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# A Study of the Ottoman Guilds as they are depicted in Turkish Miniature Paintings

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# Contents

## Abstract

This thesis explores the Ottoman guilds during the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries as they are depicted in the miniature paintings contained within two well-known and well-preserved festival albums: the *Surname-i Hümayun* (1582) and the *Surname-i Vehbi* (1720). These manuscripts describe the events occurring during the festival celebrations for the circumcisions of the sons of Sultan Murad III (r. 1574-95) and Sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703-30) and while they offer an excellent portrait of Ottoman society in general, they are particularly noteworthy for their portrayals of guild processions. Based on analysis of the festival paintings as well as on existing literature, the guilds are examined in the greater context of the Ottoman Empire and aspects such as guild function, structure, hierarchy, membership, and origins and evolution of the guilds are considered.

## Résumé

Cette thèse traite le sujet des guildes ottomanes durant la période des 16e et 18e siècles telles que représentées dans les peintures miniatures de deux manuscrits bien connus et bien préservés: le *Surname-i Hümayun* (1582) et le *Surname-i Vehbi* (1720). Ces manuscrits décrivent les événements ayant lieu durant deux festivals qui célébraient les circoncisions des fils du sultan Murad III (r. 1574-95) et du sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703-30). Les manuscrits nous montrent un portrait excellent de la société ottomane en générale mais en plus, en particulier ils représentent en grand détail les défilés des guildes, ce qui nous permet d'étudier ces organisations de près. Dans le contexte général de l'Empire ottoman durant les siècles prévus, on vise à étudier des guildes prenant en considération les aspects tels que fonction, structure, hiérarchie, adhésion, ainsi que les origines et l'évolution des guildes.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Professor A. Uner Turgay of the Institute of Islamic Studies, for igniting my interest in Ottoman history as well as for his enthusiastic description of Turkey and its extraordinary art, food and culture. I am very grateful for his encouragement of the study of miniature paintings.

There are several people to whom I am indebted for their never-ending patience and encouragement. My colleagues Kay Johnson and Fabrice Labeau were a constant source of support and I owe them my sincere thanks for their flexibility and good humour in accommodating me during this process. Of my colleagues at the Institute of Islamic Studies, I would like to thank Başak Ozoral for sharing her time and knowledge so willingly, for showing me around Istanbul, and for welcoming me into her home.

And finally, to Tomasz and LouLou, my most valuable sources of inspiration and sanity, I offer my most heartfelt thanks, gratitude and admiration.

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## Introduction

"The extravagant pleasures enjoyed by the [Ottoman] court diverted attention from social unrest. Impoverished by heavy taxes and obligatory support of military troops, villagers abandoned the countryside to seek employment elsewhere. In the cities they were excluded from the work force by the rigid rules governing guild membership."[1] These three succinct sentences from Esin Atıl's description of the remarkable story of an eighteenth century Ottoman festival introduce a period of Ottoman history that was at once opulent, beautiful, chaotic and tightly controlled. Such a description would apply equally to a sixteenth century festival that was depicted in a festival album and that occurred during a period of extraordinary expansion of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the Ottoman guilds.

Festivals and the entertainment, parades and feasts that they incorporate reveal the very nature of the society who celebrates. During the height of the Ottoman Empire, albums of miniature paintings depicting festival celebrations were produced on important occasions such as weddings, births and circumcisions. Such books contain a unique and accurate portrayal of the festivals and close study of festival miniatures presents a reflection of social structure and hierarchy and reveals differences and commonalities in customs and rituals among all ranks of society, as well as among members of the same social levels.

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[1] Esin Atıl, *Levni and the Surname: The Story of an Eighteenth Century Ottoman Festival* (Istanbul: Koçbank, 1999), 20-21.

Indeed, even aspects such as dress and culinary habits are also displayed. Such details allow the historian to formulate a vivid image of life within a society.

While festivals in celebration of weddings and births offer excellent opportunity for study of various aspects of Ottoman society, one of the most important and informative festival celebrations occurred on occasions of royal circumcisions. Circumcision, an event common across all ranks of society, was celebrated as lavishly as possible among all members of Ottoman society, and certainly most luxuriously among the nobility and members of the court. Those with the financial means hosted elaborate festivals to celebrate the circumcisions of their sons; even those who were unable to afford to host such celebrations benefited from the Ottoman social system where wealthier members included poorer members' sons within their own festivities and paid for the services of the surgeon. As such, all levels of society participated in the same celebration. Often, the host of the celebrations would commission a souvenir book containing collections of miniature paintings portraying festival events. Study of such festival books presents an inclusive portrait of Ottoman society: from the labourer who prepared and maintained the grounds, to the acrobats, musicians and dancers who entertained the guests, to the nobility who attended the celebrations as honored guests. For this reason, an exploration of festival miniatures represents an excellent point of departure for an exploration of Ottoman society.

The focus of this thesis is directed at a portion of Ottoman society whose significant presence is noted in festival albums. Initial examination of the

paintings in two such books reveals that one group in particular, the guilds, is well represented throughout the festival miniatures. Parades of guildsmen appear throughout the books indicating the importance of the guilds within the Empire. Closer examination reveals guildsmen participating in the festivities as part of the entertainment: parades of guildsmen file past the sultan and his guests, demonstrating their crafts and offering gifts. In one particular example noted in figure 1, the procession of the jeweler-goldsmiths is depicted and we note the presence of a turbaned figure seated on a horse, surrounded by red-capped figures who appear to form a guard (lower third middle). All other guildsmen are on foot and are unaccompanied save for their fellow guildsmen. Notes accompanying the miniature indicate that this is the chief goldsmith of the palace and as such he is portrayed as a more ornate and higher ranking individual in the guild.[2]

FIGURE 1 *Surname-i Vehbi*
Procession of the guilds: goldsmiths, beeswax sellers, tinsmiths, and merchants of the flea and spice market

Hierarchy among guildsmen is but one aspect that may be noted in the miniatures. In consideration of this example, the overall question for this thesis

[2] Atıl, *Levni and the Surname*, 148.

is as follows: what can a study of the Ottoman miniature paintings contained in two festival albums reveal about the institution of Ottoman guilds?

The proposed course of research aims to explore Ottoman guilds using as a basis for discussion the festival miniatures contained within two festival books: the *Surname-i Hümayun* (1582) and the *Surname-i Vehbi* (1720) commissioned for the occasion of the circumcisions of the sons of Sultan Murad III (r. 1574-95) and Sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703-30).

The *surname* was a festival book, commissioned to commemorate occasions such as royal births, weddings and particularly, circumcisions. Generally, owing to the extravagant cost involved in creating such a magnificent work, *surnames* were usually commissioned by sultans or wealthy subjects and demonstrated the grandeur of the event. These albums depicted in great written and pictorial detail the festival celebrations, essentially describing the events and participants, and included such occurrences as the arrival of the sultan and the members of the court, the feasts, entertainment, athletic competitions, musicians, dancers, acrobats, fireworks and most importantly in the context of this project, the processions, particularly the guild processions. Furthermore, the *surname* acted as a type of chronicle of the festival, recounting the order in which the events took place. Atıl notes that the pictorial narrative is far more detailed than the accompanying text, depicting events that are not necessarily described in prose. She argues that *surnames* are in effect two versions of a description of the same event presented in one manuscript where one version presents the

visual description, the other the narrative.[3] For this reason, the *surname* would appeal to a wide audience. The painters recorded the events as they had witnessed them and as such, no literacy was required to understand the paintings and to follow the story. The viewer was therefore invited to "participate in the story by discovering amusing vignettes" while the prose required a more sophisticated and learned audience.[4] Beyond the visual appreciation of the paintings and their artistic quality, the appeal of the *surname* could be found in the fact that the higher ranking and highly educated subjects could enjoy an aspect beyond the grasp of the illiterate. Atıl notes that the earliest recorded festival work predates the Ottoman Empire: the album was commissioned in honour of the marriage of Osman I to the daughter of the Karaman Emir in 1285.[5]

The *Surname-i Hümayun*, the book of the imperial festival, is regarded as the festival album that initiated the tradition of the *surname*.[6] The book was the first to illustrate and describe the events occurring during the 55-day festival hosted by Sultan Murad III to celebrate the circumcision of his son Mehmed in 1582. Containing 427 paintings by the master painter Nakkaş Osman, the *Surname-i Hümayun* managed to represent all of the days of the festival.[7] Osman arranged the paintings to tell the story of the festival, which was located at the

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[3] Esin Atıl, "The Story of an Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Festival," Muqarnas 10 (1993): 181.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Atıl, *Levni and the Surname*, 42.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid. In contrast, Terzioğlu states that there are 437 miniatures contained in the *Surname-i Hümayun*. See Derin Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582: An Interpretation," Muqarnas 12 (1995): 84.

hippodrome in Istanbul, using a static backdrop for each of the folios. As shown in figure 2 the sultan was seated in the balcony of the palace of Ibrahim Pasha, the Grand Vizier to Murad III, and watched the events unfold beneath him. His guests are seated in stands positioned along the sides of the hippodrome. Using this setting, Osman depicted the festival processions and entertainment.

