

From the Book Shelf

**Osmanli Sadlik Hizmetlerinde Ermeniler Ve Surp Prgic Ermeni Hastanaesi Tarihi (Istanbul 2001) 865 pages.**

**By Arsen Yarman**

(Armenians in the Health Services of the Ottomans and the History of Surp Prgich Hospital)

Reviewed by Sarkis Y. Karayan, M.D.

The Surp Prgich Armenian Hospital that is located in European section of Turkey, was established in 1832 in Istanbul, outside the historic ramparts of that city. It was initiated by Kazaz Harutiun Amira Bezjian. The Imperial permission was given by Sultan Mahmud II to Bezjian Amira who had special friendship with the Sultan.

A few words about the author of this book. Arsen Yarman, the grand son of Harutiun Yarmayan of Tokat, was born in Istanbul in 1949. He got his elementary education at the local Mkhitarist School of Pangalti, and his higher College and University education in Italy. In addition to his mother language of Armenian, he has mastered the Turkish, French and Italian languages. From 1997 to 2001, he was in the administrative committee of Surp Prgich Hospital and a coordinator of its various departments.

This voluminous book is his first book devoted to the contribution of Armenians to the general health services in the Ottoman Empire and the history of Surp Prgich Hospital of Istanbul. It is Yarman's only book dealing with this important historical subject. The book is of course in Turkish. I am told there is an Armenian edition as well. A second volume in Armenian, covering the years 2000 to 2005 has been recently published.

Recently, Yarman also has edited the book "Svaz 1877". This book is in Turkish, a translation of the book by the Armenian cleric Boghos Natanian about Sivas province in 1870ies.

Arsen Yarman is not a physician, but I understand that he is an industrialist. He devotes this book to the brother of his grandfather, Dr. Minas Yarmayan, who was born in Tokat, and studied medicine at my alma mater, the American University of Beirut and took his Doctor of Medicine diploma in 1906. More about him later in this review.

This voluminous book of 865 pages is printed on high quality paper, and profusely illustrated with black and white and many colored pictures. The pictures, about over 3,000 in number, include not only that of physicians, but also pictures of famous Armenians, articles produced by Armenian artisans as Kutahya porcelains, ornamental jewelry, pictures of tombstones from ancient times, Armenian churches and schools that existed until 1920ies.

The book gives not only the contributions of Armenians in the field of medicine and pharmacy, but also historical information about Armenian life, specially in the capital city of Istanbul. Thus the contents of this book give more information than the title of the book indicates.

The book itself is divided into eleven chapters or sections.



Section 1. Discusses the legal status of non-muslims in the Ottoman Empire. The settlement of Armenians in Istanbul, the professions and trades that Armenians preferred to follow, and a discussion of the evolution of the Amira class.

Section 2. Pages 89-173 gives the history of Armenian medical practice through the ages.

Section 3. Pages 175-250. Medical practices in the Ottoman Empire and the Armenians.

Section 4. Pages 251-316 Ottoman pharmaceuticals and Armenians.

Section 5. Pages 317-334. Armenians dealing with botanical products.

Section 6. pages 335-372. The Red Crescent organization and the contribution of Armenians to the Children's Care Society.

Section 7. Pages 373-424. Other Armenian hospitals in Anadolu.

Apart from Surp Prgich hospital, there were several Armenian hospitals in Turkey, specially in the Asiatic section or Asia Minor. These are as follows:

(A) Surp Hagop Hospital. (page 375) In Pera District of Istanbul. This belonged to the Armenian Catholic Community. The Armenian Catholic community was recognized as a separate community called millet around 1758. In 1801, a catholic hospital was built in Beyoghlu district, but in a few years this building was pulled down and replaced by a hospital for the Turkish military. In 1831 the community built a new 90 bed hospital and called it Surp Hagop, Half of the beds were for acute cases and the other half served as residence for senior citizens, who had physical disabilities. The main person in this hospital was a religious father, who was at the same time a physician, Dr. H. Dogramajian. He was an able doctor, and became famous by saving the life of one of the seriously sick sons of Sultan Mohamed.

During the political disturbances in Istanbul in 1909, the hospital was damaged by the fighting in between Turkish soldiers, In spite of this, many wounded soldiers were admitted here, and Armenian volunteer women dis-

tributed cigarette, candy, oranges and biscuit to the soldiers,

The building of Surp Hagop hospital has been renovated in 1968, and equipped with two operating rooms, and a section for infectious diseases constructed. It continues to serve all ethnic groups in Istanbul

On page 379, discusses the Foreign Christian Missions of USA and the establishment of hospitals in Turkey. Around 1820, missionaries arrived in Palestine from USA. Let me add that they were told to try to preach Christianity to Moslems and Jews. The answer they got from Palestine is that it is not possible to preach Christianity to Moslems, and Jews would not listen to them anyhow. The Mission office in Boston answered that Armenians are clever, and let them preach Christianity to Moslems and Jews – an impossible task of course. Ignorance by Americans about the Middle East continues up to present days...

