Ottoman armies reconquered Van. From survivors' accounts, Niles and Sutherland estimated that one-half of the Muslim refugees had died. Van City was nine-tenths destroyed, as were a large majority of the province's villages. The city had no commercial life ("In the City the shops contain nothing"), no schools. The governor, praised by the Americans, was able to keep open military and civilian hospitals and an orphanage. The people were no longer starving, but only because their diminished numbers were so few that the limited amount of grain that the government was able to distribute sufficed. The refugees had been in "great want" at first but now had planted enough to guarantee a harvest that would see them through the winter.

Van's Armenians, who had been one-fourth of the province's prewar population, were gone. Only those seven hundred remained, protected by soldiers from the vengeance of the Muslims. The inhabitants told the Americans that the Armenians had destroyed everything and tortured, raped, and killed the Muslims. Niles and Sutherland, like other Americans and Europeans, had been fed on a diet of anti-Turkish propaganda that made the Armenians into saints and the Turks into devils, so at first they did not believe the claims of the Muslims. They changed their minds: "At

first we were most incredulous of these stories, but we finally came to believe them, since the testimony was absolutely unanimous and was corroborated by material evidence. For instance, the only quarters left at all intact in the cities of Bitlis and Van are the Armenian quarters, as was evidenced by churches and inscriptions on the houses, while the Moslem quarters were completely destroyed. Villages said to have been Armenian were still standing, whereas Musulman villages were completely destroyed."

The Muslims were living in Armenian houses and Armenian villages, because their own houses and villages had been obliterated. Less than one-third of the villages existing before the war were fit for life, and this was only because the refugees had been repairing them for more than a year before Niles and Sutherland arrived.

Before World War I and the Armenian rebellion against the Ottomans, Van had been known as a city of trees, gardens, and vineyards, remarkable in an otherwise barren landscape. Its markets and warehouses had been the center of trade for all of southeastern Anatolia. The city had been inhabited longer than history had been written. It had been filled with mosques and churches, many of them renowned for their beauty. Now it was a ruin.

The Armenians of Van had revolted against the Ottoman government, putting their trust in the Russians, who betrayed them. They and the Russians had driven the Muslims from the province. The Armenians in turn had been driven out. Theirs was the final exodus. Surviving Muslims returned. Neither side, however, can truly be said to have won the war. More than half of Van's Armenians had died, as had almost two-thirds of its Muslims.

The new Turkish Republic found it impossible to rebuild on the ruins. A new city was built to the southeast. The Ottoman city of Van had died.

Notes

1. United States National Archives 184.021/175. The report of Niles and Sutherland was deliberately suppressed by those who did not wish their account to be seen (Justin McCarthy, "American Commissions to Anatolia and the Report of Niles and Sutherland," in *Türk Tarih Kurumu Kongresi XI, Ankara: 5–9 Eylül 1990* [Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994], pp. 1809–53). The only extant copy is a draft found among detritus of the American Harbord Commission. The report thus contains grammatical infelicities and intermixed usages such as "Moslem" and "Musulman." The recorded interviews of the inhabitants that were conducted by Niles and Sutherland have been lost, probably destroyed.

CHAPTER 2

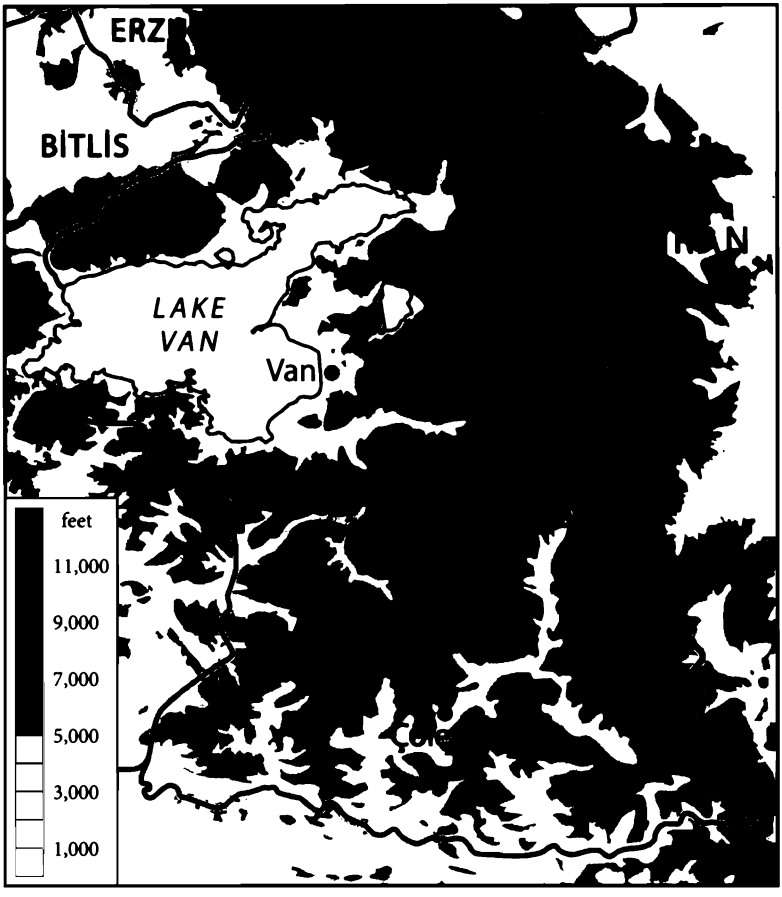
The City and Province of Van

The City of Van

To its inhabitants, the city of Van was beautiful. It was within easy walking distance of the largest lake in Anatolia. Mountains, often snow-capped, surrounded the city. The views of the mountains and the lake were spectacular. To outsiders more accustomed to trees, the surroundings of Van may have appeared a bit bleak. The only greenery consisted of scrub bushes on hillsides, crops on farms, and some trees along watercourses. Parts of the city contained tree-lined streets and gardens, although these were often behind walls, a private beauty. The stark beauty of the mountains and Lake Van represented the city's public face.

The city of Van was situated 2 kilometers east of Lake Van. The Van fortress district, the Old City of Van, stretched for 1 kilometer along the foot of a defensible outcropping of rock 200 meters above the plain. It had been a most defensible fortress and seat of government since ancient times, surrounded by a moat and thick fortification walls. The Old City had four gates: the Tabriz Gate, Palace Gate, Middle Gate, and Quay Gate. To the east, outside the Tabriz Gate, the land rose sharply to a rocky prominence. After conquering the region in 1534, Süleyman the Magnificent had built the Van Citadel (İçkale: inner fortress) on this promontory directly north of the Old City. It was used in the later nineteenth century as a garrison and site for an artillery battery.

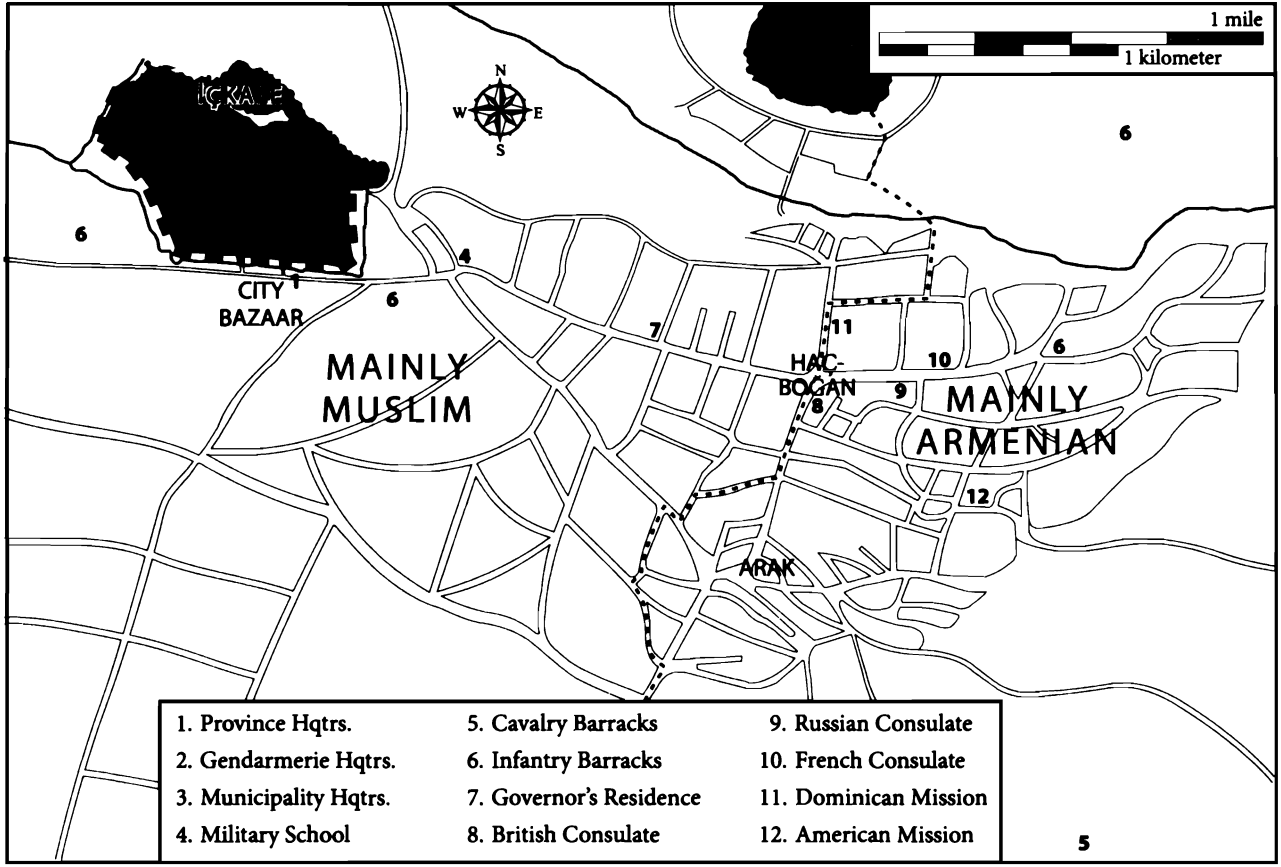
The houses and streets of the Old City were what might be expected in a traditional Middle Eastern city. The houses were built of mud brick and wood. The streets were narrow, winding, and dark. Some estimated that there were five thousand houses in the Old City. This was surely a gross exaggeration: government figures listed only 5,400 households in the whole district of Van, which included the entire city of Van (much larger than the Old City alone) and the surrounding countryside.[1] Without doubt, however, the Old City was packed full of two-story houses,



