

they] gradually migrated to Constantinople where they advanced [economically].¹⁰³

In their zeal to elevate the *amiras*, some Armenian writers ascribed to them noble origin, the authentic mark of distinction and respect. These same writers on Akn try first to establish the veracity of the creation and settlement of the town by Armenian *nakharars*, then to prove that a certain family of *amiras* had authentic lineage from a noble dynasty. Historically, the last Ardzruni king of Vaspurakan, Senekerim or Senacherim, left his kingdom to the Byzantine Emperor Basil II in exchange for the city of Sebastia in Cappadocia in 1021.¹⁰⁴ Some of Senekerim's *nakharars* left Sebastia and built the towns of Akn and Arabkir on the edge of the river Euphrates.¹⁰⁵ The *nakharar* dynasties who settled in Akn and the surrounding villages¹⁰⁶ were able to keep the town under their control, in a semiautonomous status for some fifty years, until the Seljuks put an end to Byzantine rule in the region towards the end of the eleventh century. After the Seljuks, the whole area was ruled by the Ak-Koyunlu and Kara-Koyunlu tribal confederations, and eventually by the Ottomans, who occupied it during the reign of *Celebi* Mehmet I (1403-1421).¹⁰⁷

There is no record of the fact that these Armenian *nakharars* held on to their lands and privileges. Furthermore, even if they had somehow survived the earlier periods, they could not continue their status under the Ottomans, for the latter did not permit a non-Muslim feudal lord to enjoy seigniorial rights, except in some specific cases, and even then, only for a short

¹⁰³ **Alexan Papazian**, *Hayots Patmutiun* [Armenian History], reported in **A. Ketchian**, *Akn*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁴ In Sebastia Senekerim established the Kingdom of Sebastia which included, among other towns, Akn, Arapgir and Divrig. The kingdom was probably swept away during the invasion of Seljuk Turks into central Anatolia at the end of the eleventh century. See **Alboyadjian**, *Patmutiun Hay Gaghtakanutean* [History of the Armenian Migration], 3 vols. (Cairo, 1941-1961), 2:507.

¹⁰⁵ **Tchamtchian**, *Patmutiun*, 2:903; **Antoine Jean Saint Martin**, *Mémoire sur l'Arménie*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1819), 1:189; Darkot, "Egin," p. 194.

¹⁰⁶ After the first settlement there was a continuous movement of newcomers from Ani, the Bagratid capital, after the city was seized by the Mongols in 1236. This trickle turned into a flow when the city was ruined from the earthquake of 1319.

¹⁰⁷ **Darkot**, "Egin," p. 195.