



The World of Ottoman Guilds: The Issue of Monopoly

Osmanlı Loncalarının Dünyası: Tekel Meselesi

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Abstract

The guilds had a very important position in terms of the socio-economic life of the cities. The need for them in big cities like Istanbul was much higher. The state gave importance to the working flawlessly of the guilds which were implementing a significant function in meeting the state's own and the city public's needs. So as to provide this order, the guilds were working within an agreement that was determining their domestic affairs, production standards, their relations with the state and other guilds. Besides this, the state permitted the determination of the guilds' working fields through monopoly and thus facilitated the business of the guilds.

Key Words: Guild, artisans, monopoly, slot.

Özet

Loncalar şehirlerin sosyo-ekonomik hayatı açısından oldukça önemli bir konumda bulunmaktaydı. İstanbul gibi büyük şehirlerde onlara duyulan ihtiyaç daha da artmaktaydı. Devlet kendisinin ve şehir halkının ihtiyaçlarının karşılanmasında önemli bir işlevi yerine getiren loncaların kusursuz bir şekilde çalışmasına önem vermekteydi. Bu düzeni sağlamak amacıyla loncalar iç işleri, üretim standartlarını, devletle olan ilişkilerini ve diğer loncalarla olan münasebetlerini belirleyen bir nizam dahilinde çalışmaktaydı. Bunun yanı sıra devlet tekel vasıtasıyla loncaların çalışma alanlarının belirlenmesine izin vermekte ve bu sayede loncaların işleyişini kolaylaştırmaktaydı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Lonca, esnaf, tekel, gedik.

Introduction

Especially from the Medieval Age the classes making production in the Middle East and Europe began to come together under the names that were changing from district to district when the financial and social structures in the cities reached to enough growth. In the Ottoman Empire this institution took the name of *lonca*¹(guild). The Ottoman guilds

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¹ It is considered that the word of the "lonca" comes from Italian word "loggia". Ahmet Kal'a, "Lonca," *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, XXVII, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı (TDV), 2003) 211. Actually in the Ottoman sources were generally used *esnaf* and *taife* words. In the court registers the word of *lonca* was began to use extensively after eighteenth century.

which began to develop under the influence of *ahi* community gained distinctive qualities in time.

The guilds that lived their heyday in the 18th century implemented important functions in the city via their organizations². Their functional structure was nothing ignorable for the state as well. The guilds were significant means in terms of providing the livelihood of the public, one of the most important responsibilities of the *sultan*. The state, desiring to prevent the possible malfunctions from occurring in the system, wanted the guilds to work systematically. For this, every guild had a *nizâm* (guild agreement or rules). The functioning and relations of the guild with outside world were connected to these *nizâms* and rules. Besides the state provided the guilds the rights of monopoly and *gedik* (slot or exclusive license) in order to protect their rights and make them work more regularly in the market.

Since the guilds show changes according to time and place, it is required to make distinction according to time and place on the studies that are being achieved³. For this study, while Istanbul was chosen as a place, the second half the 18th century was preferred as the time period. Istanbul, the capital city of the Empire, was also one of the most crowded cities of the time. That the city had immense population led to the guild life here be very active. Compared with other cities of the Empire, in Istanbul there were many guilds in different crafts. For these reasons, Istanbul has an advantageous position in the sense that the guild organizations can be understood. The 18th century however was the time when the Ottoman guilds lived their golden age. In this term, the artisan-state relations were in a progressed level and the guilds had professionalized in their organization and management.

As the guilds carried out important missions in terms of state, the state tried to help them to facilitate their operations. The state gave some rights to guilds to prevent problems and disorders. These were monopoly and *gedik*. The guilds made their monopolies functional with the help of using their *nizâms*.

² Bazaar was the most distinctive feature of the Islamic cities and the most important subject of it, guilds had not only economically but also socially important roles with the organizations they founded. In Cairo, one of the major centers of The Ottoman Empire in the 18th century, the guilds are thought to make up the half of the active population. André Raymond, "The Economy of the Traditional City," in *The City in the Islamic World I*, ed. Salma K. Jayyusi (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 732.

