

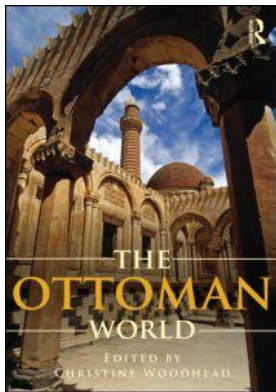
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The Ottoman World

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

SUBJECT TO THE
SULTAN'S APPROVALSeventeenth- and eighteenth-century artisans
negotiating guild agreements in Istanbul—♦—
Suraiya Faroqhi

Ottoman non-elites and their daily lives entered the historiography of the twentieth century quite late, apart perhaps from long-distance traders, the most privileged members of this milieu. However, historians of the twenty-first century are ready to make up for lost time; after a long period of neglect, Ottoman craftsmen and occasionally even craftswomen have come in for a share of attention. Before the 1980s they had appeared but seldom even in urban histories, although as notable exceptions we might mention the work of Fahri Dalsar on Bursa, Robert Mantran on Istanbul and André Raymond on Cairo.¹

But, in recent years, individual men, women and families have attracted the attention of historians, and micro-history has become a recognized part of Ottomanist historical production.² As has long been the case in European history of the later Middle Ages and the early modern period, Ottomanist researchers have come to focus on the manner in which artisans related to one another. By analysing a particular instance of such relationships, namely the manner in which guildsmen 'checked up' on one another, scholars have tried to gauge the extent of guild autonomy. Viewing this issue from a different perspective, however, we can also discern how, by observing one another and bringing deviant behaviour to the attention of the authorities, guildsmen functioned as cogs in the machinery of social and political control. Put differently: when artisans enforced guild rules, they also facilitated the work of the officially instituted market inspector (*muhtesib*).³ But we have learned, too, that there were always some craftsmen who managed to increase the volume of their business by 'working around' the regulations that, in principle, should have circumscribed their every move.⁴

Moreover, artisan guilds, which until about twenty years ago were regarded as organizations constraining artisan activities in a manner that remained more or less unchanged from around 1500 to the mid-nineteenth century, are now understood to have had a history of their own. In addition, guilds in Sarajevo, Damascus or Istanbul operated in ways peculiar to the town or city in which their members lived and worked: within the broad framework of Ottoman imperial practices there was considerable room for variation. We now know that, in the early 1600s, both in Bursa and Istanbul, it was fairly easy to enter or leave a craft organization. At least in the former

city, paying one's taxes together with a given guild sufficed to qualify a man as an artisan member in good standing.⁵ Or, by entering into the right partnerships with people from other guilds, an artisan might take on jobs which normally were the province of a different set of craftsmen.⁶ By the second half of the eighteenth century, however, in many if not most trades a master had to have acquired a 'slot' (*gedik*). Only after he had taken possession of such a 'bundle of rights and obligations' could he exercise his specialty, usually in a predetermined place but sometimes in a locale of his own choosing.⁷ Masters now frequently exercised minute control over their fellows, and those who did not conform might even risk losing their rights to live in the capital at all.

But these negative constraints often were balanced by positive measures of mutual support. In Bursa and other places in the eighteenth century, guilds set up foundations that provided low-interest credit to artisans and often also helped finance the common meals and picnics that must have contributed significantly to the formation of social solidarities.⁸ Thus, in terms of organizational cohesion, Ottoman guilds reached their apogee in the late 1700s and early 1800s, just before dissolution began in the second half of the nineteenth century.

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

The capital as the empire's marketplace

Istanbul artisans did not live and produce in a socio-political vacuum. However, the context in which they acted was mainly local, as very few of their products went to customers in the provinces or abroad. In terms of bulk, the demand of their fellow urbanites for articles of everyday consumption, such as bread, grape syrup, yoghurt, rough cloaks and shoes, must have made up by far the largest share of the production of Istanbul craftsmen. Istanbul has been aptly described as the 'capital and belly' of the whole empire.⁹

Yet even the production of everyday goods would not have been feasible if the sultans and their administration had not resided in Istanbul. In essence, the city's artisans, though moderately endowed with worldly goods and often downright poor or even miserable, depended for their remuneration on funds contributed by the provinces. It was the taxes paid by provincials that permitted the Ottoman elite to purchase craft products, and on account of a 'trickle-down' effect, provincial tax revenues found their way at least partly into the purses of Istanbul craftsmen. In turn, these people and their labourers used their earnings to buy bread, floor coverings, prayer rugs, shoes and other articles of ordinary consumption.

