

The Role of Artisans in the Circumcision Festival of 1675 During the
Reign of Sultan Mehmed IV

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Abstract

In 1675, the Ottoman state held an imperial festival (*sur-ı hümayun*) in Edirne to celebrate the military achievements, the circumcision of the sons of Sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648-1687) and the marriage of his daughter. Drawing from seventeenth-century official and non-official sources concerning the festival, this essay focuses mainly on the role of the artisans. It shows how the practices of the artisans at the festival resembled those of the army artisans who, too, paraded at the initial stage of the military campaigns. However, rather than the mere theatrical aspects of the guilds' pageantry, it emphasizes other yet multiple functions of the artisans. In particular, showing the role of the Istanbul and Edirne guilds in front of and behind the stage, this essay argues that they not only benefited from participating in such events but also bore their burdens as they provided various services, labor, and funding. In this regard, it also pays attention to the other side of the coin where not only artisans but also

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other actors were involved. To this end, after a brief introduction, this essay focuses on the day-to-day parades of the artisans, the practices of gift-giving, the burdens and benefits of the festival for the different classes, and finally its military tone by considering the actively involved artisans and their auxiliaries.

Keywords: Sultan Mehmed IV, Edirne, Ottoman Circumcision Festival of 1675, imperial festival (*sur-ı hümayun*), artisans, guild/artisan pageants, army artisans, auxiliary artisans.

Sultan IV. Mehmed Döneminde 1675 Tarihli Sünnet Şenliğindeki Esnafın Rolü

Öz

1675'te Osmanlı Devleti, askerî başarıları ile Sultan IV. Mehmed (1648-1687)'in oğullarının sünnetini ve kızının evliliğini kutlamak için Edirne'de bir imparatorluk şenliği (*sur-ı hümayun*) düzenledi. Şenlikle ilgili on yedinci yüzyıldan resmî ve resmî olmayan kaynaklara dayanan bu makale, esas olarak esnafın rolüne odaklanmaktadır. Ayrıca şenlikteki esnafın uygulamalarının askerî seferlerin ilk aşamasında geçit töreni yapan ordu esnafıninkilere nasıl benzediğini göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte, şenliklerdeki geçit törenlerinin sadece teatral yönlerinden ziyade, esnafın diğer fonksiyonlarına vurgu yapmaktadır. Özellikle İstanbul ve Edirne loncalarının sahne önünde ve arkasında oynadığı rolü gösteren bu makale, bu tür etkinliklere katılmaktan sadece fayda sağlamakla kalmayıp aynı zamanda hizmet, emek ve finans sundukları için külfetini de taşıdıklarını savunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, sadece esnafın değil, aynı zamanda diğer aktörlerin de yer aldığı madalyonun diğer yüzüne de dikkat çekmektedir. Bu amaçla, kısa bir girişten sonra, bu makale esnafın günlük geçit törenlerine, hediyeleşme pratiklerine, şenliğin farklı sınıflar için getirdiği yüklerle ve faydalara ve son olarak da aktif olarak katılan esnafları ve yamaklarını göz önünde bulundurarak şenliğin askerî tonuna odaklanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sultan IV. Mehmed, Edirne, 1675 Osmanlı Sünnet Şenliği, imparatorluk şenliği (*sur-ı hümayun*), esnaf, lonca/esnaf alayları, orducu esnafı, yamak esnafı.

“As Mr. North gazes upon this great idol of human worship, to which so much gold is offered up every day, his mind whirls: ‘What a world of riches must be gathered from such a vast concourse of people! I say no more...’”

Introduction

Sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648-1687), often known as “the Hunter”, assumed the position of ruler of the Ottoman Empire at the tender age of six. Under his rule, rebellions broke out in Istanbul and Anatolia, and the financial problems of the empire remained unresolved. The appointment of the Köprülüs as grand viziers, on the other hand, signified the commencement of a phase characterized by notable accomplishments against Venice in the Mediterranean, the Habsburg Empire, and the Polish Commonwealth in the northern regions. During the reign of Mehmed IV, significant military expeditions were also undertaken against the Habsburgs in 1663², the Polish in 1672³, and the Russians in 1678⁴. Mehmed IV demonstrated a vested interest in the exploration of hunting territories, with particular emphasis on the city of Edirne, which functioned as his principal administrative center. Edirne thus became the site of the 1675 imperial festival (*sur-i hümayun*)⁵. Furthermore, he resided in that city for the rest of his life after his removal from power in 1687, four years following the unsuccessful siege of Vienna⁶.

This essay explores the 1675 imperial festival, which was organized to celebrate various momentous occurrences, such as the annexation of Crete (1669)⁷,

- 1 Cited in George Frederick Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople: A Record of Sir John Finch's Embassy 1674-1681*, Macmillan and Co., Limited St. Martin's Street, London 1920, p. 106.
- 2 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi: 1600-1914*, Vol. II, ed. Halil İnalçık-Donald Quataert, Eren Yayıncılık, Istanbul 2004, p. 557.
- 3 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman Survey Register of Podolia (ca. 1681), Defter-i Mufassal-i Eyalet-i Kamanıçe, Part 1: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2004, p. 4.
- 4 Lubomyr Andriy Hajda, “Two Ottoman Gazanames Concerning the Chyhyryn Campaign of 1678,” Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, Cambridge 1984.
- 5 For a recent study of the 1675 imperial festival, please see M. Fatih Torun, “Revisiting an Ottoman Dynastic Celebration: Princely Weddings and Circumcisions in Edirne, 1675,” Unpublished master's thesis, Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul 2019. In contrast to this master's thesis, this essay pays more attention to the various roles of the artisans in front of and behind the scenes of the festival.
- 6 For the dynamics of the politics of the period, see Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, State University of New York Press, Albany 1991.
- 7 The English ambassador John Finch (1626–1682) stated that a large festival had been planned since

the conquest of the castles of Uyvar (1663), and Kamianets-Podilskiy (1672). Additionally, the festival commemorated the circumcision of Sultan Mehmed IV's sons and the wedding of his daughter⁸. The essay also places emphasis on the gift-giving ceremonies⁹, examining the concept of gifting as a hybrid practice that encompasses elements of both commodity exchange and obligatory fees. The utilization of these practices by the Ottoman court served the purpose of rationalizing ongoing military conflicts¹⁰ and upholding the loyalty of the subject population. Significantly, the scholarly discourse has scarcely explored the involvement and active participation in the Ottoman festive events. This essay aims to address this research gap by primarily drawing upon official and non-official sources from the relevant historical period. Previous scholarly works primarily concentrated on the participation of artisans in celebratory events, particularly those with theatrical and entertaining elements¹¹. Contemporary scholarship has shifted its emphasis in recent years to highlight the dissatisfaction expressed by artisans¹². However, there has been a lack of emphasis on the military

1669 when the Ottomans conquered Crete. Cited by Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople*, p. 68.

- 8 For more on the political relations of the time, see Cumhuriyet Bekar, "The Ottoman Revolution of 1661: The Reconfiguration of Political Power under Mehmed IV and Köprülü Grand Viziers", *Journal of Early Modern History*, Vol. 1, 2022, pp. 1-30. In particular, Zeynep Yelçe notes that the royal wedding of 1524 and the circumcision festivals of 1530 and 1539 were intended to make up for political failures: Zeynep Yelçe, "Evaluating Three Imperial Festivals: 1524, 1530 and 1539", in *Celebration, Entertainment and Theatre in the Ottoman World*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi-Arzu Öztürkmen, Calcutta: Seagull Books, London; New York 2014, pp. 71-109.
- 9 For more details, see Rhoads Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty: Tradition, Image and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household, 1400-1800*, Continuum, London 2008; Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "Power and Submission: Gifting at Royal Circumcision Festivals in the Ottoman Empire (16th-18th Centuries)", *Turcica*, Vol. 41, 2009, pp. 37-88; Linda Komaroff, *Gifts of the Sultan: The Arts of Giving at the Islamic Courts*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011.
- 10 Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Sultan Nourishing His Subjects – But Was the Reverse not More Close to the Truth?" (forthcoming). We would like to thank Suraiya Faroqhi for sharing this article.
- 11 For part of the earlier literature on the Ottoman festivals, see for example Metin And, *Kırk Gün Kırk Gece*, Taç Yayınevi, Ankara 1959; Özdemir Nutku, *IV. Mehmet'in Edirne Şenliği (1675)*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara 1972; Derin Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582: An Interpretation", *Muqarnas*, Vol. 12, 1995, pp. 84-100; Nurhan Atasoy, *1582: Surname-i Hümayun: an Imperial Celebration*, Koçbank, İstanbul 1997; Esin Atlı, *Levni and the Surname: The Story of an Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Festival*, Koçbank, İstanbul 1999; Mehmet Arslan, *Türk Edebiyatında Manzum Surnâmeler: Osmanlı Saray Düğünleri ve Şenlikleri*, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, Ankara 1999.
- 12 For a selection of recent scholarly works exploring Ottoman festivals, please visit Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire*, Tauris, London; New York 2005; Suraiya Faroqhi and Arzu Öztürkmen, *Celebration, Entertainment and Theatre in the Ottoman*

dimension of the festival, as evidenced by the instances of artisans' pageantry and the involvement of army artisans. This essay examines this significant aspect of the festival and the involvement of artisans in various activities, including gift giving, parading, and offering services, labor, and financial contributions made by artisans originated from Istanbul, Edirne, and, in a specific case, Bursa¹³. Thus, it aims to offer a thorough examination of both concealed and overt aspects of an early modern event.

