

The most notorious among the numerous such cases of *sarraḡ* downfalls was that of the Diuzians, who, as we have noted, held the twin positions of director of the mint and chief goldsmith. In 1819, after a preliminary investigation of their accounts and activities at the mint, four male members of the family were hanged, while the others, including some women, were banished from the capital to Anatolian cities, and their extensive properties and great -fortune confiscated. This was such a significant event that even the French ambassador reported the hangings and the ensuing confiscations to the Foreign Ministry in Paris.¹²⁸ There is extensive literature on this subject. Suffice it to state that the accusation of flaws in the accounts by the government was not without any foundation, but the extreme punishment does not seem to have been warranted.¹²⁹

Another striking case of the disgrace and impoverishment of an Armenian *sarraḡ* was that of Mgrditch *Amira* Djezayirlian, who was the *sarraḡ* of the Grand Vezir Mustafa Resid Pasha. A short time after Resid Pasha's death (7 January 1858), Mgrditch *Amira*'s properties and wealth, including jewelry, were confiscated (1859) under the pretext that his accounts were to be examined. The investigation never took place, he was left totally destitute and he died a poor man two years later (1 April 1861). Such misfortune as befell Djezayirlian *Amira* was not as frequent and ominous as the change of grand vezirs, yet it did happen intermittently. In 1832, three prominent

¹²⁸ *Archives des Affaires Etrangères*, Paris, Correspondence Diplomatique, Turquie, vol. 232 (July 1819 - December 1820), p. 108.

¹²⁹ To mention a few sources on the subject: **Arsen Pakraduni**, *Azgabanutiun ev Patmutiun Nshannavor Antsits Aznuazarm Tann Diuzeants* [Genealogy and History of Major Events of the Noble Diuzian Dynasty] (1856, MS, Mekhitarist Library, Venice); **MacFarlane**, *Constantinople*, 2:143-144; **Menevishian**, *Diuzeants*, pp. 28-33; **Ayvazovski**, *Osmanean Petutean*, 2:519; **Ormanian**, *Azgapatum*, 2:3452-3455.

According to the sources cited, the culprit was Halet Efendi who, as Grand Vezir, exerted great influence over Mahmud II, as well as Halet's Jewish *sarraḡ* Yehazkel (see **M. Franco**, *Essai sur l'Histoire des Israelites de l'Empire Ottoman* (Paris, 1897), p. 133) whom Armenian sources call Khesgel. Halet replaced the 'amil of the mint, Abdülrahman Bey, friendly with the Diuzians with his own collaborator Hayrullah Efendi. The latter investigated the accounts of the mint and found discrepancies. The Diuzians had made many loans; moreover, they had lavishly spent money from the mint. They were given no opportunity to collect the loans they had made, nor to get loans from friends to repay the money missing in the accounts; they were forced to sign confessions of embezzlement and were immediately hanged. Eventually Halet Efendi was removed from office and beheaded. His Jewish *sarraḡ* was saved from certain death thanks to the intercession of Bezdjian *Amira*.