Moreover, part of the capital's population served the sultans directly. Admittedly, the ruler's court was often a poor paymaster. But, on the other hand, artisans who specialized in luxury crafts, such as fine bookbinding, the manufacture of articles adorned with inlays of ivory and precious woods, or else the manufacture of silks and brocades, all depended to a considerable extent on palace custom. In addition the palace provided many of its employees with basic clothes and foodstuffs: therefore official purchases by no means involved only items of superior quality.

High dignitaries supplemented palace demand; the goods bought by vezirs and the princesses to whom they were often married may have been somewhat less costly than

those demanded for the sultans' use. But these elite households made up in quantity for the perhaps slightly lower quality of their purchases. Dignitaries active in the capital belonged to a socio-political category known as the sultans' servitors, the *askeri*; at least in the seventeenth century these people kept their distance from the ordinary taxpayers known as the *reaya*, or 'flock', which the elite claimed to protect but which they certainly 'milked and sheared' as well. By the 1700s this old division began to lose some of its sharpness, but it would be an exaggeration to claim that even by this time the privileges of the *askeri* had completely disappeared.

Some members of the Ottoman elite, such as vezirs or top-level religious scholars, might be very wealthy. High-level dignitaries typically needed to provide for large numbers of people. A well-appointed household, whose members the head could mobilize when sent to govern a province or serve as an officer on campaign or as a judge in a large provincial city, was often a prerequisite for high office. Retainers had to be clothed and fed and often enough supplied with arms as well. While household heads and their relatives demanded silks and brocades in addition to winter garments lined with costly furs, rough woollens and leather more or less protected the guards and servitors employed in their households from the cold humid winds of the Istanbul winter. As a result, the capital's craftsmen – and occasionally craftswomen – got to cater for a clientele that was not only huge but also extremely diverse, even within the *askeri* sector.

Askeris of more modest status included officials employed in the main naval arsenal of Kasımpaşa, a populous neighbourhood near the Golden Horn. A large number of janissaries were permanently stationed in the barracks of Etmeydanı, near today's Aksaray in the middle of the downtown area, and in the immediate vicinity of the sultan's palace as well. In addition, the city housed the offices of the central administration with its scribes and accountants. For the most part these people should have demanded goods of medium to modest quality. Nevertheless, once again this market owed its entire existence to the fact that the empire was administered from Istanbul.

Even wealthy non-*askeris* such as merchants specializing in interregional and 'inter-empire' trade, who must themselves have been in the market for at least some high-quality goods, often owed their resources to the fact that Istanbul was the capital, and its denizens demanded items that would not have found many buyers in provincial towns. Because of the significance of this 'politically determined' demand, Istanbul's craftsmen revolted when towards the end of the seventeenth century the long-term residence of the sultans in Edirne made them suspect that the capital might formally be transferred to that city. When Ahmed III (1703–30) followed his brother on the Ottoman throne, he therefore had to promise that, from now on, he would reside in Istanbul on a permanent basis.¹⁰

However, Istanbul artisans did not monopolize the local market: provincial manufacturers, especially those from the empire's core territories, competed with their colleagues at the seat of Ottoman government. When in late 1589 the Moroccan ambassador al-Tamghrūtī visited Istanbul, this wealth of goods greatly impressed him; he added that many inhabitants of the city had a perhaps excessive concern with making money. According to a mid-seventeenth-century Ottoman price register, the markets of the capital also were full of the cottons and leathers of Manisa, the woollens of Salonika, the carpets of Uşak and the silks of Bursa or Damascus.¹¹ Nor was the abundance of provincial products a matter of chance: after all, the inhabitants of the provinces

every year sent large quantities of silver to Istanbul in form of taxes and needed to ‘earn back’ some of this coin so that, next year, they could continue to pay their dues.¹² If they did not want to lose out against provincial competitors, Istanbul manufacturers thus needed to provide goods that were comparable both in quality and price.

