

Transottomanica project:

“Transimperial Armenian Mobility and the Rise of Ottoman Tokat”

The project examines the mobility and culture of the Anatolian Armenians from the 16th to the 18th centuries using the example of the city of Tokat (Armenian Եւդոկիա Ewdokia) as an early modern economic and cultural center. While the early modern history of Armenians in Poland-Lithuania (Lwów-Lviv, Kamieniec, Zamość), the Crimea, the Safavid Empire (New-Julfa in Isfahan) and in Constantinople is more thoroughly researched, Anatolia remains largely in the shadow. Tokat became an important Armenian center since the late 16th century in the context of the Safavid-Ottoman wars, as Armenians fled from embattled regions further east to the safety of Tokat and contributed to the city’s economic and cultural development. At the time of the Celali uprisings many Armenians of Tokat moved west again – this time to the Crimea, Wallachia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – while maintaining strong ties with their former homeland. Mediating between Armenian communities of Iran, Anatolia and Eastern/Central Europe and their respective cultures, Tokat became a vibrant hub of the Transottoman cultural transfer. Historiographically, the early modern period in the history of Armenian communities has always been overshadowed by history of the medieval Armenian kingdoms, as well as modern Armenian history and the history of the Armenian genocide. History of Armenian communities of Anatolia in the early modern period has therefore been little researched, and its reappraisal is an important desideratum. The project is based on a variety of contemporary Armenian, Ottoman, and Polish sources now preserved in numerous manuscript collections and museums in Armenia, Turkey, Italy, Austria, Poland, Ukraine, Iran and other countries.