³ For instance, "Istanbul had a very elaborate and sophisticated method of controlling the number of shops in any occupation; a method called *gedik* system, while nearby Bursa had noting of the kind. And then we have the case of Damascus, where almost everything was again different. It seems highly unlikely that one mind was responsible for inventing such a heterogeneous guild system." Haim Gerber, *State, Society and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994) 115. Another example, "as was the case in Bursa, certain elements were from our picture, for example, the religious element (although unlike Istanbul, and in a way reminiscent of contemporary Cairo, the term *Shayhk* was commonly used in Jerusalem in this context without any apparent religious connotation)." Amnon Cohen, *The Gilds of Ottoman Jerusalem* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 5. Although Egyptian guilds had fiscal functions, it was seen that Istanbul guilds did not have this function. Gabriel Baer, "The Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol I, (Jan., 1970) 35.

1. *Nizâm*

Nizâm is a set of rules issued by mostly the guilds and sometimes the state in order to ensure perfect functioning of the guild or prevent possible problems. These written rules were later recorded to the courts. *Nizâm* is a kind of law of the artisans. The distinctive side of this law is that it is made by the artisans themselves. The artisans of a particular guild got together and decide the rules to obey inside and outside of the guild. In this way the artisan law was formed and the guild members acted accordingly after that. The guild administrators tried to solve the problems they encountered in the light of those rules. If the problem was not solved within the guild they went to the court. The first legal source that the court would apply was again the *nizâm* of the guild.

The important point to draw attention here is the autonomy the guilds have while deciding on those rules. There was no restriction for deciding those *nizâms* as long as they did not violate red lines⁴ of the state. The guild autonomy should not be contradictory rule of general law⁵. There could even be totally different *nizâms* belonging to different guilds. This freedom that the guilds had about deciding their own *nizâms* shows the autonomy they had against the state authority.

The guilds' being free in changing their own *nizâms* did not mean they changed it very often. The traditionalist understanding that dominates especially Ottoman economic institutions⁶ showed its effect on the guild system. The guilds made their new *nizâms* if the older one became functionless or when a new guild was formed. This traditionalist understanding can be understood from the following expressions cited in court registers: "kadimü'l-eyyamdan berü, ez kadim, nizâm-ı kadim, ber-mu'tâd-ı kadim, nizâm-ı muteber, kâ'ide-i kadime, şürûtu mer'iyye" etc. It means that the traditionalist structure of the producers influenced also the *nizâms*. For instance, the complaining of the Jewish artisans about the Muslim artisans in the paper-seller guild shows how often the *nizâms* of this particular guild was changed. The Jewish artisans complained in 1727 that the Muslim artisans sold their goods according to the 1653 and 1692 *nizâms* not according to the latest *nizâm* and so they were making undeserved gain⁷. Considering that this court register was dated 1766, it can be clearly seen that the latest *nizâm* was being used for 39 years. Also there had only been two changes in the *nizâm* in the 123 year period.

The traditional rules usually had good connotations for the artisans. If there was an objection to the traditions this was regarded as a negative attitude. However all these did not necessarily mean that the old one was always good and the new one was always bad. As some innovations were against the traditions and the laws they were regarded as negative. There were some interesting reasons for being so devoted to the traditions. For instance, a guild could object to a new tax introduced by the state by simply claiming that it was against the traditions. Or they could object to a new guild warden assigned by the state

⁴ *Narh* can be shown as an example for the state's red line. Especially in the basic needs materials, the kind and quality of the raw material that was to be used in production were under state control. The production that is contrary to the fixed price is one of the most significant reasons why the members of the guild are punished.

⁵ Ahmet Kal'a, *İstanbul Esnaf Birlikleri ve Nizâmları 1* (İstanbul: İstanbul Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1998) 71.

⁶ For more information about this topic, see Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve Ekonomi* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2000) 50.

