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Urban Modernization of Late Ottoman Kadıköy and the Memoirs of Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian

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Abstract

This article explores the urban modernization of late Ottoman Kadıköy through the lens of Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian's memoirs. A local inhabitant of Kadıköy and an active stonemason that oversaw the construction of several buildings in his district, Stepanian was an avid observer and passionate archivist of the eventful decades that shaped the urban fabric of modern Kadıköy. His memoirs contain precious visual and textual material including hand-drawn maps and neighborhood plans, property transactions, and patterns of the transformation of agricultural fields into real estate commodities. This article puts Stepanian's hitherto untapped memoirs into historical perspective and offers a narrative of late Ottoman urban modernization that centers on the inhabitants of a *semt* (quarter) and the dynamics of the real estate market rather than the imperial and communal perspectives and practices.

Keywords: Kadıköy, urban modernization, Tanzimat, real estate, Ottoman Armenians

Geç Osmanlı Kadıköy'ünde Kentsel Modernleşme ve Hovhannes Kalfa Stefanyan'ın Hatıratı

Özet

Bu makale, Hovhannes Kalfa Stefanyan'ın hatıratı ışığında Kadıköy'ün geç Osmanlı dönemi kentsel modernleşmesini inceliyor. Kadıköy'ün yerlisi, semtteki pek çok binayı inşa eden bir taş ustası olan Stefanyan, modern Kadıköy'ün oluşum sürecinin keskin bir gözlemcisi ve tutkulu bir arşivcisiydi. Stefanyan'ın anıları, bu sürece dair kendi çizimi olan haritalar ve mahalle planlarının yanında semtte mülkiyetin el değiştirmesi ve tarım arazilerinin birer emlak metasına dönüşme biçimleri üzerine çok sayıda yazılı ve görsel malzeme içeriyor. Bu makale, Stefanyan'ın şimdiye kadar akademik bir incelemeye konu olmayan hatıratını tarihsel bir perspektife oturtuyor; bu anılardan yola çıkarak geç Osmanlı dönemi kentsel modernleşmesine dair, devlet veya cemaatler yerine semtin sakinlerini ve emlak piyasasının dinamiklerini merkezine alan bir anlatı ortaya koyuyor.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kadıköy, kentsel modernleşme, Tanzimat, emlak, Osmanlı Ermenileri

Introduction

Istanbul went through comprehensive urban transformations during the late nineteenth century.¹ While Istanbul's core areas saw major architectural and urban interventions, many

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¹ Steven Rosenthal, The Politics of Dependency: Urban Reform in Istanbul (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980); Zeynep Çelik, The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the 19th Century (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986); Pierre Pinon, "The Parceled City: Istanbul in the Nineteenth Century," in Rethinking XIXth Century City, ed. Attilio Petruccioli, Seminar Proceedings, series no. 1, vol. 2. (Cambridge: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1998), 45–64; Zeynep Merey Enlil, "Residential Building Traditions and the Urban Culture of Istanbul in the 19th Century," in 7 Centuries of Ottoman Architecture: "A Supra-National Heritage", ed. Nur Akin, Afife Batur, and Selcuk Batur (Istanbul: Yapı Endüstri Merkezi, 1999), 306–315; Jean-Luc Arnaud, "Modernization of the Cities of the Ottoman Empire (1800–1920)," in The City in the Islamic World, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Renata Holod, Antillio Petruccioli, and André Raymond (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 957–981; Ahmet Ersoy, Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire

24 peripheral neighborhoods and even villages became incorporated into the city. A prominent example is Kadıköy, a small peripheral neighborhood on the outskirts of Istanbul proper that underwent a series of comprehensive and radical changes from the 1840s onwards. A small agricultural and fishing settlement around 1800, Kadıköy had transformed into a major commercial and transportation hub by the end of the nineteenth century.

Kadıköy's urban modernization has received scant attention in Ottoman studies so far. Scholars have mostly covered modernization processes of more prominent districts such as Pera, Galata, and Aksaray.² Sources on these core districts are relatively richer and more diverse. However, we know little on the implications of urban changes in peripheral areas of Istanbul. Conventional Ottoman sources are more silent on small and peripheral neighborhoods, especially when it comes to local dynamics and perspectives. Even Celal Esad's comprehensive profiling of late Ottoman Kadıköy does not give more than a generic overview of the socio-spatial components of the district compared to information that could be found in nonconventional sources, especially those in Ottoman languages other than Turkish.³

Nevertheless, a distinctively fruitful source is the memoirs of Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian,⁴ a nineteenth-century kalfa (mason) and a Kadıköy local. Stepanian's memoirs are a detailed depiction of Kadıköy's urban history in the late Ottoman period. Written as an account of personal and family records, the memoirs offer invaluable information on the socio-spatial transformations that shaped Kadıköy's urban fabric in the nineteenth century. In his memoirs, Stepanian provides a rich set of textual and visual information that covers the urban, political, and economic dynamics of Kadıköy in the 1800s. For example, Stepanian gives detailed information on land commodification, property transactions, and property ownership models in Kadıköy before and during the Tanzimat period. He also provides detailed lists of names, dates, locations, prices, and property types regarding real-estate transactions. Additionally, Stepanian records an assortment of facts and events such as the Great Kadıköy Fire of 1855, the influx of wealthy Istanbulites into the district, and the urban activities of local developers, which shaped the district in the nineteenth century. Equally importantly, in his memoirs, Stepanian documents one of the first neighborhood reorganization plans in Istanbul, and the Ottoman Empire at large, designed and implemented in 1856 by local engineers and kalfas.⁵ In other words, this was one of the first manifestations of Tanzimat regulations in urban planning and is as old as (if not older than) the Aksaray reorganization plan, designed following the 1856 Aksaray Fire and known so far in the literature as the first grid-street pattern in modern Istanbul.⁶ Finally, Stepanian sheds light on the agency of diverse locals such as *kalfas*, merchants, notables, mütevellis (trustees), religious institutions, and neighborhood councils in the making of modern Kadıköy.

5 Stepanian, Memoirs, 310.

6 Çelik, Remaking of Istanbul, 53-55.

⁽London: Routledge, 2015).

² Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul*; Enlil, *7 Centuries*; Işık N. Demirakın, "A Study of Ottoman Modernisation on the City: The Sixth Municipal District of Istanbul (1858–1877)" (PhD diss., Bilkent University, 2006); Muhammet Sami Bayram, "Transformation of Pera into Cultural District of Istanbul in the Second Half of the 19th Century" (master's thesis, Charles University, 2016); K. Mehmet Kentel, "Assembling 'Cosmopolitan' Pera: An Infrastructural History of Late Ottoman Istanbul" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2018); Nilay Özlü, "A Modernization Utopia: Galata and Pera during the Late Ottoman Era," *AURUM Journal of Engineering Systems and Architecture* 3, no. 1 (2019): 113–127.
3 Celal Esad, *Kadiköyü Hakkında Belediye Araştırmaları* (Istanbul: Kadıköy Belediyesi, 2011 [1914]).

⁴ Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian, Hushabadum: Kadikughi Antsyalen Badarigner [Memoirs: Traces of Kadiköy's past], ed. Archpriest Krikor Damadyan (Istanbul: Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, 2012 [1875]). Stepanian's handwritten manuscripts (penned originally in Armenian) were unexpectedly found in a pile of books donated to the Surp Takavor Armenian Apostolic Church in 2008, by the relatives of late Father Garabed Bilalian, a priest and former head of the same church. As mentioned in the foreword of the later-edited memoirs, "The level of details and information shared by Stepanian in his manuscripts were so remarkable that even the most local Kadıköy resident was unaware of." Stepanian, Memoirs, 3. In 2012, the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople published (in its original language) the memoirs of Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of his death; the book was edited by Archpriest Dr. Krikor Damadyan, the head of the Surp Takavor Church (September 26, 2002-present) and author of many publications about the history of the Armenian community in Kadıköy, and Istanbul in general. I came across Stepanian's book in 2018, while conducting an on-site study on the urban history of Kadıköy. Following a meeting with Archpriest Damadyan, the latter kindly handed me a pile of books to help me with my research, among which were the precious Stepanian memoirs. Upon the recommendations of my then-thesis advisor, Açıkgöz, I used the Stepanian memoirs as my primary source to study the urban modernization of Kadıköy in the long nineteenth century. Sarine Agopian, "Urban Modernization in Plural Ottoman Districts: Kadıköy, Istanbul, during the Long Nineteenth Century" (master's thesis, American University of Beirut, 2021).

Despite offering a richly detailed and textured account of facts and events, Stepanian's memoirs have so far remained untapped by scholars. The information found in the memoirs is often presented as a simple narrative thread instead of an in-depth analytical interpretation of urban changes in nineteenth-century Kadıköy. The aim of this paper is therefore to sort out and classify information from the Stepanian memoirs and analyze it in light of historical and academic sources to construct a narrative of a longue durée urban change in late Ottoman Kadıköy.7 The larger objective of the paper is to analyze the memoirs' relevance for the study of Ottoman urban modernization, highlighting the experiences of locals rather than processes documented by government officials. I argue that a detailed examination of small and peripheral neighborhoods such as Kadıköy will offer new insights and help deepen our understanding of Ottoman urban modernization. It will bring to attention those crucial local dynamics and agencies that are bound to be underestimated, if not totally neglected, in studies devoted to the analysis of top-down interventions in the late Ottoman urban space. Some of the key questions this paper aims to address are as follows: In what ways does Kadıköy's trajectory challenge more conventional, state-based narratives? What alternative does the Kadıköy example offer considering the well-established linear model of Ottoman modernization? What were the socio-spatial dynamics that urban modernization in Kadıköy responded to? Who were its key actors? And how did they shape the urban space?