MAP 2.1. The Province of Van.

mosques, churches, and markets. Commercial buildings in the Old City included warehouses, caravanserais, markets, workplaces, and bazaars, many of which had been there for centuries. Most of the Old City would have been recognizable to inhabitants of Van in the Middle Ages.

What was new in the Old City had been created mainly by the government. The Old City was the administrative and economic center of the city and province. The Palace Gate (Saray Kapısı) neighborhood in the southeast contained the Provincial Government Headquarters, police and gendarme (rural paramilitary police) headquarters, courts, the central jail, a barracks, government health and agricultural offices, the customs office, a post and telegraph office, the Ottoman Bank, the Public Debt



MAP 2.2. The City of Van.

and Tobacco Reji offices, and government schools. Most of these buildings were recent, built during the reign of Abdülhamit II.[2]

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the city of Van expanded considerably beyond the fortress walls. The new section of the city, called the Garden District, stretched slightly more than 3 kilometers to the east and southeast of the Old City and covered an area six times as large. Van could still not be called a big city. Outside the Old City it was more lightly settled. A great fire of 1876 and a famine in 1878–80 had dictated that houses be farther apart than was usual in the Middle East in order to keep flames from spreading and to be able to grow food.[3] Thus houses in both the Muslim and Christian Quarters of the New City were built apart from each other, centered in wide gardens surrounded by walls six feet high. Residents grew much of their own produce, in particular grapes and other fruit. The result was attractive and livable. Even the provincial governor and government officials lived in the Garden District. Consulates, foreign missionary establishments, and modern schools were found there, as well as the American missionary hospital, the military hospital, a telegraph office, the Agricultural Bank (Ziraat Bankası), and mosques and churches. Although some neighborhoods were mixed, in general Christians lived in the east of the Garden District, Muslims in the west.[4]

The City's People

Turkish and Kurdish Muslims and Armenian and Nestorian Christians, with only a very small number of Jews and others, made up the population of Van. Evliya Çelebi, who visited Van in 1655, wrote that there were twelve neighborhoods in the city, of which three were Armenian. Orhan Kılıç estimated that 35,000–45,000 lived in the city in the seventeenth century, nearly 30 percent Armenian, the rest Muslims. The only Christians at that time were Armenian, and half the Muslim population was made up of soldiers, administrators, and Muslim pious foundation (*vakıf*) officials.[5]

No one knows exactly how many lived in Van in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Ottomans kept detailed records of the city's population, but only the totals for the *kaza* (district), which included the city and its surroundings, have been found among the millions of documents yet to be searched in the Ottoman Archives. The population of the kaza was listed as 79,736 in 1912: 45,119 Muslims, 33,789 Armenians, and 828 others. The Ottomans, like similar states, underregistered women and children, so these figures probably underestimated the rural section of the kaza's population by one-fourth.[6] Soldiers, administrators native to

other provinces, and temporary residents were not included. Vital Cuinet gave a low estimate for Van City in the 1890s: 16,000 Muslims, 13,500 Armenians, and 500 Jews, a total of 30,000.[7]

Although the numbers of the continuously resident population of Van probably did not change much from the 1880s to World War I, the city's actual population fluctuated greatly, depending on external conditions. Both Muslims and Armenians flooded the city in times of famine and civil unrest, looking for security and food.

The Province of Van

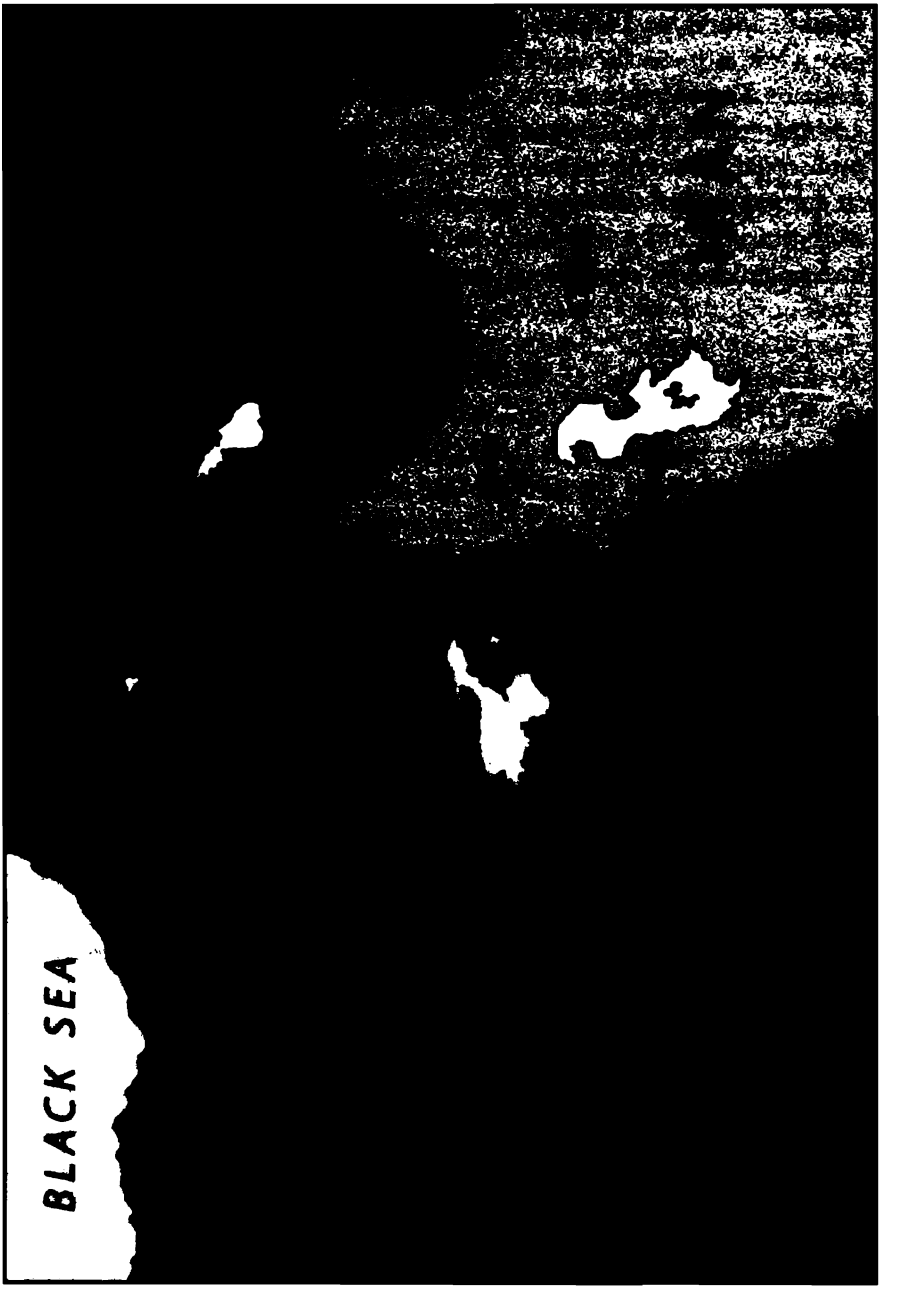
Climate

Only in the context of Middle Eastern regional features such as the Caucasus Mountains or the Arabian Desert could Van's climate have been considered salubrious.

Van was not particularly hot in the summer, at least not by the standards of the Middle East. July was the hottest month, and its average maximum temperature was only 22° (72°F), although it might reach 38°C (100°F). Winter, however, was horrible. The coldest month in Van City, February, averaged -4°C (25°F), but -29°C (-20°F) was possible.[8] Temperatures fell below freezing on more than one-third of the days in a year. (It should be noted that these are figures for Van City, whose climate was moderated by its proximity to Lake Van. Many parts of the province, especially higher regions, were colder and generally nastier. Hakkâri, in the mountainous south, for example, averaged 4°C colder in winter than Van.) Van's average annual precipitation was 380 millimeters. In high summer it barely rained at all (3 millimeters in August).[9] Most of the precipitation was in the form of snow, which fell almost one-fourth of the year. During winter, houses in villages were connected by shoveled paths with "walls" that rose above a man's head on each side; visiting a friend was akin to walking down a tunnel. Mountain passes within the province and leading to other provinces were closed. Trade and communication were mainly shut down in winter.[10]

Muslims

The ethnic affiliations of Van's Muslims are surprisingly hard to identify. The Ottoman population registration system, the best source of most information on the people, recorded Ottoman subjects by religion, not by ethnic or language group. European commentators seem to have been eternally confused over who was a Turk or a Kurd. They often used "Turk"



MAP 2.3. Ottoman Eastern Anatolia.

