

amiras, Maksud *Amira* Sarimian, the brothers Djanig *Amira* and Khntir *Amira* Papazian, faced imminent hanging but were saved thanks to the intervention of well-placed friends in the government.

It would be erroneous to deduce or assume from the few incidents described and many similar ones not recounted here that the government had any planned policy directed against the Armenian *sarrafs*. The imprisonments and executions were “normal” consequence of Ottoman political vicissitudes. If the pashas, some of them former grand vezirs, could be hanged or decapitated, the Armenian *sarrafs*, as *zimmis*, would be just as liable to such a fate. In other words, there is no evidence that throughout this period the Ottoman government pursued any deliberate policy inimical to *sarrafs* in general, and to Armenian *sarrafs* and wealthy *amiras*, in particular.

On the contrary, the Armenian *sarrafs* were so well integrated into the Ottoman system that they enjoyed the confidence and trust of not only the pashas but the sultan himself. Maksud *Amira* Sarimian is reported to have been a “special scribe” of Mahmud II in the 1820s.¹³⁰ Abdülmecid dined twice at Garabed *Çelebi* Diuzian’s house and once brought with him the *valide sultan*, *i.e.*, the queen mother.¹³¹ He also visited Garabed’s nephew, Mihran *Çelebi* Diuzian at the latter’s house.¹³² Similarly the sultan paid many visits to the Dadians, and once stayed over at Boghos *Amira* Dadian’s house at Ay Stefano for four days.¹³³

The close relations that developed between Mahmud II and Harutiun *Amira* Bezdjian remained unparalleled. Bezdjian *Amira*, known also as Kazez Artin, became a companion, confidant and a counselor of the sultan. The ties of friendship were so close that many anecdotes were told about them. Kazez Artin was a frequent visitor at the palace. When he fell ill the sultan visited him at his rather modest house at Yenikapu. To be closer to the palace, he was moved to Ortaköy. And when he died his casket was put in a

¹³⁰ **Zartarian**, *Hishatakaran*, p. 28.

¹³¹ **Menevishian**, *Diuzeants*, p. 41.

¹³² **Pakraduni**, *Azgapanutiun Diuzeants*, p. 2.

¹³³ **A. Ketchian**, *Akn*, p. 138.