But at least all artisans supplying the capital were able to count on the custom of a large population. For, by the standards of the period studied here, Istanbul was an enormous conurbation. Admittedly for our period we have no official counts, just more or less realistic estimates by travellers. At the very end of the eighteenth century, the French doctor Antoine Olivier suggested a figure of half a million for the city *intra muros* – in other words, the triangle enclosed by the Byzantine walls – in addition to the suburbs. As for the latter, they should have included Üsküdar, Eyüp, Galata and a number of villages along the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn.¹³ A scholar who recently has examined a series of fragmentary official counts has concluded that, by the year 1829, the same area held a population of about 420,000 men and women.¹⁴ In the seventeenth century the figure may have been somewhat lower, as the Bosphorus villages mainly became attached to Istanbul in the course of the eighteenth century. Throughout, population must have been highly variable: the numerous plague epidemics of the times killed off many people, but immigration, both legal and clandestine, must have filled the gaps, often in fairly short order.

Government demands

While Istanbul artisans were thus intimately concerned with the urban market, this was certainly not a place where supply and demand were permitted free rein. The Ottoman administration was a firm believer in price-fixing, and artisans generally could count on only a very modest margin of profit: 10 per cent was the norm, with 20 per cent allowed in exceptional cases.¹⁵ It is hard to say to what extent these figures are realistic: for, if an artisan worked with cheap inputs, we may wonder whether a 10 to 20 per cent profit sufficed to feed his family, keep up his inventory and pay his taxes. Presumably in some cases artisan wives added something to the family budget. In 1720, blacksmiths working for the naval arsenal in Kasımpaşa declared that they could not continue their work unless their wives were permitted to sell *paça*, cooked sheep’s trotters that consumers typically purchased ready-made. A guild of *paçacı*s had protested against this competition, but the needs of the naval arsenal always came first.¹⁶

Occasionally we hear of certain artisans who refused to work for the low pay offered on the sultans’ projects. In the 1580s, after a major devaluation of the currency, workmen on an officially sponsored construction site expressed their discontent through collective action of this kind. Officials must have recognized that the site would remain abandoned unless they increased the daily wage: the two sultanlic commands concerning this affair record such a concession. But, presumably even then, the wage offered was not too generous, for one of the documents concludes with the threat that builders refusing to work at the new rate should expect exemplary punishment.¹⁷ Even so, some of the workmen evidently were not willing to accept the wages offered. We do not have many other documents recording pre-nineteenth-century work stoppages: whether such events were in fact rare or whether officials merely chose to not record them must remain an open question.

In wartime, moreover, certain Istanbul artisans were needed to serve the sultan's armies and navy in person. Craftsmen skilled in the building and outfitting of ships who worked for private patrons in peacetime were a major target for recruitment; at least in the later 1600s, they supplemented the relatively small workforce that ran the naval arsenal in peacetime.¹⁸ Rowers for the galleys continued to be important in Mediterranean warfare well into the seventeenth century and sometimes beyond. Certain guilds thus were saddled with the obligation to supply rowers to the sultan's fleet. Among them were the boatmen who ferried people up and down the Bosphorus and across the Golden Horn: the latter were numerous, for the first bridge appeared only in the mid-1800s. Tavern-keepers also had to supply rowers. Presumably their service was not due to any special skills, but because the administration regarded tavern-keepers as part of the city's riff-raff. Rowing galleys was hard work and dangerous to boot; caught in the holds of the ships and sometimes chained, rowers were more at risk than any other category of sailors. Thus, in spite of the privileges that came with residence in the capital, many Istanbul artisans thus lived lives full of toil and trouble.

