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**The Armenian Question as Reflected in Hungarian
Sources,
1848–1939**

**A Hungarian Perspective on the History of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in the
19th and 20th Centuries**

Theses of the Doctoral Dissertation

Doctoral School of History

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Theses

I. Background and aims of the research

In recent decades the Armenian Question and the tragedy that befell the Armenians during World War I have become major areas of historical research. The events of the period, which until the 1950s had been known only from Franz Werfel's novel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, drew greater attention after the adoption, in 1948, of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Although the first scholarly works were published at that time, it was only in the 1970–80s that research on the topic gathered real momentum, doing so mostly for political reasons. On the one hand, in Soviet-controlled Armenia commemorations of World War I were permitted for the first time in 1965, whereafter the Soviet leadership began to support the territorial demands of the Armenians against Turkey and their efforts to secure a revision of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). The attention of international public opinion and historical researchers was drawn to the topic following the attacks of the Armenian terror organisations (ASALA, JCOAG) on Turkish diplomats, resulting in more detailed research and analysis. In response to works by Western authors describing the events of World War I as genocide, Turkish authors – enjoying substantial support from the state – began publishing works on a similar theme that portrayed the tragedy of the Armenians as part of a program of forced expulsion conducted in line with customary Ottoman practice and explained by the treachery of the empire's Armenian population. Ever since then, an ideological struggle has been underway between “Western” and “Turkish” interpretations of events, although it should be mentioned that there are several Western researchers who support the Turkish position as well as some Turkish researchers who support the Western view. At the same time, on this matter Turkey – as an ally of the West – could count on the support of the United States and the European countries until the 1990s. In the decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, many of the country's former allies (as well as its adversaries) legally recognised the events of 1915-1917 as genocide.

Meanwhile, in Hungary this aspect of World War I received scant attention, although in the period leading up to World War II several interesting works on the subject were published by Attila Orbók, Eghia Hovhannesian, János Bodurian and Dénes Korbuly. After many decades of silence, research on the topic expanded after the political changes of 1989/90, and this trend has strengthened in recent years, thanks in large part to the work of such distinguished researchers and writers as Kornél Nagy, Mihály Dobrovits, Bálint Kovács, Péter Kránitz, Éva Merenics, Piroska Krajcsír, Anna Birkás and István Flesch (although few of these authors made use of sources in Hungarian).

The dissertation starts from the premise that, although the so-called Armenian Question and the tragedy of the Armenians in World War I have been at the forefront – and in the crossfire – of historical research, the relevant Hungarian sources have never been explored fully. Thus, two goals were defined: 1. to present, in summary fashion, the evolution of the Armenian Question based on the international scholarly literature while also providing the background information necessary for an understanding of the Hungarian sources; 2. to explore and present the sources in Hungarian that arose in the period 1848–1939 and which relate to the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire, while confirming the information gleaned through other sources where possible. A Hungarian perspective may, in addition, be of interest, in view of the historical co-existence (Hungarians living side by side with both Turks and Armenians), which led Hungarian public opinion – and the shapers of public opinion – to feel strong sympathy both towards the Armenians and towards the Turks. While the Hungarian sources do not, and cannot, give the kind of comprehensive picture of events offered by the German, American, Austrian, and French sources (or those of the other major powers), the former can be used to supplement and confirm – or perhaps refute – the latter, thereby contributing to the international discourse on this issue. Finally, it should be underlined that the dissertation seeks to step outside the polarised framework of genocide versus forced expulsion. For this reason and in line with usage in the post-WWI Hungarian sources, the events are referred to as the massacres of Armenians, whereby the aim is not to relativize or deny the suffering of the Armenian population but – in place of the legal battle over words – to concentrate on the causes and consequences identifiable in the sources.

II. Research topic and methodology, structure of the dissertation

The research proceeded from the assumption that numerous Hungarian politicians, soldiers, travellers, churchmen, adventurers and ordinary members of the public visited or

