

responsibility, he enjoyed complete jurisdiction over the Armenian *millet*, that is over its religious, charitable and educational institutions. Within the patriarchal premises, he had his own court and prison, where he could try all cases except those involving “public security and crime.” The Patriarch wielded such power that

a note from him to the Porte was quite sufficient ... to procure the banishment of any individual, whether an ecclesiastic or layman, the mere word of the Patriarch being taken as sufficient to establish the guilt of the accused.⁴³

Because of this power over their lives, people dreaded the Patriarch, as an eyewitness vividly put it:

In those days the name of the patriarch caused terror in the capital, when the bailiff came to an Armenian and said ‘the *vekil* Holy Father would like to see you,’ the man was so petrified that his saliva dried in his mouth. Then the bailiff pulled the man by a big chain around his neck through the streets like a bull-dog and took him to the Patriarchate. No one dared to interfere. At the Patriarchate the *vekil*, with whom no one could joke, told the man to lie down on his stomach, and personally delivered twenty-five to thirty lashes on his back.⁴⁴

Finally, the Patriarch, as *milletbaşı*, was granted many privileges, such as the right to own properties, to be exempt from taxation, along with the fifteen members of his staff, and to appoint tax collectors for the collection of state taxes from members of his *millet*, since he was personally responsible for the payment of his *millet*’s tax which amounted to one hundred thousand *akçe*.

As in the case of secular matters, the Patriarch exercised total control over the clergy. He was empowered by church custom to appoint and to remove clerics from office, and by the sultan’s *ferman* to exile and to imprison clerics at all the levels of ecclesiastical hierarchy, from the deacon to the highest ranking bishop. Furthermore, the *katholikoi* of Sis (Cilicia) and Aghtamar were subordinate to him in administrative matters, even though

⁴³ H. G. O. Dwight, *Christianity in Turkey* (London, 1854), p. 84.

⁴⁴ Iutiudjian, “Hishatakner,” p. 163.