

cal, linguistic and literary value, some of which have been translated into Turkish.³⁴

The best known among the *çelebis* was the family of Diuzians. The rise, fall, reemergence and the eventual disappearance of this dynasty will be one of the focal points of this study. It is worth noting that their ancestor Sarkis, son of Harutiun, was a palace goldsmith in Istanbul and the first of the family to be called *çelebi*, an honorific title kept by his descendants even though by the mid-eighteenth century the title *amira* had come into prominence.

A student of the subject rightly points out that Armenian Catholic notables generally preferred the title *çelebi*,³⁵ another considers it an indication of the acceptance of “*frankutiun*,” i.e. “frankism” or catholicism.³⁶ These assertions are open to question as far as earlier periods are concerned, but they were certainly true for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³⁷

As Armenian provincial notables responded to the lure of Istanbul, and as *hoca* became devalued as a title, the use of *çelebi* as a honorific began to have a special appeal for those aspiring to the highest status and prestige.

Since the word *çelebi* carried with it implications of learning and polish in the very highest Ottoman circles, and the word *hoca* was less esteemed by those very same circles, Armenian notables appear to have made an effort to increase its use. The evidence supports Anasian’s conclusion that *çelebi* came to be perceived as the title appropriate for “the [Armenian] aristocracy of the capital.”³⁸ *Hocas* appear to have coveted it, and the shift from the use of that title by the fathers to the use of *çelebi* by the sons is

³⁴ In addition to Torkomian’s valuable work, there are a number of others, including **Fr. Nerses Akinian**’s *Eremia Tchelepi Keomiurdjian, Keankn u Grakan GordzUNETIUNE* [Eremia Çelebi Keomiurdjian, His Life and Literary Activities] (Vienna, 1933); **Simon Eremian**, “Eremia Tchelepi,” *Bazmaveb* (1903):367-373. For a complete listing of works on this topic see **Torkomian**, *Eremia Tchelepii*, 1:138, note 1, and for the listing of Eremia Çelebi’s works see Akinian.

³⁵ **G. Hnaser** (pseud.), “Hay Vadjarakanner ev Arhestavormer K. Polsoy metj (JZ ev JE Dar),” [“Armenian Merchants and Craftsmen in Istanbul (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries),”] *Arev* (Cairo), 7 October 1955, p. 3.

³⁶ **Mrmerian**, *Masnakan Patmutiun*, n. 25.

³⁷ **Ghazarian**, *Arevmtahayeri Katsutiune*, p. 382.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 381; **Anasian**, *Azatagrakan Sharjumnern*, p. 67, note 1.