

a goldsmith. The circumstances surrounding the appointment of Sarkis Diuzian (d. 1721), a descendant of Harutian, as palace goldsmith, are not clear. What is known is the fact that Sarkis was very skilled in his profession. His descendants continued to serve the palace in the same capacity, becoming *kuyumcubaşı*, chief goldsmith in the interim until Mikayel got the appointment to the mint. Thus Mikayel was able to combine in his person two positions: *kuyumcubaşı* and *darphane emini*, chief goldsmith and director of the mint. Both positions were kept in the family on a hereditary basis, either in one person or among different members. By this time the mint contained a special plant where the Armenian goldsmiths worked on gold and silver.⁴¹

In 1819, the family was disgraced, four of its male members hanged and the others driven to exile, and the control of the mint was entrusted to Harutian *Amira* Bezdjian, who was, however, a former employee and protégé of the Diuzians. From 1819 to 1832 Bezdjian kept the directorship of the mint, except for a short interval in 1820, when he too was exiled for a year. During that period still another Armenian *sarraf*, Boghos Bilezigdjian, was put in charge of the institution.⁴²

In addition to the money they made in goldsmithing and at the mint, the Diuzians were involved in banking activities as well. In 1802 Hovhannes *Çelebi* Diuzian obtained the right to collect customs duties on silk.⁴³ Another member of the family, Hagop *Çelebi*, showed interest in industry and built a large paper mill in Izmir in the 1840s.⁴⁴

The Diuzians brought improvements in the management and efficiency in the operation of the mint. Mikayel is reported to have invented a new method to polish gold, a closely guarded secret, used only in the mint until 1830, when apparently the secret was given out. Mikayel minted a new

⁴¹ In addition to the section for the goldsmiths, the mint served as a depository for the keeping of the jewelry of the sultan and his household, the jewelry of the *valide sultan*, i.e. the sultan's mother. It also contained a treasury for the payment of royal expenditures, a bureau for securities or guarantees, and a safe for royal stamps. See "Kostandnupolsoy Pogheranotse" ["The Mint of Constantinople"], *Bazmaveb*, 1 December 1847, p. 363.

⁴² **A. Berberian**, *Patmutiun*, p. 170.

⁴³ See note 28, p. 65.

⁴⁴ **Menevishian**, *Diuzeants*, p. 37.