



Remains of an Armenian village in the province of Bitlis left by its inhabitants during the 1894-97 massacres. Image by Jelle Verheij.

THE HAMIDIAN MASSACRES OF 1894-97: CHALLENGING TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Organized by the Armenian Genocide Research Program at the UCLA Promise Armenian Institute

Over the course of three years in the mid-1890s (1894-1897), tens of thousands of Ottoman Armenians were killed in pogroms known as the Hamidian massacres—after Sultan Abdülhamid II (reigned 1876-1909). Despite being known contemporarily as “the great massacres” among Armenians and the importance of this period for Ottoman-Kurdish-Armenian relations, the massacres received very little scholarly attention, even by specialists in Armenian history, until the late 1990s. Only in the last two decades have research articles appeared, primarily case studies of individual massacres.

Dr. Jelle Verheij (University of Amsterdam) is the author of several works on the Hamidian massacres, and his research articles of the late 1990s were among the first on the subject. His Ph.D. thesis is a voluminous 800-page study that may pass for the first comprehensive monograph on the massacres. Dr. Owen Miller, the author of a thesis and several research articles on the Sasun massacre of 1894 and its background, will discuss with Jelle Verheij his findings and the need for revision of the traditional perspectives, touching on many of the key issues and players: the death toll, characteristics and motivation of the perpetrators, the roles of the Ottoman authorities, foreign powers and Armenian revolutionary parties.

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