Overall, this essay discusses the roles performed by the paraded artisans and the practices of exchanging gifts that are evident in the festival. It then pays attention to artisans who offered a diverse yet similar range of their services during both periods of peace and conflict¹⁴. In other words, this essay argues that imperial festivals, here the 1675 festival, exhibited a "military tone" whereby pageantry and activities of artisans mirrored those observed during military campaigns and imperial festivals. More specifically, the imperial festival that occurred in 1675 coincided with the Ottoman-Polish War. The notable imperial festivals in 1582 and 1720, however, appear to have taken place in a less militaristic context. The former event transpired four years subsequent to the Ottoman-Safavid battles, while the latter occurred two years after the engagement with the Habsburg and Venetian forces. Therefore, this essay aims to examine the 1675 festival as a case study in order to investigate both the civic and militaristic aspects of an imperial

World, Seagull Books, London; New York; Calcutta 2014; Hakan Karateke, "Illuminating Ottoman Ceremonial", in *God Is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth: Light in Islamic Art and Culture*, ed. Jonathan Bloom-Sheila Blair, Yale University Press, New Haven 2015, pp. 282-307; Kaya Şahin, "Staging an Empire: An Ottoman Circumcision Ceremony as Cultural Performance", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 123/ No. 2, 2018, pp. 463-492; Kaya Şahin, "To Observe, to Record, to Depict: Memorializing the Circumcision of an Ottoman Prince, ca. 1582-ca. 1600", *History and Theory*, Vol. 58/ No. 4, 2019, pp. 43-67; Sinem Erdoğan-İşkorkutan, *The 1720 Imperial Circumcision Celebrations in Istanbul*, Brill, Leiden; Boston 2021; Özgen Felek, and Sinem Erdoğan-İşkorkutan, "Introduction: Ceremonies, Festivals, and Rituals in the Ottoman World", *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, Vol. 6/ No. 1, 2019, pp. 9-19.

- 13 For an overview of guild pageants, see Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Parades of Ottoman Guildsmen: Self-Assertion and Submission to the Sultan's Command", in *Material Culture-Präsenz und Sichtbarkeit von Künstlern, Zünften und Bruderschaften in der Vormoderne/Presence and Visibility of Artists, Guilds, Brotherhoods in the Premodern Era*, Andreas Tacke, Birgit Ulrike Münch, ed. Wolfgang Augustyn, Michael Imhof Verlag 2018, pp. 157-173.
- 14 The Ottoman state required agricultural, transportation, industrial labor, and the services of many, including artisans and soldiers: Suraiya Faroqhi, "Labor Recruitment and Control in the Ottoman Empire (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)", in *Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500-1950*, ed. Donald Quataert, State University of New York; Albany 1994, pp. 36-38.

festival, with a particular focus on the involvement of artisans. The essay examines the involvement of various guilds in the festival, including the main/actively involved guilds and auxiliary artisans (*yamak esnafı*). It also explores the similarities between the practices of both guilds and army artisans (*orducu esnafı*), thus relevant auxiliaries¹⁵.

1. Artisans at Parade

During the period spanning from the sixteenth to the first half of the eighteenth century, the Ottoman court employed elaborate and widely recognized guild pageants as a means of celebrating various significant events such as the weddings of the sultan's daughters, the circumcisions of the male heirs, the enthronement of the new sultans, the launch of campaigns, and military victories¹⁶. The pictorial books give voice to the guilds' participation and the splendor of their pageants at the 1582 imperial festival¹⁷. Evliya Çelebi (1611-1682)¹⁸, a famous Ottoman traveler during the seventeenth century, documented the parade of guilds held for the departure of Murad IV (r. 1623-1640) on his military campaign to recapture Bagdad in 1638. Moreover, Eremya Çelebi K m rciyan (1637-1695), an Ottoman Armenian residing in Istanbul, recounted a triumphal celebration in the city that Muslim and Christian artisans participated in together. Antoine Galland (1646-1715), the French ambassador, documented the procession of guilds that took place as the Ottoman army embarked on their Polish expedition in 1672. In the year 1675, the guilds of Istanbul, Edirne, Bursa (at least in one case) actively engaged in parades as part of the circumcision festival, three years subsequent to

15 For details about the army artisans (*orducu esnafı*), see Şenol Çelik, "Orducu", in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 33, 2007, pp. 370-373. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/orducu> (accessed: 22.04.2023); Please also see a few examples from different years that illustrate the recruitment practices of the army artisans or the taxes (*ordu akçesi*) they paid: the Ottoman Archive in Istanbul (T rkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivi [hereafter: BOA]), İbnülemin – Askeriye (İE.AS.), 89/8245, H-20.07.1018/18.10.1609; BOA, Cevdet – Askeriye (C.AS.), 494/20648, H-20.04.1206/17.12.1791; BOA, M himme Defteri (A. DVNSMHHM.d.), 91/8, H-04.01.1056/20.02.1646.

16 For an overview of the guild parades, see Faroqi, "The Parades of Ottoman Guildsmen", pp. 161-165.

17 Atasoy, *1582: Surname-i H mayun*;  iğdem Kafesciođlu, "Sokađın, Meydanın, Şehirlilerin Resmi: On Altıncı Y zyıl Sonu İstanbul'unda Mek n Pratikleri ve G rselliđin D n ş m ," *YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies* 1/ No. 1, 2019, pp. 7-43.

18 On the discussion of the relevant sources, see Suraiya Faroqi, "Guildsmen and Handicraft Producers", in *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Vol.3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqi, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, pp. 347-349.

the aforementioned event. The practice of guild pageants endured during other significant historical events, including Mehmed IV's military campaign to Russia in 1678 and the circumcision festival held in Istanbul in 1720.

The festival of the princes' circumcision commenced on Sunday, May 26, 1675, and spanned a duration of fifteen consecutive days¹⁹. During the initial three days of the festival, declarations pertaining to military triumphs were pronounced. On the second and third days, a series of simulated military conflicts, mock battles, and pyrotechnic displays were organized to demonstrate the Ottoman Empire's supremacy in both terrestrial and maritime domains. Following this, the guild pageants commenced on the fourth day and continued for the duration of the remaining period in the late afternoon at the festival square (*Sırk Meydanı*), located in close proximity to the imperial palace in Edirne. On the fourth day of the festivities, the procession was commenced by bread makers (*ekmekçiler*)²⁰ and the bun makers (*çörekçiler*)²¹, who were subsequently followed by the butchers (*kassablar*) and the dried and fresh fruit sellers (*kuru ve yaş yemişçiler*)²². Candle makers (*mumcular*), furriers (*kürkçüler*), tanners (*debbaglar*), shoemakers (*pabuççular*), quilted-turban makers (*sark yapıclar*), tailors (*terziler*), and shoe sellers (*kundura satıcıları/haffafan*) exhibit a shared pattern, indicating a collective correlation between a festival and a campaign in specific contexts. The adverse weather conditions experienced on the seventh day of the festival required a departure from the usual sequence of the pageant, resulting in the need to make adjustments that lasted until the tenth day (refer to Table 1)²³. There were limited guild pageants on the tenth day of the

19 Fahri Ç. Derin, *Abdurrahman Abdî Paşa Vekâyi'-nâmesi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1648-1682)*, Çamlıca, İstanbul 2008; Mehmed Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Düğünleri ve Şenlikleri 4-5: Lebib Sûrnâmesi, Hâfız Mehmed Efendi (Hazin) Sûrnâmesi, Abdî Sûrnâmesi, Telhîsü'l-Beyân'ın Sûrnâme Kısmı*, Sarayburnu Kitaphâğı, İstanbul 2011, pp. 486-537.

20 Although three guilds paraded on the fourth/the first day of the guild pageants, only the bread makers (*etmekciyan*) of Edirne offered gifts to the sultan; the two other groups, bun makers and millers (*değirmenciyan*), were probably auxiliary (*yamak*) to the bread makers. Sevim İlgürel, *Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi: Telhîsü'l-beyân fî kavânîn-i Âl-i Osmân*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, İstanbul 1998, p. 217.

21 İlgürel, *Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi*, p. 216.

