

ret formula of mixing gold with an alloy without leaving any impression of impurity or admixture. This apparently improved the quality of the gold without degrading it in value or in appearance. Those who knew the secret formula were called *küliçeci*,³² a slang word meaning mixer or caster.³³ In Istanbul, these skilled goldsmiths worked as craftsmen and sometimes as *sarrafs*.³⁴

Among the Armenian *sarrafs* who began as skilled artisans, no position was of great or even equal importance for the function and financial well-being of the Ottoman state than the management of operation of the state mint. In order to evaluate the function and role of these Armenian *sarrafs* more effectively, a concise description of the organizational structure of the mint seems warranted.

Like the other revenue-producing enterprises, the income of the mint was farmed out at auction. As in the case of provinces, here too the successful contractor, called *'amil*, had to make payments to the state treasury in one lump sum or in regular installments.³⁵ Although the *'amil*, the intendent of finance or collector of revenues,³⁶ was responsible for the collection of inco-

³² *Küliçeci* is a Turkish word of provincial usage. Neither Ottoman nor modern Turkish dictionaries mention the word. The closest is the word *küliçe* meaning “a round flat cake of cast metal, wax, etc.” in *Redhouse Turkish-English Lexicon* (Istanbul, 1921), p. 1600.

³³ **Zartarian**, *Hishatakaran*, p. 123; this was first reported by Aram Andonian in an article in *Loys*, 1908, no. 10.

³⁴ See article by **Hovhannes Der Bedrosian**, “Hayeru Sadare Turk Mshakoytin ev Tntesutean” [“The Contribution of Armenians to Turkish Culture and Economy”], *Arev* (Cairo), 29 November 1976, p. 3.

³⁵ *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Dar al-Darb,” by **Halil Inalcik** (hereafter cited as EI²).

³⁶ There is confusion about the terms *emin* (a) and *'amil* (b). Uzunçarşılı and Pakalin consider the *darphane emini* the official who was appointed yearly and whose function was the collection of revenues from the mint. (See **Ismail Hakki Uzunçarşılı**, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilatı* [The Palace Organization of the Ottoman State] (Ankara, 1945), p. 386; **Pakalin**, *Deyimleri*, 1:396.) For **Halil Inalcik** (see note 35 above), it was the *'amil* who occupied that position and fulfilled the function; the *'amil* had assistants, called *emin* and *wekil*. **Inalcik** states that the operation of the mint was in the hands of state-appointed employees, named “*emin* or *nazir*, who had its [the mint’s] supervision.”

While the first two consider the *sahib-i 'ayar* (or *'ayyar*) the official responsible for all legal and technical aspects of the mint, Inalcik ascribes to him the position of director too.

To avoid such confusion in usage of the two terms, the Diuzians are called directors of the mint, refraining from the use of any Ottoman term.

(a) *emin*: Ott. hist. superintendent, head of a department, p. 338;