2 Hamshen before Hemshin
The prelude to Islamicization
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The history of the Hemshinli is at many junctures mired in obscurity. It has often been regretted that Hamshen did not have its native historian, since both the paucity of existing sources and their laconic nature render the study of Hamshen Armenians and their Islamicized descendants, the Hemshinli, an arduous challenge. As examples, medieval Armenian chroniclers, such as Ghewond, and Step‘anos Tarōnets‘i, or Asoghik (Stephen Asoghik of Tarōn), provide us with only a few lines on the migration of Armenians to the Pontos and the foundation of Hamshen, which they believe to have occurred in the second half of the eighth century, while a third chronicler, Pseudo-Yovhannēs Mamikonian (John Mamikonian), in his history of Tarōn, places these events in the early decades of the seventh century. A brief description of the geography and climate of Hamshen is given by the historian Het‘um of Korykos (Frère Hayton) at the beginning of the fourteenth century. A little more information is available on the principality of Hamshen during the fifteenth century thanks to the colophons (scribal memorials) of Armenian manuscripts and the diary of Castilian ambassador Ruy González de Clavijo. Ottoman registers (defters) become an important source for the period following Ottoman conquest in the late fifteenth century, especially through the statistics provided on the demographics and economics of the area.

The conversion of part of Hamshen’s Armenian population to Islam and the exodus of those who remained Christians greatly reduced the access of Armenians to an already isolated region, and thus the ability of their scholars to gather material for its history. Moreover, Armenian historians and ethnographers who studied the case of the Hemshinli placed most of the emphasis of their studies on the coercive nature of the conversion process and of the linguistic Turkification that followed a few centuries later, to the neglect of other aspects of the history of Hamshen/Hemshin. Turkish scholars, including local historians of Hemshinli descent, have been mainly concerned with the objective of establishing, or more correctly forging, the credentials of the Hemshinli as an authentic Turkic tribe having no links whatsoever with Armenians. Consequently, the history of Hamshen before Hemshin is often considered an enigma, particularly by those who lack knowledge of the Armenian language. It is no surprise then that the title of a book published recently in Istanbul was Hemşin Gizemi (the mystery of Hemshin).

The lack of knowledge about the history of Hamshen prior to Islamicization also has the unfortunate consequence of distorting any discussion of the latter
phenomenon in Hemshin. Figures from an Ottoman register of the early 1520s showing a high percentage of Muslims in the Hemshin kaza have led to the assumption that Hamshen Armenians were among the early converts to Islam in the Pontos. It has even been suspected that Islam had already begun to make inroads into the region by the early fifteenth century. As will be shown in this chapter, however, mass conversion to Islam in Hemshin is a later development, having mostly taken place in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is therefore important to properly establish the historical background of Hamshen in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, before moving on to an analysis of subsequent periods of its history.

Between myth and reality: the origins of Hamshen

A majority of historical accounts that have reached us trace the genesis of Hemshin history to the period of Arab dominion over Armenia at the end of the eighth century. Pursuing the Abbasid Caliphate’s harsh policy of the period vis-à-vis Armenians, the ostikan (governor) of Armenia, Sulayman Ibn Yazid al-’Amri, who, according to Armenian historian Ghewond, was more ‘ferocious and perfidious than all of his predecessors’, drastically increased the already heavy fiscal burden of the country following his appointment in 789. As a result, to escape the heavy taxes imposed by the Arabs, 12,000 men and their families, led by Prince Shapuh Amatuni and his son Hamam, left their ancestral home of Ōshakan in the Aragatsotn canton. After an encounter in the canton of Kogh (now Göle, near the sources of the Kur River) with Arab troops pursuing them, the fugitives reached the Byzantine-ruled Pontos, located to the northwest of Armenia. Byzantine Emperor Constantine VI (780–797) welcomed the two Amatuni nakharars (lords) and the other princes accompanying them, bestowing honours upon them, their nobles and their cavalry, and granting the common people fertile lands in the region. Another historian, Stephen Asoghik of Tarōn, places these events a few decades earlier, in the 750s, but the political context of the late 780s, marked by the heavy climate of repression following the defeat of the anti-Arab Armenian revolt of 774 to 775, makes the latter time period more plausible. As is pertinently pointed out by Elizabeth Redgate in this volume and elsewhere, one should be careful here not to take the figure of 12,000 men literally, since it probably has a larger symbolic significance than a statistical one. Interestingly, the author of an 1898 article on Black Sea Armenians was told by an elderly informant of Hamshenite background that Prince Hamam had come to the Pontos with a total of 4,000 migrants.

The account by a third chronicler, although it should be received with much caution, sheds some light on the situation in the territory settled by the Armenian migrants and the possible motivations of the warm welcome given to them by Constantine VI of Byzantium. In his history of Tarōn, Ps. John Mamikonian describes a war that takes place between Hamam, who is ruling over the Armenian settlers in the city of Tambur, and his maternal uncle, the Prince of Georgia Vashdean. According to Robert Edwards, this narrative could more likely refer to events having taken place in the early ninth century, a few decades after the initial Armenian migration, rather than to the early seventh-century date provided by Ps. John Mamikonian. Shapuh’s marriage to a Georgian or a Laz princess...
raises the possibility that the Amatunis moved to Chaneti (Lazia) because they were already familiar with the region, over which their in-laws may have had a nominal or actual claim. Furthermore, the war between Hamam and Vashdean could represent a dramatized account of conflict having taken place between the Armenian settlers and their new neighbours. The Byzantines generally encouraged Armenian immigration to win over soldiers for a future campaign against the Arabs. Edwards wonders pertinently whether they were not also recruiting in this case colonists who would help them bring order to border districts inhabited by unruly Tzan and other Kartvelian tribes over which the Byzantine administration had little control. After rebuilding Tambur, which had been destroyed by the Persian (i.e. Arab) troops brought by Vashdean, Hamam called the city by his own name, Hamamashen (built by Hamam). With time, Hamamashen became Hamshen, which came to designate the entire area inhabited by the Armenian immigrants and their descendants.

Two other hypotheses concerning the origins of Hamshen deserve to be examined. The first and least plausible one links the foundation of Hamshen with the destruction of the Armenian capital Ani by the Seljukid Turks in 1064. A group of fugitives from Ani is believed to have found refuge in the forests of Hamshen, ‘which until then had never seen any human face’. This account, which was transmitted to nineteenth-century travellers by Hamshen Armenians and Muslim Hemshinli, remains widespread to this day in the oral tradition of both groups.