TABLE 2.1. Government Statistics for Van Province in 1897/1898.

DISTRICT NAME	VILLAGES	HOUSEHOLDS	MOSQUES, MESCIDS	MEDRESES	DERVISH LODGES	MONASTERIES, CHURCHES	SHOPS
Van District*	67 neighborhoods†	5,417	32	10	15	15	1,636
Erçek Subdistrict‡	53 villages	1,666	5	2	—	30	6
Havasor Subdistrict	48 villages	1,830	9	2	—	30	5
Timar Subdistrict	70 villages	2,580	5	3	1	35	3
Erciş District	123 villages	3,612	—	—	—	—	123
Gevaş District	66 villages	2,890	—	3	—	—	11
Müküs District	65 villages	1,797	—	5	—	—	12
Çatak District	83 villages	1,623	—	—	—	—	83
Bargiri District	104 villages	1,285	2	—	—	—	6
Adilcevaz District	62 villages	1,934	8	—	—	—	75
Karçekan District	70 villages	1,860	—	—	—	—	8
Total	811	26,494	61	25	16	110	1,968

Source: Van Vilâyeti, *Van Vilâyeti Salnamesi, 1315* (Van: Matbaa-i Vilâyet,1315) p. 207.

* District = kaza.

† Subdistrict = mahalle.

‡ Neighborhood = nahiye.

TABLE 2.2. Population of Van Province, 1912.

RELIGION	POPULATION	PROPORTION
Muslim	313,322	.6146
Greek	1	
Armenian	130,500	.2560
Syrian, Chaldean, Nestorian	62,400	.1224
Jewish	1,798	.0035
Other	1776	.0036
Total	509,797	

Source: Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), pp. 110–11. These population figures are based on Ottoman records, corrected for undercounts, especially undercounts of women and children. A number of estimates of the Van population have been made at different times by travelers and others. The so-called Armenian Patriarch Statistics, supposedly taken from files of the Armenian patriarch of Constantinople, were forgeries, but a real compilation of statistics was made by order of the Armenian patriarch of Echmiadzin. For 1913–14, these listed 110,897 Armenians in Van (Raymond H. Kévorkian and Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire Ottoman à la veille du génocide* [Paris: Editions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1992], appendix, p. 60). We believe the higher figures for Armenian population in the table are more accurate, because they are based on actual counts of the population, not estimates.
* Less than .0001.

to describe the settled and "Kurd" to describe the tribal, whatever the language actually spoken by the subject. As in most of the Middle East until very modern times, the identity of individuals was primarily religious, followed by local/tribal and family affiliations. Asked "What are you?" a Kurd, after reflecting on the absurdity of the question, would probably reply "a Muslim,"[11] then give the name of his or her tribe or village.

Linguistically, the Muslims of Van were overwhelmingly Kurdish. A sizable number of Kurds in Van and smaller groups in other cities had become socially a part of Ottoman civil society, speaking Turkish as well as a Kurdish dialect and adopting the general Ottoman culture, which included Turks, Kurds, Bosnians, Albanians, Circassians, and dozens of other ethnic groups. Six fairly large families in Van traced their lineage to the first Turkish tribes to arrive in Van centuries before and considered themselves to be Turks. In the countryside, the Muslims were Kurdish-speaking farmers and tribespeople. Those who were usually called "Turks" by Europeans in Van were the aforementioned Turks of ancient lineage and Ottoman officials. Sometimes the Europeans included the "Ottomanized" Kurds as "Turks." The largest number of Ottoman officials were soldiers, who were indeed primarily Turkish-speakers from Anatolia and Ottoman Europe. Their officers and other government officials might be from many backgrounds. The officials all spoke Turkish natively, but their

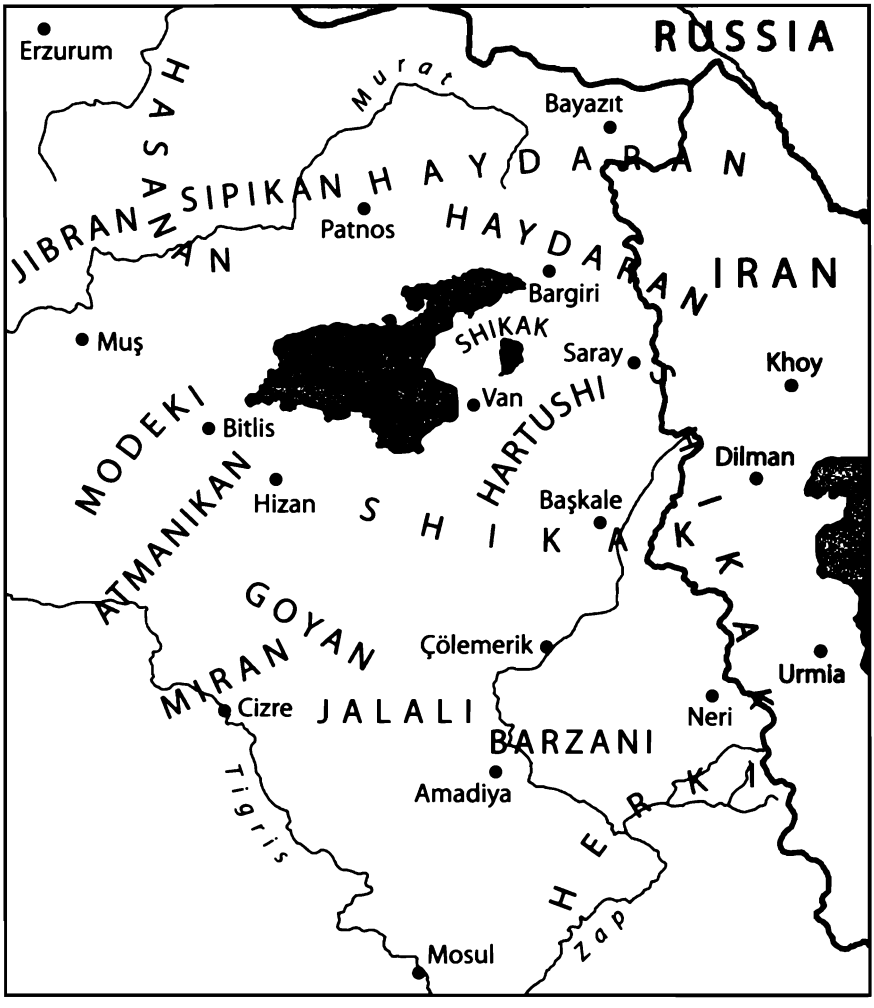
ancestors might have spoken any number of European or Middle Eastern languages.

The tribal affiliations of Van's Kurds were too numerous to be listed here. The largest tribal confederation was the Haydaran (also called the Haydaranlı). The confederation was made up of tribes who inhabited the great high plain that stretched across southern Erzurum and northern Van Provinces into Iran—from Bayazıt in the north and Patnos in the west into Iran. The Haydaran were more or less constant enemies of the Sipikan (Sipikanlı) Kurds to their west and the Sheveli Kurds to their south. The Sheveli, part of the second largest tribal confederation in Van, the Shikaks, lived between Bargiri and Van City. The most numerous and powerful Shikak tribe was the Shekifti, whose territory crossed the Iranian border in southeastern Van Province. Judging from government and consular reports, the Shikaks and Haydaran were the most troublesome, if only because of their sheer numbers. Both of these tribes were internally divided, however, and tribes in the confederations fought each other only slightly less often than they fought others.

Very few of Van's Kurdish tribes were truly nomadic—the Herki, the Atmanikan, and some smaller tribes. Many, such as the Goyan and the Miran, were mainly seminomadic, spending winter in their villages and living in tents in summer pastures. Many tribes were mixed: some of the Jalali were nomadic, some sedentary. Some of the Shikak and Hartushi groups were sedentary, some seminomadic. Even nomadic tribes like the Herki had some sedentary subtribes.[12]

The life of the tribes was changing. Tribes like the Hasanan (Hasananlı), many of whom had been seminomadic, were becoming sedentary in the 1890s. This seems to have been generally true of the northern tribes. Moreover, the tribal structure was under great stress as the Ottoman government gradually increased its power over the tribes. The great tribes were losing their cohesion, while many smaller tribes were being subsumed into larger confederations. This resulted in a greater number of medium-sized centers of power. Given the tribes' penchant for warfare, this was not good for civil order.[13]

Kurdish tribes were led by their chiefs. Succession was not always hereditary and was not guaranteed to the oldest son. Earlier in the nineteenth century the power of the great chiefs had diminished significantly. Until Sultan Mahmud II began to extend state power into southeastern Anatolia, each Kurdish leader, called *mir* (emir), had ruled over a large stretch of the region, dividing power in the southeast among themselves. Once a renascent government asserted its powers and ended the "emirates," the local power of smaller tribal chiefs increased, as did the power of



MAP 2.4. Kurdish Tribes.

the *şeyh*s. These were leaders of dervish (Sufi mystic) fraternities. Because their position and prestige were defined by religion, not by tribal structure, they were able to attract a following from many tribes, often creating "synthetic tribes" with themselves as chief and religious leader. Two of the most important families of leaders, the şeyhs of Şemdinan and Barzan, came to power in this way.[14]

Map 2.4, drawn from contemporary British sources, indicates only the largest and most important tribes.[15] The areas indicated for each large tribe or confederation were not exclusive. Villages belonging to one tribe often

MAP 2.5. The Armenian Church in Van.

were next to villages belonging to another, and nomadic tribes traveled across the lands ascribed on the map to another tribe as they went to summer and winter pastures. The Herki, for example, wandered the southern part of the province in small groups with their flocks. The powerful chiefs were always expanding their territory, although the gains were usually lost once they died. There were hundreds of tribes and semiautonomous clans in tribes that cannot be listed on one small map.[16]

Armenians

Like the Muslims, the Armenians in the countryside were primarily subsistence farmers. The urban Armenian population, however, contained many well-to-do families—money changers/bankers and merchants, doctors and dentists, lawyers, government officials, translators in consulates,

TABLE 2.3. The Armenian Church in Van: Approximate Armenian Figures.