22 İlgürel, *ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

23 Table 1 shows that guilds of the same craft/trade from two cities did not necessarily march on the same day; The barbers from Istanbul paraded on the eleventh day, those from Edirne on the fourteenth day, and also the blanket makers (*yorgancıyan*) from Edirne marched on the ninth, those from Istanbul on the fourteenth day of the festival. Although it is not a rule, similar/relevant guilds, especially bread makers, bun makers, and millers, appeared on the parade on the same day. Different guilds, such as tent makers (*çadırçıyan*), tailors (*derzi/terzi, haffafan*), barley dealers

festivities, which can likely be attributed to the grand cavalcade. Both miniature and life-sized *nahuls*²⁴ artificial wax trees adorned with valuable textiles were part of this ceremonial procession where the eldest son of the sultan, Prince Mustafa (future sultan, r. 1695-1703) commenced his journey from the Old Palace of Edirne, also known as *Saray-ı Atik* and proceeded towards the official residence of the sultan. The following day, the thirteenth guilds proceeded as usual, and finally, the genuine circumcision of the successors and the corresponding ceremonial rituals took place on the twelfth day of the festival. Some guilds specific to Istanbul made their appearance on the final two days. Included in this group were the merchants of Egypt (*bazerganan-ı Mısır*)²⁵, the second-hand dealers/repairers (*eskiciyan*), tinsmiths (*kalaycıyan*), and cauldron makers (*kazgancıyan*), packsaddle makers (*semerciyan*) from both cities, the shoe-tip makers (*na'lıcıyan*) of Edirne, and the barbers (*berberan*) of Edirne. Notwithstanding the existence of four discrete Edirne guilds, the final two days of the festival were predominantly characterized by the prominence of Istanbul guilds.²⁶ All the guild pageants were completed before the banquet that took place on the fifteenth day of the festival.

Table 1: Guild Pageants, Day by Day²⁷

Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
Bread makers of Edirne, Bursa as their auxiliary (<i>etmekçiyan-ı Edirne ma'a Bursa yamakan</i>)	Herbalists of Edirne (<i>attaran-ı Edirne</i>)	Small cattle butchers of Istanbul (<i>kassaban-ı ganem-i İstanbul</i>)	Tanners of Istanbul (<i>debbag-ı İstanbul</i>)	Cloth merchants of Istanbul (<i>bezzazan-ı İstanbul</i>)

(*arpacıyan*), and bow and arrow makers (*okçıyan ve yaycıyan*) from both cities, marched on the same day (eleventh day).

24 For more details, please consult Nutku, *IV. Mehmet'in Edirne Şenliği*, p. 65-71; For *nahul* making, see chapter 1: Erdoğan-İşkorkutan, *The 1720 Imperial Circumcision Celebrations in Istanbul*.

25 It is unclear whether these merchants directly linked to the Egyptian/Spice Bazaar/*Mısır Çarşısı* of Istanbul, which had been constructed in the late seventeenth century before the festival took place.

26 It is unclear if bun makers, millers, furriers, carpenters, and merchants mentioned in Table 1 were from Edirne or Istanbul.

27 Table 1 is an advanced version of Nutku's table, *IV. Mehmet'in Edirne Şenliği*, p. 74, primarily relies on the observers and official documents of the time mentioned in this essay.

Bun makers (<i>çörekçiyan</i>)	Paper makers of Edirne (<i>kagıdcıyan-ı Edirne</i>)	Large cattle butchers of Istanbul (<i>kassaban-ı bakar-ı Istanbul</i>)	Boot makers of Edirne (<i>postalcıyan-ı Edirne</i>)	Silk merchants of Istanbul (<i>gazgazan-ı Istanbul</i>)
Millers (<i>değirmenciyan</i>)	Herbalists of Istanbul (<i>attaran-ı Istanbul</i>), paper makers of Istanbul as their auxiliary (<i>kagıdcıyan-ı Istanbul yamak-ı mezbûr</i>)	Butchers of Edirne (<i>kassaban-ı Edirne</i>)	Second-hand dealers/repairer of Istanbul (<i>eskiciyan-ı Istanbul</i>)	Jewelers of Edirne (<i>kuyumciyan-ı Edirne</i>)
	Shoe sellers of Edirne (<i>haffafan-ı Edirne</i>)	Groceries of Edirne (<i>bakkalan-ı Edirne</i>)		Saddlers of Edirne (<i>sarracan-ı Edirne</i>) ²⁸
	Shoe sellers of Istanbul (<i>haffafan-ı Istanbul</i>)	Groceries of Istanbul (<i>bakkalan-ı Istanbul</i>)		
		Candle makers of Istanbul (<i>mumciyan-ı Istanbul</i>)		
		Candle makers of Edirne (<i>mumciyan-ı Edirne</i>)		

28 In the official registers, neither the saddlers of Edirne as gift-givers nor their receipt of a gift from the sultan was recorded. Mentioned in one source, however, that they paraded on the eighth day and were both gift givers and gift receivers: İlgürel, *Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi*, p. 226.

Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Cloth Sellers of Edirne Bezastan (<i>bezestancıyan-ı Edirne</i>) ²⁹	Furriers (<i>kürkçıyan</i>)	Tent makers of Edirne (<i>çadırçıyan-ı Edirne</i>)	THE ACTUAL CIRCUMCISION DAY, NO GÜLLÜ PARADE	Merchants of Egyptian Bazar (<i>bazergânan-ı Mısır</i>)	Bread makers of Istanbul (<i>etmekçiyan-ı İstanbul</i>)
Cloth Sellers of Old Bezestan of Istanbul (<i>eski bezestanlı Asitane</i>)	Merchants (<i>bezîrganan</i>)	Tent makers of Edirne and Istanbul (<i>çadırçıyan-ı -Edirne ve-Asitane</i>)		Cloth Sellers of New Bezestan of Istanbul (<i>bezestancıyan-ı cedid-i Asitane</i>)	Cauldron makers of Istanbul (<i>kazgancıyan-ı İstanbul</i>)
Quilted-turban makers of Istanbul (<i>kavukçıyan-ı İstanbul</i>)		Tailors of Edirne (<i>derziyan-ı Edirne</i>)		Saddlers of Istanbul (<i>sarıracan-ı İstanbul</i>)	Tinsmiths of Istanbul (<i>kalayçıyan-ı İstanbul</i>)
Quilted-turban makers of Edirne (<i>kavukçıyan-ı Edirne</i>)		Tailors of Istanbul (<i>derziyan-ı İstanbul</i>)		Second-hand dealers/repairer (<i>eskiciyan-ı İstanbul</i>)	Blanket makers of Istanbul (<i>yorgancıyan-ı İstanbul</i>)
Felt hat makers (<i>arakçıyıcıyan</i>)		Shoe-tip makers of Istanbul (<i>na'kçıyan-ı İstanbul</i>)		Packsaddle makers of Edirne (<i>semerciyan-ı Edirne</i>)	Barbers of Edirne (<i>berberan-ı Edirne</i>)
Trouser Makers of Edirne (<i>çakşurçıyan-ı Edirne</i>)		Trouser makers of Istanbul (<i>çakşurçıyan-ı İstanbul</i>)		Packsaddle makers of Istanbul (<i>semerciyan-ı İstanbul</i>)	
Cooks of sheep heads of Edirne (<i>başçıyan-ı Edirne</i>)		Barbers of Istanbul (<i>berberan-ı İstanbul</i>)		Shoe-tip makers of Edirne (<i>na'kçıyan-ı Edirne</i>)	
Dealers in sheep's head of Istanbul (<i>başçıyan-ı İstanbul</i>)					

29 Here *bezestan* refers to a particular place/a type of cover bazaar where cloth sellers concentrate.

Medal ornament in relief makers (<i>kaknacıyan</i>), sword and knife makers of Istanbul as their auxiliary (<i>kalıççıyan-ı İstanbul ve bıçakçıyan</i>)		Cooks of Edirne (<i>aşçıyan-ı Edirne</i>)	THE ACTUAL CIRCUMCISION DAY, NO GUILD PARADED		
Sword makers of Edirne (<i>Edirne kalıççıları</i>)		Animal hair processors of Edirne (<i>mıytaban-ı Edirne</i>)			
Fluffers (cotton) of Istanbul and Edirne (<i>hallacın-ı İstanbul ve hallacın-ı Edirne</i>)		Bow and arrow makers of Edirne (<i>okçuyan ve yaycıyan-ı Edirne</i>)			
Carpenters (<i>neccaran</i>) ³⁰		Bow and arrow makers of Istanbul (<i>okçuyan ve yaycıyan-ı İstanbul</i>)			
Blacksmiths of Istanbul (<i>na'lbandan-ı İstanbul</i>)		Barley dealers of Edirne (<i>arbacıyan-ı Edirne</i>)			
Blacksmiths of Edirne (<i>na'lbandan-ı Edirne</i>)		Barley dealers of Istanbul (<i>arbacıyan-ı İstanbul</i>)			
Blanket makers of Edirne (<i>yorgancıyan-ı Edirne</i>)					
Silk merchants of Edirne (<i>gazazacıyan-ı Edirne</i>)					

30 Abdi and Hezarfen Hüseyin mentioned that the chief architect, Ahmed Agha, paraded with carpenters and apprentices: İlgürel, *Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi*, p. 229; Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Dişünleri ve Şenlikleri* 4-5, p. 504.

