

a dozen churches;²⁷ the Balianes were the architects as well as the donors of a number of churches.²⁸

Many new churches were built through the generosity of single *amiras*. To cite but a few: Misak *Amira* Misakian financed the building of two churches, one at Boyacı köy, near Rumeli Hisar (1840) and another, through a bequest in his will, at Emirgün (1857);²⁹ Harutiun *Amira* Noradungian defrayed the cost of the reconstruction of the church at Kadi köy (1814);³⁰ Garabed and Kevork Karakehya Eramian brothers paid for the construction of a church at Böyükdere (1848);³¹ Garabed *Amira* Aznavurian sponsored the building of a new church at Narli Kapu (1807).³² According to one source sixteen churches were either built or repaired during the short span of time between 1831 and 1839.³³

The cost of these constructions and repairs was extremely high. Actual figures are not available, but contemporary sources continuously repeat that the construction of one or another church cost great sums. We have already mentioned the case of the reconstruction of the patriarchate and its adjoining three churches which cost three million *kuruş*, although to be sure this was an exceptional case. A more representative one is that of St. Mary's church at Ortaköy. In 1824 Bezdjian *Amira* donated 100,000 *kuruş* to the church to repay its debts, most probably incurred as a result of some repairs.

As important as funding the construction of a church was, the procurement of the official *ferman* or authorization needed to undertake the work. One had to be prepared "for great financial sacrifices" and demonstrate "exceptional skills to wrest the necessary *ferman*."³⁴ In general, acquiring a *ferman* for the construction or repair of a church would take years and large

²⁷ Zartarian, *Hishatakaran*, 2:17, 23; Torkomian, *Eremya Tchelepii*, 1:271, 2:473-474, 544; Stepan Papazian, *Kensagrutiun Harutiun Bezdjiani*, pp. 25-35; Toros Azadian, *Hariurameay Hopelean Bezdjian Mayr Varjarani*, pp. 18-23.

²⁸ Torkomian, *Eremya Tchelepii*, 2:658.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 699, 702.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:171.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2:708.

³² Azadian, *Akn I*, p. 50.

³³ Asadur, *Polsoy Hayere*, 133

³⁴ Siruni, *Polis*, 1:417.