

Icons and Scholarship

Zadig Khanzadian's map, *Rapport sur l'unité géographique de l'Arménie: Atlas historique* (Paris, 1920), has become a central icon of the Armenian Genocide. It was the first attempt to map out the losses of the Genocide, the principal deportation and transit routes, and locations where mass killings had taken place between 1915 and 1917. It illustrated losses in red circles that varied in size according to the populations in question. Given that Khanzadian's map was printed in 1920, immediately after the cataclysm of 1915, and under very trying circumstances, it is not surprising that many details were left ambiguous, presumably because of a lack of information.¹ Despite its imperfections, the 1920 work was of pioneering significance and remains a milestone in the historiography of the Armenian Genocide.

Some eighty years after the publication of Khanzadian's work, the Armenian National Institute (ANI) has also produced a map of the Armenian Genocide. This new map purports to be the "latest research" on the Armenian Genocide, and an example of the ANI's commitment to the "promotion of scholarship."² Though the ANI could have drawn on a great deal of new scholarship for such a map, their "latest research" is simply an English version of Khanzadian's 1920 work, combined with a more recent publication by Raymond Kévorkian, "Axes de déportation

des populations arméniennes et camps de concentration en 1915–1916."³ This fact is obscured by a curious citation, where credit is given to "the Armenian National Institute (ANI) (Washington, DC) and the

Under Review

Armenian National Institute

The 1915 Armenian Genocide in the Turkish Empire

Washington D.C. 1998

Nubarian Library (Paris)," and there is no mention of Khanzadian and Kévorkian.⁴

Beyond obscuring the intellectual origins of the work under review, the ANI does a disservice to scholars of the Genocide by ignoring their work in its representation of the "latest research" on the Genocide. Furthermore, instead of correcting the errors and ambiguities of Khanzadian's map, the ANI reproduces them and introduces new errors that should have been avoided. Here are some examples:

(1) The ANI map fails to address the most basic of questions regarding the Khanzadian map that it reproduces: What do

¹ The work was also used to buttress the position of the Armenian National Delegation, which claimed sovereignty over much of western Armenia in the former Ottoman Empire as a final homeland for survivors of the Armenian Genocide. Khanzadian's map did not show the whole of the Ottoman Empire when representing the Genocide. It excluded, for example, the communities of Bursa, Izmid, and Adabazar. It was limited to Armenia.

² This claim is made in the ANI Annual Report, 1998.

³ See *Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine (numéro spécial): l'extermination des déportés arméniens ottomans dans les camps de concentration de syrie-mésopotamie (1915–1916): la deuxième phase du génocide* (Paris, 1998), pp. 48–49. This work shows the 1915–16 deportation routes, especially the concentration and extermination camps in the lower Euphrates.

⁴ The fact that the ANI lifted *The 1915 Armenian Genocide in the Turkish Empire* from the works of Zadig Khanzadian and Raymond Kévorkian is confirmed by the ANI Web site, which mentions the two scholars, but still does not give bibliographic information, including the date of Khanzadian's work. One is still left with the impression that the ANI map is of recent origin, reflecting the latest research on the Armenian Genocide.



Zadig Khanzadian, *Rapport sur l'unité géographique de l'Arménie: Atlas historique* (Paris, Délégation Nationale Arménienne, 1920)



Raymond Kévorkian, "Axes de déportation des populations arméniennes et camps de concentration en 1915-1916" (Paris, 1998)

the red circles in the 1920 work actually represent? Do they indicate the number of people killed *at* each locality, or the number of people *from* each locality who were killed?

Today we have a good understanding of the number of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire on the eve of World War I, as well as compelling figures regarding how many were killed in Der

Zor and other locations.⁵ Kévorkian, for example, argues that 870,000 Armenians actually arrived in Syria and Mesopotamia by the end of 1916, and most were killed in the lower Euphrates. The body of Western archival records also supports these figures, clearly shifting the focus of genocidal killings to the south.