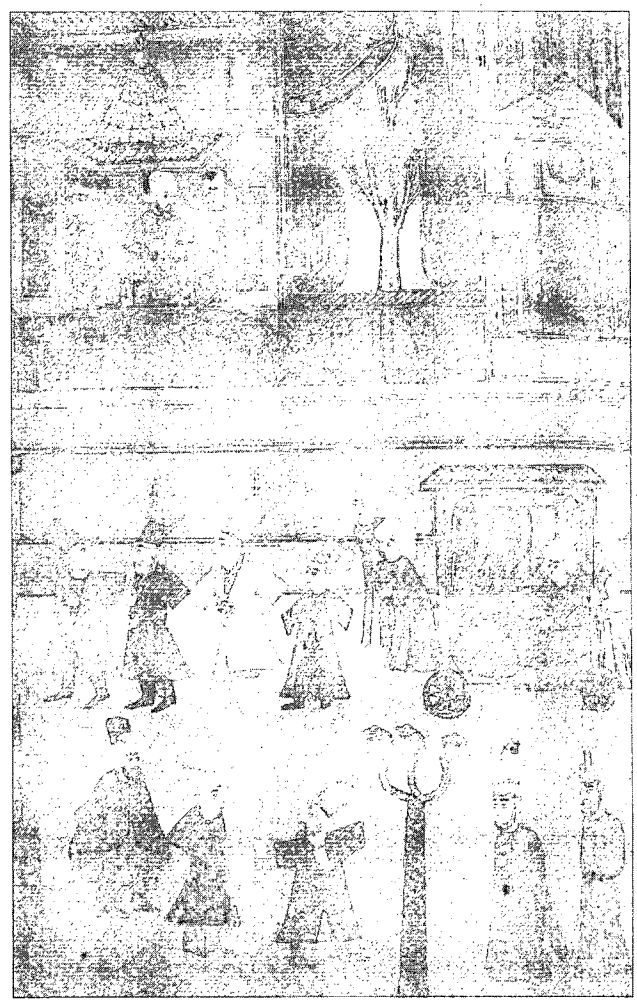

FIGURE 2 *Surname-i Hümayun*
Murad III observes the festival entertainment from the palace of the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha

In her article describing the imperial festival of 1582, Derin Terzioğlu states that in addition to celebrating the circumcision of the prince, a principal purpose for the celebration was to distract the Ottoman subjects from a period of crisis: the Ottoman Empire was experiencing a grave financial crisis, disorder and unemployment were rampant in the countryside which resulted in a mass migration to the cities, and the sultan's armies were engaged in ongoing and costly wars. Terzioğlu asserts that "the festival was no doubt meant to distract the population with its displays of imperial generosity and powers as well as to impress the great number of

foreign envoys in attendance."[8] Indeed, evidence of this attempted distraction is noted throughout the miniatures of the festival book: the sultan hosts lavish feasts and distributes food and coins among the populace, fireworks are showered over the Golden Horn, buffoons symbolically defile Persian turbans, and mock battles remind the spectators of the Empire's past victories.

Similarly, the festival *surname* of 1720, the *Surname-i Vehbi,* offers an equally clear description of the celebrations in honour of the royal circumcision and masterfully reflects life in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. The festival album was illustrated with 175 paintings by the master Levni with accompanying prose by the writer Vehbi which together described the 15-day festival. As with the 1582 festival, the entertainment took place primarily in the hippodrome with displays of fireworks and mock maritime battles occurring on the Golden Horn. However, Levni's paintings, in contrast with Osman's, are not at all static and portray all aspects of the festival, from the erection of the tents and festival grounds to the sultan's final distribution of coins among the court staff as seen in figure 3. Levni's masterful *surname* is considered to be the last great illustrated Ottoman manuscript.[9]

Analysis of the *Surname-i Hümayun* and the *Surname-i Vehbi* reveals an extraordinarily accurate historical portrayal of the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, for within the paintings one may find not only representations of social structure, hierarchy, dress and culinary habits, but

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[8] Derin Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582: An Interpretation," Muqarnas 12 (1995): 85.
[9] Atıl, *Levni and the Surname*, 36.

also the economic and military situation of the Ottoman Empire during these time periods.

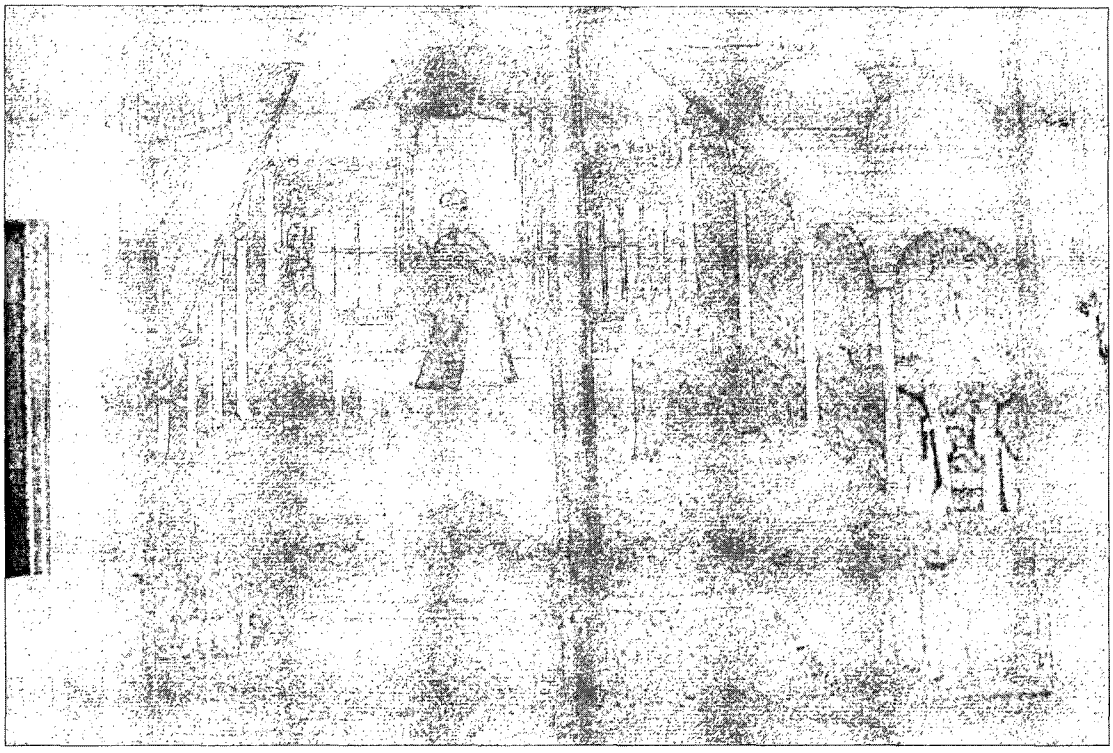

FIGURE 3 *Surname-i Vehbi*
The sultan tosses handfuls of gold coins to his staff

As Atıl points out,

> Contemporary or nearly contemporary Ottoman histories illustrated with paintings that are at once traditional and realistic provide ample material to analyze how the artists re-created a specific event and produced a pictorial narrative that could be understood without the assistance of the text. Even though the painters were employed by the state and had to follow the artistic styles regulated by the imperial studios, they managed to create original compositions that documented historic events with identifiable settings and personages.[10]

In framing this thesis, I have attempted to investigate the Ottoman guilds using as a basis for the discussions the miniature paintings contained within the aforementioned *surnames*. Specifically, I have examined approximately 20-25

[10] Atıl, "Story of an Eighteenth Century Ottoman Festival," 181.

miniatures contained within the *Surname-i Vehbi* and 12-15 within the *Surname-i Hümayun* and made observations on such aspects as participants, clothing, manner of entertainment, and placement of characters. I have chosen these two festival albums in particular for the extent of the paintings contained within as well as for the time periods in which they were created. The classical age of Ottoman art began with the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66) and was remarkable for the magnificence and the variation of works produced during this time. The Tulip Era, a period of cultural and intellectual revitalization in the early eighteenth century (c. 1703-30) is considered by many to be the second golden age of Ottoman art, however as Atıl notes, "its artistic production never rivaled the magnificence and splendor of the first classical age".[11] The Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries was at both the apogee and the denouement of its grandeur: the Empire of the sixteenth century experienced extraordinary growth and power and at the same time that it was acquiring wealth at an astonishing pace, so too was it experiencing a monumental financial crisis. The eighteenth century, on the other hand, saw a renaissance in the Empire that offered a brief respite from a period of stagnation. During this era, emphasis on art, literature, and intellect was revitalized and Ottoman subjects found themselves living in a period of expanded freedom and luxury that many consider to be the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Attention was temporarily diverted from the crushing problems of the time, however such diversion proved short-lived as more and more Ottoman

[11] Atıl, *Levni and the Surname*, 22.

subjects experienced economic strife and hardship resulting from heavy taxation and mandatory support of the sultan's armies. The ensuing rebellions ensured Ahmed III's abdication bringing to an end the Tulip Era.