temporarily resided in the Ottoman Empire between the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution (and war of liberation) of 1848–1849 and World War II, and that in line with the customs of the period these individuals have left us diaries, travelogues and memoirs of their experiences. They also wrote letters, newspaper articles and sometimes even secret reports detailing their observations and touching upon the issue under investigation. All these sources offer excellent opportunities to gain insights into the everyday functioning of the empire and the situation of its religious minorities. Research of the documents was undertaken steadily over a period of years, with each source leading to further sources. Most of the diaries, memoirs and travelogues have been published, and so the easier part of the research work was accessing the various sources and selecting those parts that relate to the Armenian inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire. Much of the work in this field took place in the National Széchényi Library (Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, OSZK) or in its Manuscript Collection (Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Kézirattára, OSZKK). A more difficult task was research on the sources and material stemming from Hungarians working for foreign governments: the secret correspondence of Ármin Vámbéry was found among the Foreign Office records at the UK National Archives, while the reports of Hungarian clerics in World War I were discovered at the Archives of the Kalocsa Archdiocese (Kalocsai Főegyházmegyei Levéltár, KFL) and at the Austrian State Archives (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, ÖstA HHStA); the papers and records of the Hungarian Scientific Institute in Constantinople were mostly found at the Hungarian National Archives (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, MNL MOL), which is also the location of the post-WWI Hungarian diplomatic correspondence. In addition, I also found relevant material at the Hungarian Military Archives (Hadtörténeti Levéltár, HL), in the manuscript collection of ELTE University Library and Archive (ELTE Egyetemi Könyvtár és Levéltár Kézirattára), at the Library of the Hungarian Parliament (Országgyűlési Könyvtár), and in a private collection. Finally, but importantly, I also undertook research at the Ottoman Archives (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, BOA) and Republican Archives (Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi, BCA) of the Turkish Prime Minister's Office, where I discovered documents relating to the Hungarian travellers and to several aspects of the Armenian Question that impacted on Turkish–Hungarian relations. A basic criterion when selecting the sources was that they should stem from Hungarian authors and should be – where possible – in Hungarian; exceptions were made in only a few cases. The aim was to achieve the inclusion in the international discourse of Hungarian sources that have hitherto been overlooked by scholars.

The dissertation comprises eight chapters and twenty-three subchapters. The first (introductory) chapter presents the historiography of the Armenian Question with a short summary of Hungarian and international research on the topic. Chapter 2 examines the general situation of minorities in the Ottoman Empire, focussing upon the case of the Armenians. Chapter 3 comprises five subchapters presenting – by means of the contemporary Hungarian descriptive accounts – the Armenian church, Armenian society, the rural Armenian population, the place of the Armenians in Ottoman-Turkish society, and the Armenian political movement. Chapter 4 investigates 19th-century events in the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of the Armenian Question, the peace negotiations following the 1877–78 Russo-Ottoman War, and the formation of the Armenian revolutionary organisations. The bloody events and first anti-Armenian pogroms of the 1890s are also presented in this chapter, by way of Ármin Vámbéry's reports. The next chapter (Chapter 5) examines the political movement of the Young Turks, the constitutional revolution of 1908, the “counter-revolution”, the Adana Incident, and finally the policies of the Turkish and Armenian political parties prior to WWI. Chapter 6 examines more broadly Turkey's entry into WWI as well as Hungarian reports on the massacres of Armenians. Chapter 7 presents the general Turkish political situation in the post-WWI period, the aftershocks of the Armenian massacres, and the residual traces of Armenian influence within the Republic of Turkey. The final chapter (Chapter 8) summarises the main findings of the dissertation and puts forward a conclusion.

III. Major results

In the first half of the dissertation my aim was to present the historical context of the Armenian Question. Thus, the place of the Armenian minority within the *millet* system that shaped the life of the religious communities in the Ottoman Empire is explained and observations are made concerning the systemic changes to the system known as the *Tanzimat* reforms. Here, I approached the period from the assumption that, with the appearance of the nationality (ethnic) movements and with the growing independence of the Balkan countries, the Armenians living in Istanbul and in other major cities could occupy increasingly prestigious positions in the state apparatus, while some of the Armenian merchants and moneychangers accumulated significant wealth. Concurrently, the Armenian *millet* political struggle also arose, amid the conditions and opportunities of the period. The process was

