

place in society; the non-Muslim or *zimmi* subject wore a different garment than the one worn by Muslim citizens. In a society where an individual's clothing was an important symbol, such outward trappings implied more than a special care for one's appearance; they gave the person a special status and immediate recognition. The *amira* was neither an ordinary member of the Armenian *millet* nor a simple *zimmi* subject of the sultan; he had a special niche within the Ottoman ruling class. The latter, according to a recent study, was composed of "well under one thousand men" in the eighteenth century.⁶⁶ Placed in this environment and setting, *amiras* did form a sizeable and prestigious social stratum.

Still another mark of their prestige and distinction was their right to ride on a horse and even to possess a retinue of horsemen.⁶⁷ In general, only a Muslim could ride a horse; Christians and Jews could ride and travel only on donkeys or mules.

Less obvious and pompous was the fact that *amiras* were known by their first names, perhaps to stress the title *amira*. Their limited number made such a practice possible. "Djanig *Amira*" meant Simon *Amira* Papazian's son Djanig who had two last names: Papazian, the usual family name, and Simonian, in honor of his famous father.⁶⁸ "Misak *Amira*" referred to Misak Misakian,⁶⁹ "Mikayel *Amira*" to Mikayel Pishmishian,⁷⁰ "Mgrditch *Amira*" or "Shnorhk *Amira*" to Mgrditch Miridjanian,⁷¹ "Eram *Amira*" to Eram Karakehia Terzian,⁷² and many others.

Such was the awe and respect they either inspired or imposed upon the Armenian people they were dealing with that a series of special adjectives was devised to designate them. Starting from the simplest, *gerabadiv* and *hargamedzar* (meaning "superior in honor" and "of honorable dignity"), these terms ranged to *ishkhanazun* ("of princely race") and *aznuazarm* ("of

⁶⁶ Joel Shinder, "Career Line Formation in the Ottoman Bureaucracy, 1648-1750: a New Perspective," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 16 (1973): 236.

⁶⁷ A. Ketchian, *Akn*, p. 226; A. Berberian, *Patmutiun*, p. 203.

⁶⁸ P. Ketchian, *Patmutiun Hivandanotsin*, p. 73.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Asadur, *Polsoy Hayere*, pp. 89 and 91.

⁷² Azadian, *Akn II*, p. 63; see also note 1, p. 59 above.