It should be noted that the miniatures considered for this project are facsimile reproductions with English notes in the accompanying text. I have also considered the text accompanying the folios in my observations: owing to an inadequate knowledge of modern and Ottoman Turkish, I was reliant upon translations provided by Atıl[12] and Atasoy[13], both experts on the *surname* and authors of scholarly articles, books, and Ph.D. dissertations on the subject of these festival albums. These observations were compared against existing guild literature in order to provide a summary and analysis of the guilds, focusing on such aspects as guild origins, traditions, structure and hierarchy.

Chapter 1 discusses the miniature as an art form. While discussion of the miniature as an artistic medium is necessary within the scope of this project, this thesis is not meant to function as a study of art history, nor is its purpose to discuss the topic of art in Islam. My intention is not to treat the paintings as art objects, but rather to consider them a historical pictorial narrative of a sequence of events. The subject of Islamic art is briefly addressed to provide background for the discussion of the miniature painting as an art form. The existing body of work on art in Islam is nothing short of astounding and while a study of Islamic art in the context of the *surname* would be fruitful, there has already been a

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[12] Atıl, *Levni and the Surname*, 22.
[13] Nurhan Atasoy, *1582 Surname-i Hümayun: An Imperial Celebration* (Istanbul: Koçbank, 1997).

significant contribution to this effect and I believe that such an undertaking does not fall within the scope of this project.

I have endeavored as much as possible to situate the guilds within the overall context of the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, drawing on the events depicted in the miniature paintings to outline major events during these periods and to provide a framework for the discussion so as to avoid studying the guilds in a vacuum. Chapter 2 provides this context in which the two festivals take place using the festival miniatures as a reference. Aspects such as the economic situation, foreign affairs, and social conditions are explored. The chapter attempts to offer comparisons between the sixteenth and eighteenth century Ottoman Empire, outlining specific events such as territorial expansion, involvement in wars and specific problems within the Empire. Finally, chapter 3 draws on the context presented in the first chapter and undertakes to present a discussion of the institution of the Ottoman guilds and their function within Ottoman society.

Analysis of the Ottoman guilds is based on literature which, for the most part, provides an excellent summary of inaccessible primary sources. In her prolific writings on the topic of the Ottoman guilds, Suraiya Faroqhi recalls the beginnings of guild research in the early twentieth century. Specifically, she notes Osman Nuri Ergin's work in 1920 that discussed Istanbul's urban affairs.[14] Ergin's work is regarded as pioneering and remains the basis for many modern

[14] Suraiya Faroqhi, "Understanding Ottoman Guilds," in Crafts and Craftsmen of the Middle East: Fashioning the Individual in the Muslim Mediterranean, Suraiya Faroqhi and Randi Deguilhem, ed., (London: Tauris, 2005), 3.

scholars' arguments. What has emerged since the 1920s is a body of work describing the guilds, their organizational structure, their rituals and customs as well as their origins. However, a full understanding of the origins and evolution of the guilds remains elusive and is widely debated among scholars of Ottoman history. For example, authors such as Gabriel Baer[15] have argued that the guilds' evolution is independent of religious origin, while others such as Ines Aščerić-Todd[16] assert that the link between religious fraternities and guilds is undeniable. Faroqhi argues that the main cause of the uncertainty regarding the Ottoman guilds is a frustrating lack of primary sources, particularly concerning the period prior to the 1570s.[17] The sources that do exist such as the court registers are often incomplete or contain gaps in information. Regardless, while the debate over specifics such as origin continues, the existing information has allowed scholars to at least outline a portrait of the Ottoman guilds. What is clear in the literature is that the guilds were of central importance to the economic life of the Ottoman Empire and that guildsmen, organized according to their trade, constituted a major portion of the overall population.

In the early stages of guild research, the emphasis of the literature tended to focus on the spiritual aspects of the organizations, not only in their origins but also in the context of the overall life of the guild. This concentration is perhaps

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[15] Gabriel Baer, "The Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," International Journal of Middle East Studies 1:1 (1970): 28-50.
[16] Ines Aščerić–Todd, "The Noble Traders: The Islamic Tradition of "Spiritual Chivalry" (futuwwa) in Bosnian Trade-Guilds (16th-19th centuries)," The Muslim World 97:2 (2007): 159-173.
[17] Faroqhi, "Understanding Ottoman Guilds," 3.

due to earlier scholars' focus on the period prior to 1500, a time when the boundaries between guild and religious fraternity were blurred. As Faroqhi reminds us, texts from this time period "emphasize morals and the ceremonial rather than the mundane problems of artisan production."[18] Franz Taeschner was one such scholar noted for his interest in spiritual aspects of the medieval organizations that carried through to the modern guilds. Ergin, on the other hand, emphasized the socio-political aspects of the guilds in a practical approach that became the dominant method, in contrast to the spiritual focus, for discussions of the guilds from the 1960s until almost the end of the twentieth century.[19] At the time of Ergin's scholarship, in the 1920s and 30s, the last remaining vestiges of the Ottoman guild system still remained active and as Donald Quataert's work has shown, relatively powerful up until the First World War.[20] Faroqhi has suggested that a practical guide to the guilds was required by the Kemalists, thus shifting the emphasis from the spiritual to the secular.[21] Explanations of artisans' rules as well as works describing the guilds' place in and restrictions for operating in the competitive marketplace became increasingly more common in guild literature from the 1940s onward.

It has been noted that Gabriel Baer's work on the Ottoman guilds was meant to portray the guilds not as organizations whose primary concern was to defend the interests of the craftsmen, but rather as extensions of the central state

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[18] Faroqhi, "Understanding Ottoman Guilds," 4.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Donald Quataert, *Social Disintegration and Popular Resistance in the Ottoman Empire, 1881-1908* (New York: New York University Press, 1983).
[21] Faroqhi, "Understanding Ottoman Guilds," 7.

administration attempting to control urban Ottoman society. Baer argued that the Ottoman guilds were not guilds "in the sense in which the term is used by European historians" but that they were a state-established institution whose purpose was not necessarily production and regulation-related but more to fill a void in urban institutions.[22] Of the literature considered for this study, Baer is the sole researcher to suggest that the guilds played the role of extension of the state.

As is often the case with languages whose script consists of non-roman characters or who use a modified roman script, there is a significant inconsistency throughout the literature in the method with which Turkish or Arabic words are represented in English and French texts. I have attempted as much as possible to standardize the representation of Turkish and Arabic words throughout this work while remaining loyal to the Romanization system used by McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies.[23] With regard to the protocol adopted for treating pluralization of non-English words, I have simply added the unitalicized English plural morpheme -s to the italicized word, for example *surnames*.

My interest in this topic stems from a combination of linguistic studies and an attraction to Ottoman miniature paintings. Admittedly, this is an odd beginning to the subject and deserves at least a cursory explanation. As an undergraduate student, I was exposed to a course of language studies that eventually gave way

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[22] Faroqhi, "Understanding Ottoman Guilds," 9.
[23] See ALA-LC Romanization Tables available on the Institute of Islamic Studies web site: http://www.mcgill.ca/islamicstudies/students/

to the discipline of linguistics and via this medium I was introduced to the Turkish language. Course discussions often veered from the strict language rules to encompass such intriguing topics as Turkish food and art, and my beginners' exploration of Turkish literature led to the discovery of the Ottomans and their festivals. It was while visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Islamic Art collection that the desire to study the festival miniatures came to be. The realization that the miniatures offered a true depiction of a time long passed was both appealing and inviting.

## 1. The Miniatures of the *Surname-i Hümayun* and the *Surname-i Vehbi*

Both the *Surname-i Vehbi* and the *Surname-i Hümayun* are truly remarkable reflections of the times in which they were created and they are noted as much for their ability to depict historical events as they are extraordinary works of art. The paintings of the *Surname-i Hümayun*, undertaken during the reign of Murad III, reflect the artistry of what is referred to as the Golden Age of Ottoman art while those of the *Surname-i Vehbi* reflect the artistic mastery of the Tulip Era. Both manuscripts are fine examples of a valuable medium, namely Ottoman Turkish miniatures.

The illustrated manuscript and the miniature paintings contained within its pages constituted a particularly important art form in the Ottoman Empire. Manuscripts were commissioned not only by sultans but also by members of the court, and wealthy officials and Ottoman subjects to document festivals celebrating such centrally important events as weddings, births and circumcisions. Indeed, many rulers were art connoisseurs and collected books and paintings by famous artists. Illustrated manuscripts were donated toward the endowment of charitable foundations, offered as gifts to visiting dignitaries or rulers, or purchased as souvenirs by visitors to the Empire.

Of the miniatures themselves, while much has been written on the Persian miniature, there remains relatively little information pertaining specifically to

Ottoman Turkish miniature paintings.[1] As G.M. Meredith-Owens reminds us, painting in the tradition of Islamic art has always been less esteemed than calligraphy.[2] Richard Ettinghausen speculates that the lack of information about Turkish miniatures arises from the fact that Turkish art, and in particular, painting, did not achieve widespread support or appreciation in the Ottoman Empire. Rather, he suggests that among the Ottoman population, there was a resistance to the physical representation of living beings in art, given the Turks adherence to canonical law. For this reason, he suggests that painting and miniatures remained within the realm of the sultan and as such were kept within the court, away from public scrutiny or appreciation, and this lack of support may also account for the limited amount of works illustrated by Turkish artists.[3] Evidence of the sensitivity of the subject of portraiture is found in Evliya Çelebi's accounts highlighting the great difference in the number of shops held by *nakkaşan*, painters of decoration such as nature scenes, and *musavviran*, painters of portraits. In Istanbul during the seventeenth century, Çelebi describes "at least a hundred shops belonging to the *nakkaşan* in the metropolis" while the portrait painters shops number only four.[4]

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[1] It should be clarified here that this study refers to Ottoman Turkish paintings. The Ottoman paintings produced in Baghdad pertain to the Persian school and have been the subject of much study. While there are undoubtedly similarities between the two, this study focuses on the production and characteristics of the Turkish school.

