

subject could enter into the *sarraflık* trade with a small or large capital after obtaining the necessary *berat*, permission, paying a certain fee; he would then join the guild of the *sarrafs*. Once the official permission was granted, the *sarrafa* could lend money to anybody according to prevailing laws and regulations, as well as customs, but those wishing to enter into governmental transactions had to obtain a special license. The *sarrafs* licensed by the state were *kuyruklu*, literally “with tail,” meaning privileged or licensed.³ These were granted the permission to work with the state treasury, and were, therefore, treasury *sarrafs* (*hazine sarrafları*).⁴

These *sarrafs* played a pivotal role in the *iltizam* system of taxation. The main function of the system was to guarantee income to the state treasury through the collection of taxes. At first taxes were collected only from imperial lands, in Ottoman terminology *havass-i hümayan*.⁵ The system, however, grew from year to year, and by the eighteenth century many kinds of taxes were collected throughout the empire.⁶

Turkish pashas, known as *mültezim*, entered into contractual obligation with the state treasury, bidding for the right to collect taxes in the provinces. This system allowed the state treasury to acquire most of the taxes to be collected long before the tax collectors were in the field. Moreover, peasants frequently paid in kind and there was a necessary period of waiting before this could be translated into its cash equivalent. The right to collect taxes was sold at auction and the highest bidder was granted permission for the collection of taxes in a province. To guarantee payment of the sum that was bid, the state treasury required the *mültezim* to present the security of a *sarrafa*, for the successful bidder had to deposit the amount agreed upon either immediately or in installments. To gain the financial support of a

Joghovurdneri Masin [Turkish Sources About Armenia, Armenians and the Other People of Transcaucasia] 2 vols. (Erevan, 1961-64), 1:237-243, 300-302.

³ **Pakalin**, *Deyimleri*, 1:79-3 S. V. “Hazine Sarrafları.”

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:57-53; **Mehmet Genc**, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Malikane Sistemi* [The Malikane System in Ottoman Finance], ed. Osman Okyar, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri* [Seminar on the Economic History of Turkey] (Ankara, 1975), pp. 232-235; **DuVelay**, *Essai*, pp. 2-81.

⁶ For a cursory study of the history of the *iltizam* system and the various taxes collected see **Pakalin**, *Deyimleri*, 2:57-58 s.v. “İltizam.”