2. ‘Look a Gift-Horse in the Mouth:’ Gift-Givers and Their Recipients

As a well-established practice, the act of exchanging gifts during imperial festivals held great importance³¹. The phenomenon of gift-giving, commonly referred to as the “gift mode”³² in scholarly literature, as observed during the 1675 circumcision festival, can be understood as a practice that combines elements of commodity exchange and displays of social hierarchies. During the festival, various high-ranking officials, including the grand vizier, second vizier (also known as the groom), third vizier, chief treasurer, deputy grand vizier, and judges/*kadis* as well as provincial power holders³³ from across the empire, offered their gifts to the sultan³⁴ and partook in the royal banquets³⁵, which continued throughout the festival.

One of the most important participants of the festival was artisans. Artisans, like high-ranking officials, offered their gifts. After the pageants, they specifically presented silver gifts that they had skillfully created or obtained³⁶. Figure 1 depicts the offering made by the tinsmiths: a rosewater flask accompanied by a silver

31 Hedda Reindl-Kiel, “Power and Submission: Gifting at Royal Circumcision Festivals in the Ottoman Empire (16th-18th Centuries)”.

32 Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison 2000.

33 For Dayıyan-ı Tunus and Cezayir as gift-givers, and others as gift recipients, see BOA, Ali Emiri – Mehmed IV (hereafter: AE.SMMD.IV), 84/10048, H-18.09.1087/24.11.1676; BOA, AE.SMMD.IV, 84/10049, H-26.09.1087/02.12.1676.

34 Abdurrahman Abdi Pasha explained that during the banquet for certain individuals, the commander-in-chief (*serdar*) and vizier Ibrahim Pasha were presented with a sword and a caftan - an often embroidered and fur-lined dress worn by wealthy people and administrators - as gifts during the campaign against Poland: Derin, *Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa Vekâyi’-nâmesi*, p. 441.

35 Those who were hosted at the banquets included, chief military judges (*kadı-asker efendiler-kazaskers* of Rum-ili and Anatolia), descendants of Prophet Mohammed and sheiks (*sadat ve meşayih*), cavalry corps (*sipah ve silahdar ocakları*), Janissary corps (*Yeniçeri Ocağı*), *aghas* of the *Rikab-ı Hümayun* including the managers under the queen mother and the chief consort (*Rikab-ı Hümayun Ağaları-Valide Sultan hazretlerinin ve sa’adetli Haseki Sultan hazretlerinin kethudaları bu zümre-i alıyyeye dahi dahil*), people serving the Imperial Stables (*Istabl-ı Amire halkı*), the chief clerks of the Imperial Council (*Divan haceleri*), Armory and Artillery corps (*Cebeci ve Topçu Ocakları*), urban population (*şehirlî*), the judges/*kadis* of Rum-ili and Anadolu (*Rum-ili ve Anadolu kuzatı*), former provincial governors and *beys* (*ma’zul beğlerbeğlerden ve beğlerden mevcut olanlar*). Derin, *Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa Vekâyi’-nâmesi*, pp. 440-443.

36 Diverse types of fabrics were in high demand among the upper and middle classes, demonstrating their prosperity and cultural level: Suraiya Faroqhi, “Introduction, or Why and How One Might Want to Study Ottoman Clothes”, in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi-Christoph K. Neumann, Eren, Istanbul 2004, pp. 15-48.

incensory³⁷. The offerings presented by the barley dealers of Istanbul, the grocers (*bakkalan*) of Istanbul, and the cloth merchants of Istanbul who served the royal court (*Sandalcıyan-ı Rikab-ı Hümayun*) consisted of objects Chinese ceramics (*fâğfur*), or silver rosewater flasks (*gülabdan*). In the seventeenth century, Chinese ceramics were frequently employed as opulent ceremonial objects. In a similar vein, various artisan groups in Istanbul, including bread makers, tanners of Yedikule (*debbâğ-ı Yedikule der Asitane*), tailors, saddlers (*sarracıyan/sarraçan*), made contributions in the form of silver candlesticks, as shown in Figure 2³⁸.



Figure 1: Rose Water Flask, or Bottle. Made of Black, Turquoise, Green, Red (Bole), Cobalt Painted and Glazed Ceramic, Pottery (Courtesy of the British Museum)³⁹.

37 BOA, Bab-ı Defteri – Başmuhasibe Sur-ı Hümayun Kalemî Defterleri (hereafter: DBŞM. SRH.d.), 20605, H-29.12.1086/15.03.1676.

38 For the gifts given by other guilds, see BOA, DBŞM.SRH.d., 20605 and for the list of the gift-giving guilds, see Table 2.

39 This image is provided under a “Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)” license: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/>



Figure 2: Large Candlestick with a Tulip-Shaped Socket. Made of Cast Brass (Courtesy of the British Museum)⁴⁰.

The offerings provided by the artisans were relatively fewer compared to those presented by the upper class. However, the quantity and variety of gifts varied among artisans. For instance, the Istanbul herbalists (*attaran*) offered a generous assortment of gifts, including four turban muslins (*destar*)⁴¹, two balls of brimmed linen (*kenarlı bez*), two brocaded *badule/badle*, a bundle (*boğça*) of velvet with gold (*zerduz*)⁴², one prayer rug broadcloth (*çuka*) made with gold (*zerduz*), a *kılabdan*

image/330620001 (accessed: 22.04.2023).

40 The image is provided under a “Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)” license: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/1613356167> (accessed: 22.04.2023).

41 See turban muslins in different gift accounts: Reindl-Kiel, “Power and Submission”, p. 49, p. 50 and p. 60.

42 For *boğça/bohça*, see Reindl-Kiel, *ibid*, p. 59 and p. 71; *Zerduz* mainly refers to the process of fabric embellishing with gold, see “cemâat-i zerduzân-ı hâssa” in Bahattin Yaman, *Sarayın Terzileri: 16-18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Hassa Kıyafet Birimleri*, Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul 2018, p. 28.

bundle⁴³, two *mirzayi bugasi*⁴⁴, a brocaded kerchief (*sırmalı makrama*)⁴⁵, and three kerchiefs. Meanwhile, Istanbul cloth sellers (*bezzazan*)⁴⁶ presented two silver trays and a silver tankard as their contributions. After presenting their gifts, artisans eagerly awaited the sultan's gift (*atiyye*), which likely served as a way to obtain additional funds and cover the expenses related to the portable platforms, costumes, and other elements of celebration that were carried during their processions. As explicitly mentioned in the festival book, the grandeur of the pageant was credited to each guild's rank⁴⁷.

Obtaining the sultan's gift proved to be a challenging task⁴⁸. The artisans' gifts⁴⁹ was contingent upon the verification, approval, and documentation of the gifts by a state official in a distinct register⁵⁰. Indeed, the secretary of the Turkey Company (later the Levant Company), Thomas Coke, who gave some details about the Ottoman custom of gift-giving, noted that the bestowal of gifts was not solely dependent on the presenter's discretion and generosity. Rather, there seem to have prescribed guidelines dictating the nature and quantity of gifts to be given. He

43 *Kılabdan*, "a type of thread made from a mixture of cotton and silver or silver gilt." Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "Luxury, Power Strategies, and the Question of Corruption: Gifting in the Ottoman Elite (16th–18th Centuries)", in *Şehrâ-yîn: Die Welt der Osmanen, die Osmanen in der Welt. Wahrnehmungen, Begegnungen und Abgrenzungen/Illuminating the Ottoman World. Perceptions, Encounters and Boundaries. Festschrift Hans Georg Majer*, ed. Yavuz Köse, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2012, p. 117.

44 *Mirzayi* is a type of textile, probably made of silk, see Reindl-Kiel, *ibid.*, p. 117.

45 See an Indian *makrama* as a gifted item. Reindl-Kiel, "Power and Submission", p. 57.

46 BOA, DBŞM.SRH.d., 20605.

47 Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Düğünleri ve Şenlikleri 4-5*, p. 488.

48 Thomas Coke, *A True Narrative of The Great Solemnity of The Circumcision of Mustapha Prince of Turkie Eldest Son of Sultan Mahomet Present Emperour of The Turks. Together With and Account of The Marriage of His Daughter To His Great Favourite Mussaib At Adrianople, As It Was Sent In A Letter To Person of Honor*, Printed by James Cottrell for William Crook, at the Green Dragon without Temple-bar, London 1676.

49 Abdi and Hezarfen Hüseyin mentioned that the chief architect, Ahmed Agha, paraded with carpenters and apprentices: İlgürel, *Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi*, p. 229; Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Düğünleri ve Şenlikleri 4-5*, p. 504.

50 One of these registers used here is housed in BOA, DBŞM.SRH.d., 20605; For a complementary gift register, see Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi Defterleri (hereafter: TSMA.d.), 154, H-01.03.1086/26.05.1675, and for its transliteration, see Şaduman Tuncer, "The Ottoman Imperial Festival of 1675: An Attempt at Historical Contextualization," Unpublished master's thesis, Fatih University, Istanbul 2011. A more recent study of the subsequent imperial festival in 1720 reveals that, in preparation for the 1720 circumcision festival, the artisans inquired of the royal court's steward (*kethüda*) as to what items they should offer: Erdoğan-İşkorkutan, *The 1720 Imperial Circumcision Celebrations in Istanbul*, p. 198.

wrote that gifts “were not left to the liberty and generosity of the Presenter, but they were taxt they should give, and an Officer appointed to survey the quality of them; which if not approved, was returned, and perhaps augmented: for in this Country it’s no ill manners to *look a gift-Horse in the Mouth*”⁵¹. According to T. Coke’s observations: Firstly, the act of giving gifts was not left to the arbitrary choice of the giver; secondly, it was acceptable to express criticism regarding the gifts; and third if the gifts were not adequately valued, there was the possibility of returning them⁵².

