

by the presses of this printing shop under the supervision of a notable scholar of the time, Madteos Dpir.¹⁹ Another printing establishment was founded by Apraham Terziant's *Amira* at Hasan Pasha Khan where during its two years of existence (from 1824 to 1826) some ten books, mostly of religious nature, were published. The colophons of these books reveal the generosity of this *amira* who paid for the printing expenses of all the books, until death put an end to his publishing zeal.²⁰ Moreover, the books were freely distributed in the provinces for the enlightenment of the people there.²¹ A number of other *amiras* sponsored the publication of books. Bezdjian paid for the publication of a scholarly work entitled *Parskahay Bargirk*, "Persian-Armenian Dictionary," by Badueli Kevork.²² These books published or sponsored by *amiras* were of religious, didactic or pedagogic nature.

The exception was Hovhannes *Amira* Dadian. No *amira* had been so keenly interested and so dedicated to the publication of books designed for the education of the common people. Dadian *Amira* made major contributions to the twin Mekhitarist institutions in Venice and in Vienna. Being an ardent student of Armenian history, he commissioned the Mekhitarist scholar cleric Hovsep Katerdjian to write a three-volume "Universal History," the first two volumes of which were published in Vienna, in 1849 and 1852. (The third volume, dealing with the modern period, was never written, for unknown reasons)²³. Upon his recommendation, several copies of an atlas in Armenian were prepared by the Mekhitarist scholar Arsen Aydenian, each copy costing over five hundred gold francs. He also commissioned the versatile and talented Mekhitarist cleric Ghevont Alishan, a great geographer, to write a two-volume geography, which was published in Venice in 1853. The history and geography books were intended for the use of Armenian students and laymen. Hovhannes *Amira* donated many valuable books to various schools, including the seminary at Armash.

¹⁹ **Torkomian**, *Yeremia Tchelepji*, 1:242.

²⁰ **Asadur**, *Polsoy Hayere*, p. 128.

²¹ **Hratchey Adjarian**, "Hayots Dere Osmaneane Kaystrutean Metj" ["The Role of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire"], *Banber Erevani Hamalsarani* (Erevan), 1967, p. 157.

²² *Endarsak Oratsoyts*, 1900, p. 142.

²³ **Alboyadjian**, *Les Dadian*, p. 68; **Boghosian**, *Dadian Gerdastane*, p. 98.