concluded with the adoption of the Armenian constitution of 1863. At the same time, living conditions for the peasants, who made up the larger part of the Armenian population, were just as difficult and impoverished as they had been in earlier centuries. Moreover, the missionary work of the Great Powers in the eastern parts of the empire coupled with Tsarist Russia's military and ideological expansionism, encouraged a growing number of Armenians to take a stand against the lack of public security in rural areas and the corruption of the local bureaucracies. At the same time, the Armenians failed to preserve their unity: alongside the juxtaposition of rich and poor, urban and rural, the Armenian Apostolic Church also had to accept a loss of power with the appearance of the newly formed Armenian Catholic Church and the emergence of the Protestant denominations. To prove the above findings, I used primarily the reports and diaries of refugees from the Hungarian revolution and war of independence of 1848–1849 as well as the memoirs of Hungarian travellers and researchers who visited the Ottoman Empire. Here, I note that the refugees who fled Hungary at the time of the war of independence – which had ended in tragedy for the country – offer a special opportunity to researchers of the period: in the 19th century, few foreign nations were represented in such numbers in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the social status, level of education and family backgrounds of members of the Hungarian “colony” in Istanbul were very heterogeneous. Thus, we gain insights into everyday Turkish life in the 1850–1880s from the perspective of Catholics and Protestants, priests and physicians, government ministers and ordinary horse grooms. These features render the Hungarian descriptions unique even in international terms. Although Hungarian historians have fully investigated these accounts, I am the first researcher to analyse the information contained therein that relates to the Armenians. From the former prime minister Bertalan Szemere, who visited the Ottoman capital, to Gedeon Ács, who lived in exile in Kütahya, to István Nogel and Imre Frivaldszky, who collected insects on the fields of Bursa, to János Pap and Józsa Orosházi, who observed close-up the problems of rural life, I succeeded in analysing the recollections of many refugees, confirming or adding nuance to the known opportunities and life courses of Armenians in both urban and rural areas. The Hungarians confirm in full that the Armenian moneylenders, small and great merchants, and intellectuals living in the capital city and other major urban centres had successfully integrated themselves into mainstream society and that, by the second half of the century, they had overtaken the Turks (in terms of wealth and status). The reasons for this were, on the one hand, their willingness to adapt and their relatively higher level of education and, on the other, their contacts abroad, including the growing level of support received from the great powers (which, of course, were seeking to

promote their own interests). In contrast, the rural Armenian peasants, who made up nearly two-thirds of the total Armenian population in the empire, waged an ongoing struggle against the local authorities and against their nomadic Kurdish and Circassian neighbours, on account of whom they were forced into a double tax trap. The struggle intensified after the 1856 reforms granting equality to the Christian population and following the removal of the Kurdish leader, Bedirhan Bey (Bedr Khan Bey), who had controlled the eastern regions. The discontent mounted as destitute refugees from the lost Ottoman territories were resettled in the eastern part of the country. As the land issue (its short supply) grew more acute, many Armenians left their former dwelling places and sought refuge in the major cities or even in the Russian territories. All these developments – problems already known to scholars – were confirmed by the Hungarian writers, who also offered new information on the problems surrounding the coexistence of Turks and Armenians. For instance, they mentioned the prejudice that could be observed towards Christians. Even so, until the end of the 1880s the Ottoman state considered the Armenians to be the most loyal nationality within the empire (*millet-i sâdıka*) and tended to address the problems arising as a matter of domestic politics.

Within the broader framework of the *Eastern Question* (i.e. the Ottoman Empire's gradual disintegration and its probable effects), the internationalisation of the Armenian Question occurred at the time of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, during which Russian troops decisively defeated the Turkish army. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1874) and the final acts of the Congress of Berlin (i.e. the Treaty of Berlin, 1878) made first mention of the situation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, whom the Ottoman government was now obliged to defend from attacks perpetrated by Kurd and Circassian bandits and who, from this time onwards, became a pawn in the games of the great powers, whose aim was to undermine the Ottomans. Still, some Armenians – having seen the successful independence struggles waged by the Balkan countries – were dissatisfied with the achievements and began to form armed revolutionary organisations. I used the secret letters sent to the British Foreign Office by the famous Hungarian orientalist Ármin Vámbéry to expound on the ethnic strife of the 1890s and on the Armenian–Turkish confrontation that culminated in widespread bloodshed in 1894–96. Here, I proceeded from the assumption that Vámbéry had good knowledge of both the Turkish and the British sides, a fact that renders his letters important period documents. Furthermore, the letters contain the personal statements of Sultan Abdulhamid II. While Vámbéry's opinion of the sultan grew steadily worse in response to the bloodshed, the Hungarian orientalist and researcher correctly saw how the great powers were playing games behind the scenes and issued a warning about the likely consequences of their actions. In the

meantime, the Armenian revolutionary organisations – principally the Hunchaks – sought to elicit an intervention by the great powers by holding spectacular protests and by inciting the Ottoman authorities to commit violence. However, nothing was gained apart from empty promises from the Western countries and bloody retribution on the part of the Ottoman authorities. Alongside the information provided by Vámbéry, the memoirs of Gyula Germanus, Ferenc Herczeg and Sándor Bródy as well as the material preserved in the Ottoman archives relating to the official complaints made by Austria-Hungary, show how the Istanbul pogroms had been well organised in advance and had even impacted upon nationals of the great powers residing in the Ottoman capital. After the conclusion of this period – during which at least 60,000 Armenians lost their lives – passions abated, but feelings of mutual distrust remained. To secure its aims, the Armenians’ strongest organisation, the Dashnaktsutyun, dispensed with the protests and began to support the Young Turks, who were conspiring against the sultan, as well as smaller armed insurgent groups.