	DIOCESE	ECCLESIASTICAL HEAD	EXTENT	ARMENIAN CHURCH MEMBERS	PARISHES	CHURCHES	CATHOLICS	PROTESTANTS
Patriarchate of Constantinople	Van	Archbishop	Kazas of Van, Mahmudiye (Saray), Erciş, Adilcevaz	100,000	108	130	500	200
	Lim and Ktutz	Abbot	Nahiye of Timar	11,000	25	32	—	—
	Albak (Başkale)	Abbot	Sancak of Hakkâri	10,000	20	23	—	—
Catholicosate of Akhtamar	Akhtamar	Catholicos	Kazas of Gevaş, Çatak, Karçekan	70,000	130	203	—	—
	Hizan	Bishop	Kaza of Hizan	25,000	64	69	—	—

Source: Malachia Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia*, edited by Terenig Poladian, 2nd ed. (London: Mowbray, 1955), pp. 206–8.

artisans and craftsmen, workers, priests, teachers, and journalists.[17] All contemporary observers stated that the Armenians had control of the trade of the province. While most of the Armenians of Van City were by no means rich, as a group they were more prosperous than the city's Muslims.

The 1876 Erzurum Province Yearbook stated that the leaders of the Van Gregorian community were the bishop of Lim Island (in the northeast of Lake Van) and the catholicos of Akhtamar Island, both named Agop. Ex-patriarch Malachia Ormanian wrote that four ecclesiastical jurisdictions governed the Gregorian Church in the province: the small diocese of Lim and Ktuts Islands, which included some area on the mainland shore (the Nahiye of Timar); the extensive Catholicosate of Aghtamar (Akhtamar), which governed the region south/southwest of Van City and southeastern Bitlis Province; the Diocese of Aghbak (Albak, Başkale) in the east-southeast; and the Archdiocese of Van, which covered all the rest of the province.[18] There were very few Uniate Catholic and Protestant Armenians in the province. While Catholic and Protestant (mainly American) missionaries had made many converts among the Armenians of Western Anatolia, the Van Armenians mainly remained loyal to the Gregorian Church. The city had only a small group of Armenian Protestants, ministered to by native pastors and missionaries.

To a large extent the appointment of Armenians to government positions was a part of the diversification in government initiated by Sultan Abdülhamit II and continued by later governments. Members of minority groups rose to all but the highest positions in Istanbul (e.g., foreign minister, but not grand vezir). Government appointments in Van followed the pattern set in Istanbul, although circumstances and problems were unique. In Van, as well as in similar provinces such as Erzurum and Bitlis, the government was most anxious to enroll Christians in official positions in order to show the minorities that they were a part of the Ottoman system and to assure them fair treatment by a government that included many members of their own communities. This, it was hoped, would blunt the appeal of nationalist revolutionaries. Operating by the same logic, the revolutionaries did all they could to discourage Armenian membership in the government.

Appendix 2 lists Armenians in Ottoman service as they appeared in various Van provincial yearbooks. Perhaps reflecting their economic position in the province, most of the Armenians in the administration were in financial positions—treasurers of districts and of administrative councils—as well as high officials in the important area of land registration.

Armenians, undoubtedly members of the merchant class, sat on the administrative councils and boards of Van as well serving as judges in the provincial courts and on judicial councils. Late in the nineteenth century Armenians started to serve as deputy governors and assistants to governors or deputy governors. These were high positions of considerable power and authority. Armenians also began to appear in government lists as police officers and officials. As late as 1908 Nazareth Tcharukhdjian was police superintendent in Van. As will be seen, many of these positions, particularly police offices and administrative posts, carried considerable danger to the incumbents. They were liable to be assassinated by Armenian revolutionaries, who viewed those who took part in the government as traitors.

Nestorians

The Nestorians (also known as Assyrians) inhabited the mountainous region south of Van in the Ottoman Empire and the lowlands west of Lake Urmia in Iran. The heartland of the Ottoman Nestorians centered on the towns of Tiari, 80 miles directly south of Van City, and Koçanis, the traditional seat of the Nestorian patriarch, near Çölemerik. Those who lived in the mountains, known as Aşiret (tribal) Nestorians, had been virtually independent until the Ottomans began to extend state authority to their mountains in the middle nineteenth century. Others lived as clients of Kurdish tribes. The Nestorians were not nomadic but divided themselves into tribes, each with its own chief (*malik:* king). In fact, the highest authority among the Nestorians was held by the Nestorian patriarch, the Mar Shimun, who was both an ecclesiastical and a secular leader. The office was hereditary in the Mar Shimun family: the patriarch himself was celibate; the office was inherited by a nephew of a deceased patriarch. It was not unknown for nephews to fight over the succession.[19]

Unlike the Armenians, the Nestorians were seldom involved in the commerce and industry of Van Province. The Aşiret Nestorians remained in their mountains. Those in Iran and some of the non-Aşiret Nestorians in the Ottoman Empire might travel as far as Russia as day laborers and beggars.[20] Some were accomplished stonemasons, constructing fine homes for Kurdish chiefs in the southeast.

The lives of the Nestorians were intimately bound up with the Kurds who surrounded them. They were a constant factor in Kurdish alliances and feuds, sometimes fighting against Kurdish tribes, sometimes fighting alongside them as allies. Before World War I their greatest disaster was a slaughter by the forces of Şeyh Ubeydullah Bedirhan in 1847. After that the power of the Nestorians in their conflicts with Kurdish tribes was con-

siderably diminished. They did have a European champion in the British, however. The archbishop of Canterbury sponsored a mission to the Nestorians that managed to make a small number of converts to Protestantism, as did an American mission among the Nestorians in Iran.[21]

Jews

Ottoman official statistics listed 1,400 Jews in the province in 1912. Most of these Jews were rural, however, living in remote and poorly registered areas, so they were greatly undercounted. Cuinet estimated 5,000,[22] which was probably closer to the truth.

Americans

Missionaries of the American Board for Foreign Missions first visited Van in 1870. The Van mission station was opened in 1872. The mission, headed by Dr. George C. Raynolds throughout its time in Van, first occupied a rented house in the Old City then opened an extensive compound in the Garden District. The first mission school for boys opened in 1875, and a new elementary and secondary boys' school in the Garden District in 1881. Mrs. Raynolds began a girls' school, offering primary and some high school courses, in the Old City in 1879. By 1910 there were boarding primary and high schools for both boys and girls, with 953 students (433 boys and 520 girls), all Armenians. In 1896 the missionaries began relief work and provided limited medical assistance in Van City. Medical work expanded to surgery and a general hospital in 1900 with the arrival of Dr. Clarence Ussher.[23]

As they did elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, the Americans provided an excellent modern education for Van's Christians. The missionaries came to Van with the intention of drawing Armenians away from the Gregorian Church and into Protestant beliefs. They soon found this impossible. They satisfied themselves with the thought that their schools and other activities were bringing a moral change in the Armenians and causing the Armenian Church to adopt more Protestant beliefs.[24] (The accuracy of the former view is unknown, but the latter was demonstrably wishful thinking.) The labors of the missionaries were more noteworthy for their temporal than for their spiritual benefits.

Europeans

Unlike the cities of Western Anatolia and Ottoman Europe, Van was not the home to many Europeans. With the exception of Russian subjects, who were mainly Armenians from the Southern Caucasus, the European

subjects resident in Van were consular officials or missionaries. As a strategically important city, however, Van was the site of a number of foreign consulates: Iran, Russia, Great Britain, France, and Italy.[25] German Protestants and French Catholics (Dominicans) each operated a mission, whose efforts were directed at local Christians. The British operated a mission among the Nestorians in the southern part of the province. Because the missions were not very successful at gaining converts, they can properly be considered service organizations, providing education for Christians and relief and medical care for Christians and many Muslims. The Dominicans operated a school for Armenians. German Evangelical missionaries of the Deutsches Hilfsbund came to Van to provide relief services to poor Christians in 1895. By 1910 they were feeding and clothing 500 of the poor daily. Their efforts were coordinated with those of the American missionaries. Just before World War I the Germans opened a boys' school and a girls' school with 11 teachers and 238 students.[26]

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

The Ottoman government attempted to draw up statistics on agricultural production in Van Province, but these were at best informed estimates. There were too few officials to count all the herds and visit every field. Data on numbers of animals were particularly deficient, because taxes were paid on each one, giving a great incentive to hide animals and lie to the tax collector. Indeed, enumerating farms and animals was a dangerous business. Those who went out to count sheep belonging to Kurdish tribes had to be accompanied by soldiers in order to survive. Nevertheless, official estimates do afford a fairly accurate picture of what was produced in Van, if not the true quantity of production.