[2] G.M. Meredith-Owens, *Turkish Miniatures* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1969), 9.

[3] Edward Binney, *Turkish Treasures from the Collection of Edwin Binney 3rd* (Portland: Portland Art Museum, 1979), 7.

[4] Ibid., 10-11.

The subject of Ottoman Turkish miniature paintings introduces the question of figural representation in Islamic art over which there is much debate. There is among Islamic cultures a resistance to the physical representation of living beings in art and architecture that stems from the belief that the creation of living forms is unique to God. Yet, while there are those who believe that creating human and animal images is akin to usurping the role of creator, there are a great many others who believe that figural representation is merely ornamentation and as such the figures lack any larger significance. It is noted throughout historical literature that the sultans, as well as wealthy Ottoman subjects, kept collections of portraits for their own enjoyment in addition to the commissioned festival books and manuscripts which depicted human and animal subjects. Indeed, the great number of these works that exist in modern collections is evidence that portraiture was permitted, even encouraged. Both Meredith-Owens and Edward Binney note that the Ottomans were far from prohibiting portraiture – they merely kept their collections private.[5] The question of figural representation in the context of miniature painting is a large, important and complex subject about which much information exists. However, examination of this topic in itself is well beyond the scope of this project. Another scholar of Turkish art, G.M. Meredith Owens, accounts for the scarcity of information about Turkish art by noting, "firstly, the greater part of the rich collection in the Istanbul libraries has been inadequately described in the past... The second difficulty is far more serious – the scarcity of material outside

[5] Binney, *Turkish Treasures,* 16.

Turkey...".[6] Indeed, of the numerous sources available on the subject of miniature painting, only a very few pertain specifically to Turkish miniatures.[7]

## Turkish manuscripts and the Turkish school of painting

Prior to Mehmed II's conquest of Istanbul in 1453, there appears to be a distinct lack of evidence of any extensive Ottoman illustrated manuscript production and few illustrated manuscripts predate Mehmed II. One of the first manuscripts that has been attributed to the Ottomans, is the *Dilsizname*, the Book of the Mute, produced in 1455-56.[8] The beginnings of the royal painting studio correspond with the reign of Mehmed II and the influence of the sultan's education and taste for the arts are reflected in the early years of the *nakkaşhane* (imperial painting studio). The greatest artistic influence came from Persian schools of painting in Shiraz, Herat and Tabriz, however as Atıl points out, the early Istanbul school of painting was known for visits of Italian artists who were invited to the court at the request of Mehmed II.[9] An education in European history, culture, and art had instilled a taste for portraiture and sculpture in the sultan and following the conquest of Istanbul, there was to be a significant Italian presence in the court as the Italian states were attempting to establish alliances with the empire. During the early years of his reign, Mehmed invited well-known Italian painters and

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[6] Meredith-Owens, *Turkish Miniatures,* 9.
[7] For example, of the approximately 260 titles on the subject of miniature paintings that are available from the McGill University libraries, 15 deal specifically with Turkish miniatures.
[8] Esin Atıl, "Ottoman Miniature Painting under Sultan Mehmed II," Ars Orientalis 9 (1973): 106.
[9] Ibid., 104.

sculptors to the court, among them Matteo di Pasti[10], Gentile Bellini and Costanza de Ferrara whose portrait and bronze medallion depicting the sultan are noted

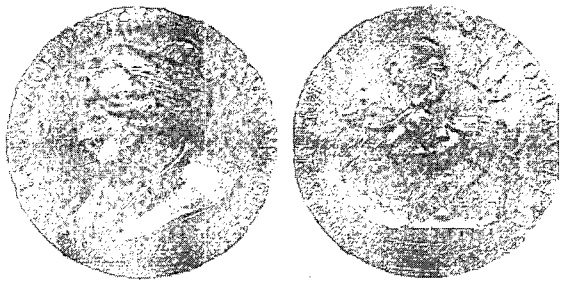

FIGURE 4 Bronze medallion of Mehmed the Conqueror
Undated
Costanza da Ferrara

in figures 4 and 5.[11]

FIGURE 5 Portrait of Mehmed the Conqueror (c. 1480)
Gentile Bellini

A. Sakisian notes the influence of the fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian painters and states that the Italian influence is noted as the one of the most distinguishing features differentiating Ottoman miniatures from those of the Persian school.[12]

Turkish miniatures are closely linked to those of the Persian school; however, the two differ in several ways. Sakisian and Meredith-Owens have outlined these

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[10] The Italian city states were continually at war with one another. In an attempt to sabotage relations between Verona and Istanbul, Venetian authorities arrested di Pasti and charged him with espionage, releasing him shortly thereafter. The artistic mission was aborted and he returned to Verona. For a discussion of artistic influences on Ottoman-Italian relations, see Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture, 1100-1500* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

[11] Julian Raby, "A Sultan of Paradox: Mehmed the Conqueror as a Patron of the Arts," Oxford Art Journal 5:1 (1982): 4.

[12] A. Sakisian, "Turkish Miniatures," The Burlington Magazine 87:510 (1945): 224.

differences noting such characteristics as colour, perspective and range of subject. Meredith-Owens notes that the Turkish miniatures display a smaller range of colour but yet, use stronger colours such vibrant crimson reds, magentas, brilliant shades of lilac and blue, and a yellow-green that is particular to Ottoman painting. Colours are applied in a broad and bold manner without the subtlety of the Persian technique.[13] Sakisian's observations agree with Meredith-Owens'. He offers a description of a portrait of Mehmed II and outlines the artist's use of "shadows to model the face and the folds of the garment, thus differentiating this picture from Persian works. The colouring is not Persian either: the garment is dull green embroidered with red, and coat is indigo with a white fur."[14]

Basing her characterization on Ettinghausen's observations, Meredith-Owens notes that the subject of Turkish miniatures is broader than that of the Persians, and observes that "Persian artists were romantic rather than realistic" and confined themselves to subjects of romances and legends of heroes.[15] The Turkish artist, on the other hand, depicts a broad range of subjects from festivals and people holidaying to historical events. The realism depicted by Turkish painters in their works can be seen throughout the paintings of the two *surnames* discussed in this study. Sakisian also notes that Turkish miniatures contain a degree of realism not found in Persian painting until later centuries.[16] Next, he considers the perspective of the Turkish paintings. As shown in figure 6,

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[13] Meredith-Owens, *Turkish Miniatures*, 14.
[14] Sakisian, "Turkish Miniatures," 227.
[15] Meredith-Owens, *Turkish Miniatures*, 14.
[16] Sakisian, "Turkish Miniatures," 227.

the relative proportions of the figures depicted in the miniatures are dictated not by perspective, but rather by the person's importance and rank: Selim II, as the supreme subject, is more prominent in the miniature.

FIGURE 6 Portrait of Selim II discharging an arrow Attributed to Haidar

This characteristic may also be noted in the *Surname-i Hümayun* as well as in the *Surname-i Vehbi*: the sultan, who is depicted as observing the festivities in the background of the paintings, is the same size as the figures in the foreground. Realistic perspective would logically depict figures in the foreground to be relatively larger than those in the background but such is not the case with these *surnames*. With regard to perspective, Meredith-Owens observes that Turkish artists displayed their subjects in mostly full profile and frontal views, rather than the Persian technique which was to portray subjects in three quarter profile. Turkish figures tended to be larger than Persian and the artist took great care to "show individual character and mood".[17] Finally, Meredith-Owens notes that the Turkish miniatures were also much stronger in their depictions of the grotesque. The *Surname-i Hümayun*'s depiction of buffoons wearing Safavid turbans on their bums (figure 11) as well as the entertainers disguised as Iranians in the *Surname-i Vehbi* (figure 12) are examples of this characteristic.

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[17] Meredith-Owens, *Turkish Miniatures,* 14.

