

from the *sarrafs*,²⁷ using taxes that were to be collected as collateral. The immediate and major concern of the state was the availability of cash provided by the loans. Thus, financing the daily operations of the Ottoman Empire became a tripartite affair, bringing the *sarrafs* into ever more direct contact with the Ottoman state itself.

Under the *iltizam* system it was invariably the *mültezim* who collected taxes in the provinces as representatives of the government, but Armenian *sarrafs* were given full and direct responsibility in the collection of customs duties. While it is not clear why the *sarrafs* could collect duties but not taxes, a partial explanation of this phenomenon may lie in the fact that the collection of duties by Armenian *sarrafs* was limited to major ports such as Istanbul, Izmir, and such major commercial centers as Aleppo and Erzurum. To cite but two instances: in 1802 Hovhannes *Çelebi* Diuzian had acquired the right to collect customs duties on silk,²⁸ and in 1847, a company headed by Mgrditch *Amira* Djezayirlian and Maksud *Amira* Sarimian was granted permission to collect import duties at ports in Istanbul and Izmir.²⁹

Other *sarrafs* were jewelers and goldsmiths. In this capacity they served the palace, providing members of the sultan's family with jewelry. The *kuyumcu*, i.e. "goldsmith," *sarraf* had to have the capital as well as the knowledge necessary for the profession. According to a Turkish historian, the *kuyumcubaşı*, chief goldsmith, and all the goldsmith *sarrafs* were Armenian.³⁰ Most of these *sarrafs* had goldsmiths work for them. In some provinces, goldsmithing was a special trade with hundreds of years of tradition and many professional secrets. A case in point is goldsmithing in the city and province of Van. According to one source, the profession had seven subdivisions, each with its specific task.³¹ Much the same was true in Divrig, a town near Sebastia, where goldsmithing among Armenians was a highly developed and specialized craft. The specialty of the trade in Divrig lay in the sec-

²⁷ Pakalin, *Deyimleri*, 1:793.

²⁸ Endarsak Oratsoyts, 1900, p. 141; Zartarian, *Hishatakaran*, p. 138.

²⁹ Arshaloys Araratean (Izmir), 10 January 1847, p. 3.

³⁰ Pakalin, *Deyimleri*, 2:334, s.v. "Kuyumicubaşı."

³¹ Haygag Gosoian, "Vasporakani Hay Joghovrdakan Mi Kani Dohmik Arhestneri Masin," ["About A Few Native Armenian Crafts of the Armenians of Vasporakan"].- *Varag* (Teaneck, New Jersey) 58 (July 1967): 24.