Although the Young Turks began their political struggle against the absolutism of Sultan Abdulhamid II in the late 1880s, the struggle bore meaningful fruit only in the first decade of the 20th century. Here my hypothesis was that the Turkish opposition movement cooperated closely with the Armenian organisations working against the sultan. Both before and during the constitutional revolution of 1908, which resulted from clandestine activity in which Gyula Germanus also played a part, there was indeed close cooperation between the Turkish and Armenian political parties and armed organisations, although the Armenians carried out a failed bomb attack against the sultan in 1905. All this showed that cooperation between the Committee (later Party) of Union and Progress, which placed the emphasis on the centralisation of the empire and on the cohesive power of Turkish nationalism, and the Armenian parties, which sought the decentralisation of the empire and autonomy for the Armenian-inhabited areas, would only be sincere until the defeat of the common enemy. All these suppositions are confirmed by the diaries of Imre Karácson (a Hungarian archivist deployed to Istanbul), Miklós Horthy (captain of the Taurus vessel), and Pál Farkas. The memoirs provide detailed information about the course of the revolution in Istanbul, the initial delight and confidence of the people, the gradual decline in popularity, and finally the “counter-revolution” that was the result of the joint efforts of the liberal opposition and the Mohammedan Union. This information clearly adds nuance to what used to be the general view (namely that the “counter-revolution” was exclusively the work of Abdulhamid II), and it also provides evidence that some anti-Armenian incidents had already taken place. The reports submitted by Karácson and Germanus contain specific instances of this, just as the

Adana Incident echoed this. The violence, which had its roots in regional problems and – even more so – in the failure to resolve the land issue, was put down in the space of weeks, but for the Armenians it was a sign of tough times ahead. After the failure of the “counter-revolution” political cooperation was resumed – albeit with varying intensity and sincerity – between the Committee of Union and Progress, which governed from behind the scenes, and the Dashnaktsutyun. At the same time, the upsurge in Turkish nationalism, the gradual displacement of non-Turkish merchants in accordance with the goals of the national economy, and the establishment of armed groups (e.g. the Special Organisation, or *Teşkilat-i Mahsusa*, which was regarded as the CUP’s fist) led to an ever-widening gap between the Turkish and Armenian political parties. The final break came on the outbreak of WWI, but the critical signs were already evident in 1913.

It was at this time that a resolution of the Armenian Question reappeared on the agenda of the great powers, representing a further blow to the Ottoman Empire after its losses in the Balkan Wars and in Libya. By 1914, it had been agreed that the eastern provinces inhabited partly by Armenians should be divided into two major territorial units, with each unit being supervised by a Christian inspector-general with an international mandate. Major Nicolas Hoff, general-secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of War, was selected to head the region formed through the merger of the vilayets of Erzurum, Trabzon and Sivas, while Louis Westenenk, a former representative of the Dutch East Indies Society, was chosen to head the region comprising the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Mamüret-ül-Aziz (Harput) and Diyarbakır. However, war broke out before the two men could take up their posts, whereupon they departed from the empire.

In connection with WWI, it should be emphasised that it was not the aim of dissertation to analyse in detail the massacre of the Armenians that began on April 24, 1915. Indeed, this could not have been its aim, for sources in Hungarian describing all the details are not available. Moreover, it would have been a meaningless undertaking, in view of the extensive international scholarly attention received by the topic and the prior publication of Western and Turkish sources relating to the issue. Consequently, this part of the dissertation presents a cross section of events by focussing on four groups of sources: the task of Lipót Mosony, who was selected by Lajos Thallóczy and sent to Istanbul in 1914, was to continue the archival research begun by Karácson; in 1915 the secular priests Mihály Kmoskó and Pál T. Schrotty were given the task of assisting the orphaned Catholic missions in the east and preparing for the establishment – in Jerusalem and Istanbul – of a Hungarian pilgrims hostel and scientific institute, while in late 1916 the Hungarian Scientific Institute was formed at the initiation of Kunó Klebersberg. As the fourth element but subject to completely different considerations,

in the autumn of 1915 the first Austro–Hungarian artillery units arrived in the territory of the Ottoman Empire. The main question relating to WWI events was whether the Turkish government implemented a pre-planned course of action against the Armenians and whether its aim was to annihilate the Armenian population or whether it was reacting to a wartime situation, whereby its responses gave rise to the situation.