⁷ İstanbul Şer'iyye Sicili (İŞS) 25: 98.

showing the traditions as an excuse⁸. This shows that they could use their traditions as trump card against the state authority.

Each guild formed their artisan laws on different in accordance with their needs. The most basic topics that artisan laws were prepared for were production, monopoly, deciding the number of masters and shops, quality, raw material distribution and fixed prices⁹.

The court registers are good sources about the *nizâms* as the guilds had to have their artisan laws approved to the courts. One cannot reach many verdicts about *nizâms* in the court registers as the guilds did not change their artisan laws very often. The information needed for this issue can be reached indirectly. If an action was brought to the court with a claim of violation of the artisan law, the rule that this particular action violated was also mentioned in the application letter. This situation enriched the registers in terms of *nizâms*¹⁰.

When the guilds were newly formed or the previous artisan law becomes functionless they made a new artisan law. The most common reason for changing the present artisan law was the fact that it gave harm to the public. For instance, the porters' guild decided on *narh* (fixed prices) for different destinations from the dock to different destinations for the porters to carry goods. However it was indicated that the fee of the oxcart owners who carried timber and different things did not change for a long time. And as this situation gave harm to the public a new artisan law was formed¹¹.

The basic reason behind creation of *nizâms* was to ensure the system to function in a perfect way. For this reason, the responsibilities of the administrators and how the system should work were indicated in the *nizâms*. For instance, the goldsmiths' guild in Istanbul defined the responsibilities of the chief of goldsmiths in its artisan law and defined how the guild should operate. According to this the chief of goldsmiths had the authority to give permission to open a new shop in the jewelry guild to let a new artisan to enter to the guild. The chief of goldsmiths was also responsible for warning and punishing the ones who violated the *nizâm* of the guild¹².

A great sum of raw material and food was coming to Istanbul and there were lots of customers for these goods. For this reason, there were some problems in the distribution and sharing of raw material¹³. As the guilds did not want to experience many problems about this issue the guilds formed artisan laws among and within themselves. These kinds

⁸ Eunjeong Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth Century Istanbul: Fluidity and Leverage* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) 117-118.

⁹ For more information, see Kal'a, *İstanbul Esnaf Birlikleri ve Nizâmları I*.

¹⁰ If there is a situation against guild agreement, the guild members complaint the situation to the court and they show their old agreement as a proof. For instance, brooms-maker in their application to the court "1197 senesi Şa'ban tarihiyle müverrah der-kenar olunub yedimizde olan emr-i şerîf-i alişanda zıkr ve beyan ve ayan kılındığı üzere mısırî süpürgesi kadîmü'l-eyyamdan berü..." with these statements they pointed out their old agreement. İŞS 62: 23a.

¹¹ İŞS 25: 70b.

¹² İŞS 43: 59.

¹³ Robert Mantran, *17. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında İstanbul I*, trans. Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay, Enver Özcan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1990) 167.

of artisan laws were observed in the guilds which were crowded or the ones which use the same raw material even if they were doing different jobs. For instance, the six shares of sugar coming to Istanbul was divided among perfumers, sugar seller, sugar candy seller guilds with the help of a *nizâm*¹⁴. According to this, the perfumers' guild was getting three and half shares of the sugar coming from the country and sugar seller and candy seller guilds were getting two and half shares. Boot makers, cobblers and merchants' guilds formed a *nizâm* to share the morocco leather and leather coming from Anatolia and Thrace. According to this, the raw materials were being brought to *loncayeri* in the market by comptroller of the customs after their customs tax was paid and it was being distributed among those guilds by guild wardens and *yiğitbaşıs*¹⁵.