A Hemshinli mullah residing in Kyrgyzstan – where the Hemshin of Ajaria were deported by Stalin in 1944 – still took pride in the 1980s in being a descendant of Ani’s inhabitants. The popularity of this thesis, however, may have more to do with the prestige of Ani and the desire of many Armenians to trace their origins to the famed ‘city of a thousand and one churches’ than with historical fact. Migrants from Ani chose as their new homes cities that were important trading centres rather than a rural, mountainous canton (gawar) such as Hamshen. Many did indeed move to the Pontos, but their destination was the city of Trebizond and not Hamshen. Father Minas Bzhshkian was careful to note in his history of Pontos the differences in dialect and pronunciation between the Trebizond Armenians, who hailed from Ani, and the Hamshen Armenians.

The final hypothesis concerning the origins of Hamshen connects it with the immediate areas to its south, Ispir and Pertakrag (Armenian Berdagrak, Ottoman Peterek). Following the initial settlement under Shapuh and Hamam Amatuni, the Armenianization of Hamshen could have been advanced by a gradual infiltration of migrants from the south. Similarities have indeed been noted between the dialect of the Khodorchur (Armenian Khotorjur) Valley of Pertakrag and the one of Hamshen. These parallels, however, could reflect contacts between the two areas throughout the centuries rather than a common origin. It is possible that the process of Armenianization was completed when the newcomers assimilated – or expelled – the area’s sparse Tzan population, if such a population existed at all near the head-waters of the Prytanis (Fırtına). Anthony Bryer advances the attractive, yet unfortunately unsubstantiated, supposition that the Hemshinli, ‘a singular people with certain traditional Tzan characteristics’, were Armenianized by the Bagratunis (Bagratids) of Sper/Ispir between the seventh and eleventh centuries. Nevertheless, the hypothesis linking Hamshen with Ispir
and Pertakrag is highly interesting and very useful, if only to remind us that despite the formidable Paryadres (Barhal) Mountains, Hamshen Armenians were not isolated from their compatriots to the south. Hamshen may have thus been less an Armenian enclave in the Pontos than a northern extension of the Armenian settlements of Ispir and Pertakrag (see Map 7.2). In later centuries it was the large city to the south, Erzurum, which would attract the Islamicized Hemshinli. One may agree with Bryer that ‘any controller of Varoş [Varoş Kale, the upper castle of Hemshin] in the land of Arhakel would look to Ispir, rather than to the remote and inaccessible Trebizond, for the nearest power’.

**Geographical setting**

It is probably in the vicinity of Varoş Kale (at the altitude of 1,800 m), also known as Yukarı Kale or Kala-i Bâlâ/Hemşin-i Bâlâ (from the Persian bâlā, upper), that the semi-mythical town of Tambur, later Hamamashên and Hamshên, must have been located. Ruins near the fortress seem to indicate the presence of a town of larger importance than the current villages around Varoş Kale. In any case, the initial Armenian settlement on the north side of the Pontic mountains was in the highland district encompassing the valleys formed by two branches of the Firtina River (the Prytanis, Portanis, or Pordanis of earlier times) – the smaller Hala (Khala) branch and the main Büyük Dere branch – and corresponding to the present-day Çamlıhemşin county (ilçe) of the Rize province (il). This heartland was protected from a northern intrusion by Ağaği Kale, or Zil Kale/Kala-i Zîr/Hemşin-i Zîr (from the Persian zîr, lower, alt. 750 m), the former Kolonea/Kolona, located around 40 kilometres inland (see Map 2.1).

The easternmost section of the Pontic Alps was once known as the Paryadres (Barhal or Parhal) chain, while the current appellation, the Kaçkar Range, refers to a more limited section of the mountains which forms the southern border of Hamshen. It is in this section that the Pontic Mountains, which run parallel to the Black Sea, reach their highest altitude, with an average of over 3,000 metres, and are closest to the coast, in some areas at less than fifty kilometres. On sunny days one can see from the place where the Fırtına flows into the sea the Kaçkar (3,932 m), the Tatos (3,560 m), and the Verçenik (Varshamak or Varshambek in Armenian sources, at 3,711 m) peaks. According to the authors of a travel guide to the region, ‘those are some of the highest spots that can be seen at sea level anywhere on earth, rivaled only by a few points on the Andes and in New Guinea’. Clear days, however, are rare, since the mountains hold the clouds coming from the sea, provoking abundant rainfall. Travellers to the region, such as the nineteenth-century German botanist Karl Koch, have depicted the contrast between the valleys covered with mist and the sunbathed mountain summits and pastures (yaylas) above the line of clouds. With a yearly average of 250 days of rain, Hemshin is one of the most humid areas in Turkey. The consequence of the rain is ‘a natural flora of astonishing wealth and diversity: a quasi-tropical luxuriance that surpasses any other part of the Black Sea coast’.

The other notable physical characteristic of Hamshen is its difficulty of access, if not outright inaccessibility. In addition to the Paryadres/Kaçkar Mountains
the south, entrance to the region from the coast is restricted by steep, rugged relief and dense forests, which also hinder travel and transport within Hemshin itself. Some of the paths are too narrow to be taken by horses and mules, leaving to humans the charge of sumpter beasts.\(^{36}\) The quasi-permanent fog that covers Hamshen, as well as the impediment to access caused by its forests, mountains and ravines, have left a strong impression on the rare visitors, or writers who had heard of it. In *La Fleur des histoires de la terre d’Orient*, Het’um of Korykos, of the royal Armenian house of Cilicia, the Frère Hayton of French sources, writes:

> In the realme of Georgi appered a gret meruayle, which I darred nat tell nor reherse yf I hadde nat sene it. But for bycause I was there and se, I dare say that in Georgi is a prouynce which is called Haynsen, the which is well of iii dayes iourney of length or there about; and as long as this sayd prouynce lasteth, in every place is so great obscurite that no man is so hardi to come into the sayd lande, for they can nat cum out agayn. And the dwellers within the same lande sayde that often tymes there cometh noyse of men, cockes crowyng, and horses neynge; and by a fludde that cometh out of that place come tokens appering that there is resorting of people. Verily they fynde in thistores of Armeny redyng, and Georgi, that there was a cruell emperour in Persy name Sauorelx. This emperour worshypped the ydols, and cruelly persecuted the Cristen men…. And than the sayd Cristen men made a gret cry to Our Lorde God, and sone after came this great darkenes that blinded themperour and all his men; and so the Cristen men scaped, and the sayd Emperour with his men taryd in the sayd darkenes. And there thei shall abyde, as they beleue, to the worldes ende.\(^{37}\)

Het’um’s work, including the passage on Hamshen, would be reproduced three centuries later by English traveller Samuel Purchas, who believed that ‘Hamsem’ was the location of the original Cimmerian gloom of Homer’s *Odyssey* (XI, 14).\(^{38}\)