## Nakkaş Osman and Levni: Master painters of the *surname*

Very little is known about the lives of the men who painted the miniatures contained in these two *surnames*. Nakkaş Osman - Osman the Miniaturist - was the chief painter to the Ottoman court during the later part of the sixteenth century and in addition to being credited as the painter of the *Surname-i Hümayun*, he is hailed as one of the most famous painters during the Golden Age of Ottoman art. Osman is noted for his "plain, yet perceptive style" and his introduction of realism into Turkish art.[18] Filiz Çağman, author of a study that has examined references to Osman in literature and historical or archival documents, notes that the miniaturist did not appear on the payroll of the palace painters until the court register of 1566, where his salary was listed at six *akçe* daily.[19] The existence of this register confirms his presence in the court during the last year of Süleyman's reign. Based on the similarity of Osman's style with that of Matrakçı Nasuh, the artist who illustrated the *Süleymanname*, the Book of Süleyman,[20] it is thought that Osman studied with this particular artist and entered the imperial school of painting between 1559 and 1565.[21] Further evidence supporting the theory of Osman's presence in the court during this time is found in what was likely to be his first work: an account of Süleyman's campaign at Szigetvár, Hungary. This manuscript is noted for the miniatures that

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[18] Filiz Çağman, "Nakkaş Osman in Sixteenth Century Documents and Literature," in Turkish Art: 10th International Congress of Turkish Art, Geneva, 17-23 September 1995: proceedings, François Déroche [et al.] ed., (Genève: Fondation Max van Berchem, 1999), 198.
[19] Ibid., 197.
[20] Oktay Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture* (London: Faber, 1971), 315.
[21] Çağman, "Nakkaş Osman," 197.

demonstrate a lack of decorative element but instead portray the historical event, reflecting Osman's style of realism. Çağman speculates that the eyewitness perspective of the paintings indicates that Osman was in attendance at the campaign.[22] The final appearance of Osman's name in the palace register is noted in 1596 and is missing entirely from the next surviving register dated 1598.[23] Neither his year of birth nor death survive in literature.

Similarly, little biographical information exists for Levni, the man who is known as the most accomplished and famous Ottoman painter of the early eighteenth century. Born Adbülcelil Çelebi in Edirne (ca. 1680), the young man received his training as an apprentice to an illustrator in the imperial *nakkaşhane* in Istanbul. There are two different arguments as to the origin of the name Levni: Gül İrepoğlu states that the name, meaning "colorful and varied" was attributed to him by his peers,[24] while Süheyl Ünver states that he ascribed the name to himself once he had become a painter.[25] Following what must have been a highly successful apprenticeship, Levni progressed to the rank of master, changing in the process to the medium of painting and becoming the court painter, then portraitist during the reign of Mustafa II (r. 1695-1703).[26] In addition to painting and illustrating, Levni was also known as a poet, an occupation which has been described, like the origins of the name Levni, as resulting from two different

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[22] Çağman, "Nakkaş Osman," 198.
[23] Ibid., 203.
[24] Gül İrepoğlu, "Visual Arts: Miniatures," Turkish Culture, 2006, Turkish Cultural Foundation, http://www.turkishculture.org/pages.php?ChildID=111&ParentID=1&ID=2&ChildID1=822&miMore=1 (23.11.2008).
[25] Süheyl Ünver, *Levnî* (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Basimevi, 1951), 5.
[26] Ibid., 6.

situations. He is portrayed by Ünver as leading a poor life which required him to have multiple occupations in order to survive. However, no other reference is made to his poverty and İrepoğlu suggests "[t]he fact that the title 'Çelebi' is used with Levni's name, shows that he was an educated, elegant, well mannered, respectable gentleman from a high social class within the Ottoman society."[27] Esin Atıl's biographical information about Levni agrees with this point. Furthermore, Atıl draws attention to the fact that Levni, while most likely "not a salaried employee of the nakkaşhane", portrayed himself as a participant in the 1720 festival, riding with the officials of the *enderun* (inner service of the palace) in the circumcision parade as shown in figure 7.[28] It does not seem likely, then, that Levni was impoverished and required to write poetry as Ünver suggests. While he is most widely recognized as the painter of the magnificent works contained within the *Surname-i Vehbi*, he is also credited with painting a series of sultans' portraits for the *Silsilename,* the book of portraits of Seyyid Muhammed.[29] Many other works that either bear his signature or have been attributed to his distinct style are found in collections in the picture gallery in the Topkapı musem. Levni's signature is noted in figure 8.

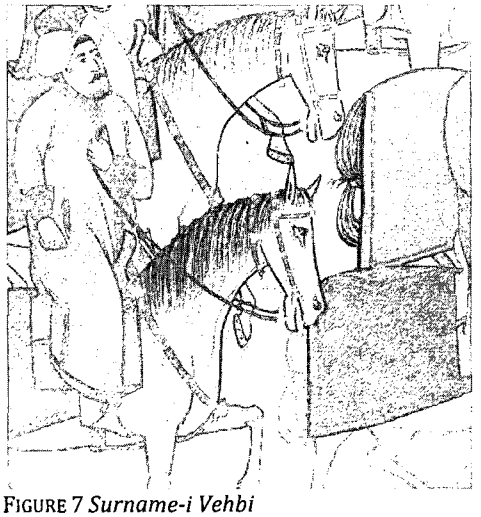

FIGURE 7 *Surname-i Vehbi*
Levni (self portrait) riding with the officials of the *enderun*

[27] İrepoğlu, "Visual Arts: Miniatures."
[28] Atıl, *Levni and the Surname,* 33.
[29] Esin Atıl, ed., *Turkish Art* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980), 219.

FIGURE 8 Levni's signature

## The imperial painting studio

Scholar of Turkish art Esin Atıl, in her book on the same subject, states that the illustrated manuscript as an art form was declining noticeably by the mid-seventeenth century; however, she credits Levni as reviving both the art form and the *nakkaşhane.*[30] Illustrated manuscripts were manufactured within the court in the *nakkaşhane,* which consisted of a corps of book artists such as painters, calligraphers, illuminators and bookbinders. The actual location of this workshop has been the subject of some scholarly discussion. In their article on the imperial painting ateliers, Alan and Carol Fisher argue against what they say is the general assumption that the *nakkaşhane* was located inside the palace, hypothesizing instead that rather than one central workshop, the *nakkaşhane* consisted of many workshops throughout Istanbul with the palace serving as the central organizing point for the different processes.[31] It is interesting to note, however, that Levni depicts the workshop as an interior part of the palace. During the circumcision procession, pictured in figure 9, the sultan is depicted observing the procession from the *nakkaşhane,* shown as a two-storied building with shuttered windows and beautifully decorated with tile work on the façade. That this location is, in fact, the *nakkaşhane,* is noted in the text that accompanies the

[30] Atıl, *Turkish Art,* 218.
[31] Alan W. Fisher and Carol Garrett Fisher, "A Note on the Location of the Royal Ottoman Painting Ateliers," Muqarnas 3 (1985): 118-119.

miniature. Atıl notes, however, that the structure no longer exists and Levni's painting is the only documentation supporting its existence.[32]

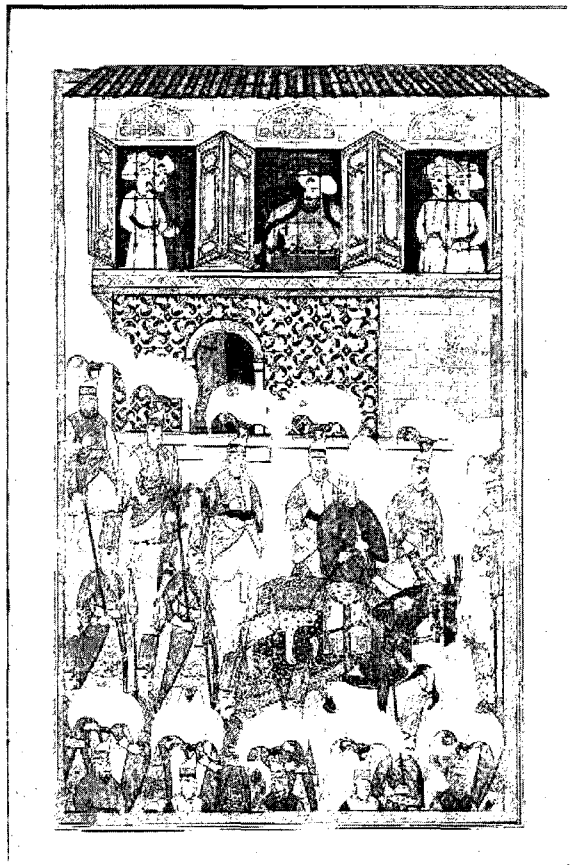

FIGURE 9 *Surname-i Vehbi*
Ahmed III observing the processions from the *nakkaşhane*

The *nakkaşhane* was established to take responsibility for all forms of decorative arts required by the Empire and as such, *nakkaşhane* artists, in addition to creating books, also created designs to be used by artisans of textiles, carpets, tiles, ceramics and woodwork. Within the studio, training schools were established to instruct artisans, and boys and young men from all parts of the Empire were admitted to these schools. A register that has been discovered in the Topkapı museum provides some information about the composition of the *nakkaşhane* of Süleyman. Among the lists of artisans are sixteen painters who are comprised of three portraitists and thirteen specialists in mural decorations and flowers.[33] Furthermore, registers of artisans' guilds list, in addition to Turkish painters, Hungarians, Albanians, Circassians, Moldavians, as well as Persians employed in the *nakkaşhane*.[34] All aspects of the *nakkaşhane*, from registration of new members,

[32] Atıl, *Turkish Art*, 222.
[33] Binney, *Turkish Treasures*, 14.
[34] Ibid., 12.

to salaries and members' status, were controlled by the state. Its members belonged to a branch of the army and as such were often required to accompany the army on military campaigns for documentary purposes.