This article is organized into two sections. The first includes an overview of Stepanian's background, a brief look at his family's history, and an *état des lieux* of nineteenth-century Kadıköy. The second part offers an in-depth analysis of the urban modernization of Kadıköy based on a detailed reading of Stepanian's memoirs and maps. It covers information on property transactions, regime, and the market during the district's transformative years, which only a local could have documented in such detail.

The Stepanian memoirs help us portray the late Ottoman urbanism not simply through abstract regulations and reforms orchestrated by elite bureaucrats but through complex dynamics and multilayered negotiations that played out on the ground, integrating into the narrative of urban modernization those crucial factors that remained absent in state documents. The aim of this article is to reveal some of those key details and construct the narrative of urban change in late Ottoman Kadıköy. This article falls in line with recent studies conducted on the urban modernization of key Ottoman cities and districts such as Salonica, Izmir, Pera, and Galata,⁸ but highlights the experience of smaller, less prominent, yet equally cosmopolitan urban centers like Kadıköy through the memoirs of Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian.

The Memoirs of Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian: A Personal and an Urban Biography

Late Ottoman memoirs and personal narratives provide alternative accounts of historical, spatial, and social dynamics and events which official documents often tend to neglect.⁹ Due to the relative scarcity of written and visual sources on Istanbul's peripheral neighborhoods in the nineteenth century, Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian's memoirs constitute

^{7 &}quot;Kharn Lurer" [Miscellaneous News], *Masis*, August 18, 1855, 3–4, https://tert.nla.am/archive/NLA%20TERT/ MasisPolis/1855/186_ocr.pdf; "Kharn Lurer" [Miscellaneous News], *Masis*, August 2, 1875, 3; Alexandre Yeritsiants, "Dadjgasdani Hayots Iravunknere yev Noya Sahmanutrutiune" [The Ottoman Armenian Rights and Constitution], *Ports: Azkayin yev kraganagan yeramsyah hantes* 1, no. 1 (1876): 367–393, https://tert.nla.am/archive/NLA%20AMSAGIR/ pordzT/1876/1.pdf; Müfid Ekdal, *Kadıköy Sokakları: Saklı Hikâyeleri ve Resimleriyle* (Istanbul: Tarihçi Kitabevi, 2014); Krikor Damadyan, *Hushamadyan Kadikughi* [Kadıköy commemorative book], 5 vols. (Istanbul: Surp Takavor Armenian Church Foundation, 2016); Çelik, *Remaking of Istanbul*; Pinon, *Parceled City*; Demirakın, *Study of Ottoman Modernisation*; Bayram, *Transformation of Pera*; Kentel, "Assembling 'Cosmopolitan' Pera"; Özlü, "Modernization Utopia"; Osman Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i Umur-i Belediyye*, 6 vols. (Istanbul: Istanbul Büyük Şehir Belediyesi, 1995 [1914–1922]); Esad, *Kadıköyü Hakkında Belediye Araştırmaları*.

⁸ Sibel Zandi-Sayek, Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840–1880 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Sotirios Dimitriadis, "Transforming a Late-Ottoman Port-City: Salonica, 1876–1912," in Well-Connected Domains, ed. Pascal Firges, Tobias Graf, Christian Roth, and Gülay Tulasoğlu (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 207–221; Kentel, "Assembling 'Cosmopolitan' Pera", Özlü, "Modernization Utopia"; Nora Lafi, "The Municipality of Salonica between Old Regime, the Ottoman Reforms and the Transition from Empire to Nation State: Questions and Research Perspectives," in *Thessaloniki: A City in Transition, 1912–2012*, ed. Dimitris Keridis and John Brady Kiesling (London: Routledge, 2020), 81–94; Malte Fuhrmann, Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: Urban Culture in the Late Ottoman Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁹ Richard Wittman and Yaşar Tolga Cora, "Fighting under the Same Banner: Memories from the Ottoman Theater of the Great War," *Archiv Orientální* 88, no. 3 (2020): 303-307.

THE KALFAYANS: Six Generations of Builders in Kadıköy and its environs						
1670s-1770s PAPERTSI GHAZER						
1702-1776	MELKON					
1729-1805	GIRAGOS KALFA MELKONIAN					
1766-1829	HOVHANNES KALFA GIRAGOSSIAN					
1804-1838	STEPAN HOVHANNES KALFAYAN (BORN STEPAN HAROUTIOUNIAN)					
1834-1912	HOVHANNES KALFA STEPANIAN					

Table 1: The Kalfayans: six-generations of builders (Stepanian, *Memoirs*, 50–251; table compiled by Agopian, "Urban Modernization," 85–86).

a precious document to understand the urban transformations of Kadıköy during the period of Ottoman modernization. However, before diving into the analysis of Kadıköy's urban modernization, it is important to understand the author's profile and his detailed mapping of the old core of Kadıköy. This section sheds light on Stepanian's background, his works, and his profiling of Kadıköy. It covers data from as early as 1814 with the first reconstruction of the Surp Takavor Armenian Apostolic Church in Kadıköy up until 1899 with the construction of the Haydarpaşa Port.

Author's Background

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Born in Kadıköy in 1834, Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian is a prominent figure in the district's modern history. He comes from a family of six generations of *kalfa*s, or master builders (table 1).¹⁰ Stepanian started his profession at the age of ten working alongside his older brother, Sarkis, in the family-owned timber workshop located at the heart of Caferağa, Kadıköy's old core. The workshop was inherited from Hovhannes Kalfa Giragossian, Stepanian's great-grandfather and one of the most renowned builders in Kadıköy and the neighboring areas in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹¹ Following Sarkis's death in 1856, young Stepanian fully took over the family business and ran it until his death in 1912. Although based in Kadıköy, Stepanian's job required regular travel to both Üsküdar and Istanbul to supply his workshop with raw materials and construction tools. This triangulated relationship with the three urban centers helped Stepanian expand his network of connections and his scope of activities. The experience of working as a timber merchant and a builder allowed him to develop a deep understanding of Kadıköy's urban and social fabric and consequently trace the dynamics between the two.

Stepanian was knowledgeable about all matters related to land and building transactions. In his memoirs, he provides detailed information about numerous transactions that helped shape Kadıköy's urban fabric over the years. This information includes details on property type, location, area, price, buyer and seller backgrounds, and transaction dates (see subsection *Property Transactions* below). Stepanian was also well-informed on the economic, administrative, and legal contexts of Kadıköy at that time. Having lived under the reign of five different sultans, he was particularly knowledgeable about the official decrees related to the non-Muslims' construction activities in Kadıköy. Moreover, Stepanian was familiar with different land and property laws and regulations such as the land tenure law, land transaction laws, and inheritance laws.

Stepanian's knowledge of the spatial dynamics of Kadıköy was enriched by his elaborate social connections. His marriage to the daughter of Surp Takavor's parish priest is a clear indication of Stepanian's social standing. Strategically located at the heart of the old core, right next to Surp Takavor Armenian Apostolic Church, Stepanian's house extended on both sides of Mühürdar Street (see subsection *Site Scale: An Evolving Communal Development Model* below). Due to his prominent status, Stepanian was voted member of the Kadıköy

¹⁰ Information in this table is based on Stepanian, *Memoirs*, 50–251; the table is compiled by Sarine Agopian. Agopian, "Urban Modernization," 85–86.

¹¹ Hovhannes Kalfa Giragossian was an active *kalfa* who took part in several projects. Some of these projects are the construction of summer houses in Findikli, public fountains in Sarıgazi, religious buildings in Üsküdar, and, most notably, the Selimiye Barracks. Stepanian, *Memoirs*, 53–83.

Armenian neighborhood council twice, from 1860 to 1866.¹² The council comprised prominent and active Armenians who managed the communal matters and advocated for the community's rights and needs.

Throughout his life, Stepanian collected and documented written and oral stories from different sources about Kadıköy and its locals.¹³ Perhaps the best phrase to describe him would be "urban archiver" as he was knowledgeable about all matters related to land and building transactions, land commodification, and property exchange in Kadıköy. Stepanian also had advanced mapping and cartography skills which helped him document, both textually and visually, many key urban projects such as the Kadıköy neighborhood reorganization plans, the reconstruction of Surp Takavor Church Complex, and the construction of the Aramyan Uncuyan School, among others. Between 1872 and 1875, Stepanian employed all his knowledge, experience, and social connections to document Kadıköy's urban growth over the years and penned his memoirs: a representation of a personal and an urban biography.

Stepanian's Memoirs and Maps

Written in Armenian, Stepanian's memoirs are a collection of stories, facts, and figures about Kadıköy, its inhabitants and its urban history, combined in a four hundred-page manuscript including a series of maps. The result is more than an archiving work; it is a medium of transmitting the quarter's social and spatial history to future readers. Stepanian often uses the term *entertsoghe*,¹⁴ "the reader," in his memoirs. This suggests that he was keen on documenting information not just as personal records but as archival material on Kadıköy's late Ottoman history. He often invites readers to understand and question how the development of the town and its people came about and analyze it within the larger context of late Ottoman changes.¹⁵

Stepanian's memoirs are organized into three parts: the first part gives a historical overview of Kadıköy from antiquity to the mid-1850s; the second part dives into the history of his own family, the Kalfayans;¹⁶ the third and the most important part (for the purposes of this article) is a detailed account of the urban, social, and economic development of Kadıköy during the Tanzimat period. In other words, Stepanian dedicates a whole section to the urban transformation of Kadıköy at the height of the Ottoman modernization. He states that "the thirty years [between 1852 and 1882] were very important to the development of both the neighborhood and its inhabitants."¹⁷ He identifies key factors of urban change such as the 1855 Great Kadıköv Fire, the expansion of transportation networks (the establishment of the first public ferry service in 1850-1852 and of the railway system in 1872), and the mutually transforming demographic and spatial changes. He states that these transformations were negatively perceived by the locals at first; however, they soon became a source of wealth for the neighborhood and its residents. The developments and changes that Stepanian addresses are part of the late Ottoman modernization, which he describes as "a Pandora's box that [when opened] will bring prosperous days to Kadıköy and its environs."18 He provides verifiable information on how these changes were locally perceived and implemented.