Difficulty of access, however, did not imply complete isolation. Medieval merchants and caravans travelling between the coastal regions to the Armenian plateau sometimes went across Hamshen, borrowing a once paved road along the Fırtına. Various mountain paths connected Hamshen to Ispir and Pertakrag (Kiskim), on the other side of the Paryadres chain.\(^{39}\) Father Ghukas Inchichian of the Venice branch of the Armenian Catholic Mekhitarist congregation, informs us in his early nineteenth-century *Geography* that every spring, ‘Laz’ people crossed Khodorchur (now Sirakonaklar), and by necessity Hemshin, to go to Erzurum.\(^{40}\) Later in that century, it was the Armenian Catholics of Khodorchur who hired Hemshinli guides to reach Rize via Hemshin. Unfortunately, it was often ‘Laz’ – a generic appellation used to describe all Muslims from the Pontos, including the Hemshinli – bandits who came through these mountain paths from Hemshin to plunder Khodorchur. Other tracks allowed communication between the Fırtına and parallel valleys.\(^{41}\)

Throughout the centuries, Hamshen Armenians spread from their heartland in the Fırtına to the highland sections of neighbouring valleys, such as the Adienos (Senes or Senoz Dere, the Kaptanpaşa district (*bucak*) of the Çayeli county) and the Kalos or Kalopotamos (İkizdere) Rivers. Unlike the situation in the upper Fırtına Valley,
which was possibly uninhabited prior to the arrival of Hamam and his followers, there is little doubt that expansion in these adjacent valleys was largely made at the expense of the original Tzannic populations of these valleys. Echoes from hostile encounters between the original population and Armenian newcomers may be found in the oral tradition of the Hemshinli of the Abu Viçe Valley (in the Fındıklı county). This narrative relates how migrants coming from Hemshin ‘centuries ago’ scared away and expelled the ‘Georgians’ (i.e. Tzan or Laz) inhabiting the villages of this county now populated by Hemshinli. The narrative also mentions that tension continued for a long time between the two groups.\textsuperscript{42} The valley of the Zagatis River (Susa or Zuğa Dere, the modern Pazar or Hemşin Dere) must certainly have been one of the earliest they occupied. Hamshenite settlement follows the river almost along its entire length, coming to a halt at a short distance from the coast. The Susa Dere is thus likely to have constituted an integral part of the principality of Hamshen. Cihar (Kise) Kale, located eight kilometres inland from Pazar (Athenai), together with the two fortresses on the Fırtına, Varoş/Yukarı Kale and Aşağı/Zil Kale, appears to have been part of the defensive system of the barons of Hamshen. According to Anthony Bryer and David Winfield, these three fortresses, and even the castle of Athenai, on the coast, ‘may be considered as a group on grounds of construction’.\textsuperscript{43}

This raises the question of the northern borders of Hamshen. Did the principality of Hamshen have an outlet to the sea? Despite similarities in style with the inland fortresses, Bryer and Winfield doubt that the castle of Athenai (Pazar) ever belonged to Hamshen, since the emperors of Trebizond controlled the coast.\textsuperscript{44} The locality closest to the mouth of the Fırtına, however, has an Armenian-sounding name: Ardeşen. Richard Kiepert’s 1913 map of Asia Minor (\textit{Karte von Kleinasien}) shows a promontory named Armene just to the east of Ardeşen.\textsuperscript{45} Alexandre Toumarkine reports the story, told to him by Lazi informants, that the villages of Seslikaya (former Ağvan), Köprüköy (Temisvat), Çayırdüzü (Guvant), Akkaya (Pilercivat) and Duygulu (Telikçet), all located on the lower stretches of the Fırtına valley not very far from Ardeşen and the coast, were formerly inhabited by the Hemshin, prior to their expulsion by the Lazi.\textsuperscript{46} While the political boundaries of Hamshen may never have reached the coast, they were not very far from it. In subsequent centuries, large sections of the northern borders of the sancak (Ottoman subprovince) of Hemshin, as described by Koch, were close to the sea.\textsuperscript{47}

\textbf{The principality of Hamshen}

Aside from the commentary by Het’um of Korykos, the only other mention of Hamshen in historical sources in the 600 years between the late eighth and early fifteenth centuries is a reference to a monk from Hamshen who received a manuscript copied in Rome in 1240 while he was a resident there (Erevan, Matenadaran, manuscript 218).\textsuperscript{48} A legend which could be linked to events that actually took place during that period is brought to us by ethnographer Sargis Haykuni. Two notables of ‘royal race’, Grigor and Martiros, come to blows after Grigor refuses to give his daughter in marriage to Artashên, the son of Martiros. The latter invades the territory of Grigor, vanquishes him, and marries his son to
Grigor’s daughter. Artashen then builds in the domain of his father-in-law, on the upper reaches of the ‘large Hamshen river’, a castle named after himself. A curious fact here is the existence of the other Ardeşen on the coast, about the origins of which we know nothing, but a link between the two should not be excluded. One may reasonably wonder whether Ardeşen on the coast was founded by people from Artashen (in western Armenian, Ardashen).

If the ‘large Hamshen river’ meant the Büyük Dere, the main branch of the Fırtına, the tale transcribed by Haykuni could be a reference to the building of Varoş Kale. Koch, however, tells us of a yayla called Artâ or Arta (now Ayder), near the sources of the Hala Dere, the smaller branch or affluent of the Fırtına. A fortress on the Hala Dere filling the same role played by Varoş on the Büyük Dere (i.e. control of access to Hamshen from the south) indeed makes sense from a defence perspective. Bzhshkian mentions the existence of other castles along the Fırtına, in addition to Zil Kale. One could easily imagine that these fortresses were built by either the main princes of Hamshen, or by lesser barons who held some of the affluents of the Fırtına or its adjacent valleys. As an example, a booklet prepared in Hemşin Ortaköy (Zuğaortaköy, or Pazar Hemşin) on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Turkish Republic in 1998 mentions that in proximity to Kantarlı, the highest and southernmost village of the county, stand the ruins of Mağlüt Kale. This fortress, however, is not included in any of the major works on the historical monuments of the region, and it could be no more than a minor building, the importance of which has been blown out of proportion by local villagers. Besides the fortresses of Zil, Varoş and Mağlüt, there were also, according to Şerif Sayın, an amateur Hemşin historian, a number of watch towers on the territory of Hamshen, located in the villages or pastures of Kızıltoprak, Çoço, Kanlıboğaz, Üsküd and Tağpur.

Not only Armenian, but also Georgian, Byzantine, Trapezuntine and Turkish sources are silent about Hamshen. The answer to the question asked earlier about the absence of an indigenous historian in Hamshen might simply be, as judiciously discussed by Elizabeth Redgate, that there was no need for such a history, because there were no wars in Hamshen. We can only deduce that the principality of Hamshen must have lived through these centuries as a vassal of the larger powers surrounding it, such as the Bagratid Armenian kingdom, the Byzantine Empire, its successor the Empire of Trebizond, the Jalāyirids, and the Kara Koyunlu and Ak Koyunlu Türkmen Confederations. The Georgian option should also be considered, especially during the period of apogee of the Georgian kingdom in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Links between Hamshen and Georgia may provide the rationale for Het’um’s placement of his narrative on the darkness of Hamshen in the chapter on Georgia.