Wheat was the most important grain crop in Van Province. Fifteen times as much wheat was produced as the next grain crops, barley and rye. Only very small amounts of other cereal crops were grown. Yet Van did not actually produce much wheat; per capita wheat production was one-third that of provinces such as Erzurum and Ankara.[27] Van did not have enough flat land for large-scale cereal farming. Each year wheat, barley, and flour had to be imported from other provinces. Rainfall was scarce, and farmers were forced to use irrigation from rivers and streams to produce a variety of fruits: melons, watermelons, grapes, apples, apricots, pears, cherries, sour cherries (*vişne*), and quince.[28] There was a limit to what could be produced with low-technology irrigation. The per capita production of grapes, for example, was only one-twentieth that of the province of Aydın in Western Anatolia, which had better weather. In regard to the produc-

tion of wine from those grapes, however, Van was a major producer in per capita terms.[29] The farms of the province grew only small amounts of vegetables, and the diet of the populace was surely deficient. The vegetables produced were of the type that will keep for long periods: onions, lentils, green beans, broad beans (*bakla*), and okra. Walnuts were a primary crop, both for local use and for export. Small amounts of hazelnuts and almonds were also produced. Other export crops included flax seed (for oil) and tobacco.[30]

The mountainous scrub land of Van Province dictated the type of animals found there: few (if any) camels, many goats. Pack animals were primarily donkeys and mules. Oxen, donkeys, mules, and water buffaloes (and perhaps some horses) did the plowing. Sheep (the most numerous animal) and goats (the second most numerous) were reared for wool for export, as well as for meat, milk, and cheese. Unlike Erzurum Province to the north, which was known for its beef, Van Province contained approximately the same number of cows per person as in the rest of Anatolia.[31] Horses were no more common than elsewhere in Anatolia, and most of these were in the hands of Kurdish tribes. The tribes depended on the horses for transport and bred them for sale. The rest of Van walked or rode on donkeys. Wool, woolen goods, skins, and live animals were the province's most valuable exports.

The agricultural state of Van was always poor. In good years there was enough to eat, but never sufficient food to put aside for the bad years. The years of famine came often. The worst famine was in 1878–80. Lesser famines came every few years, however. The government took what actions it could to aid the starving (forcing hoarders to disgorge grain, punishing price gougers, etc.), but the state did not have enough power to police such crimes outside the urban areas and their surroundings.[32] Except for the famine in 1878–80, no one starved in the cities. Villagers often went hungry.[33] Both Christians and Muslims suffered during times of famine, but considerably more aid from outside sources was given to Armenians. American and British relief funds and supplies usually were restricted to Armenians, and sometimes Nestorians, while the limited government funds went to all.[34] This cannot have endeared either the local Christians or the foreigners to the Muslims. In one case, American missionaries gave relief to Armenian families then found that some of the families had converted to the Armenian Catholic Church. They went to the British consul, who was in charge of relief distribution, and demanded that the money given to the Catholics be returned, because the relief was only to go to Gregorian and Protestant Armenians. The consul refused.[35]

Historically, Shia incursions from Iran from time to time disrupted agriculture, just as Ottoman incursions into Iran damaged agriculture there. These were not a problem in the later nineteenth century, but the unsettled state of the province, particularly battles among and raiding by Kurdish tribes, remained to plague farmers.

Education

The superior economic position of the Armenian community was evident in education.[36] Once the Armenian community began to educate its students in modern schools, Armenian schools quickly outpaced the educational opportunities available to Muslims (tables 2.4 and 2.5). Until the beginning of the twentieth century schools for Muslims were traditional and religiously based. Students in elementary schools memorized sections of the Quran and learned prayers, morals, and very basic writing. Those fortunate enough to attend the Muslim secondary schools learned to read and write properly but did not take advanced mathematics or sciences. Conditions were far superior in the Armenian schools.[37]

Comparing Armenian and Muslim student numbers leaves no doubt as to which community was foremost in education. Approximately 1 of every 250 Armenians in the province was in secondary school in 1901. The comparative figure for Muslims was 1 of every 1,500. The Armenian youths were six times as likely to attend high school. It should be noted, however, that neither group was doing particularly well. By comparison, the figure for the Turkish Republic in 2000 was 1 in 13.[38] It must also be remembered that these figures for Armenian education do not include the American missionary schools. Armenian students alone had the benefit of the modern education offered by American missionaries. The missionaries founded an elementary school and a boys' secondary school in 1872–73. The following year they began a girls' secondary school. By 1898 the boys' secondary school had eighty pupils, the girls' secondary school ninety, and the elementary school forty-one.[39]

Other religious communities sponsored their own schools. In 1900, Cuinet estimated, there were fifty students in the two Chaldean schools at Gevar. Sixty students studied in two Jewish schools, one at Başkale, the other at Diza.[40]

Hampered by limited resources, the government had nevertheless begun to improve education in the province. At the turn of the century it was reported that twenty-seven new schools had been built in the province since 1876, of which eleven were new primary schools. Construction had accelerated in later years, and nineteen schools were opened between 1890

TABLE 2.4. Schools in Van in 1871/1872.

KAZAS (DISTRICTS) AND NAHIYES (TOWNSHIPS)*	CHRISTIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS	MUSLIM PRIMARY SCHOOLS	MUSLIM SECONDARY SCHOOLS (MEDRESES)
Van Kaza	6	30	6
Gevar Kaza	—	—	—
Çölemerik Kaza	—	3	2
Albak (Başkale) Kaza	2	1	1
Mahmudi Kaza	—	—	2
Erciş Kaza	3	3	7
Adilcevaz Kaza	5	2	—
Müküs Kaza	2	15	2
Gevaş Kaza	2	7	—
Çatak Kaza	1	1	4
Abağa Nahiye	—	—	—
Şemdinan Nahiye	—	4	8
Humaru Nahiye	—	—	1
Oramar Nahiye	—	—	—
Beytüşşebab Nahiye	—	—	—
Çal Nahiye	—	1	2
Hoşap Nahiye	—	—	1
Bargiri Nahiye	—	—	1
Karçekan Nahiye	—	—	—
Vastan Nahiye	—	—	1
Norduz Nahiye	—	—	—
Total	21	67	38

Source: Salname-i Vilâyet-i Erzurum, 1288 Hicri Senesi (Erzurum: Erzurum Vilâyeti Matbaası, 1289) , p. 148. These statistics are for a very early period, when Ottoman data were deficient. They should be used only to indicate approximate numbers and the relative numbers of schools and other buildings. Note that Jewish schools are not included and that only registered, formal schools are listed.

* Vilâyets were made up of sancaks, which were divided into kazas, which were divided into nahiyes.

and 1900. Secondary schools were to be found in the cities of Van, Gevaş, Edremit, Erciş, Adilcevaz, Elbak, Gevar, and Çölemerik.[41] Between 1871 and 1898 the number of state (Muslim) elementary schools doubled, to 125.[42] This was an impressive achievement, but it still meant only 1 elementary school for every 2,200 Muslims in the population. (Traditional Islamic

TABLE 2.5. Armenian and Muslim Secondary Schools in Van Province.

YEARS	MUSLIM SECONDARY SCHOOLS	MUSLIM STUDENTS	ARMENIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS	ARMENIAN STUDENTS	AMERICAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS	ARMENIAN STUDENTS
1888[a]	5	211	—	—	—	—
1897–1898[b]	8	207	—	—	—	—
1898–1899[c]	8	157	7	780	—	—
1899–1900[d]	8	205	—	—	1	390
1900–1901[e]	8	213	7	970	1	390
1901–1902[f]	8	201	9	1070	1	390
1903–1904[g]	8	201	9	1070	1	390

Sources: Ottoman imperial, provincial, and education yearbooks.

a. *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniyye* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1306), p. 210. Note that the years in the table and in other statistics given here for education are the years in which the data were published. They may be considered to represent the previous year, but the data were undoubtedly collected sporadically and were only approximate. Lack of information in the table (e.g., 1899–1900) obviously does not mean that the schools did not exist, only that the information was omitted from the official source.

b. Van Vilâyeti, *Van Vilâyeti Salnamesi, 1315* (Van: Matbaa-i Vilâyet, 1315), pp. 149–50.

c. *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1316 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1316), pp. 1210–11.

d. *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1317 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1317), pp. 1428–29.

e. *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1318 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1318), pp. 1594–95.

f. *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1319 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1319), p. 1319.

g. *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1321 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1321), pp. 677–78.

education continued alongside the new schools: 105 students were studying at the nine mosque schools [*medreses*] in the province in 1900.)[43]

In practice the government schools, which educated a number of Christians in other provinces, only enrolled Muslims in the Van Province. Armenians attended their own schools. Contemporaries reported that both the Muslims and the Armenians realized the importance of education and that they were engaged in a sort of race to educate, especially after the 1908 Revolution.[44] Undoubtedly they both greatly increased their efforts, although the Armenians had a distinct economic advantage. American missionaries reported on the "race" from their own, not disinterested, perspective: "Several Armenian organizations are taking hold of the work, but unfortunately most of them are exerting an anti-religious influence which is perverting the morals of the people. The Government too is en-

tering the field and would probably be glad to get this whole education work into its own hands and make the schools helpful for promoting a Moslem propaganda."[45]

The provincial government founded a printing press in Van City in 1889–90. At first it was a simple press that printed lithographed handwriting, not movable type. The press produced the official gazette, *Van,* in Turkish. The situation had not greatly improved ten years later.[46] Van's Armenians, however, had a much more vibrant printing and literary life. *Artsvi Vaspurakan* (The Eagle of Van) was published in 1855–56 and 1858–64. Other short-lived publications followed; by 1914 two Armenian weekly newspapers were published in the city: one by the Dashnak Party, *Ashkhatank* (Labor), and one by the liberal Armenakan Party, *Van-Tosp.* After the 1908 Revolution the Dashnaks also published a number of political pamphlets.[47]

Van had long been a center of Armenian culture.[48] Anahide Ter Minassian estimated that 70 percent of the Armenians in Van City and 30 percent in the countryside could read and write.[49] This is almost surely an exaggeration, especially for the rural areas, but indicative of a high rate of literacy for the region. No comparative estimates exist for Van's Muslims, but the figure was certainly much lower.