It is generally accepted among scholars that the first Ottoman *nakkaşhane* was established in the fifteenth century by Mehmed II following the conquest of Istanbul. The reasonably crude and undeveloped quality of illustrations in early Ottoman manuscripts (pre-fifteenth century), in contrast to the highly refined Persian miniatures of the same time period, suggests the lack of a central Ottoman authority or school of painting before the fifteenth century. However, post conquest, there is significant evidence of the presence of a royal painting school as there began to be notable production of high quality and highly developed illustrated manuscripts. Atıl points to evidence provided by the Ottoman archives that list the names, salaries and status of masters and apprentices within the royal studio. Many of the entries from the early sixteenth century list the painters as sons of artists previously employed by the court which suggests that the *nakkaşhane* had already been in existence for at least one generation.[35] This evidence would place the first royal studio in Istanbul before 1500. It was during this time that the tradition of Ottoman portraiture and miniature painting was established in the empire. The second half of the sixteenth century saw the Classical Age of the *nakkaşhane*, which was continually highly productive until the seventeenth century. The Classical Age, which has also been referred to as the Golden Age by numerous scholars, is synonymous

[35] Atıl, "Ottoman Miniature Painting," 103.

with the reign of Süleyman and is noted for an artistry that was defined by geographic expansion, trade, economic growth, and enhanced cultural and artistic activity. While developments occurred in every field of the arts, the most significant were those in calligraphy, manuscript painting, textiles, and ceramics. The Classical Age was followed by a period of decline in the arts, then a brief revival, during which time Ottoman art progressed, under the patronage of Sultan Ahmed III and his powerful Grand Vizier Nevşehirli Damat Ibrahim Pasha, in new directions providing opportunities for master artists such as Levni to thrive. Finally, the imperial studio experienced a significant decline following the death of Levni in 1732. The *nakkaşhane*, as a state-run and financed enterprise, finally ended by the close of the nineteenth century.

The development of the illustrated manuscript can be said to mirror the development of the Ottoman Empire and, as Atıl reminds us, was "directly related to the ambitions and power of the sultans."[36] As the Empire was shaped following the conquest of Istanbul, so too did the imperial painting studio develop, from its beginnings in approximately 1500 to the height of its creative period towards the end of the sixteenth century. The creative master Levni and the Tulip Era brought a brief rebirth during the slow decline of the *nakkaşhane* but this renaissance was to be short-lived.

The *Surname-i Hümayun* and the *Surname-i Vehbi* are two of the finest examples of Ottoman Turkish illustrated manuscripts to be produced during their respective eras of Ottoman Turkish art. Considered to be the first festival album

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[36] Atıl, *Turkish Art*, 231.

to initiate the tradition of the *surname*, the *Surname-i Hümayun* contains magnificent examples of Turkish miniature paintings that are notably different from the Persian school of painting in their perspective and realistic depiction of the festival events. While other outstanding collections of Turkish miniature paintings were produced in the centuries between Nakkaş Osman's and Levni's masterpieces, these two festival albums in particular frame a period that many consider to be the apex of superb Ottoman Turkish art. Indeed, Levni's *surname* was a visionary pictorial representation of one of the great Ottoman festivals and as Atıl reminds us, "[i]t is indeed fitting that the tradition of illustrated Ottoman histories came to such a glorious end with Levni, master storyteller and ultimate representative of his age."[37]

[37] Atıl, *Levni and the Surname*, 67.

## 2. An overview of the Ottoman Empire: sixteenth to eighteenth centuries

A cursory examination of the miniatures contained within festival *surnames* reveals historical details not only of the events occurring during two festivals, but also of life and society within the Ottoman Empire. Closer consideration of these paintings highlights such aspects as economy, social rank and hierarchy, as well as foreign policy. When we consider these aspects together, they provide not only a clear portrait of the Ottoman Empire during the periods in which the two festivals occurred but also a social, political and economic context in which to discuss the Ottoman guilds. For example, a miniature in the *Surname-i Vehbi* depicts a group of janissaries scrambling for plates of food that have been laid out at the request of the sultan as an example of the court's power and wealth. In order to better understand the situation that would result in such chaos among a highly disciplined group, one must consider the social and economic situation of the janissaries. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the general financial context of the Ottoman Empire in order to further understand that of the janissaries. Another aspect that is evident in the festival miniatures is that of Ottoman relations with foreign powers, namely Ottoman-Safavid relations. In the *Surname-i Hümayun*, one finds miniatures depicting buffoons entertaining the crowd by placing turbans on their bums. Closer examination reveals that the turbans treated in such a disrespectful manner are the type worn by the

Safavids[1], indicating troubled relations between the two groups. The *Surname-i Hümayun* was undertaken during a period in which the Ottoman Empire was engaged in a series of exhausting and costly wars with the Persians over territory and trade routes in the Caucasus and the Silk Road. Furthermore, the Ottoman relations with the Russians were less than ideal as noted by the prominent Ottoman historian Halil İnalcık: "the Ottomans annexed all of the western provinces of Iran from the Caucasus to Nehavend [a region situated in present-day Iran]" but were faced with extensive Russian attacks when they attempted to establish a navy fleet on the Caspian.[2] Popular opinion in the Empire was distinctly anti-Persian and crowds were highly appreciative of entertainment at the cost of their enemies. Such observations highlight the usefulness of discussion of the Ottoman Empire's war involvements, such as the aforementioned war with Persia, as well as the campaign for Vienna. A third contextual aspect which is apparent in the festival miniatures is the social hierarchy of the Empire. Even cursory examination of the miniatures shows that social ranks were differentiated by attire. For example, the sultan and the Grand Vizier are depicted with elaborate headgear and opulent, billowing robes, while in contrast, the entertainers and guildsmen wear modest or minimal head gear and robes, or the trousers and tunics of the masses. Given the link to the differentiation among the ranks of the guildsmen, social hierarchy marked by

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[1] Safavid Dynasty: the first Iranian Dynasty (1502-1736) to adopt Shi'a Islam as the state religion. Safavid males were noted for their red headgear and were known as *kızılbaş*.

[2] Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600,* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 42.

differences in attire will be discussed in chapter 3. Finally, another contextual aspect that arises from study of the festival miniatures, specifically the *Surname-i Vehbi*, is the cultural period in which this festival took place, namely the Tulip Era. Associated with the reign of Ahmed III, the Tulip Era is known for increased opulence and freedom, as well a vibrant social and intellectual life.

## A policy of debasement

The miniature shown in figure 10 is extracted from the *Surname-i Vehbi* and depicts the feast of the janissaries. The banquet was one of many offered by the sultan not only to his guests, but also to state apparatus groups such as the *kadıs* (judges), high-ranking palace officials and the *ulema* (learned, religious men). In contrast to the banquets offered to officials and religious men, that of the janissaries was chaotic and frenetic. The men are depicted as rushing at golden plates of food set of the ground with such ferocity that one of their brothers is pushed aside and his head gear knocked to the ground (middle, lower third of painting). All appear to be in a great rush:

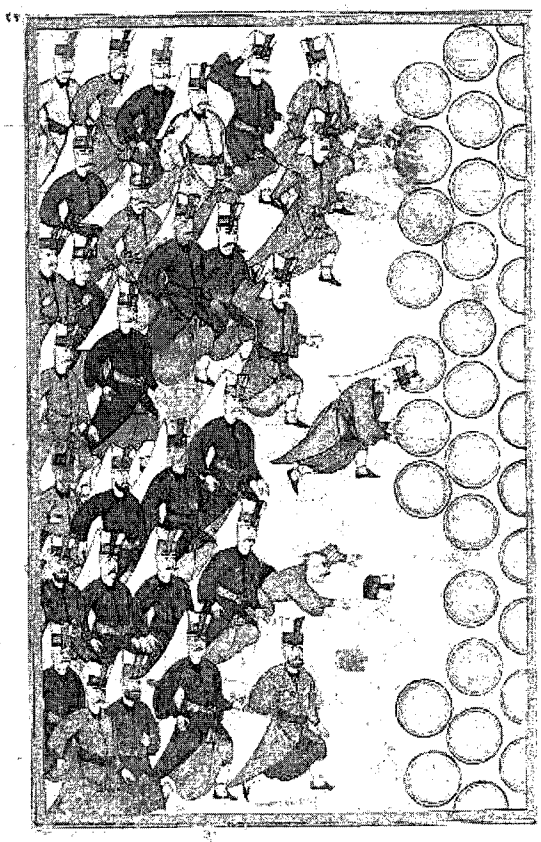

FIGURE 10 *Surname-i Vehbi*
Feast of the janissaries

Vehbi's accompanying notes suggest that the group would ravish everything offered to them and would then abscond with the empty plates.[3] Similar scrambles also took place among the general populace during such festivals as the circumcision festivals of 1582 and 1720. In the weeks preceding the circumcision, the sultan distributed coins and large numbers of slaughtered sheep and would also order bowls of food brought for the general population every two or three days. The crowds would rush excitedly upon the food, consuming everything and carrying off the plates and silverware. It is generally accepted among scholars that such scrambles were a way for the sultan to exhibit his extreme wealth and absolute power over his subjects: certainly he was giving away the equivalent of large sums of silver, however he was also setting the limit at just how much should be given away and to whom. That the janissaries are grouped with the general populace in rushing viciously to take any bit of wealth offered to them suggests that perhaps they were not so financially well compensated or wealthy. An examination of the Ottoman economic situation reveals that this was the case and that poor financial conditions were a contributing factor to the janissaries' deteriorating condition.