Writing one century after Het’um, however, Castilian ambassador Ruy González de Clavijo notes that he left Georgia – of which he considered Ispir (aspri) a part – to enter ‘la tierra de Arraquiel’ on 13 September 1405. The passage on Arraquiel in the diary he left has become what Bryer and Winfield call the locus classicus of Hemshin history. Clavijo relates that the Muslims (los moros) of this land were discontented with their lord, named Arraquil (in Armenian Arâk’el or Arâk’eal, a first name meaning ‘the apostle’), and asked the Muslim lord of Ispir – the Spiratabec or Atabeg of Ispir – to extend his authority over them. Accepting their
proposal, the lord of Ispir replaced Arraquil with a Muslim, to whom he gave a Christian deputy. Following a description of the rough mountains, narrow paths and lack of bread in the country, Clavijo says that the Castilians felt threatened by the men of Turkey (*con los de turquía*). The text here becomes confusing, for in the next sentence these same men of Turkey, described as bad people of bad character (*mala gente de mala condición*) who would not let the envoys leave the region without giving them part of their goods, are also said to be Armenian Christians (*cristianos armenios*).60 In the version edited by Argote de Molina and published in 1582, *turquía* is replaced by *esta tierra*, which would make the text more logical, but the two earliest manuscripts of Clavijo’s diary, held in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid and the British Library, have unequivocally *turquía*.61 Arraquiel thus appears to have been a land populated by both Muslims and Armenians, or alternatively a territory raided by Türkmens who worried the Castilian diplomats, and inhabited by Armenians who extorted goods from them.

Based on this excerpt and on Ilia Zdanévitch’s studies which indicate that Clavijo’s itinerary led through the Kalopotamos Valley and not the Fırtına, Edwards comes to the conclusion that Arraquiel was not Hamshen, but a territory further to the west, on the Kalopotamos River.62 The land of Arraquiel, along the Kalopotamos, populated by a mix of Turks, Armenians and Greeks, could not be, according to Edwards, the homogeneously Armenian Hamshen. It was rather a personal conquest of ARAK’el, and was hence named after him.63 One could imagine a scenario under which a power vacuum in the Kalopotamos Valley, provoked by Türkmen infiltrations or other causes, gave ARAK’el the opportunity to intervene in this area and establish control over it. To do this he had only to advance downstream from the Cimil Dere, a tributary river of the Kalopotamos, the valley of which had constituted an integral part of the Hamshen principality from much earlier on.64 Dissatisfied with ARAK’el’s domination, the Turks of the region, who by then probably constituted a sizeable percentage of the population, called to their rescue the ruler of Ispir, who evicted ARAK’el from the Kalopotamos Valley and replaced him with a Muslim. This Muslim was given a Christian deputy to quell any discontent among the Greeks and Armenians of the district, who still made up the majority of the population. Centuries later, the Kalopotamos Valley, a ‘corridor by which new settlers have entered the coastal lowlands from the Pontic mountains and from Anatolia’,65 was as mixed as it had been when Clavijo went through it. Its headwaters were populated by Hemshinli, while its lower sections were inhabited by other Muslims. Koch was the guest of Kumpusarowa Soliman Agha (Kumbasaroğlu Süleyman Agha), the Hemshinli derebey (valley lord) of Dschimil (Cimil). The German botanist believed that the physiognomy of Süleyman Agha, especially his profile, betrayed an Armenian origin and wondered if he was not a descendant of Hamam.66 While Süleyman Agha’s descent from Hamam is to be doubted, his adventures, including rebellion, imprisonment, escape and even piracy – a remarkable feat for a mountaineer – could have deserved him a mention, if not a place of honour in the *mala gente de mala condición* category of Clavijo.67

The main element arguing in favour of differentiation between Arraquiel and Hamshen, however, is the survival of the Armenian princes of Hamshen for another
eight decades. Arak’el himself, or a namesake of his, is likely to have continued to rule over Hamshen, since a manuscript from the K’oshtents’ Monastery of the canton mentions that it was copied in 1422 ‘at the request of the baron of barons, Baron Arak’eal and his son Têr [lord] Sargis’ (Jerusalem, St James Monastery/Armenian Patriarchate, ms. 1617). The title of ‘baron of barons’ and of ‘first baron’ used in manuscripts leads us to believe that there were, below the paramount prince, secondary barons or chieftains in Hamshen. Sargis was probably a younger son who became the bishop of Hamshen, since an addendum to the same manuscript was composed in 1425 ‘at the behest of Baron Dawit’ [David], baron of barons... during the patriarchy of the lord Poghos, the kingship of Sk’andar Pak, the barony of Baron Dawit’, the episcopate of Têr Sargis’. The lord Poghos is the Catholicos Poghos [Paul] II (1418–1430), thus showing the continuing loyalty of Hamshen Armenians to the Armenian Apostolic – and non-Chalcedonian – Church. Sk’andar Pak is Iskandar Bey of the Kara Koyunlu (1420–1438), and his mention is a clear indication of where the allegiance of the Hamshen princes lay in the aftermath of Timur’s invasions, namely with the Kara Koyunlu to the south, rather than with Trebizond or one of the Georgians kingdoms. The connection between the barons of Hamshen and their Kara Koyunlu suzerains is confirmed in yet another section of the same manuscript, which reproduces a letter sent to Baron Dawit’ by Khoja (title given to rich merchants) Shamshadin, an Armenian merchant from Trebizond, also known for his endowments of Armenian churches in Trebizond and Caffa in the Crimea. In his missive, Khoja Shamshadin requests Dawit’ to protect both Christian and Muslim travellers and not to levy excessive taxes on their merchandise. Dawit’ is also asked to obtain from the lord of Sper (Ispir) a list of customs fees and other charges on goods being transported through his territory. To receive such a request from Shamshadin, Dawit’ must have clearly been on good terms with his neighbour, the Muslim lord of Ispir and their common overlord, Iskandar Bey of the Kara Koyunlu, and this fact must have been well known throughout the region. As discussed earlier, Hamshenite allegiance to a power holding Ispir to the south made sense from a geographical perspective, taking into account that the centre of gravity of the small principality lay so far up in the Kaçkar Range. It also made sense in the context of the period, when the Kara Koyunlu, and subsequently their Ak Koyunlu rivals and successors, were the dominant regional power. One cannot help question, however, whether religious issues did not play a role in the political orientation of the canton. Hamshen was located in a predominantly Orthodox milieu, with Greek and Laz populations to the north, and to the southeast the Georgians and Chalcedonian Armenians of Tao/Tayk’, who followed the Georgian-Orthodox rite, but had kept the usage of the Armenian language. In spite of this environment, Hamshen Armenians had clung to the Armenian Apostolic Church and its non-Chalcedonian faith. A small canton such as Hamshen maintained three monasteries, in the scriptoria of which a fairly large number of manuscripts were copied. Moreover, Hamshen also produced religious scholars, scribes and artists, known outside of their native region with the Hamshênts’i epithet, and who served in places from the relatively close Baberd (Bayburt), Erznka (Erzincan) and Koloneia (Şebinkarahisar), to the
Ispir, which was exclusively Armenian well into the seventeenth century, and which remained predominantly so until the exodus following the Russian–Turkish war in 1828 to 1829, was Hamshen’s only neighbour with a population belonging to the same monophysite, non-Chalcedonian creed. The importance of Ispir cannot be underestimated, since it constituted a link between Hamshen and other regions of Armenia, preventing Hamshen from becoming an isolated Armenian enclave in an Orthodox, Chalcedonian, sea. Good relations with rulers of Ispir were thus an absolute necessity for the princes of Hamshen. Religious affiliation also possibly answers the vexing question of the absence of any mention of Hamshen in Trapezuntine and Georgian sources, despite the prominent role played until the last decades of the sixteenth century by the Gurieli princes of Guria and the Jaqeli Atabegs of Samtzkhe in Chaneti (Lazia) and Tao/Tayk’, to the immediate north and south of Hamshen.