Van cannot be said to have been well supplied with public libraries. In addition to the library of the Great Mosque (presumably religious in character), Van City had one library: the İskender Paşa Library, with forty-three books. The Şeyh Library in Elbak held three hundred books.[50] Presumably the various schools had at least small libraries for their students.

It would be a mistake to overemphasize the effects of the educational differences between the Muslims and Armenians of Van. The contrast between Muslim and Christian educational attainments in the western and northern regions of the empire was great. That difference was not as great in Van, although it was also developing there. In urban areas of the province Armenians were much more educated and more literate than Muslims. In rural areas there was much less difference. Armenian schools in rural areas only blossomed very late and cannot have had great effect by 1914. The majority of Van Province's Armenians, and an even higher proportion of its Muslims, were functionally illiterate.

The Commercial Importance of Van

According to the Erzurum Province yearbook (*salname*) of 1871–72, the people of Van and surrounding towns used a type of pitch taken from the flat area above the Van Citadel in construction. In addition, local people

used a kind of soda (called *perek*), accumulated from dried lake water, in place of soap. Van Province possessed a small number of useful minerals: some silver and lead at Çatak, iron oxide ore at Gevaş, salt near Van, coal at Akçay on the Karasu River and at Başkale, and borax at Başkale as well. A number of localities produced high-quality chalk. The government had given a concession to produce and process naphtha from the Gürzüt village of Bargiri Kaza. There were other, very small scale mines in Van as well; but in general Van was simply too remote and mining too difficult to support much exploitation of its minerals. There were sulfur springs in the Zilan Valley and iron carbonate springs at Pisan, but Van was hardly the place to develop healthful baths in a tourist industry. Plans to exploit minerals such as the yellow arsenic found in Çölemerik Kaza produced limited results. The government estimated that sixty-seven minerals were found within the Van Province borders; most were undeveloped.[51]

The Van landscape, at first glance, does not seem amenable to forestry, but there were forest resources in the province. The people of the Gevaş Kaza and Karçekan Nahiye profited from tree farms that produced oak and juniper. Likewise, inhabitants of the Çatak, Müküs, and Gevar Kazas sold lumber from forests of oak and similar woods.[52]

Ferries and commercial boats plied Lake Van. Some of the province's rivers were wide enough for limited commercial and personal travel: two streams that flowed west in Çatak; the Bendimahi Stream that flowed from the Abak Plain (west-northwest of Bargiri) to Lake Van; and the Kotur River that flowed east from Elbak Nahiye to Khoy in Iran. The Great Zap River flowed into the Tigris and Euphrates river system. In general, however, the province had very little river transportation. A hot-water sulfur spring in the Zilan Valley of Erciş Kaza was reportedly a remedy for lumbago and rheumatism.[53]

Industry

Because of Van's position on by far the largest lake in Anatolia and near the Iranian border, its traditional industry revolved around ships and weapons. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Van was the garrison town for the Ottoman army in the region. Many weapons, such as swords and muskets, were made in the city. Much of the construction work done in the town was military or associated with the military, including numerous establishments for traditional military off-duty pursuits.[54]

By the middle of the nineteenth century the industrial production of Van had altered. Iran was no longer a military threat, so the garrison of soldiers was greatly diminished. Military construction was minimal until

World War I approached. In any case, weapons of modern warfare could no longer be produced in small craft shops. Industry in Van settled into the production of goods for local consumption, essentially basic goods used by townspeople, farmers, and tribespeople in ordinary life: shoes, normal clothing, pots and pans, jewelry, saddles, wagons, and the like. Except for some government buildings, which were built in more modern patterns in Abdülhamit II's time, construction was traditional work with mud brick and timber, much as it had been for millennia.

Van did produce some quality goods, primarily hand-crafted cloth and clothing. Distinctive Van overcoats, shawls, and white and red cloth were exported from the province and enjoyed a market as far away as Istanbul.[55] Erzurum was also a good market for Van's products. The export market provided jobs for weavers and merchants as well as for those who made the tools and built the buildings used in the trade. Leather goods and rugs and *kilim*s were also made and exported. Van kilims, made by Kurdish tribespeople, were highly valued throughout the empire.[56]

Table 2.6 shows Vital Cuinet's estimates of industrial production in Van. His figures are surely inaccurate, but they do give a reasonable general view of production. Cuinet's list is by no means complete, including only major production. The Van yearbook for 1897–98 listed very small-scale manufacturing, including rugs and kilims, weapons, plates, pots and utensils, wagon, carriage and phaeton construction, carpentry, saddles and leatherwork, jewelry, shoes, and other work.[57]

Transportation, Communication, and Commerce

Van's historical importance was largely a product of its position on the traditional natural highways that connected Erivan, Bitlis, Tabriz, and Mosul. Without this geographic situation or the presence of a great lake, the economic role of Van (with its mountainous terrain and awful winter climate) would have been negligible. Because of its location, however, Van had been the center of the caravan trade for centuries. Although two other caravan roads passed between the Ottoman Empire and Iran (from Diyarbakır in the south and Erzurum in the north), the most important route was the Trabzon–Erzurum–Van–Iran road, which reached Istanbul and Europe by way of the Black Sea. The north–south road between the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf (Batum–Erivan–Van–Çölemerik [Hakkâri]–Mosul–Baghdad) crossed the Trabzon–Iran road in Van. Van also had direct connections to the west and on to the Mediterranean, through Bitlis and Siirt and (in winter when snows closed the passes between Van and Bitlis) southwest to Diyarbakır.[58]

TABLE 2.6. Industrial (Craft) Production in Van Province (excluding Hakkâri), ca. 1890.

ITEM	WORKSHOPS	WORKERS	PRODUCTION	PRODUCTION EXPORTED	TOTAL VALUE (LIRA)
Cloth (inexpensive wool and cotton)	900	2,200	90,000	20,500	17,000
Clothing (made from wool and cotton)	100	300	6,000	200	11,000
Mohair Shawls	90	270	6,000	2,000	2,400
Mohair Clothing	45	135	3,000	200	3,600
Taffeta	10	20	600	—	1,200
Taffeta Women's Clothing	5	10	300	—	1,500
Kurdish Kilims	—	—	15,000	5,000	12,000
Stockings (pairs)	—	—	10,000	1,000	200
Saddles (leather)	50	100	2,000	200	800
Gold, Jewelry	100	200	5,000	1,500	6,500
Pottery	60	60	300,000	24,000	1,500
Other	—	—	—	—	3,400

Source: Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, vol. 2 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1891), p. 677.

Despite its position, Van never rose to become a great transportation hub. A combination of long, cold winters, the need to cross mountain passes, and narrow roads made the province ill-fitted for nineteenth-century commerce. By the second half of the nineteenth century other routes had superseded the traditional roads through Van. According to Cuinet, at the end of the nineteenth century there were steamboats on Lake Van, but this only provided a small improvement for a bad transportation situation. Road travel between Van and Bitlis took four days, whereas the same journey would have taken one and a half days on a good road. The trip from Van to Muş, which would have taken two days on a proper road, took five days. Erzurum was seven days away, not the five days it might have been. Moreover, travelers feared attacks by bandits and tribes. Cuinet estimated that transportation deficiencies quadrupled the cost of commercial transport: transporting 120 pounds of goods the 363 kilometers between Van and Erzurum cost 200 *kuruş*, whereas on a better, safer road it would have cost 50.[59] In the years between Cuinet's publication (1891) and World War I the government made significant strides in

TABLE 2.7. Exports of Van Province (excluding Hakkâri), ca. 1890.