The bread makers and butchers' guilds were depended on their *nizâms* more than others as they were more crowded than other guilds and they were providing the society with food. Also, the state control over those guilds was more than others¹⁶. The butcher guilds were totally import depended. In order not to have problems in sharing the goods the rules were determined and put with the *nizâms*. According to a butcher *nizâm*, the weak and fat sheeps coming to Istanbul were being distributed to the butchers by means of lottery by the head butcher and elder masters in order to prevent any discussions over the quality of the sheep shared. 160 of each sheep drove were being given to butchers of Valide Sultan Mosque and 200 of them were given to Eğrikapı butchers¹⁷. In another butchers *nizâm*, the sheep coming to Istanbul could only be distributed by the head butcher, butchers guild warden and elder masters¹⁸.

A new *nizâm* was becoming operant only after it was accepted and approved by the court. For this reason, it was very important to publicize the *nizâm* before it becomes operant. However it was not that easy with crowded artisans which had more than one guild in one city like bread-makers. One record of bread makers' guild dated 1765 tells how a new *nizâm* was announced to the artisans. According to this, the bread makers' guild warden, artisan law masters and 150 bread makers gathered around the court. The new *nizâm* rules were announced to them there and the questions of the artisans regarding the new rules were answered there¹⁹. Another record belonging to Galata bread makers' guild gives information about one of their *nizâm*. According to this, the bread makers were producing two kinds of breads, pure bread and white bread and they sold those breads in accordance with the *narh* determined by the *nizâm*. However, the bread makers complained that some of the bread-makers were making a new type of bread. As a result a new *nizâm* was made. According to the new *nizâm* it was stated that the ones who make breads different from the *narh* described in the *nizâm* would be punished²⁰. According to bread

¹⁴ İŞS 25: 87c.

¹⁵ İŞS 62: 5b.

¹⁶ For instance, in Jerusalem, "bakers and butchers were strictly forbidden to leave even for a short while, if they wished to do so, they had to apply for permission and often had to provide a replacement. Moreover, millers and bakers were made personally responsible for the uninterrupted supply of good quality bread to the populace." Gerber, *State, Society and Islam*, 125.

¹⁷ İŞS 25: 3a.

¹⁸ İŞS 25: 83b.

¹⁹ İŞS 25: 7b.

²⁰ Galata Şeriyeye Sicili 479: 15.

makers guilds' *nizâm*, if owner of a bake house dies or runs away due to bankruptcy, his belongings were being sold by the guild and his debt was paid in this way²¹.

The guilds could form *nizâms* about many different topics besides above mentioned basic issues. For instance, the straw-mat makers' guild mentioned the conditions to be met in order to be accepted to the guild as a master in their *nizâm*. According to this, if a master in the guild dies without having any sons to continue his job a new master could replace him among the masters of the guild and no interference from outside could affect this process²². The sherbet sellers' *nizâm* determined the number of masters and shops according to their religions. According to this, the muslims could have 14 masters and 23 shops, non-muslims could have 13 masters and 17 shops and Jews 85 masters and 110 shops²³.

Almost all of the *nizâms* explain how the people who violate the rules would be punished. The interesting point here is that the type of punishment was also determined by the guild itself. As a result, the rules and punishment was determined by the guild and the qadi was just applying those rules. For instance, in a contract between the candy sellers and sherbet sellers the type of punishment was also determined in case someone did not obey the rules. Up to this, they accept to be punished by servitude on galley if they act against the agreement.²⁴

2. State Guarantee at the Market: Monopoly and *Gedik*

In order for the Ottoman guilds to be able to produce they needed to have some institutional and individual rights and qualifications. These rights were given to the artisans by the state. In this way the state was intervening in the process. This was good for both the state and the artisans. It needs to be mentioned that, at the beginning in the Ottoman system, where there was not free market economy, the state was dependent on the artisans and the guilds and the artisans were depended on the state at the same time. There is no system in which both parties were depended on each other that much. When the state gave production permission to the artisans it was gaining the right to control those guilds. In this way, one of the most important tasks of the state – providing the daily needs of the city, was being ensured; on the other hand, collecting the taxes from the artisans was getting very easy. On the other side, the artisans were gaining some advantages by accepting the state authority. Firstly, one of the most important and difficult issues for the artisans, that is getting necessary raw materials for production, was being handled by the state for the artisans. Secondly, they were protecting their market from other guilds and illegal production. Lastly, they were solving their individual (among the artisans) and institutional (among the guilds) problems with the help of Qadi, who was a state official, and they were registering their contracts to the Qadi.