Dawit’ is remembered again, along with his young son Vard, in the colophon of a manuscript copied in 1440 in the Khuzhka Monastery of Hamshen (Matenadaran, ms. 7263). Another manuscript, copied in 1460 and now held in Jerusalem (ms. 3701), informs us that the youthful Vêk’e, son of Baron Vard, the lord of Hamshen, was captured in that year by a certain Shahali and delivered by him to Söfûn, ‘whom they called Shêkh’. The unfortunate and misnamed child (Vêk’e is an abbreviated form of Vigen, an Armenian first name derived from the Latin Vincentius, meaning ‘victorious’) probably did not survive his captivity, for he is not mentioned again. We have no definitive answers about the identity of Shahali and Sheikh Söfûn, but the latter was in all likelihood the Safavid Junayd of Ardabil, who had attacked Trebizond a few years earlier, in around 1456.

The Kızılbaş attack was the forerunner of the coming fall of the principality of Hamshen. In 1474 it was still in Armenian hands, since the Venetian ambassador Ambrogio Contarini, who wanted to meet Uzun Hasan, the Ak Koyunlu leader, was advised by an Armenian of Caffa to sail to Tina (Athenai?), from where he could reach in a four-hour horse ride the castle of one Ariam, a subject of Uzun Hasan. Ariam or Aram may have been the name of the new prince of Hamshen or of a secondary baron holding the valley of the Zagatis (Pazar Dere) River. His castle could have been Cihar, or the more enigmatic Mağlût further upstream. The other information regarding Hamshen in the period following the Turkish conquest of Trebizond in 1461 comes from Ottoman sources. According to Mehmet Bilgin, who unfortunately does not provide any citation, the newly acquired Ottoman areas of Rize and Atina (Athenai, the modern Pazar) were the targets of three major raids during the 1461 to 1483 period. The first of these attacks, the objective of which was plunder, was led by Georgians, the second by Georgians and Armenians, and the third by the ‘Mamyan kafiri’ (the ‘infidels of Mamya’, i.e. the Gurieli Mamia or his successor Kakhaberi). The Armenians of Hamshen obviously come to mind, since they were the only ones who could have made an incursion into Rize and Athenai, given the vicinity of these towns to Hamshen.

This type of activity – if it happened at all – could not have lasted long, since by 1489 Hamshen had fallen to the Ottomans. Its last prince, Dawit’ [II], was residing in that year in Ispir, where a manuscript was produced under his protection.
(Matenadaran, ms. 7638). The monk who copied the manuscript ‘during our exile’ remembered him in a colophon as ‘Baron Dawit’, who was lord of Hamshên, who has been exiled and has settled in the land of Sper by the nation of Ch’it’akh [Ottomans]’. Two other figures were mentioned in addition to ‘the holy Dawit’, namely ‘the prince of the Muslims Datay’, probably the ruler of Ispir and the host of Dawit’, and ‘Sultan Eaghup, lord of the Orient’ (i.e. Yakub, son of Uzun Hasan, overlord of Ispir and Hamshen prior to the Ottoman conquest).

Edwards believes that prominent Armenians of Ispir facilitated the migration of Dawit’ to Ispir. That Dawit’ took refuge in Ispir and not in Georgia is a further confirmation of his political loyalty to the Ak Koyunlu. The hopes, if any, of regaining Hamshen, even with Ak Koyunlu support, must have been quite dim. The Ak Koyunlu were no longer a threat to the Ottomans, and unlike his father, Yakub appears to have maintained the most cordial of relations with the Ottomans, as shown by his correspondence with the future Sultan Selim (1512–1520), then governor of Trebizond.

The most famous member of the princely family of Hamshen, however, was not Arak’el or one of his successors, but the vardapet (doctor in theology) Yovannês Hamshênts’i. This eminent scholar, called rabunapet (derived from Hebrew, and meaning ‘headteacher’) and a ‘powerful orator’, around whom gathered students from all corners of Armenia, resided first in the Avag Monastery and then in the Surb Yâkob (St James) of Kayp’os or Kapos Monastery, both located at the foot of Mount Sepuh (now Köhnem Dağı), in the region of the modern Erzincan. Yovannês, who died in 1497, is described in one manuscript as ‘lord and captain of the Hamshên canton, son of a baron’, and in another as being of ‘royal race’. This royal claim raises the question of the identity of the family ruling over Hamshen in the fifteenth century. Already in the tale transcribed by Haykuni, Grigor and Martiros, the two feuding notables, were said to be of royal lineage. This led Levon Khach’ikyan to ponder a possible connection between the Hamshen princes and the Armenian royal Bagratuni dynasty, the origins of which were in Ispir. Khach’ikyan also suggested that the Hamshen princes may have descended from the Komnenoi (Comneni) of Trebizond through a female line, following a matrimonial link between the two houses. A priest visiting the region of Erzurum in the 1870s mentions a small village populated by seven families of migrants from Hamamashên, ‘which was called after Hamam Prince Bagratuni’. The priest or the villagers who informed him could have simply confused Bagratuni with Amatuni. This confusion or mistake could also possibly have been caused by a dynastic change, with the replacement at some point of the Amatunis by the Bagratunis of Ispir. In such cases, the confusion of the villagers would reveal what the French call un lapsus révélateur. Regional history may have been rewritten by the new rulers, and the belief spread that Hamam was a Bagratuni, similar to the belief among Hemshinli in the modern Turkish Republic that they are an authentic Turkic tribe from Central Asia.