Apart from the rich textual information that Stepanian provides, he also includes a multitude of drawings of residential and religious buildings, maps of parcel distributions, sketches, and site plans in his memoirs that explain the evolving character of the *semt*. But perhaps the most interesting of all are the colored neighborhood plans of Kadıköy's old

¹² Stepanian, Memoirs, 330.

¹³ Stepanian relied on different written and oral data: two manuscripts written by Father Hagop Seuylemezian in 1814 and 1817, and information collected from Kalfayan family members, namely his brother Sarkis Stepanian, a realtor involved in many transactions in Kadıköy up until the mid-nineteenth century. Stepanian, *Memoirs*.

¹⁴ Transliterated form of the Armenian word puptpynnp.

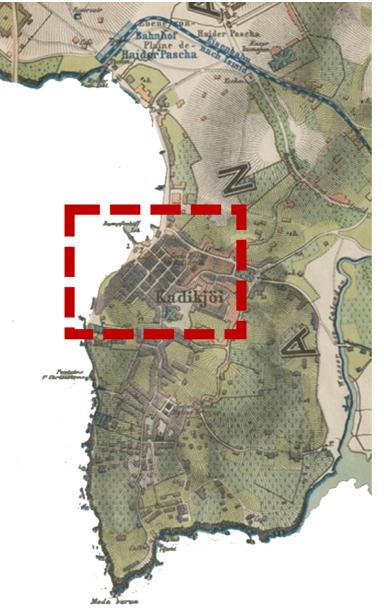
¹⁵ Stepanian, Memoirs, 276.

¹⁶ The Kalfayans is a generic family name that refers to Stepanian's family of six-generation of builders (*kalfa*) in Kadıköy. Not all family members carried the Kalfayan last name since, in the nineteenth century, family names were determined by the father's name. Agopian, "Urban Modernization," 89.

¹⁷ Stepanian, Memoirs, 9.

¹⁸ Ibid., 253.

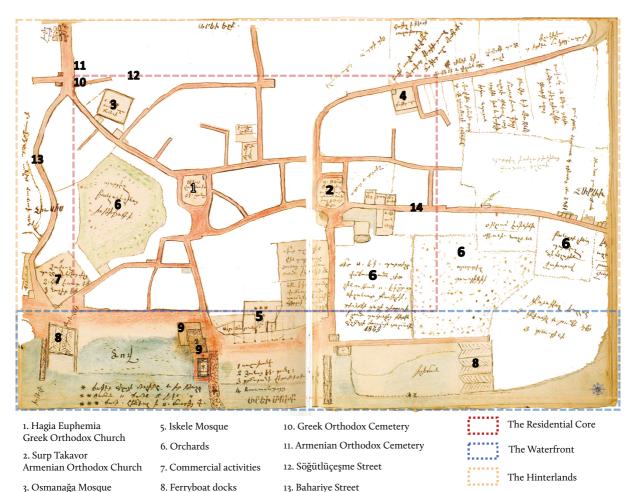
Figure 1: Map of Kadıköy. Carl Stolpe, *Plan von Constantinopel mit den Vorstädten dem Hafen und einem Theile des Bosporus*, 1882, colored map, 58 x 70 cm, Harvard Map Collection digital maps. The red dotted rectangle (added by Agopian, 2023) defines the old core of Kadıköy.



core that capture the transformation of the urban fabric from the organic layout of the pre-Tanzimat period to one that was organized and consolidated during the modernization years, as we will see below. Stepanian's memoirs and maps offer significant insights into the local dynamics that preceded and concurred with the modernization processes. The rarity of sources, especially those written in Armenian, that describe late Ottoman urban reforms from a local's perspective makes Stepanian's memoirs an even more valuable reference.

Nineteenth-Century Kadıköy in Stepanian's Memoirs and Maps

A close reading of Stepanian's memoirs and maps shows that nineteenth-century Kadıköy extended from the Haydarpaşa Bridge and recreational areas in the north to Moda Burnu and Fenerbahçe in the south, and from Bağdat Caddesi in the east to the Sea of Marmara in the west (fig. 1). Kadıköy's old core was organized into two residential neighborhoods: the lower and the upper (fig. 2). The lower neighborhood (the older of the two), was mostly covered by one- or two-story timber houses nestled in a dense network of streets. This area was inhabited by prominent Muslims, Greeks, and Armenians, mostly government officials, merchants,



14. Mühürdar Street

- 3. Osmanağa Mosque
- 4. Caferağa Mosque

Figure 2: Map of the old core of Kadıköy (Stepanian, Memoirs, 412-413; legend added by Agopian, 2023). 9. Coffee houses

and builders. The area was also marked by two churches (Hagia Euphemia¹⁹ and Surp Takavor²⁰) and one mosque (the Kethüda Mescidi,²¹ the oldest mosque in Kadıköy). The upper neighborhood, also known as Çarıkçı Mahallesi, was a densely populated area. The residents of this neighborhood were of less advantaged backgrounds, consisting mostly of fishermen, farmers, and sailors. Carıkçı Mahallesi was marked by two mosques: Caferağa and Osmanağa.²²

The old core was delimited by a commercial cluster to the north with numerous agricultural lands scattered all around. To the east, it was marked by two cemeteries belonging to the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic communities, which were located at the intersection of Söğütlücesme and Bahariye Streets (fig. 2), while to the south, the old core was defined by the outskirts of Moda Caddesi. As per Stepanian, there were also other smaller mahalles (neighborhoods) scattered across the area such as Orta Moda, Hünkar

¹⁹ In 1694, the Greek community of Kadıköy renovated the abandoned ruins of the Azize Vassi Monastery in Caferağa and renamed it Hagia Euphemia after the original Hagia Euphemia Church that was located around present-day Haydarpaşa in the early fourth century. Kadıköyü Bilim Kültür ve Sanat Dostları Derneği (KADOS), Kadıköy City Guide: Cultural Diversity in Kadıköy (Istanbul: Kadıköy, 2019), 11, https://kados.org.tr/eng/activities/culture-art/.

²⁰ Built in 1721, on the exact same site as the former sixteenth century Surp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Apostolic Church. Stepanian, Memoirs; Damadyan, Kadıköy Commemorative Book.

²¹ Built in 1550 by Kethüda Mustafa Agha, the mosque is not depicted in Stepanian's map. Muşazlioğlu, "Kadıköy Camileri.

²² The Caferağa Mosque was built between 1554 and 1557 by Babüsaade agha, Cafer Agha, during the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. The Osmanağa Mosque was built in 1612 by Osman Agha, also a Babüsaade agha, who served during the reign of Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617).

30 İmamı, Kumbaracı Yokuşu, Fenerbahçe, Yoğurtçuçeşme, Selamiçeşme, Ihlamurluçeşme, Kızıltoprak, Yeldeğirmeni, and Hasanpaşa.

The old core's waterfront was the most vibrant section of Kadıköy; it was both physically and visually well-connected to the inner neighborhoods. A place for recreation and leisure, Kadıköy's waterfront comprised many amenities and services such as *keyfhanes* (restaurants or coffee houses), ferry stations, warehouses for boat building and maintenance, docks, and piers. The Sultan Mustafa III Mosque, better known as the İskele Camii, stood in harmony with the rest of the recreational cluster.

Kadıköy's hinterland mainly consisted of vast agricultural fields. According to Stepanian, there were more than a hundred plots of lands, 25 to 50 *dönüm* each,²³ cultivated for livestock and crop production.²⁴ For centuries, the area was known as the kitchen-garden (*bostan*) of the imperial palace.²⁵ But by the end of the nineteenth century, most of these arable lands turned into built areas as a result of population growth and expansion of the urban fabric. How did Kadıköy transform from a peripheral agricultural settlement into one of Istanbul's key districts in the late nineteenth century?

Spatial Factors and Social Actors

A close reading of Stepanian's memoirs unveils the intertwined relationship between spatial factors and social actors that helped shape Kadıköy's urban fabric in the nineteenth century. The memoirs particularly capture the relationship between government officials and Kadıköy locals on the one end, and residents and their land on the other, highlighting the agency of a wide network of local actors in the development of their neighborhood, which included *kalfas*, *mütevellis*, *bostancıbaşıs*,²⁶ *subaşıs* (commanders), neighborhood councils, religious figures, prominent individuals, builders, merchants, and residents.

In this section, I will elaborate on the urban modernization of late Ottoman Kadıköy based on the firsthand accounts of Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian. Stepanian offers in his memoirs a large set of data often in a narrative form rather than in systematic charts. To efficiently use Stepanian's data, I organize the information according to different categories including property transactions, property ownership models, neighborhood regularization plans, Land Use / Land Cover, social constituents by *millets* and ranks, administrative and legal structures, and personal stories and reflections. I then contextualize and analyze these findings in light of secondhand sources, based on which I construct a narrative of urban change of nineteenthcentury Kadıköy. This narrative spreads over three scales: quarter, neighborhood, and site scales. Each scale comprises a different set of factors and actors involved in the modernization of Kadıköy's urban space. This multiscalar approach helps examine different practices of urban modernization from microscale implementations (i.e., the regularization of plots of land, the creation of squares, adding an extra story to existing residential buildings, and cladding facades with *kargir*) to large-scale planning schemes (i.e., developing a new port facility, a train station in Haydarpaşa, and new neighborhoods in Rasimpaşa, Yeldeğirmeni, and Erenköy).

