

side and a Muslim one on the other and then a holy matrimony.... No! The world had to turn in the opposite direction.²⁶

The Armenian inhabitants of *Gâvur Mahallesi* had their own subtle way of continuing to practice their religion and traditions, and a peculiar, almost unintelligible Armenian vernacular, the Tigranakerttsi dialect. Every Sunday they gathered in their only working church which “during the war [World War II] was used as an army barracks, and worship had just recently resumed there. The walls were not yet saturated with the scent of incense.”²⁷ They gathered to pray to their God, to listen to their only priest’s half-Armenian, half-Turkish sermon, and to be thankful for this humble, centuries-old church that was now returned to them. The Tigranakerttsi Armenians knew well that they were the remnants of a great catastrophe that had uprooted them from their towns and villages and thrown them into this city the Turks called Diyarbakir, a city that reminded them of the Armenian Tigranakert by the Tigris River. Significantly, they referred to themselves as Tigranakerttsis and not Diarbakirtsis. The proof of their ancient roots was in front of their eyes. Indeed, the remnants of the wall of the great citadel can still be seen from the newer city of Diyarbakir. Who wouldn’t know that Tigranakert was built centuries before the Turks appeared on the Armenian highlands? Who wouldn’t

²⁶ Margosyan, *Tigrisi aperen* (1999), p. 64. This volume is another collection of Margosyan’s short stories about Armenian life in Tigranakert.

²⁷ Margosyan, *Mer ayd koghmere*, p. 12.