THE SOURCES

Istanbul is especially attractive to the historian of artisans, because large numbers of craftspeople were active in the city and the Ottoman administration took a close interest in all matters connected to its capital. We therefore possess a significant number of documents, many more than for other Ottoman cities apart, perhaps, from Cairo. Some of this material was compiled by the bureaucrats of the *baş muhasebe* (chief accountancy office), instituted already in the 1600s, but which became much more active and visible in the eighteenth century. While the *baş muhasebe* was to audit all expenditures made by the central administration,¹⁹ its registers contained information about quite a few matters that bore at most an indirect relation to auditing. Documents concerning tax farms also shed light on the problems of certain Ottoman crafts.²⁰

However, the language of these records differed significantly from the everyday Turkish in which the majority of craftsmen must have voiced their concerns – if indeed they expressed themselves in this language. For many artisans spoke Greek, Armenian or Ladino, the Judeo-Spanish that, after 1492, Spanish Jews driven out of the Iberian peninsula by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had brought to the sultans' capital. Non-Muslim artisans often must have relied on translators, and inevitably this intervention caused the statements of these craftsmen to be even more vigorously 'edited' than those that had originally been made in Ottoman Turkish. We thus cannot expect to hear any artisan 'voices' of the 1600s and 1700s without mediation. No diaries or letters from this period written by craftsmen have yet been found, and, while some writings of this type may yet surface, at present we must limit ourselves to what Ottoman scribes saw fit to record.

While the archives thus offer us a fairly broad source basis, for the most part this material reflects the preoccupations of the state elite. The registers of the *kadis*, for instance, of which a few samples are now available and which contain significant collections of documents relevant to Istanbul artisans, are written in the 'legalese' favoured by the scribes.²¹ Officials working for the central administration authored many further documents concerning artisan affairs, and were also much concerned with conformity to 'proper' stylistic patterns.²² Thus in the mid-eighteenth century

no mention of a newly enthroned sultan would have been complete without a reference to the ‘august good fortune’ of this event, even if the matter at issue was a dispute over the types of shoes that a given guild of shoemakers was – or was not – permitted to manufacture.

What is the connection between the enthronement of a sultan and such a ‘border dispute’ between guilds? Many quarrels doubtless were solved by oral agreements between guild masters, with at most the market inspector intervening. In such cases there was little reason to put the matter in writing. If the guildsmen needed official confirmation, they could apply to the *kadi*’s court, which in certain respects operated rather like the office of a notary public. Here the scribes, presumably against payment of a fee, would record the agreement and the names of the contracting parties in their registers. For the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, the agreements about which we have information all come from this source, apart from a few chance finds in the different chancery registers of the central administration.²³

But, especially from the mid-1700s onwards, many guilds applied for and received sultanic confirmations for inter-guild – and occasionally intra-guild – arrangements. Mostly these regulations governed relations between craft organizations that either produced similar wares or else needed to work together because they were involved in a single process of manufacturing. Thus a number of guilds organized the makers of different kinds of shoes, slippers and boots, and occasionally the members had to determine, not always amicably, who was to make what. At the same time, shoemakers worked different types of leather that tanners had previously manufactured from skins and hides which, in their turn, they had bought from the city’s butchers. Such chains of purchasing raw and semi-finished materials were liable to cause disputes as well.

Once regulations had been officially confirmed, they were known as *nizam*. While the rules at issue were often short and simple, the documents that gave them official validity were lengthy and convoluted, in the style favored by officialdom.²⁴ Being sultanic commands, the *nizams* were valid only for the reign of the ruler who had issued them. Once this latter personage was no longer on the throne, the craftsmen who wanted the old regulations confirmed had to apply for a document issued by the new ruler. This regulation already existed in the sixteenth century, but only in the 1700s did officialdom produce special registers containing only the official commands submitted to the new ruler and approved by him. While many edicts were in fact confirmed over decades, and indeed centuries – conforming to tradition was an important value in Ottoman statecraft²⁵ – no sultan was bound by the regulations of his predecessor.