ITEM	AMOUNT	VALUE (LIRA)
Sheep	100,000 head	60,000
Goats	2,000 head	400
Oxen, Cows	5,000 head	10,000
Horses	1,000 head	5,000
Donkeys	500 head	750
Wool	60,000 okka	3,000
Taffeta	30,000 okka	3,000
Animal Skins	20,000 okka	1,200
Barley and Wheat	2,960 hectoliters	10,000
Borax	10,000 kg	100
Taffeta Shawls	2,000 pieces	800
Butter	5,000 okka	400
Dried Grapes	50,000 okka	750
Flax	5,000 okka	100
Flax Oil	1,500 okka	150
Walnuts	20,000 okka	600
Kilims	5,000 pieces	4,000
Buds	—	1,000
Serge	500 pieces	200
Stockings	1,000 pairs	20
Gemstones	—	1,500
Van Cloth	10,000 pieces	1,500
Clothing	400 pieces	660
Tobacco	400,000 okka	14,000
Fish	—	400
Saddles	200 pieces	80
Fur, Pelts	—	1,140
Total		120,750

Source: Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, vol. 2 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1891), p. 679.

TABLE 2.8. Imports of Van Province (excluding Hakkâri), ca. 1890.

ORIGIN	GOODS	VALUE (LIRA)
Trabzon	Cotton goods, calico, woolen cloth, iron, "French cottons" (from Austria), black flannel, black satin, hand-dyed cloth, woolen goods, various silks, sugar, coffee, tea, iron bars, iron plates, pots and pans, steel, tin, copper, lead, candles, alcohol, spices, cigarette paper, matches, porcelain glass materials, window glass, and others	77,680
Russia	Petrol, silk, samovars, woolen goods, faience/tile/porcelain	2,000
Aleppo and Antep	Striped cloth, calico, muslin, blue silk thread, Indian cotton, silk and cotton cloth, Hama belts, handkerchiefs, hand-dyed cloth, copper, cochineal	23,890
Diyarbakır	Sheets, silk caps, various cotton goods, sesame, olive oil, okra, melon seeds, used copper, raisins, madder, walnuts, watermelons, figs, coarse woolen cloth, shawls, woolen belts/sashes, tanned sheep hides	2,458
Erzurum	Tokat dyed cloth, Riga cloth, horseshoe nails, stirrups, halters, reins, girths, foils and rapiers, iron chains/fetters, copper pots and pans	5,495
Bitlis	Walnuts, dried fruits, anise, firewood, charcoal, tar, red cotton goods, marble	3,255
Iran	Raw cotton, rice, dried fruit, tobacco (*tömbek*), shawls, rugs/kilims, silken goods, Indian cottons, alum, henna, adhesive/gum/resin, sheep	31,434
Siirt	Raisins, madder, walnuts, dates, figs, watermelons, coarse woolen cloth, shawls, belts, sheep skins/leather	2,380
Total		148,592

Source: Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, vol. 2 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1891), pp. 680–84.

road-building in Eastern Anatolia. As in so many areas, however, a lack of funds kept most needed improvements from being made. A railroad connection would have been necessary, and Van was low on the list for the Ottomans' limited capability to build railroads.

Cuinet wrote that Van City had one telegraph station that transmitted international telegrams in Turkish or French and three stations that sent internal telegrams in Turkish. The entire Van Province contained eight telegraph stations: six internal and two international.[60]

According to Cuinet, the exports of Van Province (including Hakkâri, not shown in table 2.8) in 1890 were 165,750 lira;[61] its imports were 171,992 lira, a "balance of payments" deficit of 6,242 lira.[62] By far the most valu-

able exports were animals and animal products, followed by agricultural products, then cloth, clothing, and textiles. Van was a fine example of the raw material/handcraft–producing, finished goods–importing economic regimen.

Table 2.8 shows that about half of Van's imports came from Trabzon. These were often (probably mainly) goods from other countries, transshipped in Istanbul. It should be noted that these imports were not capital goods to be used in Van manufacturing. They were mainly consumer goods, the "extras" that make life livable (coffee, tea, sugar, cigarette paper, etc.).

The government listed 110 boats that plied Lake Van at the turn of the century. Officials wanted to increase the lake trade, and the government was planning a shipyard and new docks and facilities. The boats were small by seagoing standards,[63] but they were important in carrying passengers and bulk goods. The main boat piers were at Adilcevaz on the lake's west coast and at İskeleköy, the port of Van City, on the east. Most of the boat owners were Armenians.[64]

Conclusion

The proper word to describe the economic and educational life of Van is "poor." Van's poverty was largely a function of geography. The province had no seacoast, no long navigable rivers, and mountainous terrain that made road travel difficult. Winter snows, which would have closed even good roads, could last six months. There was also the significant question of what would be traded, even if conditions had been better. Van's natural trading partners were Iran and Russia. The Russian economy, though, funneled the goods of Transcaucasia north to the Russian heartland. And what was available in Iran for lucrative trade with Van? The goods in western Iran were essentially the same as the goods in Van. Political conditions (described in chapter 3) surely played a part in Van's poverty. Economic development rests on settled political conditions, and Van's situation was anything but settled.

Notes

1. Van Vilâyeti, *Van Vilâyeti Salnamesi, 1315, Birinci Defa* (Van: Matbaa-i Vilâyet, 1315), p. 207.

2. For descriptions, see Anahide Ter Minassian, "Ermeni Kaynaklarına Göre Yüzyıl Başında Van," in *Modernleşme Sürecinde Osmanlı Kentleri*, ed. Paul Dumont and François Georgeon, trans. Ali Berktay (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1992), pp. 117–18

(Turkish translation; original: Paul Dumont and François Georgeon, eds., *Villes ottomanes à la fin de l'Empire* [Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992]). Dickran Kouymjian, "Visual Accounts of Van through Travel Accounts," and Anahide Ter Minassian, "The City of Van at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in *Armenian Van/Vaspurakan,* ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2000), pp. 153–93.

3. On the terrible famine of 1878–80, see Great Britain, National Archives, FO 195/1315, Clayton to Trotter, Van, February 2, 1880. Some describe the famine as continuing through 1881.

4. FO 195/2283, Dickson to O'Conor, Van, February 9, 1908; Ter Minassian, "Ermeni Kaynaklarına Göre," pp. 120–22.

5. Orhan Kılıç, *XVI. ve XVII. Yüzyıllarda Van, 1548–1648* (Van: Van Belediye Başkanlığı, 1997), pp. 255–66.

6. Dahiliye Nezâreti, Sicil-i Nüfus İdare-yi Umumiyesi Müdüriyeti, *Memalik-i Osmaniye'nin 1330 Senesi Nüfus İstatistiği* (Istanbul: Dahiliye Nezâreti, 1336 Mali). The city's population was undoubtedly better registered.

7. Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie,* vol. 2 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1891), p. 700. Sami Bey (Frasheri), the compiler of the most complete Ottoman geographical dictionary, *Kamusülalam,* vol. 6 (Istanbul: Mihran, 1316), seems to have taken his figures from Cuinet, or else both quoted the same official resource. Sami was an Ottoman official who probably had access to the figures. Interestingly, Armenian sources do not ever seem to have listed Jews among the city's inhabitants, although they were surely present.

8. For comparison, the Van summer and winter temperatures were approximately the same as those of Kiev.

9. Las Vegas, Nevada, had three times as much rainfall in the month of August. London and Paris had twenty times as much.

10. This is partly true even today. Large buildings are constructed on the sides of roads over mountain passes in Van Province so that travelers will not freeze to death if caught in a sudden storm. Railroad trains have special long tunnels cut into mountainsides leading nowhere; trains are pulled into them to escape blizzards.

11. The vast majority of the Kurds were Muslims, although there were also Christians, Jews, and heterodox Muslims who were attached to tribes or were even members of tribes.

12. These descriptions are based on Mark Sykes, "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 38 (July to December 1908): 451–86. For the general situation of the tribes, see Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books, 1992), and "Kurdish Tribes and the State of Iran: The Case of Simko's Revolt," in *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan,* ed. Richard Tapper (New York: St. Martin's, 1983).

13. See especially chapters 4 and 5 for numerous mentions of this.

14. See chapter 7.

15. The Barzani are the exception. The tribe was not particularly large, but its şeyh had a religious following that transcended tribal boundaries. This made them a threat to the Ottoman state and to other states even today. See chapter 7.

16. The primary sources for map 2.4 are a book by F. R. Maunsell, a military officer, British consul at Van, and a first-class spy (*Military Report on Eastern Turkey in Asia: Compiled for the Intelligence Division of the War Office* [London: War Office, 1894]), and Sykes,

"The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire." They were compared to the 1-250,000 Maunsell maps drawn up for the British War Office, which include tribes. It is impossible to evaluate the accuracy of these designations because of changing tribal holdings and affiliations and especially because World War I altered the entire situation. We realize that the Kurdish tribes today often go under different names and even inhabit different territory. The larger ones remain. With some exceptions, spellings of the names used here follow used by Mark Sykes.

17. Ter Minassian, "Ermeni Kaynaklarına Göre," p. 131, and "The City of Van," p. 188.

18. See table 2.3. See also Robert H. Hewsen, " 'Van in This World; Paradise in the Next': The Historical Geography of Van/Vaspurakan," in *Armenian Van/Vaspurakan*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2000), p. 37.

19. There were two patriarchs during the period of this study, Ruwil Shimun XX (1860–1903) and Binyamin Shimun XXI (1903–18).

20. Consuls often remarked on the seasonal migration of these Nestorians, particularly noting that Nestorians made a good living as wandering holy men in the Russian Empire.

21. The largest group of Nestorian converts, the Chaldeans, were Uniate Catholics living to the south, in the Tigris Valley. They had little or no part in the history of events in Van Province.

22. Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 636.