²¹ İŞS 62: 15a.

²² İŞS 25: 46a.

²³ İŞS 43: 11, 28

²⁴ İŞS 25: 87c.

In order for an artisan to make production he had to have a *gedik*. Similarly, the guilds had to select a monopoly area for their own in order to gain state guarantee for their market and they would sell their goods in that area.

2.1. Monopoly

The Ottoman Empire was benefitting from the guilds in a great extent while actualizing the price and production policies it had determined. Monopoly rights were begun to be given to the guilds both to protect the artisans and not to malfunction this system²⁵. It is known that the artisans of Istanbul had the right of monopoly in the term of Mehmed II when it began to grow²⁶.

In the 18th century the Istanbul artisans who were providing the daily needs of the city had more than one guild. Those guilds were getting themselves a monopoly area in order to work more efficiently and prevent possible problems. They would register those areas to the court this area would belong to a guild from then on. By registering their market area to the court the guilds guaranteed their monopoly areas with state authority. If there was an intervention to their area they would report this to the court. While the artisans are complaining about this, they generally emphasize that the public will suffer from this situation. For instance, the boiled grape-juice sellers complained about the artisans who were selling the boiled grape juice secretly they had brought from periphery although they were barbers. In their complaints, they stated that this interference from the outside increased the prices and thus damaged the public²⁷. By creating monopolies the artisans were also controlling each other. The state's interest in the monopoly system was the taxes. Each artisan having a shop had to pay taxes to the state. However the tax he paid was making him privileged at the state level²⁸. This privilege was being used a lot by the artisans. When we look at some of the verdicts at the court registers we can see that the artisans complained the ones making production out of the guilds claiming that they were not paying taxes²⁹.

In 18th century, the guilds administrations also become a source of tax and began to be sold as life-term tax farms (*malikâne*). So the guilds strengthened their monopoly. In the same period the monopolies spread. The state was not preventing the monopolies; in contrast, it was encouraging them. Because, the state was preventing illegality in this way and also decreasing the tax collection costs. The state was realizing provisionism by increasing production, production quality and easing taxation³⁰.

²⁵ Kal'a, *İstanbul Esnaf Birlikleri ve Nizamları I*, 111.

²⁶ The sherbet sellers in an application they made to Divan stated that: the production of the materials they produced was only peculiar to them from the conquest of Istanbul. C. İKTS (Cevdet İktisad), no: 431. Cited from, Salih Aynural, "18. Yüzyılın Sonunda İstanbul Esnafının Alım ve Satım Tekeli ve Gedik Hakkı," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları* 130 (2001): 215.

²⁷ B.A, C. İKTS, no: 2132.

²⁸ Haim Gerber, *Economy and Society in an Ottoman City: Bursa 1600-1700* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1988) 36.

²⁹ For example, while the gardener was complaining about the artisan who interfered with his monopoly in 1778 he said that they were paying 24000 *akce* taxes per year. B.A, C. BLD (Cevdet Belediye), No: 1938.

³⁰ Mehmet Genç, "Ottoman Industry in the Eighteenth Century: General Framework, Characteristics, and Main Trends," in *Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500- 1950*, ed. Donald Quatert, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994) 62.

Many guilds had their own monopolies in Istanbul. The court registers are rich in this sense. However, a guild discussion covering all of the guilds in Istanbul would make the study rather complicated. For this reason, it would be beneficial to dwell on bread makers' guilds, which will reflect the monopoly issue the best. Bread has been the people's favorite and basic food throughout the history as it is both nutritious and cheap³¹. Istanbul's one of the most crowded guilds were the bread maker guilds. As they were gathering under the umbrella of guilds with different names like *etmekçi*, *francalacı*, *habbazan*, it can be understood that their number was vast. When we consider the reasons causing monopoly, it is clear that it was the bread maker guilds which needed the monopolies the most. Similarly when the court registers are examined many court decisions will be found regarding the monopolies of the bread maker guilds. The most common topics of the court registers are creation of monopoly areas and intervention of another individual or guild to the monopoly area of a particular guild.

