

therefore also affect their identity. Reported, documented, or otherwise, we are aware of the fact that male victims were sexually abused by Turkish executioners. This was a common practice in Turkish prisons, and was carried out in addition to beatings, bastinado, horseshoeing,¹⁷ and other types of torture. The guards and the perverted interrogator took pride of having invented new kinds of sexual torture to bring the victim to his knees and confess to things he never did or avow things he never believed. Henry Morgenthau remembers a Turkish official boasting about the methods of torture inflicted on Armenian male victims:

[A]ll these details were matters of nightly discussion at the headquarters of the Union and Progress Committee. Each new method of inflicting pain was hailed as a splendid discovery, and the regular attendants were constantly ransacking their brains in the effort to devise some new torment. (p. 307)

Morgenthau describes the methods of torture on many occasions. His descriptions of these unconceivable and uni-

¹⁷ Morgenthau notes that “All through this country Cevdet [the Vali of Van] was generally known as the ‘horseshoer of Bashkale’ for this connoisseur in torture had invented what was perhaps the masterpiece of all—that of nailing horseshoes to the feet of his Armenian victims.” *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, p. 307.

On a personal note, Sarkis Perroomian, the paternal uncle of this author’s husband, was horseshoed in Van when he was twelve years old. He lived the rest of his life in the United States, never able to forget the day when the Turkish gendarmes were torturing his father and uncle, Boghos and Bedross Perroomians, to force them to reveal the location of hidden weapons. Failing to get them to talk, the gendarmes nailed horseshoes to the feet of young Sarkis, inflicting wounds that never healed and once in a while opened up to let out blood and pus.