Quite possibly the officials who served the newly enthroned sultan disapproved of certain *nizams* and made sure that they were not confirmed. In other cases, artisans probably argued with one another over the question of whether or not they should seek confirmation. After all, any regulation would have benefited particular artisans and hampered the businesses of others. But when and if the ruler refused confirmation, or else the guildsmen preferred not to seek it, the scribes apparently made no record of this fact. Therefore we can only assume that such cases may have occurred, but we have no way of analysing them.

Our discussion will be based on documents found in the register of commands issued by Osman III (1754–7), recently deceased, and confirmed by his successor, Mustafa III (1757–74). Most of these texts are *nizams*: but we also have an

interesting case in which a regulation had not as yet received official confirmation, although at least a number of guildsmen wanted this to happen and applied for the relevant sultanic document.²⁶ The items treated here are only a small selection of the texts concerning artisans in this large and informative register. They have been selected because they throw some light on the manner in which eighteenth-century guilds negotiated agreements and also because they let us see some of the considerations which might affect the outcome.

HOW A *NIZAM* WAS NEGOTIATED: BEATING THE COMPETITION

We will begin with negotiations involving the grocers (*bakkal*), whose shops, as the ancestors of supermarkets and hyper-markets, must have supplied the foodstuffs and basic notions that the inhabitants of the capital needed every day. For the time being, only the *nizams* of the Galata and Üsküdar grocers have emerged, although quite obviously the city *intra muros* and the nearby town of Eyüp possessed similar agreements.²⁷ In Üsküdar, sixty-two recognized grocers had set up shop, and more recently the town quarter of İhsaniye had emerged as a nucleus of dense settlement, bringing the number up to sixty-four.²⁸

The text concerning Galata contains more detailed information, probably because many more grocers tried to make a living in this commercialized area. Furthermore, Galata contained what might be called Istanbul's 'factory districts', namely the cannon foundry known as Tophane as well as the naval arsenal of Kasımpaşa.²⁹ The labourers employed in these workplaces probably patronized grocers' shops either during breaks or before they returned home in the evenings. According to the *nizam*, this concentrated population permitted 265 grocers to make a living.

However, according to a pattern well known from earlier and later years, these shopkeepers had serious competitors whose 'nefariousness' they denounced in no uncertain terms: 'in corners, on the borders [of the settled area] and in/between town quarters', people who had not provided the proper guarantors had set up illegal grocer's shops.³⁰ When such an 'intruder' defaulted on his payments to a wholesaler, the latter had no recourse and, after such an experience, tended to distrust all other grocers as well. We may assume that the guildsmen, having little capital, often needed credit from their wholesalers, but, if the merchants had doubts about getting paid, either conditions of credit might be more onerous or credit might not be forthcoming at all.

The *nizam* of the Galata grocers also regulated a boundary dispute between this guild and that of the greengrocers (*manav*). Itinerant salesmen or 'basket-men' (*küfeci*) bore the brunt of the grocers' accusation; away from the watchful eyes of these guildsmen, the *küfeci* supposedly sold items that, according to the arrangements of the time, should have been available only in grocers' shops. Unfortunately, our *nizam* does not specify the disputed goods. However, the peddlers did not operate on their own but were in the employ of certain greengrocers. We can thus compare them to the bread-sellers (*iskemlecis*) attached to some bakeries who sold the bread baked by their employers, probably in improvised shelters or out in the open when the weather was good.³¹ But the *iskemlecis* were legal, at least as long as their employers did not increase

the number of their aides beyond the permitted limits, while the grocers certainly did not consider the ‘basket-men’ as legitimate traders.