The bake houses selling bread were using a unique method to create their monopoly. This was called *iskemle*³². The shops and peddlers (*tabla-kâr*) in Istanbul could buy their breads from only the bake houses listed in the artisan agreement. So the shop was being the *iskemle* of this particular bake house.

The bake houses were registering their *iskemeles* to the courts like their *gediks*. The areas that one particular bake houses has its *iskemle* were regarded as its monopoly area. Only this particular bake house could sell bread to the shops and peddlers in that area. According to the Istanbul bread bake houses' *nizâm*, the bake houses in Istanbul's Eyüp, Galata, Beyoğlu and Üsküdar could only sell their breads in their own districts. Also, each of the 4 bake houses in Istanbul could only have 20 peddlers and they were not allowed to exceed this number³³. In another record, the Istanbul (central) bakers' guild registered their 28 *iskemles* to the court. The regions where those *iskemles* were placed were mentioned in this record³⁴. Also, a bake house in Mercan Çarşısı had seven *iskemles*³⁵. The Çağalazade bake house had 17 *iskemles*³⁶.

The state was trying to provide utmost avail to the each of state-artisan-consumer triple with the monopoly right it provided to the guilds. The formation of this balance was among the state's most outstanding goals of production-consumption policies³⁷. But, in the last quarter of the 18th century it is understood that some malfunctions began to occur in the system. A good deal of data put on the record proves that by abusing the rights of

³¹ Fernand Braudel, *Maddi Uygarlık: Gündelik Hayatın Yapıları*, trans. Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2004) 120.

³² The *iskemlecis* and pedlars played important roles to access of people to bakery products. Their profit margin could change between %10 and %5. It depended on their places. Salih Aynural, *İstanbul Değirmenleri ve Fırınları: Zahire Ticareti* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001) 131.

³³ İŞS 43: 14.

³⁴ *Kaliçeciler Köşkü kurbunda Sahanlu demekle ma'ruf bir bâb ekmekçi fırınına, kadimü'l-eyyamdan berü berbut iskemlelerden odabaşılar Ağakuyusu kubunda, biri bahçe köşesinde, biri Latif Paşa'da, biri Molla Gürani'de, biri Horhor'da, iki Aksaray'da, biri Aksaray hammam civarında kababcı dükkanında, biri Hüsvrev Paşa'da bakkal dükkanında...* İŞS 43: 50

³⁵ İŞS 25: 83c.

³⁶ İŞS 25: 153b.

³⁷ Kal'a, *İstanbul Esnaf Birlikleri ve Nizamları I*, 105.

monopoly the artisans began to increase the prices against the public. It is seen that although the monopoly rights were given to the artisans producing the basic needs materials, artisans tended to monopolize in some crafts which were not needed. For instance, in an imperial edict of 1791 it is noted that every good coming to Istanbul was taken under the monopoly of an artisan and this gave harm to the public by causing the increase of the prices³⁸. In another imperial edict of 1791, it was emphasized that the abolition of the monopolies in the unneeded crafts would cause the abundance of goods and their becoming cheap and accordingly would be beneficial for the public³⁹.

In this term while purchase and sale monopolies were being abolished on the one hand, on the other hand some artisans were objecting to this. Linen weavers claimed that if the monopolies were to be abolished, a linen shop would be opened on each corner and this would give harm to the artisans selling linen in the market and the public⁴⁰. However, these objections could not hinder the abolition of the monopolies in some crafts. In a document of 1794 it was ordered that in the unneeded crafts like the artisans of vegetable the monopolies of the artisans should be abolished and the monopoly records of them be obliterated and anybody who wants can buy and sell it⁴¹.

