

for a long time, considered themselves “natives” and were extremely proud of it. The “outsiders,” in Armenian *drsetsi*, were the newcomers from the provinces, who were also known as *gavaratsi*, *i.e.* provincial; the urban “natives” looked down on them. Many colophons and chronicles mention details of the disputes between these two social elements. The arrogance the “natives” demonstrated towards the “provincials,” which Arakel Davrijetsi does not fail to notice,<sup>86</sup> was usually motivated by the success, wealth and position of the newcomers. Armenian provincial notables would accompany the Turkish pasha named to a post in the capital and thus arouse the jealousy of the “insiders” who would regard the former as “vulgar and uncivilized (not good mannered).”<sup>87</sup>

This competition, and sometimes the clash, continued even though some of the “outsiders,” with the passing of time, became “insiders;” the flow of immigrants to the capital, driven there mainly by economic necessity and sometimes by the political conditions in the provinces, never ceased. This social phenomenon, with its economic, cultural and political ramifications, is not unique to Armenians in the Ottoman Empire; but in its seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century setting it would help explain a number of problems, among them the changing forms of the confusing *çelebi* and *hoca* competition.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the emerging *amiras* became dominant in the Armenian *millet*, and developed a remarkable degree of control over the affairs of the community and Patriarchate. The *amiras* inherited and elaborated the roles and functions of the *çelebis* and *hocas* who have been called their “ancestral” groups and “prototypes.”<sup>88</sup> The *Amiras* were to become power-brokers, intermediaries between the Sultan and his Armenian subjects, philanthropists on a large scale, lay leaders of the church and its flock and conservative defenders of the *status quo*, which perpetuated their power and position.

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<sup>86</sup> **Davrijetsi**, *Patmutiun*, see in general.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. See the previous note.

<sup>88</sup> **Anasian**, *Azatagrakan Sharjumnern*, p. 60.