

Hovhannes Tchamasherdjian (1802-1813).¹⁶ According to Archag Alboyadjian's usually reliable estimates, there were twenty-four Armenian elementary schools in Istanbul by 1847. During the next decade this number increased by eighteen more, reaching a total of forty-two, including two colleges and two high schools. The total enrollment of these schools was 5,531, while the number of teachers was 197.¹⁷ A number of *amiras* not only provided the initial funds for the construction of these schools, but endowed them with revenue-producing properties or interest-bearing large liquid capital to pay for the operating expenses, as is demonstrated by the instances already cited.

There were also those who, after the construction of a school and their support of its operational expenses for a year or two, would relinquish their financial sponsorship to others. Thus, the school at Langa was supported by the guild of jewelers, the one at Top Kapu was sponsored by the guild of muslin manufacturers (*tülbendci* in Turkish), the one at Yeni Mahalle in Samatya district was financed by the guilds of merchants who did business with Europe (in Turkish *Avrupa tüccari*) and by the merchants of tobacco (in Turkish *tütünci* and *tömbekci*).¹⁸

Finally the *amiras'* attention was not restricted to the capital. As already mentioned, Hovhannes *Amira* Dadian made large contributions to schools outside of Istanbul. In 1858 Boghos *Amira* Dadian and Garabed *Amira* Balian donated the sum of 180,000 *kuruş* for the construction of a boarding school in Jerusalem, adjacent to St. James convent.

The most historic step in the educational endeavors of *amiras* was their decision to support the opening of a college, known as the Djemaran, in 1836. As we shall see later in this chapter, this school was to become an object of dispute and strife in the Armenian community of Istanbul, culminating in the adoption of a constitution for the *millet*.

In addition to education, many *amiras* demonstrated great interest in the advancement of culture. Shnorhk *Amira* Miridjanian, the founder of the first secular school, set up a new printing establishment adjacent to St. Mary church at Kum Kapu. More than half a dozen religious books were published

¹⁶ Asadur, *Polsoy Hayere*, pp. 107-108.

¹⁷ Alboyadjian, "Sahmanadrutiune," pp. 388-389.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 157.