In another *nizam*, milkmen and manufacturers of yoghurt regulated similar matters.³² Once again, the agreement was about limiting the number of shops (*karhane*) where the milkmen sold their wares and the yoghurt-makers manufactured their yoghurt. Thirty-nine such workplaces were in existence at the time, two located in Galata, five in Eyüp and one in the settlement of Çömlekçiler in the immediate vicinity of the latter township. Five further shopkeepers had chosen to operate from within vegetable gardens (*bostan*), and one of them even produced a special kind of yoghurt known as ‘garden yoghurt’ (*bostan yoğurdu*). Quite a few workshops were situated near the Istanbul land walls, in town quarters such as Sultan Selim, Ayvansaray, Tekfursaray or Karagümrük. These locations make good sense insofar as milk easily spoils in transport, and our guildsmen therefore wanted to be close to the dairy farms (*mandıra*) from which they purchased their milk: these *mandıras* often operated just outside the land walls.³³ Thus the agreement established fixed locations where milk might legitimately be sold and yoghurt manufactured. In other words, the *gediks* were now the major organizational principle of this guild. According to the craftsmen concerned, the existing shops sufficed for the needs of the Istanbul population, and they therefore forbade the opening of new ones.

Unfortunately our text does not say anything about the productive capacity of the recognized shops and workshops. Even if we assume that not only the sultan’s palace but also the residences of certain pashas and the janissary barracks had their own sources of supply, the existence of no more than thirty-nine milk and yoghurt shops for a population in the range of 400,000 does not point to a widespread consumption of milk products in mid-eighteenth-century Istanbul. Perhaps one day we will be able to follow the changes in food customs through which yoghurt became a mainstay of the city’s diet, but at present we cannot document this process.

HOW A NIZAM WAS NEGOTIATED: CRAFT SOLIDARITIES

Istanbul milkmen sold only milk and apparently did not own ewes or cows. Thus the agreement recorded in 1757 touched the dairy farmers as well as the milk-sellers and their allies the yoghurt-makers. Every spring, so the text tells us, the three groups had come together to decide the price of milk, and it had not been customary to sell this essential commodity without a prior agreement on prices. Our text particularly specifies that the yoghurt-makers had always been involved in the determination of the milk price.

Apparently milk-sellers and yoghurt-makers shared workshops; and these guildsmen also agreed that, when one shop-owner had bought milk from a given dairy farm, no other milkman or yoghurt-manufacturer had the right to offer a higher price and thus take the milk away from the original purchaser. The guildsmen further expressed their trade solidarity by stipulating that, if one shop-owner’s milk went sour, the others were to share their supplies with him. They also promised not to hire away labourers who were already employed as servants and aides by fellow guildsmen, an agreement which was obviously meant to keep down the wages which these workmen might

demand.³⁴ Milk-sellers and yoghurt-manufacturers further agreed to pay their taxes to the state as a group. At some unspecified time in the past, the guildsmen had promised each other that they would faithfully abide by this agreement and, as we have seen, not allow the opening of further shops for the sale of milk and yoghurt. Now they claimed that they had always fulfilled their mutual promises and therefore applied for the sultan's confirmation of their agreement.

This text is interesting in several respects. First of all we learn that guildsmen and dairy farmers among themselves agreed upon the price of milk, and no official intervened to enforce an administratively determined price (*narh*). This text therefore answers the question which historians have sometimes posed but to which they have offered only hypothetical answers: how did prices come about in cases where particular types of goods did not appear in official price lists? In this case, and presumably in others as well, guilds represented by their headmen (*kethüda*, *yiğitbaşı*) came to an agreement with the owners of the goods they wished to purchase and who in their turn also might be organized in guild-like structures. Unfortunately, we do not know anything specific about the organization of the dairy farmers in mid-eighteenth-century Istanbul; they may or may not have possessed a guild.

RELIGION AND GUILD BOUNDARIES

Last but not least, our text is remarkable because the guild of milk-sellers and yoghurt-manufacturers had a membership that was religiously mixed. Fourteen workshops were the property of probably thirteen Muslims, while the remaining guild members were Orthodox: the names sound Greek for the most part, with a few Slavic-sounding names among them. Thus the guild members evidently believed that solidarity, including the sharing of scarce milk supplies, was possible even across religious boundaries. Regrettably our text does not specify which taxes were to be paid in common. Perhaps the artisans referred to the dues payable to the market inspector (*ihtisabiye*), for obviously the head tax (*cizye*) owed by Christians only would not have involved the Muslim members of the milk-sellers and yoghurt-manufacturers' guild.