The most important group of sources is linked to the name of the secular priest Lipót Mosony, who was commissioned to undertake research in the Ottoman archives and lived in the Ottoman capital from 1914 until 1916. In his reports published in *Katholikus Szemle* (Catholic Review) and in *Alkotmány* (Constitution), also a Catholic publication, Mosony describes in detail the unfolding of events and also explores the painful consequences. Although by his own admission he had obtained some of the information on the fate of the Armenians from the Germans, Mosony also made a number of observations that have been ignored by researchers until now. Furthermore, Mosony, acting in concert with Schrotty and Kmoskó, played a part in the secret efforts of the Hungarian, Austrian and German Catholic circles to bring into the possession of the three countries those church properties that had been vacated following the cancellation of the capitulations and the expulsion of the French and Italian priests and then to provide for the pastoral needs of the orphaned Catholic congregations. The secret report submitted in 1916 to Prince Primate János Csernoch by Mosony, who had a good view of events, describes in detail the course and extent of the massacres of Armenians, the sparing of the Armenian population in the major cities, and the persecutions that even affected the Catholic Maronites. All this information is confirmed in Schrotty and Kmoskó's pertinent reports. In addition, Mihály Kmoskó submitted a detailed report on the situation of the missions in Syria, which also touched upon the situation of the Armenians. The information, which was gathered in personal conversations, offers insights into details that are known from the international scholarly literature but have never been corroborated by a separate source. The reports of all three secular priests reached Prince Primate János Csernoch and the archbishop of Kalocsa, Árpád Lipót Várady, who then forwarded them to Stephan Burián von Rajecz, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria-Hungary. In the knowledge of this, we can state with certainty that both the leadership of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the political leadership of the Kingdom of Hungary were aware of what was happening in the Ottoman Empire. An interesting interlude in Hungarian–Turkish relations took place at this time. A month after Mosony submitted his secret report, P. Arthúr Vákár, a journalist working for Gyergyószentmiklósi Hírlap (Gyergyószentmiklós Newspaper), travelled to the Ottoman capital bearing false papers. In Istanbul he met with Armenian ecclesiastical figures and –

according to the Turkish authorities – collected evidence about the massacres of Armenians. After Vákár's return to Hungary, the Turkish envoy in Budapest, having learnt of the events, used all his influence to prevent Vákár's planned speech to Parliament and the opposition's interpellation on the matter. Although the speech was never given, the matter continued to cause controversy. Indeed, in the end even János Csernoch had to clarify his actions. According to the Turkish accusation, the prince primate had sent Vákár to Istanbul with the task of collecting evidence against the Turks. Although I have found no corroborating source for this and the matter is anyway rendered somewhat meaningless by the presence in Turkey of the three aforementioned secular priests, the fact that Vákár's journey took place after the arrival of the secret reports does leave some doubts.

In addition to the reports submitted by the priests, further information is provided by several other sources that visited the Ottoman Empire during this period. Although I found no reference to the fate of the Armenians among the papers of the Hungarian Scientific Institute in Constantinople, which functioned from January 1917 until October 1918, the reason for this lies in the fact that the overwhelming majority of Armenians in Istanbul were unaffected by the massacres. However, with the arrival on the Turkish front of the Austro-Hungarian gunners, a new source in the person of Emil Vidéky appeared, thus enriching the research. Vidéky, an Austro-Hungarian officer responsible for obtaining spare parts, visited both Damascus and Mosul, where he encountered Armenian orphans and the ruined mansions of Armenian merchants. In his memoirs, Vidéky gave further details of his experiences in Syria and Iraq. Furthermore, he then became a member of the Lénárd expedition, which undertook ethnographic research in northwestern Turkey in 1918. By means of István Györffy, the research team's observations concerning the Armenians added further interesting information to the dissertation. Overall it can be stated that the WWI Hungarian sources contribute to the international literature on the topic, supplementing and adding nuance to existing knowledge. At the same time, these sources also partly contradict prior assumptions, by highlighting, for instance, the German role in, and notional support for, the massacres. While the information gleaned confirms the scale of the anti-Armenian actions, it also highlights the pro-Russian stance of Armenians in the eastern provinces, the completely different manner of implementation in those areas, as well as the great powers' occasional attempts to intervene. Based on all these factors, in my view the Turkish authorities were clearly responsible for the death of 600–800,000 Armenians and for the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire's Armenian population, whereby demographic and economic factors would seem to have been paramount. At the local level, however, government policy was compounded by personal and

