

As for the influence of the Armenian *sarrafs*, according to one contemporary western historian, it was decisive and enormous, for “they can reduce any Turkish governor to the condition of a private individual.”<sup>149</sup> This assessment of their economic power is exaggerated, if not misleading, for this same observer noted that “the bankers have no power of their own, they have no distinct influence, ... they are wholly deprived of all political importance.”<sup>150</sup>

While there could be diversity of opinion, if not controversy, in the evaluation of the function and role of *sarrafa-amiras*, the assessment of technocrat-industrialist and architect *amiras* is devoid of such ambivalence and argumentation. At the time the Dadians and their associates emerged on the scene, the Ottoman state, under Selim III’s guidance and instigation, was undertaking tentative and limited steps to introduce machine manufactured goods for the army. These efforts were intensified under Mahmud II, and turned into an ambitious industrialization program during Abdülmecid’s reign. More than anything else, the government needed industrial managers with technical skills who could implement the various projects. The Dadians, starting with Dad Arakel *Amira*, demonstrated unique aptitude and skill in the technical field, and talent in industrial and skill in the technical field, and talent in industrial management. They did more than select sites, import modern machines, or operate and manage the various manufacturing plants. They invented new devices and machines, and adapted others from European models; they were inventors as well as innovators. The Dadians introduced into Ottoman society, in general, not only advanced European technological methods, but western mentality and way of thinking. As such, they were westernizers as well.

As a class, the *amiras*, whether *sarrafa*, architect, merchant-purveyor, or technocrat, were deeply entrenched in the Ottoman governing system and ruling class. They enjoyed Ottoman governing system and ruling class. They enjoyed privileges, rights and status which were bestowed upon only those who belonged to the governing elite of Ottoman society.

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<sup>149</sup> **Urquhart**, *Turkey*, p. 108.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.