But in other cases relations between Muslims and non-Muslims seem to have been less amicable. Tensions are apparent from an agreement between two guilds that were both concerned with the trade in shoes.³⁵ On one side we find the shoemakers (*haffaf*). These craftsmen had their shops in a structure that can be described as the ancestor of the modern shopping centre, namely a covered shop-lined street (*arasta*) near the Sultan Bayezid mosque; presumably the area is today part of Istanbul's Great Bazaar. In any case, the headman (*kethüda*) of the *arasta* and his adjunct the *yiğitbaşı* were accompanied by the *kethüda* of one of the two covered markets (*bedesten*, *bezazistan*) that formed the centre of the Istanbul business district.³⁶ All these senior guildsmen were *seyyids* – in other words, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad – and the *kethüda* of the covered market had even memorized the Koran and therefore bore the title of *hafız*. Among the ordinary guild members, too, some people had made the pilgrimage to Mecca and others laid claim to the title of *seyyid*.³⁷ Thus the shoemakers' guild, which had only Muslim members, should have had a pronounced religious character, and we may hypothesize that in this milieu many artisans were committed to the traditions of Islamic mysticism and religiously based morality (*fütüvvet*).³⁸

As the second party, we find the guild of cobblers (*eskici*), which was subordinate to the shoemakers. Its members were all Christians and most of their names appear to be Armenian. According to the agreement, it had been ‘ancient custom’ (*ez kadim*) that the shoemakers sold newly made shoes while the cobblers refurbished used and old ones, which they then offered for sale. However, at an unspecified time in the past the cobblers had branched out into the trade in new shoes, and this initiative had sparked a great dispute between the two guilds. While a sultanic command had already once forbidden the cobblers to impinge on the territory of the shoemakers, apparently this order had been honoured mostly in the breach. At the time of the agreement, the cobblers owned new shoes worth 1375 *guruş* and 13 *para*, a substantial sum at a time when a village house changed hands for 270 *guruş*.³⁹ The shoemakers now agreed to buy the new shoes, while the cobblers promised that in the future they would not deal in these more prestigious goods. At the very end of our text, almost as an afterthought, the shoemakers also promised not to deal in old and used shoes. Apparently the infringement of guild boundaries had not been altogether one-sided. As a final step the guildsmen sought official confirmation for their agreement, originally concluded before the enthronement of Mustafa III.

In this case the hierarchy between shoemakers and cobblers was quite obvious. The shoemakers appeared as pious Muslims and their headmen were descendants of the Prophet; and some of these guildsmen must have been wealthy enough to afford a pilgrimage to Mecca. By contrast the cobblers were modest ‘unbelieving’ folk who probably did not enjoy great esteem in the eyes of officialdom. Yet the saga of the new shoes indicates that the shoemakers did not have it all their own way: while we have no way of knowing whether the 1375 *guruş* and 13 *para* were an adequate price for the shoes turned over to the shoemakers, at least the latter did have to pay something. How good it would be to know whether this agreement had been reached without external mediation, merely by the parties concerned, or whether the market inspector, the *kadi* or even agents of the central administration had had a hand in it.

CONCLUSION

Many of the major concerns of eighteenth-century artisans were not exactly new: already in the 1500s, certain artisans had vigorously attempted to limit the number of shops in their respective trades.⁴⁰ Yet in the earlier period definite ‘slots’ or *gediks* had not been so widespread, while in the 1700s we observe that, at least in Istanbul, one craft after another formally limited the numbers of masters legitimately in operation and often also determined the places where the latter might bake, prepare halva, sew or sell. In certain cases, Istanbul’s artisans made the relevant decisions from around 1730.⁴¹ In other cases, the hard times that the sultan’s subjects experienced during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1768–74 presumably encouraged artisans to divide up a sorely diminished market.⁴² In all these cases, guildsmen may have felt open to challenge, for opponents might claim that the *gediks* were novelties.