Although the scope of the time period of this study is the sixteenth to eighteenth century, it is necessary to begin with a financial picture of the Ottoman Empire at the middle of the fifteenth century as the economic condition of this period carried forward to subsequent centuries. It is accepted among historians that in the sixteenth century, the central bureaucracy continued to follow financial

[3] Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582," 95.

practices similar to those established in the fifteenth century, namely, the establishment of an elaborate system of taxation and the practice of regular debasement of the silver *akçe*[4].

The fifteenth century saw the Ottoman Empire conquer vast territories and expand on a tremendous scale, both in terms of territory and population. In order to properly maintain the newly established Empire, the government required significant additional revenue to finance a growing economy, bureaucracy and military campaigns, as well as to build the treasury of the greatly expanding Empire. Soldiers and bureaucrats were paid in *akçes*, a practice that required substantial cash revenue. Ottoman administration was highly centralized and finances were controlled centrally with the ultimate purpose of financing military and state operations. Such tight control reflects that ultimate responsibility of the sultan to ensure stability within the Empire so that his subjects, the *reaya*[5], were able to produce and trade without being harassed, a responsibility referred to as *hisba*[6]. Şerif Mardin reminds us that "the

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[4] The *akçe* was the silver coin used as the basic monetary unit in the Ottoman Empire until the end of the seventeenth century.

[5] The *reaya* were tax-paying subjects and included peasants, merchants and craftsmen. Military, *ulema* and bureaucrats were not considered *reaya*.

[6] The general meaning of *hisba* refers to the function of a person (*muhtasib*) within a community whose duty it is to "promote good and forbid evil" by supervising morality and behaviour among the citizens, as well as supervising markets (checking adherence to price regulations, weights and measures, etc.). Specifically referring to the Ottoman Empire, *hisba* becomes *ihtisab*: "the levying of dues and taxes, both on traders and artisans and also on certain imports." The term evolved to encompass the whole group of functions of the *ihtisab*, who was also referred to as the "market police" and "inspector of markets", supervisor of markets and members of trade guilds. His duties included supervision and inspection, of markets, punishment and penalties of law-breakers, and levying of

ruler is personally responsible for the welfare of his subjects." [7] Mardin also notes, however, that the economic control held by the state was as much motivated by the need and desire to support the military as by *hisba* requirement. Consider, for example, the state's practice of pressuring producers for the interests of consumers and military (to ensure an adequate supply of grain, etc., for the army) to sell particular products to the state at fixed prices that did not necessarily benefit the producer.[8]

By the sixteenth century, continued wars for territory had become a great financial burden on the state. Ottoman armies had conquered a vast amount of territory and it became extremely difficult to continue to maintain the acquired lands. Once the revenues of the conquered provinces were spent, it became necessary to divert income from other provinces for their upkeep. Provinces such as Aleppo and Erzurum furnished a large part of the Ottoman central budget but as it became necessary to use this income for other territories, the treasury was soon exhausted and the state found itself with a great shortage of capital.[9] The Empire had gone from surplus during the early period of the Empire to (almost) continual deficit by the sixteenth century and taxation, which had early beginnings in the fifteenth century, had become customary. In addition to taxation, the state devised solutions to attempt to alleviate the continual

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taxes. For more details pertaining to *hisba*, see the Encyclopedia of Islam Online 3rd ed., s.v. "*hisba,*" http://www.brillonline.nl/ (accessed December 14, 2008).

[7] Şerif Mardin, *Religion, Society, and Modernity in Turkey* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 25.

[8] Ibid., 26.

[9] Ömer Lütfi Barkan and Justin McCarthy, "The Price Revolution of the Sixteenth Century: A Turning Point in the Economic History of the Near East," International Journal of Middle East Studies 6:1 (1975): 19.

shortage of revenue. Two of these solutions, silver debasement and the *timar* system, are outlined below.

The early Ottoman Empire experienced silver shortages as well as periodic debasements of the *akçe* throughout the fifteenth century. Specifically, during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1451-81), six debasements were undertaken, with the silver content of the coin growing increasingly smaller with each incidence of debasement. Şevket Pamuk, a well-known expert on the economic history of the Ottoman Empire, has written extensively about the debasements and their outcomes. He notes that between the years 1444 and 1481, the silver content of the Ottoman currency was decreased by 30%.[10] Each debasement and the resulting tight state-imposed restrictions on silver would result in hoarding of silver coins as the new issues were of less value than previous ones. Such hoarding contributed to enduring silver shortages throughout Mehmed's reign. Pamuk notes that subsequent rulers did not impose such economic restrictions: silver shortages did not occur again until later in the sixteenth century.[11]

Based on Carlo Cipolla's work outlining the use of debasements in medieval Europe, Pamuk summarizes a series of causes for the debasements. The most important of these causes were 1) budget deficits and the need for the government to raise additional revenue; 2) the need to increase the stock of silver in circulation; and 3) pressure from social groups in the direction of profit

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[10] Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 40.
[11] Ibid., 41.

inflation.[12] The first cause, budget deficit, is quite straightforward: the Empire required revenue for the central treasury in order to pay state officials and soldiers, and any others who required payment in *akçes*. The second cause, increased silver circulation, arose from a shortage of silver in circulation that was, ironically, made worse by the debasements. During the reign of Mehmed II, a great surplus of coins had accumulated in the central treasury and was therefore out of circulation. An inventory taken following the death of Mehmed II in 1481 revealed that the state treasury contained almost 350 million *akçes*.[13] In comparison to the amount of *akçes* in circulation, this was a phenomenal sum. Such a surplus led to shortage of silver coin in circulation in the Empire and a resulting 'silver famine' during much of the fifteenth century. At the same time, Western Europe was experiencing similar silver shortages – production from European silver mines was not sufficient to provide for Europe's increased trade with the Ottomans. In response to shortages of silver, Mehmed II implemented a series of strict laws governing production, transport, operation of mines, and circulation of silver. For example, restrictions on the use of gold and silver required that "[n]o goldsmith or silver embroiderer was allowed to keep more than 200 *dirhams* (640 grams) of silver".[14] Pamuk speculates that the restrictions imposed by the state led to further shortages of silver, despite the Ottoman conquest of the Balkan silver mines in Bosnia and Serbia in mid-fifteenth century. He suggests that the tighter the laws governing silver, the more

[12] Pamuk, *Monetary History*, 50.
[13] Ibid., 42.
[14] Ibid., 45.

the sultan's subjects were inclined to hoard. A similar scenario in Europe played out with similar results. In his book on the subject of the political impact of the economic policies pursued by the crown, Harry Miskimin notes that the French nobility contributed to the ongoing French silver shortage by hoarding silver coins in response to the king's economic intervention.[15]

The third cause of the debasements, pressure from social groups, is linked to the state's need for revenue. Scholars have argued that the silver debasements were encouraged by merchant and craftsmen groups who were faced with increased taxation whenever the central treasury required funds. Merchants, craftsmen and peasants, while not gaining directly from debasements, did not lose greatly whenever the value of the *akçe* decreased: a rise in taxes would cost these groups more than a debasement.[16] Most land was state owned by the mid-fifteenth century and peasants could pay rents in kind through the *sipahis* (cavalrymen) who were assigned to specific lands.[17] A certain amount was required to be paid in cash but a debasement wouldn't immediately affect the amount of agricultural product paid to the state. Merchants also benefitted nominally from debasements as goods sold for higher prices during resulting inflation. Craftsmen were able to sell their products for higher prices during the resulting period of inflation: this would counter the rise in the price of raw

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[15] Harry A Miskimin, *Money and Power in Fifteenth-century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, (1984).
[16] Pamuk, *Monetary History*, 56.
[17] İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 107.

materials.[18] For these reasons, the merchant, craftsmen and peasant groups would favour debasement over increased taxation.

Those who suffered as a result of debasements, however, were those who received their salaries in *akçes*: state employees, and more specifically, janissaries. During the fifteenth and very early sixteenth centuries, the janissaries benefitted from the spoils won from conquered territories but this was soon to be limited by the central treasury's ever-increasing demand for income. Debasements undertaken during the fifteenth century resulted in large-scale protest by the janissaries following which their salaries were augmented.[19] Pamuk notes, however, that as subsequent debasements were carried out, no further incidence among the janissaries occurred which would suggest that Mehmed II had succeeded in effectively centralizing the administration and had gained absolute power of the Empire such that those whom were affected by debasements were not inclined to protest against such power.[20] It is highly likely that subsequent rulers were forced to try and win over the offended groups thus contributing to the financial crisis. For example, Selim II (r. 1566-74) gave janissaries permission to marry in 1566.[21] In addition to undermining the exclusivity of loyalty to the sultan, the right to marry placed further financial burden on the state treasury as the state was then required to provide janissaries' sons with employment.[22] As the financial crisis worsened, the

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[18] Pamuk, *Monetary History*, 56.
[19] Pamuk, *Monetary History*, 57.
[20] Ibid., 58.
[21] Mardin, *Religion, Society and Modernity*, 8.
[22] Ibid.

traditional *devşirme*[23] system of recruitment disintegrated and the number of volunteers wishing to join the Janissary corps increased significantly with the result that the state faced further drain on the treasury. As reflected in the miniature in figure 10, the janissaries' participation in the scramble indicates that the group suffered considerably as a result of the Empire's economic difficulties.

