

at this time, they receive little attention in their works. O. G. Indjikian,³⁰ who writes in Russian, and Levon Tchormissian,³¹ a Diaspora authority who has written a four-volume study of modern Western Armenian history, both exemplify such neglect.

A thorough search was also made of newspapers, periodicals and journals, some of which were contemporary to the *amiras*, while others came later. The results were, once again, meager. Many of the articles were written as eulogies or necrologies, while a few others pay fulsome tribute to an *amira* or to his memory. All of these are so lacking in dependable information that one cannot help arriving at the conclusion that Puzant Ketchian reached some ninety years ago: “How disappointed I was when, after doing research in the forty year collections of [Armenian] newspapers, I did not find even the trace of a partial historical or statistical study...”³²

Western-language sources are usually of little help as far as *amiras* are concerned. The French Foreign Ministry archives, so detailed about contemporary religious disputes in the Armenian community of Constantinople, contain very little on *amiras*, except for few, albeit enlightening, glimpses.³³ The archives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,³⁴ consisting exclusively of the correspondence between the missionaries in the field and the headquarters in New York, are not much more productive. The glimpses provided by these western sources have an importance out of proportion to their quantity, because of the perspective of the observers, who were by no means impartial but were driven by a different set of concerns.

Contemporary Western writers were not familiar with the *amiras* as such, since the honorific title was an innovation of the Armenian community. However, most of these Westerners wrote a great deal about the *sar-*

³⁰ **A. G. Indjikian**, *Burzhuaizii Osmanskoe Imperii* [The Bourgeoisie of the Ottoman Empire] (Erevan, 1977).

³¹ **Levon Tchormissian**, *Hamapatker Arevmtahayots Mek Daru Patmutedan* [An Overview of a Century of Western Armenian History], 4 vols. (Beirut, 1972-1975).

³² **P. Ketchian**, *Patmutiun Hivandanotsin*, pp. vii-viii.

³³ See Chapter IV, pp. 134.

³⁴ *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Harvard University, Houghton Library, Cambridge, Mass.) (hereafter cited as ABCFM).