Still, the festival provided a valuable opportunity to showcase their artistic creations, which potentially would result in financial rewards. François Pétis de la Croix, the secretary of the French ambassador, tells us about his observations about the artisans’ pageantry and how the sultan, who expressed his great enthusiasm for the tanners’ procession, and thus generously remunerated them with one of the most substantial amounts:

“The march of the tanners seemed to me the most beautiful of all, it began with sixty boys, differently dressed in the skins of animals of various species, of which they wore a face filled with straw and very well formed on the shoulder, there were lions, tigers, leopards, bears, wolves, foxes & deer wolves, ermines, martens, weasels, hares, rabbits, dogs, cats, & finally of all the animals of which they are used for the ornament of men.

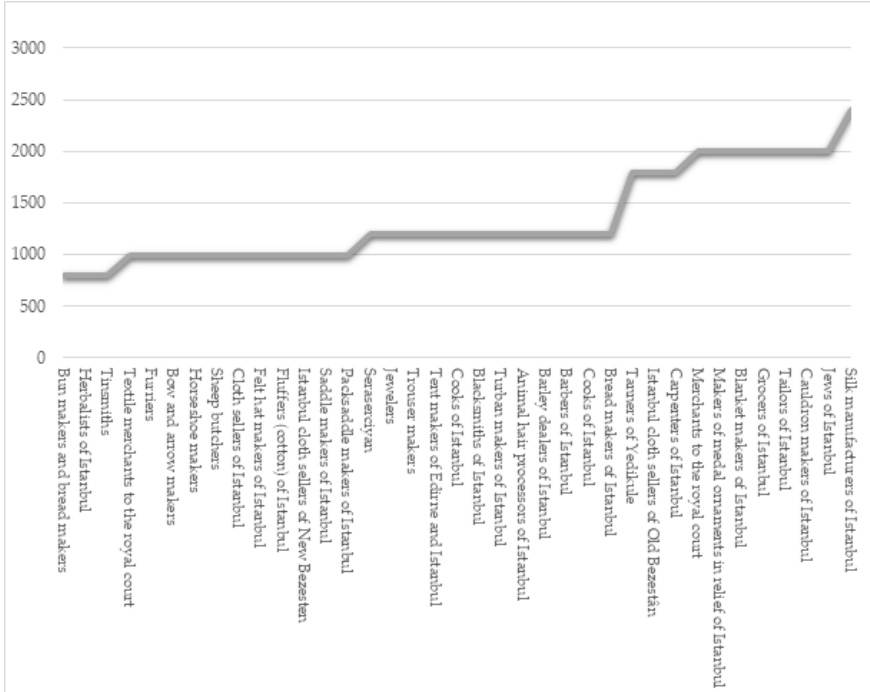
They were followed by thirty-six others, whose crew was quite gallant, they had donned the skin of a tiger and la tarque, wore a large round cap on their head, with a sable edge half a foot high, and they accompanied a shop covered with sable marten, lined inside with a quantity of very precious skins, and one can say that the richest spoils of all these animals appeared in this ceremony, the Masters having adorned themselves with the most precious furs that they had in their stores”⁵³.

51 Coke, *A True Narrative of The Great Solemnity*, p. 3.

52 Coke, *ibid*, p. 3.

53 François Pétis de la Croix, *Mémoires du Sieur, Cy-Devant Secrétaire de l’Ambassade de Constantinople*, Seconde Partie, Paris 1684, pp. 118-119.

Graph 1: The Value and the Recipients (Artisans, Jews, and Others) of the Sultan’s Gifts (*Atiyye*)⁵⁴



The gifts given by the sultan ranged from minimum 800 to maximum 2,400. Silk merchants’ guild (*gazzazan*) received a substantial amount. As mentioned above, the tanners received one of the largest sums because of their splendid performance. However, F. Pétis de la Croix stated that those who delivered the most opulent gifts did not necessarily receive large sums. Those who received the highest amount included the silk manufacturers, cauldron makers (*kazgancıyan*), tailors, grocers, blanket makers, and Jews (no indication that they belonged to any guild) of Istanbul⁵⁵. The aforementioned graph also lists the five people or groups

54 The table is based on a register kept by the chief treasurer: BOA, DBŞM.d., 20605; The register contains information about the sultan’s gifts, unlike the register of gifts in BOA, TSMA.d., 154. The monetary value of the sultan’s gift was specified in the first register only.

55 According to Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, the tentmakers received three thousand and the blanket makers received one thousand as gifts from the sultan. His account, however, contradicted the official records, stating that the tent makers earned less than half of that amount while the blanket makers received double. Hezarfen also mentions Jewish merchants, carpenters, jewelers,

who were directly employed by the royal court to fulfill specific requirements⁵⁶, including the merchants (*bazarganan-ı Rikab-ı Hümayun*), the *seraserçyan* who were the makers of the textile made of silk, silver, and gold (*Rikab-ı Hümayun seraserçyan*), the makers of silk cloth, the head of the jewelers (*kethüda-yı kuyumçyan*), who provided, for instance an exclusive item, a hand fan embellished with pearls⁵⁷, the head of the bread makers (*Ekmekçibaşî Dilaver Agha*), and the head of cooks (*El-Hac Hüseyin Agha*)⁵⁸.

According to the chief treasurer's official records, sixty guilds presented gifts to the sultan along with the patriarch of Istanbul and the Jews of Edirne and Istanbul (*Edirne Yahudileri* and *Asitanede Sakin Yahudiler*)⁵⁹.

Table 2 provides data that the sultan received gifts from a total of sixty guilds, with thirty-four of these guilds located in Istanbul and the remaining twenty-six guilds in Edirne.

Table 2: Guilds of Istanbul and Edirne⁶⁰

Istanbul Guilds		Edirne Guilds	
1	Animal hair-processors	35	Animal hair processors
2	Arrow and bow makers	36	Arrow and bow makers
3	Barbers	37	Barbers
4	Barley dealers	38	Barley dealers
5	Blacksmiths	39	Blacksmiths
6	Blanket makers	40	Blanket makers

bakers, herbalists, quilted turban makers, and felt hat makers who received varying monetary compensations: İlgürel, *Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi*.

56 The number of palace artisans (*ehl-i hireff*) dropped at the end of the seventeenth century. Before 1675, the number of silk manufacturers serving the royal court decreased by around half. See *Resim 4* in Yaman, *Sarayın Terzileri*, p. 24, and pp. 28-29.

57 BOA, DBŞM.SRH.d., 20605.

58 BOA, DBŞM.SRH.d., 20605.

59 BOA, DBŞM.SRH.d., 20605. According to F. Pétis de la Croix, Ottoman Jews did not dare to raise their eyes when parading. Pétis de la Croix, *Memoires du Sieur*, pp. 114-115; For the religious hierarchy in the Ottoman Empire, see Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, p. 120.

60 Table 2 excludes individual posts because they directly served the royal court.

7	Bread makers	41	Bootmakers
8	Cauldron makers	42	Bun makers and millers
9	Candlemakers	43	Candlemakers
10	Cattle butchers	44	Carpenters
11	Cloth sellers	45	Cloth Sellers of Bezestan
12	Cloth sellers of New Bezestan	46	Cooks
13	Cloth sellers of Old Bezestan	47	Cooks of sheep heads
14	Cooks	48	Fluffer
15	Cooks of sheep head	49	Quilted-turban makers
16	Felt hat makers	50	Jewelers
17	Fluffers	51	Packsaddle makers
18	Furriers	52	Saddlers
19	Grocers	53	Shoe-tip makers
20	Quilted-turban makers	54	Silk manufacturers
21	Herbalist	55	Slave dealers
22	Merchants of Egyptian Bazaar	56	Sword makers
23	Packsaddle makers	57	Tailors
24	Saddlers	58	Tanners
25	Second-hand dealers	59	Tentmakers
26	Sheep butchers	60	Trouser makers
27	Shoe-tip makers		
28	Silk manufacturers		
29	Sword and knife makers		
30	Tailors		
31	Tanners		
32	Tent Makers		
33	Tinsmith		
34	Trouser-makers		

3. On the Other Side of the Coin: The Burden and the Benefits of the Festival

Based on textual evidence from contemporary observers, there are indications that people partook in gossip and shared information regarding the sultan's monetary acquisition through gifts, as well as the management of overall expenses by the royal court during the festival, which occurred within the context of war. More specifically, in his diary, John Covel, an English witness of the festival, made mention of the presence of stories pertaining to the sultan's financial benefits derived from the gifts⁶¹. He wrote: "it is commonly reported that the cost of all these sports, etc., come to 12,000 purses of money, whereas his presents come to at least 32,000 purses, each purse being 500 doll.; so he gained 20,000 purses, or 10,000,000 dollars, which, at 4s. 6d. the dollar, makes 2,250,000 lb. sterling"⁶².

