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Reflective Report on Researching the Greek Genocide

I chose to write my dissertation on the Greek Genocide of the twentieth century because I was surprised by how little discussion or acknowledgement there is about this atrocity. Despite extensive evidence, decades of historical analysis, and numerous first-person accounts, the Greek Genocide remains one of the least spoken-about genocides of the modern era. Being Greek American, this topic holds special importance to me. Several family friends were directly affected by the Greek Genocide, and I recently learned through a family discussion during my research that one of my ancestors, Αντώνης (Antonios/Anthony) was killed during this melancholic time. Discovering this personal connection has made my research more personal and meaningful while deepening my understanding of the human toll of the genocide. It also has shaped the questions I have for my dissertation, particularly around recognition and the experiences of those affected. I felt compelled to explore the topic further and hopefully contribute to raising more awareness. My dissertation project aims to outline the academic foundations of my study while reflecting on my early stages of researching such a complex and often overlooked subject.

To give some context, the Greek Genocide took place between 1913 and 1923 and targeted Greek-Orthodox Christians living in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). The genocide was shaped by multiple factors, including the First World War, the Greco-Turkish War, and longstanding political and cultural tensions in the region. These issues will be examined in more detail in my final thesis. However, what stands out to me is how little attention the Greek Genocide receives when compared to other twentieth-century genocides. For example, in school we learned extensively about the Holocaust and the Rwandan Genocide. Even the Armenian Genocide, which was perpetuated during the same period and under similar conditions as the Greeks receives more recognition today than the Greek Genocide. Realizing early on how contested and complex this marginalized topic has shaped the direction of my outline so far. In order to educate and better understand the genocide, I have begun reading and looking into several main sources of its causes, recognition and the overall history of the region. I will summarize in the next section some key literature I have been exploring that will continue to help me with my research.

One of the most exciting sources that I have been reading is *Escape from Asia Minor*, published by the Greek Genocide Resource Center. The book is a personal memoir of Michail Angelou, a Pontic Greek Orthodox Christian pharmacist who served in both the Ottoman and Kemalist armies during the period of persecution. His account depicts not only his service to his country, but also his unjust imprisonment which underlines the atmosphere of uncertainty and fear experienced by the Greek minorities. After witnessing the increase in violence and hearing the intention of the plans of the new regime to exterminate the remaining Christians, Angelou fled his homeland with his family. The memoir also comprises the accounts of his friends and relatives, offering a wider picture of the suffering atmosphere of the Greek-minorities. Despite

the book not being an academic analysis, the text serves as a primary source that taps into strong key themes in broader literature. Such themes are ethnic violence, population exchanges, deportation marches, and the erasure of Christian communities within the collapsing Ottoman Empire. Reading and using this memoir for my project helps me engage with the individual aspects of the genocide, which mixes well with the more academic sources I have explored to this point.

In addition to memoirs, I have been examining online resources notably the Greek Genocide Resource Center. This site provides historical accounts of the genocide, key dates, massacres, population exchanges as well as the perpetrators of the genocide. The center also has different news accounts from different countries and their coverage of the atrocity. This source is a valuable resource that includes many secondary sources to help me understand the broader topic. It has already shaped the direction of my project and will continue to guide my exploration of key debates and evidence surrounding the Greek Genocide.

In order to ensure the successful completion of my dissertation on the Greek Genocide, I have structured myself a project management plan. This strategy includes outlining timelines, key tasks, and strategies to overcome any potential shortfalls. My immediate tasks include expanding the literature review, finishing the memoir book I am reading as well as exploring online archives and the Greek Genocide Resource Center. Following this, I will consolidate my sources, structurally organize them and construct a reading and note-taking plan to support the development of the dissertation chapters.

Following this, I will focus my time on drafting sections covering the historical aspect, causes of the genocide and the problems of recognition and memory. I plan to set myself specific

timeframes for each section to ensure steady progress on my project. This will be simple as I will check base with my supervisor, Rhian, on a regular basis. We have already met multiple times and keep a dialogue on how I can best complete and succeed with addressing the Greek Genocide thesis. Some challenges I anticipate are the scarcity of primary sources when compared to other genocides. To overcome this, I will continue to utilize memoirs and vast online resource centers as well as any translated documents. I will hopefully be able to succeed in contacting research centers for guidance and dialogue.

To stay organized, I will utilize Microsoft Word to keep track and manage my sources, maintain a structured reading schedule, and regularly review my progress against my timeline. By piecing the dissertation into manageable tasks and monitoring my advancement, I aim to produce a thorough, well-researched, and carefully analyzed project that reflects both the historical complexity of the Greek Genocide and the human experiences of those affected.

To conclude, this brief report has outlined my strategy, highlighted key sources, and reflected on personal and academic challenges encountered so far. By following my structured plan and continuing to engage with both primary and secondary materials, I aim to produce a thorough and insightful dissertation on the Greek Genocide.

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