

[that is] to investigate, regulate, punish, ordain and select prelates.”⁷⁴ He resisted the demands of the *amiras* for changes among the prelates, demands which they made in order to reassert their power of patronage. It had been traditional for a preeminent *amira* or group of *amiras* to demonstrate personal standing and to reward the loyalty of supportive clerics by having them appointed to the various bishoprics about which the Prelate had final say within the *millet* system. The Patriarch’s assertion of his right to ordain and select the members of the higher ranks of clergy was entirely legal, but remained, nevertheless, a direct challenge to the huge influence which the *amiras* had traditionally exercised. They complained to Grand Vezir Mustafa Resid Pasha, who heeded the advice of his assistant, Hagop Grdjigian. Grdjigian, who had served the Pasha in various diplomatic capacities when the latter was ambassador in Paris, Vienna and London, was now the Grand Vezir’s secretary and advisor.⁷⁵ An imperial edict, issued on 7 May 1847, directed the Patriarch to proceed with the election of two separate and independent councils, one for the administration of secular affairs of the *millet*, the other for spiritual-religious matters.⁷⁶ This edict, attributed to Grdjigian, proved a turning point in the history of Western Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. It did more than separate ecclesiastical and secular matters; it instituted two governing bodies through election, rather than appointment, as had been the custom previously.

This edict instructed the General Assembly, in which the clergy, *amiras* and *esnaf*s participated, to elect a Spiritual Council, consisting of fourteen clerical members, all from Istanbul, and a Supreme Civil Council, comprised of twenty lay members. The Supreme Civil Council, which included nine *amiras* and ten *esnaf* representatives, elected Hagop Grdjigian its *logothete* (also called *loghofet* or *löfet*), a kind of executive director, who acted both as its chairman and executive secretary.⁷⁷ *Amira* membership on the Council was composed of five *sarrafs* and four technocrats: two architects and two *barutçubaşı*. The Supreme Civil Council was empowered with jurisdiction over secular education, finances and justice, while the Spiritual

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁷⁵ **Asadur**, *Polsoy Hayere*, p. 163

⁷⁶ **A. Berberian**, *Patmutiun*, p. 319; **P. Ketchian**, *Patmutiun Hivandanotsin*, p. 12.

⁷⁷ **Ormanian**, *Azgapatum*, 3:3814; **P. Ketchian**, *Patmutiun Hivandanotsin*, p. 93.