

INTRODUCTION

The Armenian community of Istanbul existed long before the Ottoman occupation of the Byzantine capital in 1453. According to historical sources, an Armenian community lived in Constantinople as early as the eleventh century.¹ The size and influence of the Armenian population of the Byzantine metropolis increased or decreased depending on the political vicissitudes of the imperial capital.

Under Ottoman rule, the number of the Armenian inhabitants of Istanbul increased steadily. By voluntary or forced migration, Armenians moved to the new Ottoman capital in great numbers from all corners of Armenia, Anatolia, Iran and even the Crimea.² By the end of the eighteenth century, Armenians numbered 150,000,³ and around the mid-nineteenth century, out of Istanbul's total population of 891,000, 224,000 were Armenians.⁴ In the following decades, their number continued to increase; between 1860 and 1880 their number was estimated to be over 250,000.⁵

¹ For a detailed discussion on the Armenian population of Istanbul, see **Hagop Dj. Siruni**, *Polis ev Ir Dere* [Constantinople and Its Role], 2 vols. (Beirut, 1965-1970), 1:82 passim; **Haig Berberian**, *Niuter K. Polsoy Hayots Patmutedan Hamar* [Materials for the History of the Armenians of Constantinople] (Vienna, 1965, p. 105 (hereafter cited as H. Berberian, *Niuter K. Polsoy*); **Maghakia Ormanian**, *Azgapatum* [Armenian history], 3 vols. (Constantinople and Jerusalem, 1913-1927), 2:2148 passim.

² **Siruni**, *Polis*, 1:174; **H. Berberian**, *Niuter K. Polsoy*, p. 13; **O. L. Barkan**, "Osmanli Imperatorlugunda bir Iskan ve Kolonizasyoci Metodu Olarak Sürgünler" ["Exile as a Method of Settlement and Colonization in the Ottoman Empire"], *Istanbul Universitesi Iktisat Fakultesi Mecmuasi*, Istanbul, vols. 13 and 15.

³ **Dz. P. Aghaian**, gen. ed., *Hay Joghovrti Patmutiun* [History of the Armenian People], 10 vols. (Erevan, 1967-1974), vol. 5: *Hayastane 1801-1870 Tvakannerin* [Armenia in the Years 1801-1870], p. 315; **H. G. Palakashian**, *Teghagrutiun K. Polsoy ev Iur Shrtjakayits* [Topography of Constantinople and Its Environs] (Constantinople, 1887), p. 7; **H. G. Mrmerian**, *Masnakan Patmutiun Hay Medzatunneru* [Partial History of Armenian Magnates] (Constantinople, 1910), p. 49.

⁴ The Armenian population of Istanbul in the 1850's has been variously estimated at 100,000 by **Robert Curson**, *Armenia, A Year at Erzurum and on the Frontiers of Russia and Turkey and Persia* (London, 1854), p. 19; 205,000 by **A. Ubicini**, *La Turquie Actuelle* (Paris, 1855), p. 58; 222,000 by **A. Ubicini**, *Lettres on Turkey*, trans. Lady Easthope (London, 1856), 1:24; and **James Lewis Farley**, *The Resources of Turkey* (London, 1862), p. 75; (both authors give two separate numbers, one for Apostolic Armenians, 205,000, and another for United (Catholic)