John Shirley, who published *The History of the Turks* (1684) in London approximately nine years after the festival⁶³, however, described the predicament encountered by the Ottoman court because of the financial burdens incurred from previous military endeavors and extravagant festivities and thus resorted to selling properties, which ultimately proved inadequate in covering expenses. As a result, the Ottoman court implemented a reduction in both the pensions allocated to military troops and their overall numbers⁶⁴. J. Shirley highlighted the pressing economic challenges that the Ottoman court encountered immediately following the event. The assertions made by the official Ottoman chroniclers during that era corroborate the claim that the Ottoman court made the decision to close the Galata Palace

61 With the following, James C. Scott explains the power of gossip to sanction against the powerful: "...Bitter criticism via gossip is also used routinely by those at the bottom of the caste system to destroy the reputation of their high-caste superiors. Gossip, even in its strong form of character assassination, is a relatively mild sanction against the powerful. It presupposes not only a face-to-face community, but also one in which a reputation is still of some importance and value." James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, Yale University Press, 1990, p. 143.

62 The British Library, Additional (hereafter: BL., Add.) MS 22912, John Covel, *Autograph Journal of Dr. John Covel During His Travels in Asia and Italy*, 1670-1678, 201r.

63 Additional research is needed to uncover John Shirley's association with the Ottomans, given that he published numerous works for the English audience, capitalizing on the growing demand among English readers in the late seventeenth century. Anders Ingram's comprehensive study on knowledge production concerning the Ottomans in early modern England emphasizes the challenges posed by the ambiguous records related to individuals like John Shirley. Anders Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans: Turkish History in Early Modern England*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 123-127.

64 John Shirley, *The History of the Turks*, Printed by Ralph Holt and John Richardson for Thomas Passinger, William Thackery, and Thomas Sawbridge, 1683, p. 345.

and İbrahim Pasha Palace in Istanbul and the Old Palace of Edirne⁶⁵. To acquire additional financial resources, the Old Palace of Edirne was sold to the treasurer for a total of eighty purses. Paul Rycaut, the English Consul at Smyrna (İzmir), made notable contributions to the documentation of financial events in the period under consideration through his works, namely *The Turkish History* (1687)⁶⁶ and its successor edition, *History of the Turks* (1701)⁶⁷. Based on his accounts, in an effort to augment the state treasury's financial resources, the office of Cairo was sold, and the chief customer was removed from his position, so facilitating the transfer of a monetary sum to the treasury. Although P. Rycaut argued against the necessity of festival spending, it is also important to acknowledge that the festival served as a means to showcase Ottoman dominance, secure its longevity, and establish political alliances during the continuing war.

J. Covell further documented noteworthy gifts presented by Mustafa Pasha, the *kaimmakam*/deputy grand vizier, citing their significant market as a compelling illustration⁶⁸. Based on J. Covell's calculations, the monetary value of the pasha's contributions to the sultan reached 64,520 dollars. Additionally, the gifts to the elder heir were valued at 25,000 dollars while those given to the younger heir were evaluated at 10,000 dollars. Regardless of the precision of his calculation, it appears that the festival yielded certain economic benefits for the Ottoman court.⁶⁹ On the other side of the medal was, for example Ali Pasha, the grand admiral (*Kapudan*), who borrowed to get priceless offerings. His gifts included a curved saber

65 Derin, *Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa Vekâyi'-nâmesi*, p. 447; Özcan, *Şübde-i Vekayîât*, pp. 68-69; Ziya Yılmaz, *İsâ-zâde Târîhi (Metin ve Tahlîl)*, Istanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, Istanbul 1996, pp. 144-145.

66 Paul Rycaut, *The Turkish History*, Vol. 2, Printed for Tho. Basset, at the George near St. Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet, London 1687, p. 254.

67 Paul Rycaut, *History of the Turks, Comprehending the Origin of That Nation, and the Growth of the Othoman Empire, with the Lives and Conquests of Their Several Kings and Emperors*, Vol 2, Printed for Isaac Cleave in Chancery-Lane, Abel Roper, A. Bosvile and Ric. Basset in Fleetstreet, London 1701, p. 212.

68 Özdemir Nutku does not reference any records of *kaimmakam*'s gifts from J. Covell's diary. BL., Add., MS 22912, John Covell, *Autograph Journal of Dr. John Covell During His Travels in Asia and Italy, 1670-1678, 200r and 200v*. In contrast to the English accounts, the French records lacked any specific mention of the monetary value associated with the gifts presented, solely focusing on documenting the gifted materials.

69 According to Halil İnalçık, there were two types of treasuries. Gifts as income went to the one called palace treasury under the control of the sultan. For more details about two types of treasuries, please see Halil İnalçık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi, 1300-1600*, Vol. 1, ed. Halil İnalçık-Donald Quataert, Eren Yayıncılık, Istanbul 2000, p. 117; See the gifts among a governor's income and expense in the early 1670s. Faroqi, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi*, p. 693.

(*şemşir*) with a jeweled grasp, nine silver tankards, five silver bowls with the pitcher, nine *Istanbul seraseri*⁷⁰, nine bloomy (*çiçekli*) velvet garments (*donluk*)⁷¹, nine satins, interwoven with silver or gold threads (*telli atlas*)⁷², nine pieces of cashmere shawl fabric (*şal-ı keşmiri*), nine *sade hatayi donluk*⁷³, nine Indian *kutni*⁷⁴, nine embossed⁷⁵ satins⁷⁶, for which he had to borrow 36,000 *akçes* from Eyüp Efendi and 8,616 *guruş* from Yasef⁷⁷. Despite the fact that gift-giving may have helped him retain his position and provided him with additional benefits, he and presumably other high-ranking officials may bear some of the financial burdens of the festival by providing expensive gifts.

Like upper class people, ordinary people were expected to contribute to the festival. As such, although he seems ultimately failed to tax them, a local judge named Esseyid Mehmed asked the residents of the Yenişehir *kazası* for 4,000 *guruş* for the festival and 5,000 *akça* for the military⁷⁸. The available information is

70 In the type of *Istanbul seraser*, “a cloth with warp and weft from silk with an additional thread of silver or gold in the west.” Reindl-Kiel, “Luxury, Power Strategies, and the Question of Corruption”, p. 115.

71 *Donluk*, “white fabric for a garment.” Reindl-Kiel, *ibid*, p. 112.

72 *Atlas*, a “light satin.” Reindl-Kiel, *ibid*, p. 112. For *telli*, please see Hedda Reindl-Kiel, “The Empire of Fabrics: The Range of Fabrics in the Gift Traffic of the Ottomans”, in *Inventories of Textiles—Textiles in Inventories: Studies on Late Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture*, ed. Thomas Ertl-Barbara Karl, Vienna University Press, 2017, pp. 143-164.

73 *Hatayi*, “a stiff fabric woven from silk thread”: Reindl-Kiel, “Luxury, Power Strategies, and the Question of Corruption”, p. 117.

74 *Kutni*, “a blend of cotton (or flax) and silk in the warp and pure silk in the weft; sometimes warp and weft are of silk; modern kutnu resembling rep, in old days the weaving structure was close to atlas”: Reindl-Kiel, “The Empire of Fabrics”, p. 162.

75 *Taraklı*, please see Reindl-Kiel, *ibid*, p. 163.

76 Cited by Tuncer, “The Ottoman Imperial Festival of 1675”, p. 94; This record did not include the sultan’s gifts in return to the artisans. For the gifts of the artisans working for the needs of the royal court, see BOA, DBŞM.SRH.d., 20605.

77 Ali Pasha died in the festival year. From his estate inventory (*tereki malı*), Eyüp Efendi demanded 74,400 *akçes* back, which doubled the price of the gift: Çoşkun Yılmaz, *Istanbul Kadı Sicilleri İstanbul Mahkemesi 18 Numaralı Sicil (H.1086-1087/M.1675-1676)*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi (İSAM) (2010), pp. 188-189; For his debt to Yasef, see *ibid*, pp. 201-202; The local court records of Edirne provide information about people of different backgrounds and their estate inventories, but not about those like Kapudan Ali Pasha who owed money to finance his expenses for gifts at the festival: See for example a case from the festival year in BOA, MŞH – Meşihat – MŞH.ŞSC.d., 3925, H-1086/1675, p. 56.

78 Hans Georg Majer, *Das Osmanische Registerbuch der Beschwerden (Şikayet Defteri) vom Jahre 1675*, Österreichisches Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1984, p. 143 a/6. To see a more recent

insufficient to ascertain whether local authorities have also failed in other locations. Nonetheless, the Yenişehir case clearly illustrates the multidimensional nature of the festival's challenges, which could potentially spark opposition.