Quarter Scale: New Development Models and Large Planning Schemes

The Tanzimat reforms functioned as a framework fueling modernization, but it was the specific local contexts that shaped the trajectory of urban transformations in the different Ottoman districts. In Kadıköy, early signs of urban modernization were manifested through the commodification of land and a gradual transformation of agricultural fields into real estate commodities. These changes started with the Tanzimat reforms in 1839

²³ Dönüm is an Ottoman unit of area, equivalent to 919.3 square meters. Following the Ottoman period, the metric dönüm was redefined as exactly 1,000 square meters (0.10 ha).

²⁴ Some of the main fruit crop production in Kadıköy were cherry, walnut, pear, fig, quince, and three varieties of grapes: Çavuş, Çoban, and Ru-yi nigâr. Stepanian, *Memoirs*, 39.

²⁵ Ibid., 34-42.

²⁶ An Ottoman court position which directly translates into "head gardener." More specifically, the *bostancibaşı* was a member of the imperial guard whose main job was to ensure public order.

and increased in the 1850s, specifically between 1852 and 1858, as a result of demographic, economic, natural, and political factors. For example, in the early 1840s, several Levantine merchants, Greek notables, and a group of leading Armenian personalities known as the amiras left the Istanbul peninsula for Pera, the Prince's Islands, and Kadıköy. Imperial officials, statesmen, and former Janissary aghas also moved to Kadıköy.²⁷ The migration of newcomers triggered a dynamic real estate development model, which not only transformed Kadıköy's Land Use / Land Cover but also its built fabric. The rich merchants and state officials brought in with them both financial capital and architectural expertise. They undertook the building of multistory dwellings with elaborate architectural details and high-quality materials. They also acquired large numbers of vacant and agricultural lands or bostans, notably in Caferağa located at the heart of Kadıköy, and gradually transformed them into built areas. In a span of a few decades (1830s-1870s), Caferağa's urban fabric grew exponentially and expanded towards Rihtim in the north, Bahariye in the east, and beyond Moda in the southwest. New streets and neighborhoods also emerged on the outskirts of old core Kadıköy such as Bağdat Caddesi, Haydarpaşa (Rasimpaşa), Yeldeğirmeni, and Erenköy.

Property Transactions

The development of new neighborhoods was largely prompted by an active real estate market. A closer look at property transactions during this period reveals interesting insights into the transformation of land patterns in Kadıköy. In his memoirs, Stepanian imparts detailed information about real estate transactions that took place in Kadıköy during the nineteenth century. To compile all this information, I created a property transactions table that comprises the following data: property type, location, total surface area, name of buying party, name of selling party, transaction price, and transaction date (Appendix). Naturally, this table is not a comprehensive listing of all property transactions that occurred in Kadıköy in the nineteenth century; however, it offers a meaningful sample of the transactions in the real estate market and highlights the dynamics of property regime in Kadıköy both before and during the Tanzimat period.

The appendix covers the active pattern of property transactions in Kadıköy that took place specifically between 1800s and 1870s. The list includes thirty-six entries and is organized into three categories:

- Entries 1-7: Property transactions before the Tanzimat period, early 1800s-1839
- Entries 8-25: Property transactions between 1839 and 1855 (before the Great Kadıköy Fire in 1855)
- Entries 26–36: Property transactions between 1855 and 1871 (after the Great Kadıköy Fire in 1855)

A more detailed reading of the table in the appendix shows that in the early 1800s—that is, long before the Tanzimat reforms—property transactions in Kadıköy were mostly limited to a few operations only. This could be explained by two arguments: either because the property market was not vibrant before the Tanzimat or because Stepanian did not have extensive information on land and building transactions from the early decades of the 1800s. Transactions during this period were mostly limited to a few commercial units (e.g., bakeries, mills, timber shops), one educational building (e.g., Surp Takavor School), some communal properties, and a couple of vacant lands (e.g., Surp Takavor Church's house and orchard), most of which were located on Mühürdar and Muvakkthane Streets or among the commercial cluster north of Caferağa.²⁸ Parties involved in the property transaction operations were mostly from local Muslim, Greek, and Armenian communities.

²⁷ Stepanian, Memoirs, 254-255.

²⁸ Stepanian's data from this period was based on manuscripts written by Father Hagop Seuylemezian in 1814 and 1817, and information collected from Kalfayan family members.

Following the Gülhane Edict of 1839 there was a more dynamic property development 32 pattern in Kadıköy, especially during the 1840s and 1850s.²⁹ This active pattern of land ownership was largely fueled by the Tanzimat reforms since it allowed a wider scope of action, which endeavored to integrate land into the market as an exchangeable commodity.³⁰ The changing land and property regime encouraged local inhabitants to purchase property in Kadıköy. As a result, during this period only, more than eighteen transactions were logged in Stepanian's memoirs. Vacant lands and residential houses were the two most common property transaction types that took place between 1840 and 1855. Wealthy Istanbulites such as Rıza Pasha, the Lorando brothers, and Garabed Agha Mouradian acquired large plots of lands in previously uninhabited areas such as west of Moda, east of Mühürdar, Kadıköy's waterfront, and along the Kuşdili River, where they constructed large mansions and summer houses.³¹ For example, Riza Pasha bought 28 dönüm of land west of Moda. Similarly, İbrahim Agha purchased 20 dönüm of land on the left bank of the Kuşdili River. Prices largely depended on different variables such as parties concerned and property location. For example, the two plots of lands bought by Riza Pasha in 1845 from Garabed Chamurdjian and Krikor Chamurdjian were each sold at two different price points (643 kuruş and 2714 kuruş per dönüm, respectively) although having the same total area (14 dönüm) and being both located west of Moda.32 Only a few years later, a certain İbrahim Agha bought 20 dönüm of land along the Kuşdili River for 800 kuruş per dönüm.33

This dynamic property development pattern continued in the following years and included the construction and renovation of residential buildings and shops. Many local names such as Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian and Lutfi Agha Tensoufian reappear in the table. The names of newcomers such as Tubini and Satay Dimitri also appear in the table. While transactions during this period were limited to similar locations as in previous years, land prices considerably surged after the new regularization plan of Kadıköy, which 1 discuss below, and the substitution of coins by paper currency in 1862.³⁴ For example, a plot of land on Muvakkıthane with a total area of 2.8 dönüm was sold for 500 gold coins in 1865 (i.e., the equivalent of 44,643 kuruş per dönüm) compared to 2714 kuruş per dönüm in 1845.³⁵ This implies that urban modernization must have played a significant role in the drastic increase in land prices in late Ottoman Kadıköy. However, further research (i.e., comparative data from other districts; inflation and currency devaluation information) is needed to show a more nuanced understanding of the increasing land value.

Parceling and Property Ownership Model

The analysis of property transactions reveals a changing property ownership model in Kadıköy starting from the mid-nineteenth century. Property ownership in Kadıköy changed from multiple families each owning a limited area of land to a few wealthy families owning multiple plots of lands. Rich notables such as Rıza Pasha, Tubini, Zakharov, and Mouradian acquired numerous parcels (namely, agricultural lands and orchards) in the neighborhoods east of Mühürdar, south of Caferağa, and west of Moda (fig. 3).

After buying large plots of land in a single area, rich landowners pooled and subdivided the lots and sold them by the square meter. To illustrate this pattern, I will refer to the example of Konçci Yanko Sdrati Rali who, according to Stepanian, bought Stepan Megerdichian's farm in 1851 for 17,500 kuruş.³⁶ Rali then purchased all the land surrounding the farm, pooled, subdivided, and sold it later by the square meter. Stepanian also gives the example

36 Ibid., 257.

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²⁹ Most of Stepanian's data during this period was collected from his brother, Sarkis Stepanian, who acted as a realtor in many of the transaction operations that occurred in the town.

³⁰ Huri İslamoğlu, ed., Constituting Modernity: Private Property in the East and West (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004).

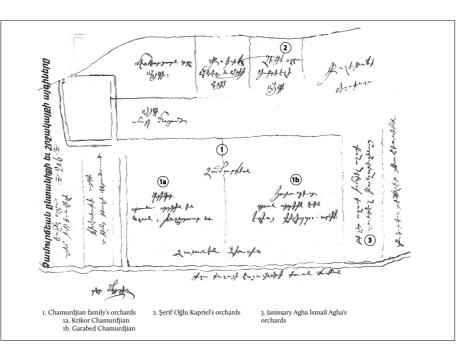
³¹ Riza Pasha was a former commanding officer in the Ottoman army, the Lorando brothers were affluent tradesmen, and Garabed Agha Mouradian was a major sarraf. Stepanian, Memoirs, 257, 258, 264.

³² lbid., 266-267.

³³ Ibid., 229.

 ^{34 1000} kuruş was worth four gold coins and six *Konsolid* treasury bonds. See Stepanian, *Memoirs*, 359. See also Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, "ilga-yi Kavaim-i Nakdiyye ve icad-1 kondolide" in Lütfi, *Vak'anüvüs Ahmed Lütfi Efendi Tarih* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1988–1993 [1873–1912]).
 35 Stepanian, *Memoirs*, 107.