2.2. *Gedik* (slot or exclusive license)

Gedik maybe the most complicated topic of guild studies. The reason for this is that the boundaries of this system was still not known for sure and its roots could not be explained properly. Also, as the *gedik*'s meaning changes from time to time and place to place the researchers failed in making generalizations on this issue. Another problem one faces in this subject however is that sometimes the *gedik* and monopoly are confused with each other. But, though the right of monopoly was begun to be practiced after the conquest, the *gedik* was begun to be given as a right to the artisans beginning from the 17th century⁴².

Gedik, which is a Turkic word, means "deficiency, weakness, inaccuracy, wreckage and crack." However, its judicial and financial meaning is more important for Ottoman historians⁴³. As a financial term *gedik* means "capability to perform trade and a profession" and "necessary tools and machinery needed to do an art⁴⁴." Even though the expression "person with slot" was used for soldiers and state officials until 18th century it was also used for artisans and merchants⁴⁵. *Gedik*'s judicial meaning has changed among the artisans throughout the history. We can discuss the term slot in two periods. First period was a period when monopoly in trade was impossible. In this period, *gedik* was getting its meaning from the Islamic term *sükna* and meant the tools necessary to perform a profession and job. During the same period, due to the financial problems, the artisans were handling the maintenance job of the *vakf* shops with the condition that they would hire those shops

³⁸ B.A, Hatt-ı Hümayun (HH.), no: 9342.

³⁹ B.A, HH. No: 8133.

⁴⁰ B.A, HH. No: 57478.

⁴¹ B.A, C. İKTS, no: 1085.

⁴² Aynural, "18. Yüzyılda Alım Satım Tekeli," 217.

⁴³ Ahmet Akgündüz, "Gedik", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, XIII, (İstanbul: TDV, 1996) 541.

⁴⁴ Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü I* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1971) 656-659.

⁴⁵ Osman Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i Umûr-ı Belediye*, II, (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 1995) 635.

later. The hirers were bringing their own tools to those shops for production. In the second period, *gedik* began to mean monopoly in trade, privilege and a kind of patent⁴⁶.

The first information that can be found in the documents belong to 17th century is scarce and is in an untidy order. The amount information begins to increase when we come to 18th century⁴⁷. When the court registers are examined this information will be confirmed. The intensity of the information regarding the *gediks* increases from 17th century to 19th century.

Then, what does the second half of the 18th century, which is the focus point of this article, mean for the guilds? In this period, *gedik* had already become an important system for the guild system. Slot was a right to become master in the guilds and it would stay the same until 1840. We observe that the *gedik* system spread so much that it had never done before. The reason for this was the economic recession's influence over the guilds especially in the last quarter of the 18th century. The artisans wanted to prevent production outside the guilds in order to finance their families. The only way of this was to limit the artisans making production with the help of *gedik* system⁴⁸. *Gedik* was a kind of private property and it could be handed over to other individuals legally⁴⁹. The court registers give enlightening information about this. For instance, according to Istanbul butchers artisan law, if a butcher dies without a son and he owes to the drovers then his slot was being sold by the trustees of the foundation that the butcher shops were connected and his debt was paid⁵⁰. *Gedik* of a butcher having son was sold after his death to pay his debt with consent of his wife. *Gedik* of another butcher, who had sons, in Istanbul was sold to the other shareholders with the consent of his wife in order to pay his debts⁵¹. Again, as one of the butcher masters, who owed 60 *kuruş* (piaster) to drovers, died his slot was sold to 60 *kuruş* with consent of mother of his sons⁵². All of these cases show that *gediks* could be sold after death of the owner with permission of his children's mother. Another case is about cloth-sellers artisans. Wife of an artisan of the cloth-sellers guild wanted to sell his slot after his death however her demand was rejected as the artisan had previously sold his *gedik* while he was alive according to the records⁵³.

The guild masters could hire or sell their slots while they were alive. A master of the wool-sellers guild sold his *gedik* to 850 *kuruş* in Istanbul⁵⁴. Another master from the bread makers' guild rented his *gedik* to 17 *kuruş* per month⁵⁵. A master of the catgut sellers' guild began to work at his shop after taking over his father's *gedik*. However he was

⁴⁶ Akgündüz, "Gedik", 541.

