

Geshghesian Boghos *Amira*,” in 1828;<sup>19</sup> “the great *sarraḡ* Baron *Amira* [Dakesian],” in 1849.<sup>20</sup> In this last case the profession is mentioned using the Armenian word *hatavadjar*, which was used as a synonym to *sarraḡ*. Clearly, *sarraḡ* referred only to the profession of the deceased person, while his titles were mentioned separately.

If some of the *sarraḡ*s had no title, while others had different ones, then all the *sarraḡ*s could not automatically be called *amira*, nor could the word *sarraḡ* be taken as synonymous to the title. Undoubtedly, due to their wealth, all the *sarraḡ*s belonged to the higher echelons of Armenian society. It is noteworthy that the epigraphs and colophons of the *sarraḡ*s with the title *amira*, or any title for that matter, are dated after 1820s. This is another indication to the fact that by the first quarter or the nineteenth century *amira* was a title of great prestige which the wealthy, including the *sarraḡ*s, coveted. Yet, as late as 1849<sup>21</sup> the epitaph of at least one *sarraḡ* shows no title, lending support to the view that all the *sarraḡ*s were not necessarily *amiras*.<sup>22</sup>

The first use of *amira*, in its modern meaning, is reported to date from 1559; it refers to an Iskender Amira of Istanbul.<sup>23</sup> But the reliability of this information is questionable.<sup>24</sup> A study of the subject claims that the title

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 429.

<sup>20</sup> **Azadian**, *Akn II*, p. 88.

<sup>21</sup> See note 6, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> As a matter of fact the members of Koranian or Koranians family practiced the profession of *sarraḡ*, but none was called *amira*, although a few married into *amira* families. See **Azadian**, *Akn II*, op. 105-108.

<sup>23</sup> **A. Ketchian**, *Akn*, p. 60.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* The author does not mention the source of his information. Most probably he obtained it from *Endardsak Oratsoyts Surb Prktchean Hivandanotsi* [The Great Calendar of the St. Savior Armenian Hospital] (Constantinople, 1902), p. 197 where the following is stated:

“For the first time in history Iskender Amira is mentioned as *amira*; he was a friend of the physician and clerical scholar Clemens Galanus whom he kept in his house during the religious persecutions of the time (1641-1642).”

This anonymous article does not provide a clue as to the origin of its information. Since this Iskender *Amira* was a “friend” of the Teatine cleric Clemens Galanus or Clemente Galano, this student examined his three-volume work: *Conciliationis Ecclesiae Armenae cum Romana*, 3 vols., Rome, 1658-1690, but to no avail. Another source calls him “Iskender *Celebi*.” (See **Mrmerian**, *Masnakan Patmutiun*, p. 25). Furthermore, if such a person existed, then the date reported is either false or misrepresented. If he were a friend of Galanus, who died in 1666, he