Figure 3: An example of wealthy developers buying numerous plots of land in Kadıköy, in the early Tanzimat years. The drawing depicts several plots of lands (used specifically as orchards) bought by Rıza Pasha west of Moda Street, near the Aramyan-Uncuyan School, in the years between 1842 and 1845 (Stepanian, *Memoirs*, 265).



of Rıza Pasha who, in the 1860s, sold most of his land west of Moda for 60–100 kuruş per square meter. These new land transaction practices and changing property ownership models, dominated mostly by wealthy newcomers, played a major role in the urban growth and the decision-making practices in Kadıköy.

The Rise of Public Transportation

As Kadıköy grew in size and population, transportation services also developed. In 1852, the first public ferry service in Kadıköy was established. The *Hüma Pervaz* was the first ferry boat to transport commuters between Kadıköy and Istanbul proper. In the following years, the Şirket-i Hayriye (lit. Auspicious Company) increased the number of commuter lines to four and established more connections between Kadıköy and other districts along the Bosporus. This attracted more families to move from Istanbul to Kadıköy, purchase land, and settle down in the district. As a result, more vacant lands and agricultural fields turned into residential areas. According to Stepanian, this boosted Kadıköy's economy and encouraged its residents to invest more in their district.

Urban modernization efforts continued in the 1870s. In 1872, the Haydarpaşa Railway Station was built in Kadıköy, and, in the following decades, a rail line was extended to reach Ottoman provinces in the east. This triggered the renovation of old buildings along the railway lines and around train stations. It also incited the development of new neighborhoods in the north and south of Caferağa, Yeldeğirmeni, and Erenköy. By the end of the century, Kadıköy became a major transportation hub and a connection point between European and Anatolian Istanbul.

Neighborhood Scale: The Implementation of Laws and Regulations

In the nineteenth century, the modernization of the urban fabric, especially in dense neighborhoods, was often a result of fires.³⁷ In Kadıköy, the Great Fire of 1855 played a major role in restructuring Caferağa, Kadıköy's old core and the cultural, residential, commercial, and recreational heart of the quarter.

³⁷ Çelik, Remaking of Istanbul; Zandi-Sayek, Ottoman Izmir; Lafi, "Municipality of Salonica."

34 The Great Kadıköy Fire of 1855

The Great Kadıköy Fire of 1855, also known as İskele Yangını,³⁸ was a major event that radically transformed the urban fabric of nineteenth-century Kadıköy. Although little has been written about this incident, the case of Kadıköy provides important perspectives into the post-fire planning activities in the late Ottoman Istanbul.

The reorganization of Kadıköy after the fire is one of the best examples of urban modernization in the Tanzimat period. Its importance further lies in the fact that it took place in a context that is both socially and spatially different from other fire-stricken neighborhoods in Istanbul such as Pera, Hocapaşa, and Aksaray. In this respect, Stepanian's memoirs offer great insights into this metamorphic event. The memoirs provide a detailed description of the fire source and its geographic limits, an inventory of the affected houses, shops, and other communal buildings, the measures taken to stop the fire, the rebuilding initiatives, the neighborhood reorganization plan, and other important historical and technical details.

The Great Kadıköy Fire started on the evening of August 14, 1855, in a depot for combustible materials in Caferağa. It quickly stretched into three branches:

- 1. The first branch crawled west, towards the lower neighborhood, ravaging around 150 houses and key landmarks such as the Surp Takavor Church and the adjacent school.
- 2. The second branch moved northward, towards the Osmanağa Mosque but was quickly extinguished thanks to the efforts of local residents (led by Selim Mehmet Pasha and Hagopig Agha Noradoungian) and French soldiers stationed in the Selimiye Barracks as part of the Franco-Ottoman alliance during the Crimean War.
- 3. The third branch extended eastward, towards the Çarıkçı Mahallesi. Here, the locals succeeded again in putting out the fire and saving most of the houses in the upper neighborhood from burning down.

The Great Kadıköy Fire took a heavy toll on the urban fabric of the district's old core. It destroyed 300 to 400 houses and shops.³⁹ Despite wreaking havoc, the fire paved the way for the reconfiguration of Kadıköy's old core, and the implementation of one of the first grid plans in Istanbul, and the Ottoman Empire at large.

The First Neighborhood Regularization Plan

Scholars have so far underestimated, if not totally neglected, the fact that one of the earliest neighborhood planning practices in the Ottoman Empire was implemented in Kadıköy. Developed in 1856, a year after the Great Fire of 1855,⁴⁰ the Kadıköy Plan is as old as (if not older than) the Aksaray post-fire plan, designed and implemented after the 1856 Aksaray Fire, and known so far in the literature as the first grid-street pattern in Istanbul.⁴¹ Here, Stepanian's memoirs contest the existing literature on the matter by providing an actual date and a firsthand account of one of the earliest neighborhood reorganization plans in late Ottoman history.

In fact, the Kadıköy fire facilitated the reorganization of the neighborhood and the implementation of a new layout (*heyet-i cedide*) made possible by the Tanzimat urban regulations. Stepanian, a Kadıköy local and an active *kalfa*, documents the intricate details of the neighborhood regularization plan with profound understanding of construction and planning practices. In his memoirs, Stepanian explains that the Kadıköy Plan was designed and implemented by a local engineer named Hasan Tahsin Efendi. The latter's post-fire plan of Kadıköy was very similar to that of Aksaray's, which was developed by the Italian

³⁸ Esad, Kadıköyü Hakkında Belediye Araştırmaları, 40.

^{39 &}quot;Miscellaneous News," August 18, 1855, 3-4; Esad, 40.

⁴⁰ Stepanian, Memoirs, 310.

⁴¹ The actual design and implementation date of the Aksaray reorganization plan is not clearly mentioned in the literature. In her 1986 book, Çelik writes, "The 1856 Aksaray fire destroyed more than 650 buildings and was a major turning point in the history of Istanbul's urban form. Following this fire, for the first time in the Ottoman capital, a systemic survey of the burned site was made, and an alternative urban design scheme was drawn up and implemented." Çelik, *Remaking of Istanbul*, 53–55.



Figure 4: Neighborhood plan and street network of the old core of Kadıköy before the 1855 fire (Stepanian, *Memoirs*, 412–413).

Figure 5: New neighborhood regularization plan of the old core of Kadıköy after the 1855 fire (Stepanian, *Memoirs*, 414-415). engineer Luigi Storari in or soon after 1856. Both neighborhood plans were inspired by European planning paradigms which called for, among other things, the regularization of the street network and the creation of squares and public spaces.⁴² Accordingly, the new post-fire neighborhood plans in both Kadıköy and Aksaray consisted of a large network of wide streets and open spaces allowing air circulation, connecting different parts of the neighborhood to create a unified ensemble, and finally promoting aesthetic principles to make the area visually more pleasant.

The regularization of Kadıköy's urban plan in 1856 was based on the Official Record of 1839 (İlmühaber), which was devised exclusively for Istanbul, and the Building Regulations (Ebniye Nizmanamesi) of 1848–1849.⁴³ The town's urban fabric changed from an organic layout to a grid pattern with straight and uniformly wide streets and large rectangular blocks. The limits of the new plan were delineated by the 1855 fire: from Osmanağa Mosque, the Çarşı Hamamı (Public Bath), and the town's bakery in the north to the agricultural lands in the south and from Çarıkcı Mahallesi (the upper neighborhood) in the east all the way to Kadıköy's waterfront and the Sea of Marmara to the west. The gentler topography of Kadıköy, compared to many other districts of Istanbul, facilitated the new plan to adopt a smoother layout.

The pre-1855 street network (fig. 4) still informed the new plan (fig. 5), but in a more organized layout. The regularization of the street network helped eliminate crooked streets and cul-de-sacs and provide easy passage for fire-fighting equipment. In other words, the rather chaotic urban fabric of the pre-1855 period gave way to a new grid plan, one that allowed continuous circulation and a well-connected street network (fig. 5). There were two street typologies according to width: main streets and secondary streets with a relative width of 6 m and 4.5 m, respectively. Mühürdar Street, which crossed the churches of Hagia Euphemia and Surp Takavor, was labeled as a main street.⁴⁴ Its importance was further accentuated by chamfering the corners of the crossroads where the churches were located. These intersections created two public squares. The two churches, which were previously located on two island plots, were now embedded into larger plots and occupied a corner of each intersection. This created two focal points at the heart of the town which connected the waterfront to Bahariye and the north to Moda.

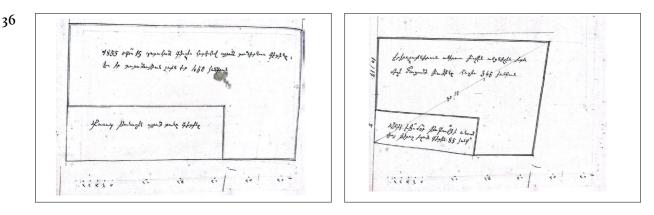
Once the new plan was implemented, Kadıköy's old core was organized into sixteen square and rectangular blocks; each block was laid out with respect to its pre-fire size, position, and characteristics (fig. 5). The implementation of this grid plan came according to the land expropriation regulation devised in the 1848 Building Regulations in which private landowners were forced to renounce a portion of their land to widen local streets.⁴⁵

⁴² Patrice de Moncan and Claude Heurteux, Le Paris d'Haussmann (Paris: Les éditions du Mécène, 2002).

⁴³ Ergin, Mecelle; Ceylan İrem Gençer and Işıl Çokuğraş, "Regulation of Urban Space in the Ottoman State: The Case of Istanbul (1820–1900)," Megaron 11, no. 1 (2016): 1–14.

⁴⁴ To date, Mühürdar is still one of the main streets in Caferağa, the old core of Kadıköy.

⁴⁵ Ergin, Mecelle, 1032–1037; Gençer and Çokuğraş, "Regulation of Urban Space," 8.



