

(i.e., mids or sacks) to weight (i.e., kantars) is used to estimate the weight, in order to assess gibaana. Then a standardized estimate of the crop's value⁷¹ is used to calculate 9ushuur. Because the taxes are determined in this case by estimations rather than precise measurements this system is termed shiishna (estimation).

The Mizaan System

Report No. 1 described in some detail the operation of the mizaan system at Abu Haraz crop market. The following reiterates and develops that discussion: The market place is open the year around, but crops are mainly sold between October and April. There are eleven local merchants who regularly buy crops at Abu Haraz; they all live in the village. However, the sales are usually dominated by four merchants who have capital and are agents of a crop buying agency based in el-Obeid which has a long history of relationship with the Abu Haraz area.⁷² Prices of crops are determined in a round-robin auction in which participation is limited to those merchants who have obtained a crop buyer's permit from the People's District Council.⁷³ The auction is managed by the kaatib as-suug (market clerk). He starts the bid by setting a basement price and then each merchant in turn is allowed to increase the bid or to pass. Below are the results of an auction that occurred at Abu Haraz market on January 15, 1982. Only four merchants participated in the auction.

Table 24. Results of a Crop Auction at Abu Haraz

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Start Bid</u>	<u>Final Bid</u>	<u>Buyer^a</u>
Groundnuts	1	8.76	7.000	8.350	Ibrahim
	2 ^b	6.27	-	-	Ibrahim
Sesame	1	23.40	15.000	17.450	Abdel-Rahman
	2 ^c	52.42	17.300	17.450	Abdel-Rahman
Gum	1	38.73	18.000	19.400	Muhammad
	2	50.83	19.250	19.450	el-Taj
	3	89.32	19.300	19.450	Abdel-Rahman
Karkadee	1	0.86	27.000	28.050	Ibrahim

^aThe names are fictitious.

^bThis lot was completed late. No bids were taken on it and it was added to Ibrahim's other lot of groundnuts.

^cThis lot was completed late. It was bid on separately and bought.

⁷¹This value is set at the beginning of the market season by the People's District Council.

⁷²One of the two flour mills in Abu Haraz is owned by the family who owns the crop agency. This family also owns several of the commercial buildings in the village.

⁷³To obtain this permit the applicant must be recommended by one of the big merchants registered at the el-Obeid Crop Market. This makes the village merchant the agent (wakiil) of the big merchant. However, this arrangement does not obligate the village merchant to sell to the big merchant even though he buys crops at the branch market in the big merchant's name. The permit to participate in a branch market auction does not require a fee to be paid.