The later princes of Hamshen, however, may simply have belonged to a newly emerged family, or had been descendants of Shapuh and Hamam Amatuni. In an age where the various Turkish and Mongol invasions had almost eradicated the Armenian nobility, descent from a princely house like the Amatunis, which by the fifteenth century was over a thousand years old – the first recorded Amatuni
flourished in the fourth century – would give one immense prestige and allow a claim to ‘royal’ lineage. A possible confirmation of the Amatuni origins of the fifteenth-century ‘barons of barons’ of Hamshen is in the list of Georgian princely families provided in an annex to the 1783 Treaty of Georgievsk between Georgia and Russia. In the section on houses of foreign origin is an Amatuni family, possible descendants of Dawit’, last prince of Hamshen. This hypothesis would answer the question of what happened to Dawit’ and his family members after 1489, but, in the absence of proof, remains only a hypothesis.

The Ottoman period

Ottoman conquest must have happened a few years before 1489, because a register dated from around 1486 shows Hamshen as an Ottoman possession, and gives the names of two of its officials. Nişli Karaca is the zaim (governor) of Hemshin, and Ismail Bosna its military commander (serasker). It is interesting to note that Hamshen has taken the form Hemshin in the very first Ottoman document mentioning it. A register from 1515 mentions Hemşin-i Bâlâ, the upper castle of Hemshin, with a garrison of thirteen soldiers, two of whom are newly settled Muslims, and gives the name of the district’s serasker, one Ali. The brevity of information on Hemshin in the 1486 and 1515 registers, when compared with other kazas (counties) of the Trebizond liva (subprovince), demonstrates the very recent nature of the conquest. Hemshin had been annexed, its fortresses garrisoned and Ottoman officials appointed there, but the district had yet to be fully absorbed into the administrative system of the empire. Hemshin is sometimes presented as a vilayet (province), as is the case in a 1518 register, or as a lower ranking nahiye (district), but it is under the form of separate kaza of the Trebizond liva or sancak that it most often appears.

In 1520, the Hemshin kaza contained thirty-four villages and was divided into three nahiyes: Hemşin, Kara-Hemşin and Eksanos. The Hemşin nahiye, with fourteen villages, corresponded to the non-coastal section of the Susa or Zuğa Dere Valley (the modern Pazar or Hemşin Dere, i.e. the Hemşin county of Rize), to the valley of the Hala branch of the Fırtına, and to the lower and middle sections of the Fırtına Valley; Kara-Hemşin – a probable reference to the fog covering the region – encompassed the upper area of the Fırtına Valley and the Çimil Valley, and comprised eleven villages while Eksanos, with nine villages, included the upper Senes or Senoz Valley (i.e. the present-day Kaptanpaşa district of Rize’s Çayeli county) (see Map 2.1). In addition to Hemşin-i Bâlâ (Yukarı Kale/Varoş), the garrison of which had grown to forty men, the lower castle (Aşağı Kale), Hemşin-i Zir, was noted for the first time, manned by a garrison of thirty. The registers also provide us the allowance received by these soldiers and their officers, and their annual wheat and millet consumption. Mahmud Çelebi was the zaim of the kaza, and Ali Koruk the serasker.

That Hemshin was under Ottoman control in the 1520s is confirmed by the colophon of a manuscript anthology on the poetical works of Nerses Shnorhali and other authors, now deposited in the Free Library of Philadelphia (John Frederick Prelude to Islamicization 31.
Lewis Collection, ms. 123). The manuscript was written at the churches of Surb Astuatsatsin (mother of God) and Surb Siovn (Sion) ‘in the monastery where the relics of the father St Khach’ik and St Vardan along with his companions have been placed for the glory and protection of our gavăr [canton] of Hamshên’. It was completed on 9 June 1528, ‘during the sultanate of Sulayman [I, 1520–1566], the reign of Skandar Pasha in Trebizond [İskender Pasha, 1513–1534], when our fortresses were controlled by the aghas Darvêshali and Siminaws, during the episcopate of Têr [lord] Mart’. Darvêshali is probably Derviş Ali, while Siminaws corresponds to the Greek-sounding Siminos or Simonos, thus indicating that the latter was probably still Christian. In spite of Siminaws’ possible Christian identity, one would agree with Edwards that ‘one detects a certain air of resentment’ at the mention of our fortresses being controlled by the aghas.

Hemshin is absent from Ottoman registers for the 1536 to 1553 period, during which, according to local Hemshinli historians, it was administratively attached to the Ispir sancak. By 1554, a new nahiye, Kuşova, had appeared, thus increasing to four the number of nahiye of the Hemshin kaza, while the number of villages was reduced by three to thirty-one. Given the location of Kuşova (Kuşıva, now Yolkıry) in the Fırtına Valley, it may be deduced that this new nahiye was probably created by separating the lower Fırtına and Hala Valleys (now part of the Çamhemşin county) from the Hemşin nahiye, leaving to the latter the valley of the Zuğá (Pazar) Dere. Hemshin is not mentioned again in Ottoman sources until 1562, when its ze’âmet (fief) is attributed to Hasan Bey, the sancakbey (governor of a sancak) of Batum. In 1566, the Hemshin kaza was a dependent of the Gönye (Batum) sancak, to which it still belonged in 1583. No information can be gleaned from any of the registers on which town or village was the administrative centre of the Hemshin kaza. Armenian medieval cantons often lacked an administrative centre, and the Hemshin kaza was probably continuing this pattern.

In addition to administrative divisions and state officials, Ottoman documents provide us with figures on the population of Hemshin during the sixteenth century. According to defter no. 387, in the early 1520s, 671 households made up the Hemshin kaza’s thirty-four villages, divided into 214 Muslim and 457 Christian families. The district also counted eleven bachelors (mücerreds), of which three were Muslims, seven Christians, and one undetermined. This brought the total number of nefers (adult men, married and bachelors) to 682, 752 when counting the seventy men garrisoned in the two fortresses of the Kaza. The population of Hemshin was thus 3,619 individuals, with 1,331 Muslims and 2,288 Christians. According to a 1554 register, however, first made available to us by M. Hanefi Bostan, the Muslim population of the Hemshin kaza had dwindled to sixteen families and one bachelor (i.e. a total of eighty-one individuals), while Christians were shown as numbering 706 families and 113 bachelors, or 3,643 individuals. If we are to believe Ottoman registers, Hemshin had in thirty years been transformed from the kaza of Trebizond with the highest percentage of Muslims to the one with the lowest. Bostan believes that a mistake could have been made in 1520 by Ottoman notaries who registered all those engaged in military service in lieu of tax payment (müssellemân) as Muslims (müslimân), or that a major outmigration of Muslims had taken place in the
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intervening years, between 1520 and 1554. Given the absence of any data on a Muslim exodus, it appears obvious that one of the two figures provided is simply wrong.