However, the 1848 regulation did not explicitly define the actual percentage of land to be expropriated from each parcel; this eventually led to haphazard expropriation practices during the implementation phase.⁴⁶ The partial expropriation of Stepanian's family house is a perfect example of this practice. Before the 1855 Kadıköy Fire, the total surface area of land owned by Stepanian, east of Mühürdar Street, was 450 m². After the fire, and in order to widen the street, around 100 m² of surface area was expropriated from Stepanian's land.⁴⁷ As such, Stepanian was left with a plot of land of 345 m^2 instead of 450 m^2 (fig. 6, 7).

The post-fire regularization plan of the Caferağa neighborhood is a perfect case to examine how Tanzimat urban regulations were put into practice. Stepanian not only documents urban changes at the neighborhood scale but also covers individual building transformations and highlights the role of local actors in shaping their built environment, to which I now turn.

Site Scale: An Evolving Communal Development Model

There are numerous examples in Stepanian's memoirs that demonstrate how multiple actors had a key role in instigating urban changes in peripheral districts such as Kadıköy. The case of the Armenian community is a good example to support this argument. Over the years, the Armenian community played an active role in shaping the built fabric of Kadıköy, both before and during the Tanzimat period.

A Communal Development Model

Armenian planning committees in Kadıköy, led by the Armenian Apostolic Church, carried out different urban development projects in the nineteenth century such as the construction and renovation of the Surp Takavor Church in 1814, the building and establishment of the Surp Takavor School in 1815, the construction of the Hamazaspyan-Mouradian School in 1858, and the building of the Aramyan-Uncuyan School in 1874.48 The organizational structure of these committees, however, significantly changed during the Tanzimat period. For example, in the pre-Tanzimat years, planning committees were mainly comprised of the church (i.e., represented by the head of the local church), the mütevelli (i.e., a selfappointed patron, in charge of decision-making, planning, and funding of projects), and several local notables. The mütevelli was usually a prominent and wealthy individual who had good connections with government officials and acted as a facilitator. He was assisted by a small circle of self-appointed locals who supported him in the executive decisions. From a technical perspective, the committee was also assisted by a *kalfa* who carried out the design, construction, and supervision of the community buildings. In many cases, the kalfa

Figure 6: Plot of land owned by Stepanian, before the 1856 Regularization Plan. The plan reads: "The total surface area of land before the August 15, 1855, fire was 450 square meters" (Stepanian, Memoirs, 312).

Figure 7: Plot of land owned by Stepanian, after the 1856 Regularization Plan. The plan reads: "After the unjust revision of the engineers, we were barely left with 350 m² of total land" (Stepanian, Memoirs, 312).

⁴⁶ This expropriation regulation was later revised: the Building Law of 1882 stipulated that the maximum surface area of any given private property expropriated by the state was not to be exceeded by one-fourth of its pre-fire area. Ergin, 1042; Gencer and Işıl, 11. 47 Stepanian, Memoirs, 312.

⁴⁸ Agopian, "Urban Modernization," 133-140.

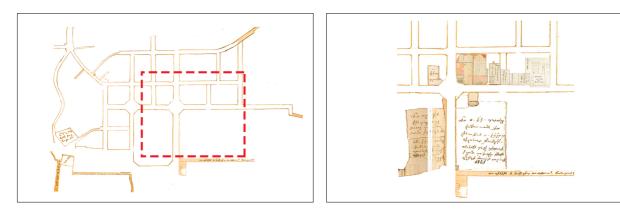


Figure 8: The location of the Surp Takavor cluster in the old core of Kadıköy (designated by the dotted rectangle, added by Agopian, 2023) (Stepanian, Memoirs, 414-415).

Figure 9: A detailed overview of the Surp Takavor cluster (based on Stepanian, Memoirs, 412-417; compiled by Agopian, 2023). also supplied construction materials (e.g., timber, brick, and mortar) and acted as a realtor. During the pre-Tanzimat years, this unofficial planning body undertook the construction of multiple buildings in Kadıköy. Its key achievement was developing the "unplanned" cluster of communal buildings and services centered around the Surp Takavor Church (fig. 8, 9). The importance of this cluster lies in the fact that it was located at the heart of Caferağa and occupied one of the two anchor points of the old core (the other being the Hagia Euphemia Church and buildings that surrounded it). The cluster delivered key urban services through several communal properties: the school, the church, numerous residential buildings, orchards, vegetable gardens, and recreational spaces. Yet, the role of residents remained limited, especially when it came to communal decision-making. As per Stepanian, residents were mostly in charge of ensuring the physical and material resources needed for the construction and renovation works, while the mütevelli controlled most of the executive decisions.

This quickly changed during the Tanzimat years when neighborhood councils replaced the old model of community administration run by the church, *mütevelli*, and the notables. A neighborhood council was formed by a committee of six to ten locals elected by vote,⁴⁹ who administered the social, urban, and educational affairs of the community;⁵⁰ this was in line with the broader developments in the Armenian community, notably the 1860-1863 Armenian National Constitution. The council oversaw the main communal projects in the district such as the Hamazaspyan-Mouradian School and the Aramyan-Uncuyan School.⁵¹ Although still a key actor in planning and building practices, the church delegated its executive role to the neighborhood council. It acted more as an umbrella body rather than a direct agent of management and implementation. While the church conceded some of its executive powers to the new committee, residents gained a more inclusive role in decisionmaking. They participated in town hall meetings and directly elected neighborhood councils. Additionally, kalfas were gradually replaced by architects and engineers from outside Kadıköy who had professional training and education. Because of their education and socioeconomic backgrounds, architects such as Resimci Haci Mahdesi Megerdich and Hovhannes Aznavourian greatly impacted the style, dynamics, and planning practices in Kadıköy in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In later decades, municipal bodies, which were created within the larger Ottoman context of urban administration, took over the administrative and planning practices in the district. In 1868, an Armenian architect named Haroutioun (rendered into Turkish as Artin) was assigned by the Üsküdar Municipality to supervise the construction of new streets and buildings in Kadıköy. A few years later, Kadıköy locals such as Krikor Khorian and Djanig Agha joined the Kadıköy municipal council and undertook different planning projects.⁵²

⁴⁹ The first Kadıköy Neighborhood Council was elected in 1860 after the establishment of the Armenian National Regulations (also known as The Armenian National Constitution), or Nizâmnâme-i Millet-i Ermeniyân. 50

Stepanian, Memoirs, 333; "Miscellaneous News," Masis, August 2, 1875, 3.

⁵¹ Stepanian, 382-383.

⁵² Esad, Kadıköyü Hakkında Belediye Araştırmaları, 44; Damadyan, Kadıköy Commemorative Book, 1658.

38 The role of localized planning bodies in Kadıköy, especially that of the Armenian planning committees, gradually changed over the years. It evolved from being top-down and autocratic (i.e., "church-*mütevelli*-notables" committee) to more inclusive and democratic (i.e., the Armenian Neighborhood Council) until it was fully taken over, by the end of the century, by official administrative and planning bodies (i.e., the Municipal Council) in which jurisdiction was beyond the community or cross-communal.

To better explain this, I will take as an example the Surp Takavor Armenian Apostolic Church and provide an analysis of its reconstruction below. Surp Takavor was reconstructed twice in the nineteenth century, first in 1814 and later in 1858, following two major neighborhood fires. The Surp Takavor case is illuminating because it highlights the example of a single edifice reconstructed twice during two different time periods (i.e., before and during the Tanzimat). It showcases the dynamics between various planning actors and offers a useful overview of the actual implementation of Ottoman laws on the ground.

The Reconstruction of the Surp Takavor Church: Pre- and Post-Tanzimat

Surp Takavor (formerly known as Surp Asdvadzadzin) was first built in 1721 upon a firman from Sultan Ahmed III. After a fire ravaged the building in 1814, Sultan Mahmud II issued another firman allowing the reconstruction of the church on a few conditions: all work had to be completed in forty-one days and the new church building had to have the same architectural specifications as its pre-fire condition (i.e., a pointed-dome basilica measuring 8 m long, 6 m wide, and 8 m tall) (fig. 10).⁵³ Once reconstructed, the church had all the distinctive features of Armenian religious architecture such as the pointed-dome, the narthex, the three altars, and the stage. The main construction material was timber, but stone, marble, lime, and cast iron were also used to decorate the church. The total cost of the reconstruction works was 36,000 kuruş.

The second reconstruction of Surp Takavor took place in 1858, three years after the Great Kadıköy Fire. Local community members led by the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople— Hagopos III Seropian (1848–1858)—submitted a letter to the Imperial State requesting approval for the reconstruction operations. Once the approval was obtained, work began immediately in January 1857. A committee formed by local notables and headed by Garabed Agha Mouradian, a major *sarraf* of the era, supervised the process. An island block of 1455 m² was allocated for the church and other communal buildings. The new church complex was designed and built over an area of 460 m²; it comprised the Surp Garabed Church, the Surp Takavor Chapel, and a two-story chancery (fig. 11). Both the church and the chapel had stone-cladded façades and the main church building was crowned by an atypical dome for Armenian religious architecture (fig. 12).⁵⁴ The second reconstruction of Surp Takavor ended in September 1858 with a total cost of 253,000 kuruş.

When closely examined, the reconstruction processes of Surp Takavor provide interesting insights into urban practices in Kadıköy in the pre- and post-Tanzimat periods. The different architectural, legal, and planning elements of each reconstruction period are listed in the comparative table below (table 2).⁵⁵ There are a few key elements that I would, however, like to highlight.