(B) Izmıt Hospıtalç İnýtıated by Amerıyan health offıcyals..

(C) Bursa Hospital. An Armenian hospital in Bursa in 1844 is mentioned. on page 388.

(D).Izmir (Smyrna). The Armenian hospital was started in 1801 and named Surp Krikor Lusavorich hospital. During 1878 it was enlarged and repaired by two benefactors of Hovanessian family. It treated yearly 600 to 700 patients. Yarman gives quite extensive information about Izmir Armenians and the hospital. No mention of this hospital after the catastrophe of Izmir after 1920ies. Izmir has always been a cosmopolitan city and prior to 1915, had about a dozen hospitals, some of which belonged to foreign countries.

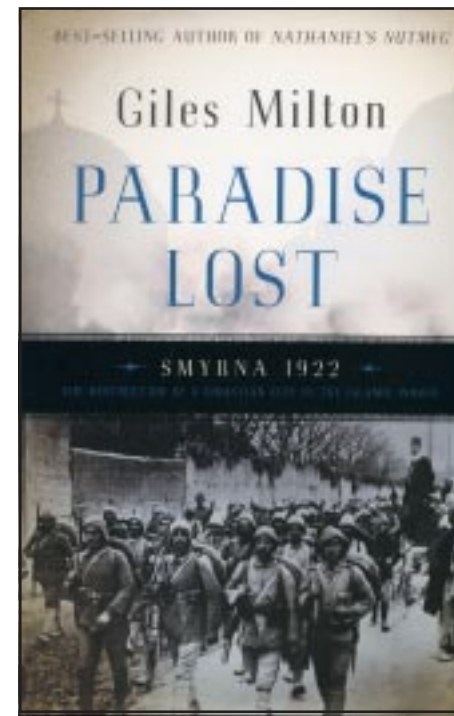
(E) Amasya. This city has been famous in medical history of Armenians. During 15<sup>th</sup> century, we had the famous physician of Amasya, known as Amirdivlat Amasyatsi, whose book "Okoud pjshgutian" (The benefit of medicine) has served all the population in the Ottoman Empire until 19<sup>th</sup> century. (This 578 pages book was printed in 1940, in Soviet Armenia by the Academy of Sciences of Yerevan).

According to A. Yarman, page 398, Amasya had an Armenian hospital until 1915. No name is mentioned. It is mentioned that it had 15 beds, in addition to other hospital utensils.

(F) Tokat (Yevtogya, Arm.) Tokat had an Armenian population estimated from 15,000 to 28,000 in 1914 by various writers.

Yarman does not mention any Armenian or Turkish hospital in this place. There was a missionary Physician, Rev. Henry J. Van Lennep, who lived in Tokat region, 1854-1865 and wrote a book, "Travels on Little Known Parts of Asia Minor" London, 1870, two volumes. Lennep has interesting

**Paradise Lost  
Smyrna 1922: The  
Destruction of a  
Christian City in the  
Islamic World  
By Giles Milton**



In the early autumn of 1922 the Turkish cavalry rode into Smyrna – a prosperous, thriving city on the western coast of Turkey famous for its tolerance and its cosmopolitan mix of Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Turks. Greece had invaded Turkey with the support of the Great Powers following the First World War and now, after three years of fighting, the Greeks had been vanquished and the Turkish army was moving in. The non-Muslim inhabitants of Smyrna assumed that the American and European warships floating in the city's harbor would intervene when the Turkish cavalry entered the city. But this did not happen. Instead one of the most vicious, horrifying, and largely forgotten humanitarian catastrophes in modern history was about to occur.

Bestselling author and journalist Giles Milton tells this tragic and important story in PARADISE LOST: Smyrna 1922 (Basic Books, \$27.95, July 14, 2008). Using eyewitness accounts, new archival research, and the memories of survivors, many of them interviewed for the first time, Milton relates, in chilling detail, how Turkish troops charged through the pristine city, looting, raping, and murdering innocent civilians. Son Smyrna was engulfed in flames and hundreds of thousands of refugees crowded along the waterfront looking for an escape. Meanwhile, the crews on the battleships in the harbor were ordered not to rescue any one and when the destruction was finally over and the smoke had cleared, well over 100,000 innocent people – most of them Greek and Armenian – had been murdered and tens of thousands more were marched off into the interior of Turkey never to be heard from again.

Smyrna was wiped off the map. The Turks changed the city's name to Izmir and hundreds of thousands of Greek refugees – those who survived the massacre and were spared the forced march – were left penniless, homeless, unemployed and forced to