⁴⁷ Yi, *Istanbul Guilds*, 149.

⁴⁸ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Dünyasında Üretmek, Pazarlamak, Yaşamak*, trans. Gül Çağalı Güven, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003)138.

⁴⁹ Engin Deniz Akarlı, "Gedik: A Bundle of Rights and Obligations for Artisans and Traders 1750- 1840," in *Law, Anthropology, and Constitution of the Social: Making Persons and Things*, ed. Alian Pottage and Martha Mundy, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 187.

⁵⁰ İŞS 62: 21b.

⁵¹ İŞS 43: 4.

⁵² İŞS 43: 30.

⁵³ İŞS 43: 41.

⁵⁴ İŞS 62: 2b.

⁵⁵ İŞS 25: 132b.

reported to the court as he said he could do his job anywhere he wanted as he had his own *gedik* and the court decided he could do his job only at the area his slot belonged to⁵⁶.

As it can be seen in the court registers mentioned above, all processes of the *gediks* were being recorded. This situation stemmed from the fact that *gediks* were being used for many reasons. Some people were using slots to make money or as an investment tool⁵⁷. More importantly, *gediks* were being showed as a guarantee for trade by the artisans to the merchants. The artisans were showing their *gedik* certificates as a security to the merchants for their debts and even in some cases the merchants were getting the *gedik* certificate as guarantee for their debts owed⁵⁸. For instance, one of the bakers' artisans, who was thought to be fugitive, owed a total of 6778 *куруş*s to distribution centers (*kapan*) merchants and the treasury. The guild sold equipment of his shop and his 28 horses in order to pay his debt⁵⁹. Another example can be seen in the agreement of butchers. According to this agreement, a butcher who owes to drovers accepts that his *gedik* will be sold to discharge his debts when he dies⁶⁰. Another example can be seen in the agreement of butchers. According to this agreement, a butcher who owes to drovers accepts that his *gedik* will be sold to discharge his debts when he dies⁶¹.

When there was shortage of daily goods in Istanbul, the merchants bringing goods to the city gained power against the artisans. The merchants applied to the *divan* and the *divan* approved the condition that the artisans had to sponsor each other while shopping from the merchants. Also the artisans would not be able to change place of their slot without permission of the court and move to another shop. The artisans had to apply to the court get permission in order to sell or rent their slots. A slot which was charged by a merchant could not be sold⁶².

Conclusion

The guilds were being administered by the administrators either elected by the artisans themselves or assigned by the state. The state gave special attention to the administration of the guilds in Istanbul. The reason for this was the fact that they were undertaking a very important mission for the system. The state had left production and services sectors of the cities to the guilds. It was the state's responsibility to secure the transport of raw materials from countryside to the city center and the operations of the merchants. However, the responsibility of the guild began when the raw materials arrived at the city's ports. There were abundant and cheap goods available in the cities in order not to cause the public to experience hunger and urge the power groups in the city for rebellions. So as to achieve this, it is understood that the guild managers were working in collaboration with the state. It is obvious that the two main components of this collaboration are *nizâm* and monopoly.

⁵⁶ İŞS 43: 31.

⁵⁷ Mantran, *Istanbul*, 345.

⁵⁸ Akarlı, "Gedik: A Bundle of rights and Obligations for Artisans and Traders 1750-1840," 176.

⁵⁹ İŞS 62: 15a.

⁶⁰ İŞS 62: 21b.

⁶¹ İŞS 62: 21b.

⁶² Akarlı, "Gedik: A Bundle of rights and Obligations for Artisans and Traders 1750-1840," 177.

It is clear that the *nizâm* and monopoly are in the center in the functioning of the guilds. The prime issue for the guilds after the *nizâm* is the monopoly. By this way, the state was making a concession for the artisans. However, it was also keeping the right of controlling their production standards and prices secret to itself.

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