The surprisingly high ratio of Muslims (32 per cent of households, 37 per cent of total population) in the 1520 register – which was first published by M. Tayyib Gökbilgin in 1962 – has led one to wonder whether Hemshin Armenians were early converts to Islam. Conversion to orthodox or heterodox forms of Islam among Armenians occurred frequently throughout the Middle Ages. Early leanings of Hamshen Armenians towards Islam would help explain Clavijo’s episode on the Muslims of Arraquiel petitioning the ruler of Ispir for the removal of their Christian prince. As we have seen, however, Arraquiel was probably not Hamshen, which continued to be ruled by its native Christian Armenian princes for almost another century after Clavijo’s journey. The 1520 statistic is also vexing because it makes Hemshin appear to be an enclave with an exceptionally high percentage of Muslims, while Islam had not yet made any inroads into any of its surrounding districts. Christians still predominated numerically in the rest of the Pontos, with a ratio of ten to one, in Ispir, with 96.5 per cent of the population, and in Pertakrag (Kiskim), which still belonged to the Georgian rulers (atabegs) of Samtskhe. Another problem with this statistic is the less than twenty households per village figure, a low count even for a mountainous canton, a possible indication of people hiding from the kâtib (notary) to escape taxation. Furthermore, Hemshin still had a bishop in 1528, named Mart, and monastic activity, including the copying of manuscripts, appears to have continued unabated throughout the sixteenth century. It is difficult to imagine how 456 or 457 Christian families would have been able to sustain the three large monasteries of the region.

The question which can then be raised is whether Ottoman control over Hamshen or Hemshin in the first half of the sixteenth century was consolidated enough to allow for a valid survey to be carried out. Hemshin was certainly in Ottoman hands during that period. A manuscript copied in 1531 informs us that Armenian boys were taken for the devshirme (child levy) from ‘Trebizond, Hamshên, Sper and Baberd…to the shores of the lake of Van, and who can describe the misery and tragedy of the parents’ (Matenadaran, ms. 6272). However, Hemshin was very much a border district until at least the mid-sixteenth century, which could explain the general brevity of registers on its topic. The province of Tao/Tayk’, to its southeast, was in the possession of the Jaqeli atabegs of Samtskhe until it was taken by the Ottomans in 1549–1550. The colophon of a medical manuscript copied in Sebastia (Sebasteia, Sivas) in 1550 informs us that ‘there was great mourning [among the Christians] in the city [of Erzurum] because they [the Ottomans] took control of the valleys of Tortum’. The second canton neighbouring Hemshin, Ispir, was occupied in the early years of the sixteenth century by the atabeg of Samtskhe, Mzechabuk (1502–1515), who had thus taken advantage of the dissolution of the Ak Koyunlu state following the death of Yakub. The colophon of a manuscript copied in Hemshin in 1503 (Matenadaran, ms. 1643) mentions that ‘around these days, the Ottomans took
Baberd from the Sofis [the Safavids], and the arrogant Georgians took Sper [Ispir] and two other fortresses'.110 We even know the name of the lieutenant and probable relative of Mzechabuk who was in charge of Ispir during all or part of that period, since a colophon added in 1512 to a manuscript originally copied in 1283 informs us of the ‘principality over Sper [Ispir] of Baron Kitevan, from the Georgian nation’.111 Mzechabuk, who pursued a policy of appeasement with the Ottomans, surrendered the keys of Ispir to Sultan Selim in October 1514 and those of the fortress of Hunut (western Armenian Hunud, now Çamlıkaya), in the Ispir canton, a little later, in 1515.112 In 1548, both Ispir and Bayburt were taken and destroyed by the Safavid Shah Tahmasp.113

To the north of Hemshin lies Chaneti (Lazistan), the western part of which, perhaps including Athenai, was taken by the Ottomans in the years immediately following the conquest of Trebizond.114 The rest of Chaneti, however, was alternately ruled by the Jaqelis of Samtzkhe and the Gurielis of Guria until 1547, when the Ottomans took the area and built a citadel in Batumi (Bathys) and then one in Gonia (Göniye or Gönye).115 Thus, until 1514, Ottoman access to Hemshin was rather restricted and only possible from the mouths of the Pazar or Fırtına rivers, in a region, Chaneti, which was more or less a constant theatre of war until at least 1547, and probably even later. The confiscation of Chaneti by King Bagrat of Imeretia in 1535 from Atabeg Qwarqware and its transfer to the Gurieli Rostom – an enemy of the Ottomans – may have further restrained access to Hemshin from the coast. This could explain the Ottoman administrative rearrangement of 1536 which, according to local Hemshinli historians, made Hemshin a dependency of the Ispir sancak.116

The political situation in the region during the first half of the sixteenth century could explain why the registers of that period did not carry creditable figures. In contrast, the political conditions of the 1554 survey were certainly more propitious, since it was carried out when the entire region was under the firm control of the Ottomans, who had consolidated their conquests of the preceding years through a peace treaty with the Safavids in 1553.

In conclusion, the hypothesis that the Islamicization of Hamshen Armenians had started in the sixteenth century and even as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century, at the time of Clavijo’s passage, should be dismissed. No religious change affected the area during the sixteenth and early decades of the seventeenth century, Hemshin remaining a quasi-exclusively Christian district for almost a century and a half following Ottoman conquest during the 1480s. The developments which led to the transformation of Christian Hamshen into Muslim Hemshin clearly belong to later periods.

Notes


4 Colophons are scribal memorials, usually short writings by scribes whose task it was to copy manuscripts. After or during the arduous task of copying a long text, the scribe often inserted something about himself and about the conditions of copying, almost always including, in the Armenian experience, the date, place and patron of the manuscript. In most cases the colophon was written at the end of copying, but not infrequently during the work. With the invention and progress of printing, the colophon became what we now call the front material or the information on publication. This information continued to be placed at the end of printed books in textual paragraph form well into the sixteenth century. I am indebted to Dr Dickran Kouymjian for this definition of colophons.


9 Ggewond (1887), Chapters 41–42; Arzoumanian (1982), pp. 147–49.

10 The Amatunis had acquired Öshakan in the fourth century. Their original domain was the Artaz canton, the modern-day Iranian district of Maku. The Artaz branch does not seem to have participated in the migration, since family members appear in possession of their domains in the ninth century, as vassals of the Artsruni princes and later kings of Vaspurakan. The Armenian princes who held Maku and Artaz until the mid-fifteenth century could possibly be their descendants. A branch of the family may
have remained in Aragatsotn itself, since the Vach’utian princes which ruled in later centuries (twelfth to fifteenth centuries) over Aragatsotn and neighbouring districts claimed Amatuni descent. However, the validity of their claim is a subject of discussion among historians.