Prior to 1839, non-Muslim religious monuments could only be restored or reconstructed according to a firman from the reigning sultan. As per sharia law, non-Muslim religious buildings could not be erected from scratch.⁵⁶ The first reconstruction of Surp Takavor

Figure 10: The Surp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Apostolic Church in Kadıköy, in the eighteenth century, with the classical pointed dome (Damadyan, *Kadıköy Commemorative Book*, 5).

⁵³ Stepanian, Memoirs, 96; Damadyan, "Kayler Kadikughi antsyalen minchev aysor," 1:preface.

⁵⁴ Later in 1884, a wooden bell tower and a *pangal* (a room where candles are sold and alms are received) were added in the courtyard of the complex. Ekdal, *Kadiköy Sokaklari*.

⁵⁵ Agopian, "Urban Modernization," 116-117.

⁵⁶ Paolo Girardelli, "Religious Imprints along the Grand Rue: Armenians and Latin in Late-Ottoman Istanbul," in *Christian Art under Muslim Rule*, ed. Maximilian Hartmuth, Ayse Dilsiz, and Alyson Wharton (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2016), 117–136; Karen Leal, "The Balat District of Istanbul: Multiethnicity on the Golden Horn," in *The Architecture and Memory of the Minority Quarter in the Muslim Mediterranean City*, ed. Susan Miller and Mauro Bertagnin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2010),

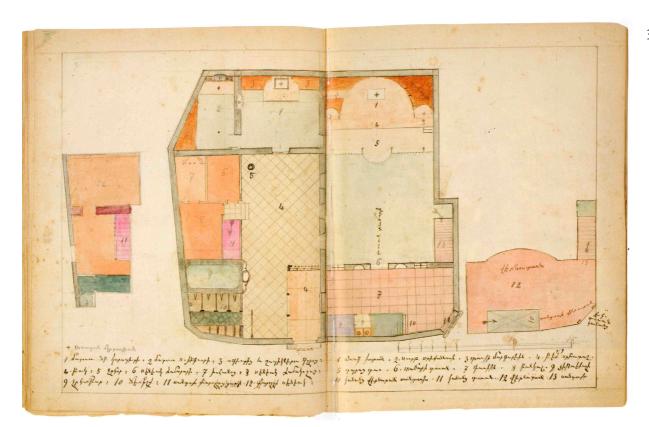


Figure 11: Reconstruction map of the Surp Takavor Armenian Apostolic Church following the 1855 fire, hand drawn by Stepanian circa mid-1800s (Stepanian, *Memoirs*, 416–417). was based on a firman issued by Sultan Mahmud II, which limited many of the structural and design elements of the new church. Despite the multiple constraints of the sharia law, the Surp Takavor was strategically located on an island plot in the heart of the district. It was not hidden among a row of buildings but prominently stood out along other religious monuments such as the Hagia Euphemia Greek Orthodox Church, Caferağa Mosque, Osmanağa Mosque, and Sultan Mustafa III's İskele Mosque. Still, *kalfa*s had no room for architectural improvements; they had to replicate the design and technical specifications of the church identically to its pre-fire condition.

Despite many legal and technical challenges, the project engaged many actors from both the Armenian and Muslim communities who collectively contributed to the reconstruction of one of the key religious monuments in the district. As per Stepanian, the reconstruction of Surp Takavor was initiated by the church and headed by the local priest. Decision-making, planning, and funding were mainly carried out by the *mütevelli* (i.e., Noradoungian Haroutioun Amira) with the help of a few notables (i.e., Ashnanian Megerdich Agha, Aznavour Amira, and Mangig Agha Noradoungian) and three *kalfas* (i.e., Hagop Kalfa, Minas Kalfa, and Hovhannes Kalfa). Haroutioun Amira, a man of influence and wealth, had good connections with government officials, which helped him sort out administrative and legal requirements for the reconstruction of the Surp Takavor.⁵⁷ Haroutioun Amira's efforts were coupled by those of prominent Muslim notables such as Şamkapı Kahyası Haci Şerif Efendi⁵⁸ and *çuhadar* agha Ladikli Ahmed Agha.⁵⁹ Both notables were Kadıköy locals holding key

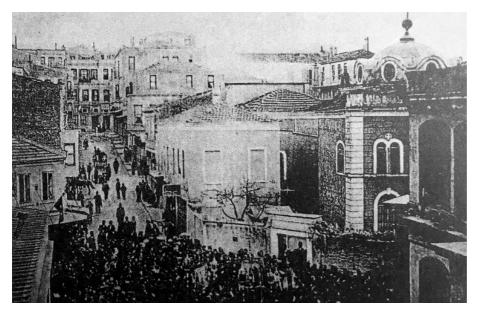
58 The chief of the doorkeepers who guarded the imperial palace in Istanbul but could also be a steward or an intendant serving under a vizier; Haci Şerif Efendi was a Vüzera Kapı Kethüdası under the reign of Sultan Mahmud II. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanlı Ünlüleri*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, trans. Seyit Ali Kahraman, 6 vols. (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996).

^{175–210;} Alyson Wharton, "Identity and Style: Armenian-Ottoman Churches in the Nineteenth Century," in *Sacred Precincts: The Religious Architecture of Non-Muslim Communities Across the Islamic World*, ed. Mohammad Gharipour (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 76–105.

⁵⁷ Stepanian, Memoirs, 95-97.

⁵⁹ An Ottoman official and one of the four closest aghas to the sultan, Ladikli Ahmet Agha was a *cuhadar* agha under

Figure 12: The Surp Takavor Armenian Apostolic Church in Kadıköy, reconstructed in 1857 and replacing the former Surp Asdvadzadzin Church. The new church has an atypical dome for Armenian churches (Ekdal, *Kadıköy Sokakları*, 42).



positions in the Ottoman bureaucracy which greatly helped secure the necessary resources to complete the reconstruction works efficiently and on time. Ahmet Agha was particularly instrumental in obtaining the firman from Sultan Mahmud II. Moreover, both Şerif Efendi and Ahmet Agha played an intermediary role between the church and the local *bostancıbaşı*, Deli Abdullah. The latter was appointed by the state to supervise the rebuilding operations. His role was to ensure that the works were conducted in accordance with the sultan's firman which entailed the completion of the edifice in forty-one days and the conformity of the new church's architectural details to those of the former one.⁶⁰

On a technical level, three *kalfas* were assigned to design and build the church: Hagop Kalfa, Minas Kalfa, and Hovhannes Kalfa. Because they were bound by the firman's conditions, the *kalfas* had to rebuild the church with the same architectural style and features as the former one. Nevertheless, they were able to bypass the restrictions imposed by the firman and improve the interior space thanks to the strong support of both local Armenian and Muslim notables. As such, the *kalfas* were able to use high-quality construction materials and decorate the interior of the church with marble, cast iron, and timber.⁶¹ Finally, the local community played a major role in ensuring both the physical and the material resources for the completion of the works within the given time frame.

The first reconstruction of Surp Takavor in 1814 is an example of collective effort between local notables, professionals, and residents to restore one of Kadıköy's key religious buildings and facilitate its reconstruction process at a time of a challenging legal context. However, things significantly changed during the Tanzimat period, namely in matters related to construction and planning practices. A committee formed by local notables and headed by Garabed Agha Mouradian supervised the second reconstruction of Surp Takavor. Although Mouradian was assigned as the church trustee (*mütevelli*), the committee members secured most of the funds through collective contributions and communal support. Additionally, no firman was needed. Since there were no legal or technical restraints that defined the type and features of the new church, the head architect and planner, Resimci Mahdesi Efendi, developed a very elaborate scheme: instead of a single church building, the new plan comprised a church complex that grouped several key buildings and extended over a larger plot of land. The main church building was larger than the old one with more decorative elements and ornate details, both on the interior walls and the exterior façades. Also,

the reign of four sultans. Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmanî.
60 Stepanian, Memoirs, 96–97.
61 Ibid., 96.

	RECONSTRUCTION OF SURP TAKAVOR IN 1814	RECONSTRUCTION OF SURP TAKAVOR IN 1857–1858			
Reconstruction period	41 days	20 months			
Legal tool	Firman	Imperial order			
Sultan	Mahmud II	Abdülmecid II			
Mütevelli	Haroutioun Amira Noradoungian	Garabed Amira Mouradian			
Architect	Hagop Kalfa, Minas Kalfa and Hovhannes Kalfa	Resimci Haci Mahdesi Megerdich Kalfa			
Location	Island plot, surrounded by a network of streets	Corner plot, grouped with a cluster of communal buildings within a larger block			
Building Type	A single church building	A church complex (chapel, main church, pastor house, etc.)			
Total Surface Area	48 m² (length=8 m, width=6 m, height=8 m)	Area of 460 m²			
Architectural elements	basilica with a pointed-dome, a narthex, three altars and a stage	basilica with a pointed-dome, a narthex, three altars and a stage, a bell tower			
Main construction material	Timber	Masonry, stone			
Other construction materials	stone, marble, lime, and cast iron	marble, timber, and cast iron			
Cost	36,000 kuruş	253,000 kuruş			

Table 2: Comparative table of the reconstruction process and activities of the Surp Takavor Church in 1814 and 1858 (Agopian, "Urban Modernization," 116–117). masonry construction was used instead of timber as per the 1848 Building Regulations, which mandated the use of masonry walls for the prevention of fire.⁶² More importantly, there were no deadlines for the completion of the work, which allowed operations to last more than twenty months. This gave ample time for the architect, the committee, and the workers of the Surp Takavor to design, fund, and erect the new church complex as per their aspirations and resources.⁶³

This comparison of the reconstruction works of Surp Takavor shows how building and planning practices in Kadıköy changed over the years. It also highlights the tight relationship between different public and private actors from different communities in shaping the built fabric of the quarter.

⁶² Ergin, Mecelle.