23. According to the annual reports of the American Board in 1910 and 1911, George C. Raynolds was the head of the Van station. He was responsible for general work. His wife, Mrs. Martha W. Raynolds, was responsible for women's work and rug making as a part of industrial work. Clarence D. Ussher was responsible for medical work. His wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Ussher, was responsible for lace making as a part of industrial work and for women's work. Ernest A. Yarrow was station treasurer, responsible for general work, and superintendent of the Boys' High School. Mrs. Martha T. Yarrow taught in the Boys' School. Miss E. Gertrude Rogers and Miss Caroline Siliman were together responsible for the Girls' High School and Boarding School: Rogers was responsible for the High and Intermediate Departments and Siliman responsible for the Primary and Kindergarten Departments. Miss Grisell M. McLaren was responsible for general evangelistic work for women, including touring the region (*The One Hundredth Annual Report of ABCFM* [American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions] *Together with the Minutes of the Centenary Meeting Held at Boston Oct. 11–14, 1910* [Boston: American Board, 1911]; and *The One Hundred and First Annual Report of ABCFM Together with the Minutes of the Meeting Held at Milwaukee, Oct. 10–13, 1911* [Boston: American Board, 1912]).

24. "We have come to believe that there are a good many converted Christians in the old church, even beyond the limits of our personal acquaintance" (ABC [American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, Harvard University] 16.9.7, Eastern Turkey Mission, 1910–1919, Documents, vol. 25a, no. 123, "Annual Report of Van Station for the Year 1910").

25. Depending on the country, these were considered either consulates or vice-consulates. In practice, the difference between the two was negligible. Beginning in the 1890s the British vice-consul, for example, routinely reported directly to the embassy in Istanbul, just as a consul would have done, not through the consulate in Erzurum. Non-British sources routinely referred to the British vice-consul at Van as "consul." To

avoid confusion, the vice-consuls at Van are referred to here as "consul," unless their proper title is essential to the meaning of the material.

26. ABC 16.9.7, Eastern Turkey Mission, 1910–1919, Documents, vol. 25a, no. 269, "American and German Missions in Turkey"; ABC 16.9.8, Eastern Turkey Mission, Woman's Board, vol. 01, Eastern Turkey, 1903–1909, Letters, no. 18; Otto Kley, "Der Deutsche Bildungseinfluss in der Türkei," *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Orients* 14 (1917): 43. They had not yet begun teaching in 1910 (Grace H. Knapp, *Mission at Van* [privately published, 1916], p. 12; Clarence D. Ussher, *An American Physician in Turkey* [Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917], p. 211).

27. Unless otherwise indicated, agricultural and horticultural comparisons in this section are drawn from Orman ve Maden ve Ziraat Nezâreti, Kalem-i Mahsus Müdüriyeti İstatistik Şübesi, *1325 Senesi Asya ve Afrika-yı Osmanı Ziraat İstatistiği* (Istanbul: Matbaa-yı Osmani, 1327 Mali). These statistics for Van can only be considered broad indicators, not in any way precise. For per capita comparisons, production/total population = per capita production.

28. Grapes, grape juice, and raisin production were always important in Van. Orhan Kılıç found in tax records from the early seventeenth century that Van City Muslim vineyards produced 200,000 bunches of grapes and non-Muslim vineyards produced 400,000 (Kılıç, *XVI. ve XVII. Yuzyıllarda Van, 1548–1648,* pp. 274–79). The Christians and Jews could legally drink wine; the Muslims could not.

29. What the Ottoman statistician called "wine" may have included a large amount of what should be called grape juice and grape syrup. Like other crops, grapes would have to be stored in a less perishable form, as raisins and wine.

30. Production is listed here by type and by quantity, as given in the 1876 yearbook (*Salname-i Vilâyet-i Erzurum, 1293 Hicri Senesi* [Erzurum: Erzurum Vilâyeti Matbaası, 1293], pp. 152–55). The *1325 Ziraat İstatistiği* indicates that tobacco was a considerable crop. Per capita production was very high, comparable to that of the Western Anatolian provinces.

31. The 1876 yearbook listed 14,600 bulls, 46,400 cows, and 34,550 calves in Van. That number had changed very little by 1910 (*1325 Ziraat İstatistiği*).

32. "The price of bread in Van has been and continues to be 60 paras an oke [*okka,* approximately 2.8 pounds or 1.28 kilograms], which is extremely high, and this has had a very serious effect on the poorer classes. It is mainly owing to the habit of all Armenians who have a little money investing it in wheat, which they hoard until they can force prices still higher. They seem quite regardless of the consequences of such action on their poorer compatriots. A public-spirited Turk, Jemal Bey, has opened a baker's shop and is selling bread at 45 paras, therebye tending to force down prices, but his action is too isolated to have much effect" (FO 195/2082, Maunsell to O'Conor, Van, May 2, 1900).

33. Reports of poor harvests and famine are to be found throughout the diplomatic literature. See, for example, FO 195/1315, Clayton to Trotter, Van, February 2, 1880; FO 195/2063, Maunsell to O'Conor, Van, December 29, 1899; FO 195/2063, Maunsell to O'Conor, Van, February 20, 1899; FO 424/198, Maunsell to O'Conor, Van, February 21, 1899; FO 424/208, Tyrrell to O'Conor, Van, January 10, 1905.

34. At least one British consul felt that Kurds often suffered worse than Armenians from famine (FO 195/1315, Clayton to Trotter, Van, May 25, 1880).

35. FO 195/2063, Maunsell to O'Conor, Van, April 10, 1899.

36. On education in Van, see the extensive, if somewhat jaundiced, analysis of act-

ing consul H. H. Lamb in FO 195/1521, Van, December 23, 1885, "Report on the State of Public Instruction in the Vilayet of Van."

37. Ter Minassian, "Ermeni Kaynaklarına Göre," p. 132.

38. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the U.S. Census Bureau.

39. *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1316 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire), pp. 1210–11.

40. Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 655. It should be noted that Cuinet tended to overstate the numbers and influence of Uniate Catholics such as the Chaldeans, of whom there were very few in Van Province.

41. *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1317 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur*, pp. 1428–29, and *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1318 sene-i hicriyesine* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1317 and 1318), pp. 1598–1601.

42. *Salname-i Vilâyet-i Erzurum, 1288 Hicri Senesi* (Erzurum: Erzurum Vilâyeti Matbaası, 1289), p. 148; *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1316 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur*, pp. 1256–57.

43. *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1317 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur*, pp. 1422–24.

44. See Ter Minassian, "Ermeni Kaynaklarına Göre," p. 132.

45. ABC 16.9.7, Eastern Turkey Mission, 1910–1919, Documents, vol. 25a, no. 116, "Report of Village Work in the Van Station Field, Eastern Turkey Mission, 1910."

46. *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1317 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur*, pp. 1430–31; *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1318 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur*, pp. 1598–99.

47. Ter Minassian, "The City of Van," p. 192; Rubina Peroomian, "The Heritage of Van Provincial Literature," in *Armenian Van/Vaspurakan*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2000), pp. 133–52.

48. See Nairy Hampikian, "The Architectural Heritage of Vaspurakan and the Preservation of Memory Layers," and Peroomian, "The Heritage of Van Provincial Literature," in *Armenian Van/Vaspurakan*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2000), pp. 87–116 and 133–52.

49. Ter Minassian, "The City of Van," pp. 191–92.

50. *Salname-i Nezaret-i Maarif-i Umumiye, 1317 sene-i hicriyesine mahsustur*, pp. 1428–29.

51. Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, pp. 659–60, 663–64; Van Vilâyeti, *Van Vilâyeti Salnamesi, 1315*, p. 210.

52. The descriptions of the size of these forests indicate that no survey had ever been taken. The Gevaş forest was "three hours long and half an hour wide," the Karçekan forest "four hours long and two hours wide," referring to the time taken to walk across them.

53. *Salname-i Vilâyet-i Erzurum, 1288 Hicri Senesi*, pp. 166–81.

54. Kılıç, *XVI. ve XVII. Yuzyıllarda Van, 1548–1648*, pp. 281–86.

55. The word "shawl" is somewhat deceptive. These shawls were not what would be considered a shawl today, a mainly decorative article of apparel. They were large, warm, and used by both sexes.

56. For lists of goods produced, see Van Vilâyeti, *Van Vilâyeti Salnamesi, 1315*, pp. 154–55; *Salname-i Vilâyet-i Erzurum, 1288 Hicri Senesi*, pp. 161–62.

57. *Van Vilâyeti Salnamesi, 1315*, pp. 154–55.

58. Kılıç, *XVI. ve XVII. Yuzyıllarda Van, 1548–1648*, pp. 286–88.

59. Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie,* pp. 674–75.

60. Ibid., pp. 634–35. International (Turkish and French): Van and Başkale; internal (Turkish only): Van, Erciş, Vosdan, Karçekan, Çölemerik, Dizi, Mahmudi.

61. Ibid., p. 216. Again, Cuinet's figures here and elsewhere should only be taken as general estimates, not exact figures.

62. Ibid., pp. 679 and 684. This includes Hakkâri Sancak, for which Cuinet gave separate figures, because it was at the time separated administratively from Van. Again Cuinet's figures, here and elsewhere, should only be taken as general estimates, not exact figures.

63. The boats had an average capacity of 10–15 tons.

64. Van Vilâyeti, *Van Vilâyeti Salnamesi, 1315,* p. 157; Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie,* pp. 668–71.