

period.<sup>108</sup> Extant Armenian sources make no mention of any special status of the Armenian notables in Akn. Yet nineteenth and twentieth century Armenian writers and historians insist on the noble origins of a number of prominent *amira* families. Such are the cases of the Dadians, the Djezayirlians, the Aznavurians, the Diuzians, the Tcherazians, the Arpiarans or Varians, the Zohrabians, the Bleokhanian-Ardzrunis, the Misakians, the Torosian-Minasian-Aliksanians, the Ashnanians, the Azadians, the Hovian-Hovuians and many others.<sup>109</sup>

Since *nakharars* from Vaspurakan and Ani did settle in Akn it is possible that some of the aforementioned families had noble lineage. An examination of the origin of a few of them might help us to better understand if not solve this problematic issue. The origins of the Dadian family are the most extensively researched and best documented. The family was first called Berozian, Berenk or Berian, in the name of their ancestor Beroz, and later Zadaian, and finally Dadian. The latter was derived from the name of their illustrious ancestor Dad Arakel.<sup>110</sup> At first their claim to noble lineage was based upon a genealogy written by the prelate of Akn in 1758 at the end of a Bible from Darsoun (Tarsus), dated 1212. In this genealogy, the prelate stated that he had investigated the origins of the Dadian family, and that through his conversations with the elderly and the notables of the city, and by his reading of the book of baptisms rescued from a church that had burnt down one hundred years earlier, he was able to trace back the family ancestry to Beroz, a descendant of King Senekerim Ardzruni of Vaspurakan. Beroz had a son, Mihrtad, who was born in 1350. From him the prelates

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<sup>108</sup> In the early period of their rule Ottomans allowed local Christian princes to keep their lands and privileges, provided they would join the Ottoman army in fighting the enemy. But once the Ottomans were firmly established in a region, these feudal lords were asked either to convert to Islam and keep their rights and properties, or remain Christian but give up their feudal privileges and lands. See **Halil Inalcik**, *The Ottoman Empire*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (London, 1973), p. 114.

<sup>109</sup> **A. Ketchian**, *Akn*, pp. 121-305; see note 94, p. 48, above.

<sup>110</sup> **Azadian**, *Akn II*, pp. 4-5; **Alboyadjian**, *Les Dadian*, p. 21; **Boghosian**, *Dadian Gerdastane*, p. 4; **A. Ketchian**, *Akn*, p. 131.