

However enviable and impressive these glamorous trappings were, *amiras* lacked a most essential ingredient or characteristic, which differentiated them from the rest of the ruling elite: political power. *Amiras* neither held political offices nor exercised any truly political power in the Ottoman government; they could not affect directly the latter's internal or external policies. Their interests lay in the preservation of the regime, yet, when the government introduced reform measures which would undermine their economic interests and social status they could demonstrate no visible opposition and acquiesced.

The political power which *amiras* lacked as marginal members of the Ottoman ruling class, they found ample opportunity and almost complete freedom to exercise in the Armenian *millet*.