⁶³ Stepanian, Memoirs, 323-324.

42 Conclusion

Stepanian's memoirs encapsulate the narrative of urban modernization in Kadıköy in the late nineteenth century. Centered around the story of a man and his neighborhood, the memoirs offer an invaluable record of late Ottoman Kadıköy's spatial, social, and economic transformations. Thanks to Stepanian, one of the key *kalfas* in Kadıköy and a passionate archivist, among other things, we have a firsthand and documented account of one of the earliest neighborhood reorganization plans in late Ottoman history: the Kadıköy Post-Fire Plan, developed and implemented by local Ottoman engineers and *kalfas* in 1856. Additionally, we also have an alternative model to conventional, state-based narratives of Ottoman modernization; a narrative that focuses on the agency of local actors in the planning and development of their urban space rather than top-down processes of urban modernization. Focusing on the experience of the Armenian community as a microcase of urban development, Stepanian highlights the role that community members from different socioeconomic backgrounds played in shaping their built space.

Kadıköy's trajectory of urban change is highly illuminating because it unveils the transformative character of pre- and post-Tanzimat urban planning. It specifically shows how the reforms in land and building regulations induced a demographic growth in Kadıköy which, in turn, induced an active real estate market and the development of new neighborhoods. It also shows how the dynamic pattern of property transactions from the early 1840s onwards increased land values and created investment opportunities especially for wealthy merchants and state officials who moved to the *semt* during that period. Moreover, the urban modernization experience in Kadıköy reveals the implementation of a new urban plan based on the Tanzimat regulations and European planning paradigms, which eventually evolved into the urban layout that is still prevalent to this day in Caferağa. Finally, it sheds light on communal development models and decision-making practices that led to the formation of core urban clusters comprised of religious, educational, and residential buildings such as the case of the Surp Takavor cluster.

The case of Kadıköy is greatly informative because it demonstrates, first, the manifestations of imperial reforms at the quarter scale, and second, how these reforms, intermingled with local realties, helped the quarter to transform into a modern urban center boasting a pivotal role in the larger urban landscape of Istanbul. The memoirs reveal how negotiations between the practical realities and local actors, largely neglected in scholarship to date, have, in fact, shaped Ottoman urban modernization.

Kadıköy's narrative of urban change reveals a great number of details about "policies versus real-ground" dynamics. But more importantly, it shows that using diverse sources, especially non-conventional ones such as memoirs, can provide invaluable insights into the history of late Ottoman urban modernization.

Appendix

Summary table of property transactions in nineteenth-century Kadıköy organized into three key periods: (1–7) before the official record of 1839; (8–25) between 1839 and 1855; and (26–36) after the Great Kadıköy Fire of 1855. Data in this table is based on Stepanian, *Memoirs*; the table is compiled by Agopian, "Urban Modernization," 129.

	PROPERTY TYPE	LOCATION	BOUGHT FROM	SOLD TO	AREA	SALE OR RENT PRICE	DATE	LEGAL	NOTES	REFS
1	Bakery + mills	Commercial Cluster	Zot Oğlu (Greek)	Mannig Agha Noradoungian & Khachadour Agha Arsenian	N/A	N/A	1800		early 1800s, right before 1814	p. 98
2	Kereste Workshop	Commercial Cluster	Aziz Pasha	Hovhannes Kalfa Giragossian	N/A	16 kuruş per month	1800	Gedik	on a 400 m² vakif land	p. 215
3	Surp Takavor church house + garden	Muvakkıthane	Uncu Nazar Agha	Surp Takavor Church	2000 m²	N/A	1814	Waqf		p. 261
4	Surp Takavor garden	Muvakkıthane	Haroutioun Amira Noradoungian	Greek farmer	2800 m²	200 kuruş per year	1815	Gedik	NOT sure about the year	p. 107
5	Residential Blgd, later Hamazaspyan School	Mühürdar	Greek owner	Surp Takavor Church	N/A	250 kuruş	1814	Waqf	around 1814	p. 94
6	Land (waqf)	Commercial Cluster	Aziz Pasha daughter	Stepan Hovhannes Kalfayan	400 m ²	N/A	1834	Gedik	kereste workshop	p. 215- 217
7	Shares (70 out of 120)	Commercial Cluster	Haroutioun	Janissary Agha İsmail Agha	N/A	N/A	1834	Gedik	Hovhannes Kalfa Giragossian's grandson	p. 216
8	School + garden	Muvakkıthane	Haroutioun Amira Noradoungian	Şarabci Angelaki (Greek)	1200 m ²	N/A	1840			p. 261
9	Surp Takavor church house + garden	Muvakkıthane	Mütevelli Haroutioun Amira	Basmadji Mahdesi Bedros Altounian Agha	2000 m ²	N/A	1840		around 1840	p. 261
10	Residential Bldg + garden	Waterfront	Kazetaci	Rıza Pasha	N/A	N/A	1842		Meds Sparabed (ปีեծ บպшրшщետ), 1840–1842	p. 264
11	Shares (70 out of 120)	Commercial Cluster	Janissary Agha İsmail Agha	Sarkis Stepanian	N/A	16,000 kuruş	1844	bey' bi'l- istiğlâl (renting to the seller),	bey' bi'l- istiğlâl, or 1259 Hijri	p. 216
12	Land	West of Moda Caddesi	Garabed Chamurdjian	Rıza Pasha	14 dönüm	9,000 kuruş	1845		Garabed's share / un- fair sale in 1845-1847	p. 266
13	Land	West of Moda Caddesi	Krikor Chamurdjian	Rıza Pasha	14 dönüm	38,000 kuruş	1845		Krikor's share in 1845–1847	p. 267
14	Şaraphane	Waterfront	Mahdesi Vartan	Surp Takavor Church	N/A	16,000 kuruş	1848		around the mid-1840s	p. 232
15	Coffee house	Waterfront	Aziz Muazzin	Surp Takavor Church	N/A	6,500 kuruş	1848		around the mid-1840s	p. 232
16	Casino (previously a <i>şaraphane</i>)	N/A	Mahdesi Stepan	Surp Takavor Church	N/A	40,000 kuruş	1848		Feragh on Mutevelli Khachig Agha	p. 235
17	Residential Bldg.	East of Mühürdar	Damgaci Mehmed Bey's mother Nesibe Hanim	Kevork Peshdilmadjian	N/A	200,000 kuruş	1850		400 kese	p. 258

	PROPERTY TYPE	LOCATION	BOUGHT FROM	SOLD TO	AREA	SALE OR RENT PRICE	DATE	LEGAL	NOTES	REFS
18	Residential Bldg.	East of Mühürdar	Köstenceli Tahir Efendi	Garabed Mouradian	N/A	135,000 kuruş	1850		270 kese	p. 258
19	Agricultural lands	N/A	Stepan Me- guerdichian	Konchdji Yanko Sdrati Rali	N/A	17,500 kuruş or 35 kese	1851		1851-1852	p. 257
20	Agricultural lands	Moda Caddesi	Baltaci Mustafa	Lorando brothers	N/A	N/A	1851		1851-1852	p. 257
21	Residential Bldg.	Waterfront	lhtisab Agha Hüseyin Bey	Bulmumcuzade Salih Efendi	N/A	N/A	1852		once belonged to Şam Kapu Kyahyasi	p. 258
22	Land	West of Moda Caddesi	Kabakci Hasan	Sarkis Stepanian	12–16 dönüm	5,500 kuruş	1853			p. 227
23	Land	Kuşdili River banks	Şakir Bey	Ibrahim Agha	20 dönüm	16,000 kuruş	1853		around 1853, on the left side of the bridge	p. 229
24	Farm works (orchard)	West of Moda Caddesi	N/A	Sarkis Stepanian	3.5 dönüm	2,500 kuruş	1853			p. 227
25	Land + farm works	West of Moda Caddesi	Chamurdjian	Sarkis Stepanian	7−9 dönüm	N/A	1853			p. 227
26	Land	Moda Burnu	Baltazzi	Tubini	N/A	1600 gold coins	1855		around 1855; or 400 kese	p. 35
27	Residential Bldg. (construction)	N/A	HKS	Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian (HKS)	85 m²	30,000 kuruş	1857		10 m height; 3 bedrooms, kitchen & others	p. 313- 314
28	Residential Bldg. (selling)	N/A	HKS	Satay Dimitri	85 m²	29,000 kuruş	1860			p. 315
29	Residential Bldg. (construction)	next to HKS big house	нкѕ	HKS	85 m²	160 gold coins	1860		1860-1863	p. 359
30	Residential Bldg. (construction)	N/A	нкѕ	НКЅ	110 m ²	275 gold coins	1863		62.5 gold coins per year (rent)	p. 359
31	Residential Bldg + garden	next to HKS house	Greek owner	Lutfi Agha Tensoufian	440 m ²	N/A	1863			p. 359
32	Surp Takavor East garden	Muvakkıthane	Surp Takavor Church	Demirdji Bedros Agha	2800 m²	500 gold coins	1865		Land sold after being built	p. 107
33	Surp Takavor East garden	Muvakkıthane	Demirdji Bedros Agha	Tubini	2800 m²	N/A	1865		After 1865 (or in 1885?)	p. 107
34	Kereste workshop (expansion)	Commercial Cluster	N/A	НКЅ	N/A	120 gold coins	1868			p. 369
35	Land	Orta Moda	Suleyman Deukmedjian	The Mkhitarists Congregation	N/A	N/A	1869		Establis- hed the Mkhitaryan School	p. 35
36	Aramyan-Un- cuyan School	West of Moda Caddesi	Rıza Pasha	Armenian Neighborhood Council	1642 m²	N/A	1871			p. 383

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