other motives: envy, religious fanaticism, antagonism between Kurds and Armenians and between Turks and Armenians, the lack of public security, corrupt public administration, and inequalities of status and opportunity. Moreover, the Hungarian reports describe how government decisions were often ignored outside the capital and how life in the provinces tended to be ruled by old habits and prejudices rather than by the government's announced policies. Based on this too, I found no evidence suggesting that the Ottoman leadership had planned the systematic destruction of the Armenian population. In my view, this would not even have been possible, given the discrepancies in implementation, the various domestic and foreign factors (the great powers, local governors, foreign and local military forces etc.), and the state of Turkish public administration at the time. Still, the Ottoman government likely viewed the wartime conditions as a kind of opportunity. Without much preparation it embarked upon a programme of radical demographic change in the eastern regions, for which it apparently had the backing of its military allies. Here the Turkish government's goal was to prevent further territorial losses and to concentrate economic power in local hands, with a view to ensuring the empire's survival and without risking an intervention by the great powers. The often dissimilar and arbitrary fate of those forced to leave their homes, the different motives and social backgrounds of those taking part in the massacres, and the mixed distribution of the survivor population, indicate that the primary goal was to drive out the Armenians and take control of their property.

The final part of the dissertation briefly examines post-WWI political developments in Turkey, including the French legions' incursion in southern Turkey, Armenian requests made during the peace negotiations, the first wars fought by the newly formed Armenia, and the judicial proceedings undertaken by the so-called Mazhar Inquiry Commission against the perpetrators. In addition, based on the reports submitted at the time by Hungarian foreign ministry officials and by members of the diplomatic representation that was subsequently established in Istanbul, it becomes apparent that in the initial years of the Republic of Turkey the state authorities attempted, as far as was possible, to interfere in the internal affairs of the remaining minorities. Moreover, xenophobia was widespread, as a consequence of which much of the surviving Armenian population emigrated from Turkey. In addition, based on the memoirs of the traveller Zoltán Nagyiványi, the military attaché Imre Németh, and the engineer Tibor Fehértájj, the vacuum left behind by the displaced minorities, in particular by the Armenians, is described in graphic terms. Németh gave an account of the situation in the Amasya-Samsun region, while Fehértájj wrote in detail about the former Armenian inhabitants of the area between Kayseri and Maraş. Each of them describes abandoned and

devastated urban neighbourhoods, uncultivated fields, and ruined commercial undertakings – all of which was reflected in the post-WWI economic indicators for the Turkish economy. It was obvious to them that the goal of realising a national economy within a short timeframe had failed and that the way of life and economic potential of the newly arrived refugees from the Balkans and the Caucasus did not even approach the standards set by the former Armenian inhabitants.

In the above I have attempted to present all the sources in Hungarian that offer meaningful information about the Armenian inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire. From the Hungarian refugees who fled to Turkey at the time of the 1848 revolution and war of liberation to the diplomats in WWII, almost all the Hungarian sources could contribute something of relevance relating to the social, political, religious and cultural life of the Armenians. The information gleaned has confirmed the findings of international scholarly research and – I hope – has augmented those findings. The reports written by Vámbéry in 1894–96, the Hungarian narrative reports of 1915–1917, and the post-WWI descriptive accounts offer supplementary information, thereby constituting primary and hitherto unexplored sources of the massacres of Armenians. Further, a successful attempt was made to place among the political developments of the period those Ottoman-Turkish documents that touch upon aspects of Turkish–Hungarian relations relating to the Armenian Question and whose interpretation had hitherto flummoxed Turkish researchers. In conclusion it can be stated that the Republic of Turkey lost out greatly through the disappearance of the Armenian population, although beneath the surface a part of the Armenians’ built and cultural heritage remains to this day. The stories springing from “a well 1915 metres deep” – to quote the words of the murdered Armenian journalist Hrant Dink – will be on the agenda concerning Turkey for a long time to come, just as they have been on the agenda during the past hundred years.