As the ANI map stands, the circle at Der Zor is too large if it represents the number of Armenians native to that region killed in the Armenian Genocide (there were fewer than 500 Armenians in 1914), and it is too small if it represents the number of people from other parts of the Ottoman Empire who were killed in Der Zor and surrounding areas (over 300,000).⁶

(2) Today we know more about the events of 1915 than ever before. For example, there is a creditable doctoral dissertation on the manifestation of the Armenian Genocide in Trebizond.⁷ We know, for example, that in 1915, there

were approximately 5,500 Armenians there. When deportation orders were first announced, a large number of Armenian children were placed into orphanages and later disbursed in Muslim villages.⁸ The adult population was deported in four caravans on 1 July 1915 (600 people); 3 July 1915 (2,000 people); 5 July 1915 (2,000 people); and 18 July 1915 (remaining population).⁹



Armenian National Institute, *The 1915 Armenian Genocide in the Turkish Empire* (Washington D.C. 1998)

There was, it is true, a report of the mass drowning of ten thousand Armenians from Trebizond in the Black Sea. The *New York Times* wrote on 7 October 1915 that James Bryce reported that the Italian consul at Trebizond had claimed that ten thousand Armenians had been drowned in one

afternoon. But by 1916 Bryce must not have considered the report reliable, since he did not include it in the British Parliamentary Blue Book.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the ANI map includes mass drownings in the Black Sea in its representation of the Armenian Genocide.¹¹

⁵ For population figures see Raymond Kévorkian and Paul Paboudjian, *Les arméniens dans l'empire ottoman à la veille du génocide*, (Paris: ARHIS, 1992). In fact, the article that accompanies the Kévorkian map that the ANI has utilized discusses the number of Armenians who perished in Der Zor in great detail. See "Axes de deportation des populations arméniennes et camps de concentration en 1915–1916," pp. 60–61.

⁶ At the beginning of 1916, United States consul Jesse B. Jackson estimated that there were 486,000 Armenians in the lower Euphrates, over 300,000 of them in Der Zor and surrounding villages. See J. B. Jackson to Ambassador Morgenthau, communication dated Aleppo, 8 Feb. 1916, National Archives, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910–1929, Decimal file number 867.48/271. None of these survived by 1918.

⁷ Kevork Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond: A Case Study of Armeno-Turkish Relations During the

First World War," (Ph..D. diss., Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1981).

⁸ For example, see the memoirs of Leo Surmelian, who was placed in a caravan of children, marched south, and placed into a Muslim family. Some of his fellow children were killed outright because they could not keep up with the convoy. Surmelian, *I Ask You Ladies and Gentlemen* (New York: EP Dutton, 1945).

⁹ Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," pp. 132–36.

¹⁰ James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1916: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon by Viscount Bryce [Uncensored Edition]*, ed. and intro. Ara Sarafian (Princeton, N. J.: Gomidas Institute, 2000).

¹¹ A microfilm collection assembled by none other than the ANI's director includes the dispatches of Oscar Heizer, United States consul in Trebizond, 1915. These dispatches also do not support the



This image from the ANI Annual Report for 1998 shows ANI director Rouben P. Adalian, Ph.D., exhibiting the map under review to a group of schoolchildren.

(3) Many Armenians from western Turkey were deported toward Syria by train in cattle trucks. They had to disembark and trek over the Taurus mountains because the railroad was not finished. Many died on the way. Other deportees, thousands of them, were used as forced labor to complete these incomplete sections of the railway.¹² The ANI map shows the railroads

as continuous. In the map, the railroad extends several hundred miles to the east of Ras-ul-Ain (where it actually ended in 1915). This information is correct in Khanzadian's 1920 work, but not in the ANI map of 1998.

The publication of the ANI map raises questions about the competence of the ANI as an academic institution. Publications in Armenian studies need to

be held to the highest academic standards. The ANI map, sad to say, does not even meet the most forgiving standards. For the ANI, an organization with an academic director, an academic board, and a substantial endowment, there can be no excuse for such shoddy, incompetent work.

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reported mass drowning. See National Archives, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910–1929, decimal files 867.4016/94, 103, 114, 128, 210, 224.

¹² See Hilmar Kaiser, "The Baghdad Railway and the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1916: A Case Study in German Resistance and Complicity," in *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, ed. R. G. Hovannisian (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1999), pp. 67–112.