Perhaps the artisans’ concern about legitimizing their restrictive measures was one of the reasons why, by the mid-eighteenth century, they were no longer satisfied with oral agreements or records in the registers of the local *kadi*. Given the changed circumstances, they now wanted a sultanic command, properly authenticated by a *tuğra*, whose elaborate calligraphy ornamented as well as confirmed the decrees of Ottoman

rulers. Furthermore, many craftsmen had probably become disillusioned after experiencing scores of times that their rivals, more or less with impunity, broke the rules and agreements documented by the *kadis* of their own localities. Due to the closeness of the central administration and the availability of its different recording facilities, petitioners – including quite a few artisans – may well have decided that they stood a better chance of enforcing their rules and regulations if the latter possessed the sanction of the central administration.

Seen from another angle, Ottoman officials may also have encouraged artisans to submit their agreements to the central administration and receive them back as officially confirmed *nizams*. By mid-century, the Ottoman centre had lost a good deal of its former influence in many of the more remote provinces. In reaction, the government seems to have tried to strengthen its ties to those people over whom it continued to exercise direct control, and the 400,000 to 500,000 inhabitants of the capital and its environs must have topped the list. We can therefore assume that, on this particular matter, the interests of the artisans and those of the Ottoman government coincided. A need for protection and legitimization on the craftsmen's side, and a need for continuing involvement with the affairs of its subjects on the part of the governing elite, resulted in the bureaucratic records that provide so much of the information on which we base our analyses of eighteenth-century artisan life.

NOTES

- 1 Dalsar 1960; Mantran 1962; Raymond 1973–4.
- 2 Analogous with the practice in other disciplines (for instance, Hispanist or Byzantinist), we will refer to all scholars who from the late 1800s to the present day have worked on Ottoman history, literature or art as 'Ottomanists'.
- 3 Kütükoğlu 1986.
- 4 İnalçık 1969; Yi 2004.
- 5 Gerber 1988: 36.
- 6 Yi 2004: 101–2.
- 7 Akarlı 1985–6, 2004.
- 8 Faroqhi 1995b; Faroqhi 2009.
- 9 Mantran 1962: 179.
- 10 Abou-el-Haj 1984: 86.
- 11 Kütükoğlu 1983: 116–17.
- 12 Bayly 1983: 63.
- 13 Olivier 2007: 30.
- 14 Başaran 2007: 59.
- 15 Yi 2004: 184.
- 16 Faroqhi 2001.
- 17 Barkan 1972–9: II, 292.
- 18 Bostan 1992: 66.
- 19 *Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi rehberi* 2000: 142–3.
- 20 Genç 1994.
- 21 Aykut 2006; Aydın and Tak 2008.
- 22 Veinstein 1996.
- 23 İnalçık 1953–4; Dalsar 1960; Yi 2004.
- 24 Kal'a 1997–8: I.
- 25 Genç 1994.
- 26 BOA, Maliye Ahkâm Defteri [MAD] 9983, p. 43, 1171/175

- 27 MAD 9983, pp. 304 and 43, 1171/1757–8. These other documents, if found, would enable us to assess the density of habitation in these four settlements, today all part of Greater Istanbul.
- 28 MAD 9983, pp. 43; Konyalı 1976: I, 63.
- 29 Bacqué-Grammont 1999; Bostan 1992.
- 30 MAD 9983, p. 304, 1171/1757–8.
- 31 Aynural 2001: 130–32.
- 32 MAD 9983: 203, 1171/1757–8.
- 33 No milk or yoghurt shops are on record for Üsküdar and, where *intra muros* Istanbul is concerned, our document mentions many shops without specifying their approximate locations. It is therefore impossible to produce a convincing map.
- 34 Yılmaz 2003: 214. Although the government had abolished guilds before the First World War, the by-laws of the association of İzmir shoemakers from 1340/1921–2 refer to a similar rule.
- 35 MAD 9983, p. 147, 1171/1757–8.
- 36 İnalçık 1979–80.
- 37 Kılıç 2005.
- 38 On *fütüvvet*, see Gölpınarlı 1949–50, 1953–4.
- 39 Kal'a 1997–8: IV, 19.
- 40 Altınay [1917] 1934–5: 121–2.
- 41 Faroqhi 2009.
- 42 Akarlı 1985–6.