Despite its burdens, the festival required a substantial quantity of slave and non-slave labor and also provided job opportunities including various artisans and laborers⁷⁹. The works included organizing a semicircular main festival area and constructing seven royal tents next to the imperial palace⁸⁰. The sultan's tent was set up first, followed by the tent of the grand vizier. The tents of the chief treasurer, the deputy grand vizier, and the chief of the Janissaries were erected. All these were the massive tents built for the daily royal banquets given to Ottoman dignitaries; the royal tents that stood in 'majestic immobility'⁸¹ were equipped with a wooden platform that enabled the spectators to observe the entertainment and gift-giving ceremonies. According to available sources, two thousand Janissaries, including those employed by the royal palace, labored to create this environment⁸². Furthermore, the chief architect, along with a group of carpenters (*neccaran*), measured the processional path. They proceeded to remove the eaves of certain houses and the wall of the inn where *nahuls* were made. The production of artificial trees and candy gardens was undertaken by candy makers (*şekerçiyan*) and carpenters. The illuminators (*işareçiyan*) were responsible for providing illumination throughout the nighttime hours. Simultaneously, the performers (*hanendegan*, *sazendegan*, *mukallidan*, *lu'debazan*) sang and danced whereas the *tulumcus*⁸³ amused the crowd while ensuring the safety of the festival square⁸⁴.

study of the same source, refer to Haim Gerber, *Oppression and Salvation: Annotated Legal Documents from the Ottoman Book of Complaints of 1675*, Klaus Schwarz Verlag GmbH, Berlin 2018.

79 Among those who provided service at the festival were cooks and water carriers. For further details, see Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Düşünleri ve Şenlikleri 4-5*.

80 Péris de la Croix, *Mémoires du Sieur*, pp. 94-95.

81 Albert Vandal, *L'odyssée d'un Ambassadeur: les Voyages du Marquis de Nointel, 1670-1680*, Plon-Nourrit et cie, Paris 1900, p. 197.

82 Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Düşünleri ve Şenlikleri 4-5*, p. 492.

83 Abdülkadir Özcan, *Żübde-i Vekayât, Tahsil ve Metin (1066-1116-1656-1704)*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1995, p. 63. In the circumcision festival of 1720, *tulumcus* for example included porters, saddlers, shield makers, painters, candy makers, shoemakers, gunsmiths, and barbers. Some *tulumcus* were artisans' sons. For more details, please consult Sinem Erdoğan-İşkorkutan, "Kımmış Bu Tulumcular?" *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol. 297, 2018, p. 35.

84 Although, as Abdi stated, they did not offer gifts to the sultan, the firework makers, illuminators and *tulumcus* marched around the festival square, just like the guilds who paraded upfront: Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Düşünleri ve Şenlikleri 4-5*, p. 503.

In addition, the acrobats, illuminators, and fireworks makers (*fıŷengciyan*)⁸⁵ (for their wages, see Table 3) were in charge of putting on a well-rehearsed performance, taking the stage after the parading guilds. As the sun set, the firework makers, including the artillerymen/gunners, took over the festival's inner circle of the festival to perform pyrotechnic arts⁸⁶. In a more specific context, hired men (*ırgadan*) were responsible for arranging and preparing the firework display at Ayiŷe Hatun Khan/*Ekmekciade* Khan, and slaves were tasked with the transportation of the *nahuls* along the streets of Edirne, leading to the designated festival site⁸⁷. A significant number of slaves under the Imperial Admiralty (*Tersane-i Amire*) were furthermore employed in the construction of ships and galleys for the purpose of facilitating the production of fireworks⁸⁸. For the fireworks conducted each night of the circumcision festival, the firework makers collaborated with carpenters, laborers, box makers (*kutucu*), lathe makers (*çıkrukçıyan*), bookbinders (*mücellidan*), ironsmiths (*ahengeran*), and bronzesmiths (*ustadiye cereyan-ı nevadd-ı tuŷ*)⁸⁹.

Table 3: Wages Received by Those in the Firework Displays⁹⁰

	Names	Total Wages (in akçe)
1	Firework makers ⁹¹	251,192
2	Hired men	31,160

85 Those in the fireworks business received daily wages, however, Table 4 shows only the total amount each group received: BOA, DBŷM.SRH.d., 295, H-01.08.1086/21.10.1675.

86 For a detailed analysis of the pyrotechnical shows, see M. Fatih Torun, "The 1675 Imperial Festival and Firework Makers in an Ottoman Register", *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* Vol. 8/ No. 2, 2021, pp. 147-176.

87 Pétis de la Croix, *Memoires du Sieur*, pp. 92-93; BL., Add., MS 22912, John Covell, *Autograph Journal of Dr. John Covell During His Travels in Asia and Italy*, 1670-1678, 195v; For some more details, see Efdal Sevinçli, "Festivals and their Documentation: Surnames Covering the Festivities of 1675 and 1724", in *Celebration, Entertainment and Theatre in the Ottoman World*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi-Arzu Öztürkmen, Seagull Books, London; New York; Calcutta 2014, pp. 192-198

88 Pétis de la Croix, *Memoires du Sieur*, pp. 92-93.

89 Firework required materials such as iron, paper, wood, and, as the dirtiest, the preparation of black powder.

90 The table originates from Table 12 in Torun, "The 1675 Imperial Festival and Firework Makers in an Ottoman Register", p. 168.

91 Although there were more than six firework makers, only six were mentioned with wages and provisions totaling 251,192 akçes, including the amount received by Turmuş Agha, who was in charge of the firework displays' management in the festival: BOA, DBŷM.SRH.d., 295.

3	Carpenters	15,865
4	Lathe makers	7,700
5	Bookbinders	5,815
6	Ironsmiths	3,800
7	Box makers	2,315
8	Bronzesmiths	720

As shown in Table 3, the majority of festival artisans who labored behind the scenes of the festival were not compensated individually. Thus, individual payments cannot be determined precisely due to the absence of supporting evidence. Whether they received a satisfactory amount or not, or whether participating in the festival was something obligatory or not, artisans seem to discover potential opportunities to showcase their products and to secure their livelihoods for a while.

4. A Military Tone: Actively Involved Artisans and Auxiliary Artisans

The guilds that paraded during the circumcision festival of 1675 followed similar logic to the military campaign in 1672⁹²; according to Antoine Galland, at least 3,000 guild members demonstrated their crafts through Istanbul's streets in 1672⁹³. He stated that apprentices and master artisans participated in the march of the guilds, some of whom were armed, while others were unarmed and mixed with imperial soldiers⁹⁴. In the seventeenth century, several actively involved guilds in Istanbul were staffed with military personnel. Bread makers/bakers, knife makers, cooks of sheep feet, tanners, shoe-tip makers, and quilted turban makers are among the Istanbul guilds that are known to have had military elements and were represented at the 1675 festival, though not necessarily on the main stage, indicating that the line between artisans and soldiers was becoming blurred.⁹⁵ Concerning the guild pageant, comparable scenes were observed

92 Özdemir Nutku's claim that the days of the guild parades were arranged in alphabetical order is misleading. Nutku, *IV. Mehmet'in Edirne Şenliği*, pp. 73-74.

93 Nahid Sırrı Örik, *Antoine Galland: İstanbul'a Ait Günlük Hâtıralar (1672-1673)*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1987, p. 112.

94 Örik, *ibid.*, p. 110.

95 Eunjeong Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul: Fluidity and Leverage*, Brill, Leiden 2004, pp. 139-140; Cemal Kafadar, "Janissaries and Other Riffraff of Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels Without a Cause?" *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, Vol. 13/No. 1-2, 2007, pp. 113-134, provide additional information on such relationship. Please also see Nalan Turna, *The Artisans and*

at the festival in 1675 (see Table 1), regardless of whether or not they were the same army artisans. Aside from the pageants, they served practical purposes: while butchers slaughtered sheep, tanners processed their hides, bakers provided soldiers with daily bread, tailors repaired their uniforms, shoemakers made shoes, *eskicis*/second-hand shoe sellers/repairers sold or repaired shoes, gardeners and fruit sellers provided vegetables and fruits, and candlemakers (*mumciyan*) created lighting.

The participation of artisans in the festivals appears to be less demanding than the logistical support they provided to the army or navy during war campaigns⁹⁶. The issue was inextricably linked to the requirement that artisans⁹⁷ were compelled to provide services or pay taxes for campaigns or festivals⁹⁸. In the seventeenth century and later, the state required direct services from artisans in Istanbul, Edirne, and Bursa while collecting army taxes from other cities to meet its growing requirements⁹⁹. In a nutshell, the artisans assisted the state in resolving labor shortage issues and supplying utensils and taxes¹⁰⁰. Those who did not join the army in this respect

Janissaries of Istanbul Before and After the Auspicious Event, 1808-1839, Libra Kitap, Istanbul 2022.

96 Faroqhi, "Guildsmen and Handicraft Producers", p. 47.

97 Donald Quataert gives an overall picture that over time, craft guilds and corvee labor declined and the workforce contracted freely rose: Donald Quataert, "Introduction", in *Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500-1950*, ed. Donald Quataert, State University of New York, Albany 1994, pp. 1-12.

