

be one of several symbols of eminence and became the one retrospectively bestowed on notables who, in their lifetime, had borne other titles.

The title *amira* is associated with particular frequency with the honorific *aġa*. Many an *amira* was the son of an *aġa*. Mgrditch *Amira* Djezayirlian's father was called simply Sarkis *Aġa*;⁴⁰ Varteres *Amira* Tchayents or Tchayian's father was Asduadzadur *Aġa*;⁴¹ and the enumeration could continue. The reverse was also true. Not all the sons of *amiras* were entitled to bear their fathers' title: of the three sons of Shnorhk Mgrditch *Amira* Miridjanian only his second son was called *amira* (Mourad *Amira*), while the youngest was known as Manuel *Aġa*;⁴² of the two sons of Varteres *Amira* Tchayents the older was Hagop *Aġa* while the younger was Baron Stepan;⁴³ Garabed *Amira* Pishmishian's fourth son was named Krikor *Aġa*.⁴⁴ Even the second son of such a well-known *amira* as the founder of the Dadian family, Dad Arakel *Amira*, had no title, while the two other sons were both *amiras*: Simon *Amira* and Hovhannes *Amira* Dadian.⁴⁵

In the official record of the decision to reconstruct St. Stephen's church in Hasköy (Khaskiugh in Armenian), dated May 7, 1830, only one person is named *amira*, Eram (or Yeram) *Amira*, who was to supervise the reconstruction work as "nazir."⁴⁶ The other four wealthy contributors whose names, too, appear in the text of the resolution, and who are called *aġa*.

It is clear that the title *amira* carried greater prestige and higher stature, and implied more wealth and stronger influence than *aġa* or any other title, though in the earlier period especially there is no consistent preference for one title over another. Sources refer to the same person sometimes as *aġa* and sometimes as *amira*: Hovhannes Aznavourian is

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75; the eldest son had no title, and available sources give no explanation.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁴⁵ **Boghosian**, *Dadian Gerdastane*, p. 41.

⁴⁶ **Hagop Varjabedian**, *Hishatakaran Hariuramiay Hobeleani Khasgiughi S[urb] Stepannos Egeghetsvoy 1831-1931* [Memoir of the Centenary of St. Stephen's Church of Khasgiugh (Haskoy) 1831-1931] (Constantinople, 1931), p. 20.