19 Sargs Haykuni, ‘Nshkarner: Korats u Morats’uats Hayer’ [Fragments: Lost and Forgotten Armenians], *Ararat* (Vagharshapat, 1895), no. 8, pp. 296; H. Minas Vardapet Bzhshkian, *Chanaparhordut’iwn i Lehastan ew yayl Koghmans Naakeals i Haykazants’ Serelots’ i Nakhneats’ Ani K’aghak’in: Sharagreal Handerdz Zanan Banarisrakan Teghekat’eambk’ [Travels to Poland and other Places Populated by Armenians Descending from Forefathers from the City of Ani: Annotated with Various Philological Informations] (Venice: St Lazarus Monastery, 1830), p. 84.

20 Harut’iwn Gat’ëonian, ‘Ch’ors Tari Shamshet’-Imerkhëvum Shrjagayut’ean Ardiwnk’its’* [From the Result of a Four-year Tour of Shavshet-Imerkhevi], *Mshak [The Tiller]* (Tiflis, 1888), 16, no. 83, 23 July, p. 2; Pirö, ‘Tachkats’ats Hayer’ [Turkified Armenians], *Nor-Dar [New Age]* (Tiflis, 1893), 10, no. 227, 21 December, p. 3; Barunak T’orlak’yan, ‘Hamshenahayer’ [Hamshen Armenians], *Grakan T’ert’ [Literary Paper]* (Erevan, 1968), 36, no. 21 (1432), 24 May, p. 4.


23 H. Minas Vardapet Bzhshkian, *Batmut’iwn Pontosi vor è Seaw Tsov* [History of the Pontos which is the Black Sea] (Venice: St Lazarus Monastery, 1819), p. 82; this is also confirmed by Hrach’eay Acharian, *K’nnut’yan Hamshent Barbaři [Study of the Hamshen dialect]* (Erevan: Erevan State University Press, 1947), p. 11.

24 Ispir corresponds to the Sysspiritis of classical times, to the Sper canton of Bardzr Hayk’ (Upper Armenia) province, and to the modern-day Ispir county (ilçe). Pertakrag (Arm. Berdagrak), known in Ottoman times as Peterek, was the Arseats’p’or canton of Armenian Tayk’/Georgian Tao province, the Ottoman Keskim or Kiskim kaza, and the modern-day Yusufeli county of the Artvin province.


26 See Chapter 10 by Bert Vaux (this volume). The present-day name of Khodorchur is Srakonaklar. The small valley is now part of the Ispir county.


30 While Varoş and Kala-i Bâlâ refer to the same fortress, they also correspond to two separate villages near it. These villages are now mostly depopulated and used predominantly in summer as yaylas. Varoş is now Yazlk, and Kala-i Bâlâ is Hisarcık.
44 Ibid., p. 337.
46 Alexandre Toumarkine, *Les Lazes en Turquie (XIXe-XXe siècles)* (Istanbul: Isis, 1995), p. 94 and n. 125; see Chapter 7 by Hagop Hachikian (this volume).

47 Koch (1846), vol. 2, pp. 23–25.

48 A. Mat’evosyan (ed.), *Hayaren Dzeragleri Hishtagararanner, XIII Dar* [Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, Thirteenth Century] (Erevan: Publications of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1984), pp. 218–19. The text of the colophon was misread by Edwards who believed that the monk from Hamshen was the copyist rather than the recipient of the manuscript. See Edwards (1988), p. 408.

49 Haykuni (1895), pp. 296–97.


51 Bzhshkian (1819), p. 97.


55 Tağpur is sometimes pronounced Tahpur. Şerif Sayın claims that another fortress of the region, Zeleğli Kale, belonged to Hemshin. Zeleğli Kale, if it is identical to the fortress described by Bryer and Winfield as Kordyla-Kalecik or Sivri Kale, is not likely to have been a part of Hemshin, however, given its location on the coast, between Atina (Pazar) and Mapavri (Çayeli). As seen above, the territory controlled by the princes of Hamshen did not extend to the coast. Şerif Sayın, *Hemsin Tarihi* (Ankara: unpublished manuscript, 1992–93), p. 21; Bryer and Winfield (1985), p. 334.

56 See Chapter 1 by Anne Elizabeth Redgate (this volume).


64 Cimil may even have contained a monastery of relative importance where manuscripts were copied. A Bible, restored in 1621 and known as Cimili Awetaran (the Gospel of Cimil), was originally copied there some three centuries before, in the early fourteenth century. This Bible was taken for safekeeping to a village in Ispir when Cimil was Islamicized in later times. See M. Sanosian, ‘Speri Hnut’ıwnner’ [Antiquities of Sper/İspir], *Arewelk’ [Orient] (Constantinople, 1904), 21, no. 5579, 29 May, p. 1.

66 Koch (1846), vol. 2, p. 23.


69 Ibid.


72 The monasteries are K’oashents’, Khuzhka and St Khach’ik Hawr. Located in the vichak or diocese of Khach’ek’ar, the latter monastery was also sometimes known as Khach’kavank’. See Father Hamazasp Oskian, *Bardzr Hayk’i Vank’er x* [The Monasteries of Upper Armenia] (Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1951), pp. 183–89 and 199; Khach’ikyan (1969), pp. 132–34; Edwards (1988), pp. 408, 410 and 413–14.


85 Cyrille Toumanoff, Les maisons princières géorgiennes de l’empire de Russie (Rome, 1983), p. 60. The claim of these neo-Atamukis, however, could have been fictitious. They could also have been descendants of the Vach’utian family or of the princes of Maku (see n. 9, above).


88 Hemshin is probably derived from Hamshen, the form taken by Hamsh when a suffix is added to it, as in i yerkirs Hamshinu (i.e. in our land of Hamshen). The letter ſ (transliterated as ‘i’) located in the last syllable of a word is usually transformed into an h when a suffix is added to that word, as in the genitive form.


translated into English by Sanjian, and was consequently missed by Bryer and Winfield (1985, p. 336 n. 9) and by Edwards (1988, pp. 412–13).

95 Bostan (2002), pp. 25, 40, 47 and 222.
96 Ibid., pp. 40, 48–49 and 221.
99 Ibid., pp. 221–23 and 260.
100 Ibid., see also 387 Numaralı Muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Karaman ve Rûm Defteri (937/1530), vol. 2, p. 50 and n.
105 M. K. Zulalyan, ‘ “Devshirme”-n (Mankahavank’ê) Ösmanyar Kayırat‘yan mej êst T‘urk‘akan ev Hayyakan Aghbyurneri’ [The “Devshirme” (Recruitment of Children) in the Ottoman Empire according to Turkish and Armenian Sources], Patma- Banasirakan Handes [Historico-Philological Review] (Erevan, 1959), nos. 2–3 (5–6), p. 251. I am greatly indebted to Ruben Melk‘onyan for informing me about this important source.
112 Bacqué-Grammont and Adle (1978), pp. 221–23. The authors are mistaken in confusing Hunut, near Ispir, with Ğinis (Cinis), a place east of Aşkale and west of Erzurum.