

was to find an Armenian *sarraf* to finance the purchase of “his outfit of daggers, pistols, shawls, and all the other indispensables of a pasha.”²²

The *sarrafs* enjoyed such “unlimited confidence” that they were “never asked for an account... even for an acknowledgment of the money which passed through their hands.”²³ The close working relationship between the Turkish pasha and the Armenian *sarraf* would create friendship and trust in each other. This relationship was based mainly on mutual interest; more often than not, it turned into enduring, lifelong loyalty and friendship. There are many eyewitness accounts and much factual evidence to support such a view of the *sarraf*'s relations with the *mültezim*. An early nineteenth century Armenian chronicler recorded: “In these days (in 1809) the one-eyed Yusuf Pasha came to Sebastia on his way to Constantinople [where he was appointed] Grand Vezir. Along with him came his *sarraf mahdesi* Kasbar *Amira* of Mashkert.”²⁴ Another illustration of the personal ties between a Turkish pasha and an Armenian *sarraf* is the friendship between Çıblak Hüseyin Pasha and Dakes *Amira*. The latter helped Hüseyin Pasha financially when he was removed from office by Sultan Selim III (1788-1807). In recompense when the pasha was appointed Grand Vezir later on, he not only kept Dakes *Amira* as his official *sarraf* but secretly brought his family from Akn to Istanbul to surprise him.²⁵ The fortunes of the Armenian *sarraf* consequently rose and fell with those of his pasha. The *sarraf* had much to gain from the elevation of his pasha, and to that end he would “even contribute to [the pasha's] nomination to be Grand Vezir.”²⁶ Along with its advantages, such a relationship naturally had its pitfalls, as we shall see later in this chapter.

As the *iltizam* tax-farming system grew both in terms of the kinds of taxes collected and the areas under the system's jurisdiction, the *sarrafs* took on a more important and greater role. The state was actually “borrowing

²² Walsh, *Residence*, 2:430.

²³ Ubicini, *Lettres*, 2:315.

²⁴ Hovhannes Sebastatsi, *Patmutiun Sebastioy* [History of Sebastia], ed. B. L. Tchugaszian (Erevan, 1974), p. 115.

²⁵ Toros Azadian, *Akn* (Istanbul, 1956), p. 87. The pasha, after his elevation to grand vezirate, secretly brought the Armenian *sarraf*'s family from Akn to Istanbul, settled them in a large house and took his friend for a casual visit there.

²⁶ Urquhart, *Turkey*, p. 109.