98 Artisans were required to accompany the army like the Rumelian nomads who had lost their tribal ties and formed military units called *ocaks*; Each of which *ocak* sent members to serve in the army, while the rest supplied tents, horses, and weapons for the armies: Faroqhi, "Labor Recruitment and Control in the Ottoman Empire", p. 36. Like artisans who were assigned to accompany the soldiers, peasants supplied the stopping points along the army routes. The disadvantage of the system was that peasants were paid little or nothing for their services and artisans could not fully cover their expenses. Istanbul artisans, more specifically, paid a tax servicing as rowers in the navy. Already, and in general, guilds paid 'irregular' taxes, such as the army tax (*ordu akçesi*) and the shovel tax (*kiirek ve kazma akçesi*), and regular market taxes (*ihtisab*). Such irregular taxes had become routine sometime in the first half of the seventeenth century, which is not surprising given the ongoing wars, changing military technology, and fiscal depletion. Although we do not know exactly how high these 'irregular' taxes were or when exactly they were regulated along with the pre-existing market taxes, they must have been so high, at least on occasion, that some guilds established special funds to help pay such taxes. For more details, see Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul*: 84-85; for some detail, please see Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve Ekonomi*, Ötüken Neşriyat AŞ, 2000, p. 293.

99 Bülent Çelik, "Osmanlı Seferleri'nde Orducu Esnafı'nın Fonksiyonları", *Vakıvîvi- Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 3/ No. 1, 2018, p. 141.

100 Quataert, "Introduction", p. 10.

stayed behind and contributed as auxiliaries (*yamaks*)¹⁰¹. Even during the actual combat, army artisans¹⁰² supplied the central army with weapons and equipment. They also accompanied the sultans on royal hunts, assisted in the construction of buildings and naval vessels, and served pilgrims visiting sacred sites¹⁰³. Therefore, their participation as army artisans and auxiliaries was crucial to the success of the campaign and attendant royal festivals¹⁰⁴. During campaigns, the auxiliaries were required to contribute funds to the actively involved guilds¹⁰⁵. Throughout the seventeenth century, the Ottoman state reserved the right to compel their recruitment, leaving them with no choice. Thus, regardless of whether they were the actively involved guilds or auxiliaries, they were demanded to contribute¹⁰⁶.

101 Çelik, “Osmanlı Seferleri’nde Orducu Esnafı’nın Fonksiyonları”, pp. 142-145; For archival examples concerning practices on army artisan from different times, see BOA, A. {DVNSMHHM.d., 91/8; BOA, Ali Emiri – Mustafa II (AE.SMST.II), 70/7506, H-09.03.1115/23.07.1703.

102 For how to recruit the army artisans, see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilatından Kapıkulu Ocakları: Acemi Ocağı ve Yeniçeri Ocağı*, Vol. 1, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1988, pp. 368-373.

103 Çelik, “Osmanlı Seferleri’nde Orducu Esnafı’nın Fonksiyonları”, p. 145; In addition to their own specific job in the campaign, the army artisans dug a tunnel beneath, repaired the castles, or worked on repairing Istanbul’s waterway arches and some imperial buildings. Usually it was bakers/bread makers, grocers, cooks and candlemakers recruited as army artisans. When the sultan went hunting and left Istanbul, others, such as saddlers, blacksmiths, barbers, herbalists, barley dealers, and shoe repairers (*eskici*) joined them. Furthermore, army artisans played a role in the Patrona Halil Rebellion (1431/1730), which led to the deposition of Ahmed III. Finally, after the abolition of the Janissary Corps in 1826, thus the practices of army artisans ended: Çelik “Orducu”, pp. 370-373.

104 Çelik, *ibid.*, pp. 370-373.

105 Since the number of artisans organized in guilds had to be certain, those who fell short were considered the *yamaks* of those who did similar work, and they were called “*yamak esnafı*.” For more details, see Feridun Emecen, “Yamak”, in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 43, 2013, pp. 310-311. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/yamak> (accessed: 22.04.2023).

106 The number of actively involved artisans at the 1675 festival was sixty. This was thirteen higher than the 1720 festival. In 1720, twenty-two auxiliary artisans contributed copper items to the celebration, and forty-seven guilds marched in total. Moreover, the broadcloth makers (*çukacıyan*) had no auxiliary during the 1720 festival, unlike in the 1675 festival when they served as the auxiliary for the cloth sellers. That is, the actively involved and auxiliary categories were not always set for certain guilds, as they may change depending on guild negotiations or state needs. For details about those in the 1720 festival, see Table 5 and Table 12 in Erdoğan-İşkorkutan, *The 1720 Imperial Circumcision Celebrations in Istanbul*, pp. 93-94.

Table 4: Auxiliary Artisans and Actively Involved Artisans in the 1675 Festival¹⁰⁷

	Auxiliary Artisans	Actively Involved Artisans
1	Bread makers of Bursa	Bread makers of Edirne
2	Broadcloth makers	Cloth sellers of Istanbul
3	Auxiliary (name not mentioned)	Tentmakers
4	Auxiliary (name not mentioned)	Saddlers
5	Auxiliary (name not mentioned)	Candlemakers
6	Auxiliary (name not mentioned)	Cauldron makers
7	Paper sellers of Istanbul	Herbalists of Istanbul
8	Sellers of dried and fresh fruits	Grocers
9	Sword and knife makers of Istanbul	Makers of medal ornaments in relief

A later document depicts the actively involved and auxiliary artisans to the festival: the broadcloth sellers and the cloth sellers of the Istanbul Bezeistan both were present at the festival. In 1720, however, the court's head merchant (in charge of the palace's purchases) considered the cloth dealers to be his auxiliary and pressed them to contribute more. The dispute was heard in a local court, where the judge rejected the chief merchant's claims while validating the broadcloth sellers' contribution to the 1675 festival, allowing them to avoid incurring additional costs¹⁰⁸. Like the locals in Yenişehir kazası mentioned above, the broadcloth sellers also carried the burden of the festival, but in a different way.

107 This table is based on the information given by Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, Abdi Efendi, Sarı Mehmed Pasha, and the official register located in BOA, DBŞM.SRH.d., 20605.

108 Faroqi, "When the Sultan Planned a Great Feast, Was Everyone in Festive Mood?", pp. 214-215; Another example would be the sherbet makers/sellers (*şerbetçiyan*) who were supposed to contribute to the imperial army's funding like the grocers' auxiliaries. In contrast, despite having provided four tents for the campaign four years earlier, the sherbet makers did not want to participate in the imperial celebration of 1720. In a fruitless attempt to contest the court's decision in 1720, the grocers refused to pay for the imperial celebration. BOA, Ali Emiri – Ahmed III (AE. SAMD.III), 3/220, H-12.06.1133/10.04.1721. For more details, see Erdoğan-İşkorkutan, *The 1720 Imperial Circumcision Celebrations in Istanbul*, p. 198.

Conclusion

This case study of the 1675 festival offers an illustration of how early modern festive occasions often encompassed cultural performances. However, it goes beyond that by analyzing the various roles of different participants, in our case artisans, and delving into their economic, social, and even political ramifications within a broader context. This essay also brings attention to the festival by examining some political, military-financial dynamics of the Ottoman court as well as interactions, negotiations, and indeed confrontations between the rulers and the ruled.

More specifically, in 1675, the Ottoman court celebrated military victories, a political marriage, and the circumcision of heirs with a grand festival. The festival served multiple purposes and was therefore more than just entertainment. Through the organization of this large-scale event, the sultan in Edirne aimed to display the progression of the royal lineage by means of the prospective ruler's ceremonial procession. The sultan sought to reaffirm his status as the most powerful figure and generous ruler in his empire in the eyes of both his subjects and his rivalries. In order to accomplish this, gift ceremonies seem to mend and strengthen ties between the sultan and all of his subjects, including those from the upper and lower classes. While gifts to the sultan or to the heirs were an additional source of wealth, the need to cover the overall expenses of the festival led to the closure of three specific palaces, the sale of some state positions, and the transfer of funds from officials. Despite these measures, it is evident that both the gift-giving lower- and upper-class subjects struggled to afford the extravagantly costly gifts. However, they were not passive recipients, as they, like the aforementioned broadcloth sellers, refused to make additional payments. Others, such as the residents of Yenişehir *kazası*, were also able to resist funding the festival and military campaign. The presence of financial benefits, the burden imposed by the exchange of gifts, and the resistance exhibited by the local population towards officials collectively suggest that the ongoing wars and the magnitude of the festival were inadequate in reinforcing the desired ties during the 1675 imperial festival. Moreover, the attitude of the actively involved and auxiliary artisans at the festival (using army artisans as an example) was both cooperative and uncooperative, indicating their bargaining power and limitations.

On the one hand, the artisans and the slave and non-slave laborers bore the burden of the festival and the military campaigns. On the other hand, they were paid for some of their services (whether satisfactory or not), and they were fortunate if their

gifts and pageants were well received, and they had the opportunity to promote their products and showcase their craftsmanship during their pageants. Since the artisans performed and labored similarly at a festival and a campaign, the actively involved and auxiliary artisans were visible in both, the festival of 1675 had a military tone, and the military had a festive tone with the pageants of the guilds.

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