### The *timar* system

The sixteenth century was a period of population growth, urbanization, and increased economic links between rural and urban areas. Commerce and cash spread from city to countryside with the rise in markets and fairs throughout the Empire[24]. By the end of the sixteenth century, however, the Ottoman Empire was experiencing serious economic and resulting social crisis, an argument that is widely accepted among historians. A similar crisis was occurring in Europe at the same time. The Ottoman economy was closed (as opposed to the European market) and so did not follow the trends of speculation, credit, and investment of the rapidly developing European economy. Prices for basic commodities such as wheat, wool, and copper were closely regulated within the Empire and so at the beginning of the sixteenth century, were less susceptible to the rising inflation

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[23] Through the *devşirme* system, young Christian boys were conscripted from provinces within the Empire and following their conversion to Islam, were trained as servants to the sultan. *Devşirme* recruits swore absolute loyalty to the sultan. For a thorough discussion of the *devşirme* system see Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey I*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 113-115.

[24] Pamuk, *Monetary History*, 126.

occurring in Europe.[25] The European market demanded such commodities which were, as a result, diverted away from the Ottoman market to be sold at much higher prices in Europe. Although this was not officially permitted by the state, profit margins were such that merchants continued to divert materials for extraordinary profit. The resulting shortages within the Empire left key cities and industries without adequate raw materials and a growing discontent resulted among artisans' guilds as they were left with a shortage of material and inflated prices. During the second half of the sixteenth century, with the rise of the European capitalist market (i.e., more competitive prices outside the Empire), the European demand for Ottoman raw materials increased, and Ottoman sales in finished products decreased. Barkan offers the following example of market shift as it affected the silk market of Bursa:

> Until the latter half of the sixteenth century, this city [Bursa] produced huge quantities of high quality silk cloth, most of it intended for the export market. Once the European silk industry was perfected, however, European merchants no longer bought anything from Bursa but silk thread, eagerly awaiting the day when they would only have to buy the cocoons. The same industrial evolution characterized the mohair (sof) industry of Ankara. Ankara had been renowned for its export-quality woven mohair cloth, but by the end of the sixteenth century it had fallen to the level of a thread center, a simple market for the hair of Ankara goats. Like Bursa, it had become a supplier of primary material.[26]

As the sixteenth century progressed, the Ottoman Empire experienced a period of great inflation and growing discontent among the Ottoman population. In addition to the debasement's negative impact on those on fixed incomes (i.e., janissaries and state employees), the rise in prices caused further suffering

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[25] Pamuk, *Monetary History*, 127.
[26] Barkan, "Price Revolution," 8.

among the population. Pamuk placed the inflation rate in Istanbul at "approximately 500 percent from the end of the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century"[27] and suggests that "[e]vidence from the account books of similar hospices in Edirne and Bursa, other cities of the Marmara basin, indicate similar rates of overall price increases during this period."[28] Inflation and unrest resulting from the financial crisis within the Empire continued through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The state, faced with discontent, shortage of funds and crushing inflation, returned to a practice whose origins predate the Ottoman Empire, the *timar* system. The state treasury was without sufficient funds to pay members of the military and as a result, established the practice of assigning "state agricultural revenues to the troops, who collected them directly, in place of salary." [29] This system, though reorganized to suit the Ottoman situation, dates from the Byzantine Empire in the sixth century.[30] The *timar* system is considered a distinguishing characteristic of the Ottoman Empire and as evidence of the importance of the system to the function of the Empire, İnalcık states that during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, "it has been estimated that there were six thousand kapĭkulu [the salaried, standing army of the state] cavalry, twelve thousand Janissaries and forty thousand provincial sipâhîs."[31] Under the guise of this system, a military group of cavalrymen, known as *sipahi*, received a lease of

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[27] Pamuk, *Monetary History*, 120.
[28] Ibid., 125.
[29] İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 107.
[30] André Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent* (New York: New Amsterdam, 1992), 342.
[31] İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 107.

land from the sultan in return for military service. The lease granted them control of the land as well as the authority to collect revenue from the *reaya* working the land. The land, therefore, became the source of the *sipahi*'s revenue as he was easily able to collect the taxes from the *reaya* that were paid to him in kind. He was then responsible for converting the tithe into cash.[32] The state assessed a particular fee for each land allotment with a percentage for the sultan, for the governor of the region, and for the central treasury, and once fees were deducted, the *sipahi* kept the remainder. In addition to fee collecting, the *sipahi* enforced state land laws and oversaw rental of land to peasants. It should be noted that all land in the Ottoman Empire was owned by the sultan, though it was leased or rented. For military service, the *timar* system required each *sipahi* to equip himself, as well as his companions (if applicable) with arms and provisions rather than the state providing armament and support. The lowest ranking *sipahi*s merely served personally, with their mount, but those with higher incomes had to bring with them at least one and up to a maximum of five fully-equipped and mounted companions.[33]

Another revenue-gaining system implemented by the Ottoman administration was the *iltizam* (tax farming) system which existed from the earliest times of the Ottoman Empire. The *iltizam* system operated in parallel with the *timar* system and brought revenue to the central treasury through the sale of state income sources such as *timar* holdings at inflated prices. The janissaries are one group that is particularly noted for their practice of extortionate tax farming through

[32] İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 107.
[33] Ibid., 113.

which they acquired large pieces of state land and the attached *reaya*.[34] In contrast to the *timar* system, the tax farmer rarely lived in the town attached to the land holding and as such tax collection passed into the hands of influential parties who were disassociated from the land.[35] The tax farmer, like the *sipahi*, collected tax revenues and converted them to cash to be returned to the state treasury however as the state requirement was a fixed amount, the tax farmer profited from any surplus leaving the *reaya* in a position vulnerable to mistreatment at the hands of the land-holder. To further exacerbate the problem, the tax farmer could count on the assistance of the state-sponsored military when making his collections.[36]

**The need for distraction**

Both the 1582 and 1720 circumcision festivals, in addition to celebrating a major social event, expressed political motivations veiled by ceremonial dimensions as well as reflecting the current situation of the Empire. The festival of 1582 occurred during a period of crisis. Devalued silver coins were flooding the market[37], inflation was rising, discontent was rapidly spreading among the sultan's subjects, and unemployment was on the rise. Certainly, the festival was meant to distract the population from the serious problems of the empire.

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[34] İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 51.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Halil İnalcık; "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700." Archivum Ottomanicum 6 (1980): 332.
[37] During the festivals, the sultan traditionally distributed a large number of silver coins among his officials, as well as meat and sweets among the general population. It is likely that these coins were of diminished value due to their decreased silver content resulting in continual debasement.

In addition to the economic troubles outlined above, another problem facing the Empire was the Ottoman engagement in a war with Persia which had begun in 1578 and continued as the festival was being held despite a truce which had been signed immediately preceding the festival. In what was thought to be an effort to sway the populace, the festival's entertainment was highly anti-Safavid.[38] For instance, as shown in a miniature from the *Surname-i Hümayun* (figure 11), a group of buffoons play a ball game with Safavid turbans while one has placed a turban on his bum – a potentially highly offensive act. Such distractions were intended to fuel the crowd's anti-Safavid sentiments and to regain their waning support for the ongoing campaign. Additional examples of anti-Safavid sentiment can also be found in the miniatures of the *Surname-i Vehbi* as noted in figure 12. In this painting, we note the presence of a group of figures disguised with grotesque noses (lower left corner) who perform a sketch ridiculing the Safavid rulers of the time and who are dressed, as Atıl's accompanying text highlights, as Iranians.[39] The negative image presented by these characters indicates that the anti-Safavid attitude remained well into the eighteenth century.

FIGURE 11 *Surname-i Hümayun*
A group of buffoons defile Safavid turbans (detail)

[38] Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582," 85.
[39] Atıl, *Levni and the Surname*, 226.

## The Ottoman-Safavid War

Throughout the earlier centuries of the Ottoman Empire, the sultan's armies engaged repeatedly in war against the Safavids for reasons of land acquisition and for the establishment and protection of trade routes. Sultan Süleyman alone undertook three campaigns against the Safavids during his reign. During these campaigns (1534-36; 1548-49; 1554-55), the Ottomans took possession of Iraq, Tabriz, territory in Georgia, parts of Persia, and border areas of Armenia and Kurdistan, as well as Yerevan and Karabakh.[40] They were, however, forced to abandon the second campaign as they were engaged in war with central Europe, and so, with the Ottomans distracted elsewhere, a detachment of Persians advanced into Ottoman territory resulting in a third Ottoman-led campaign whose outcome was a peace treaty, signed in 1555, with the Ottomans positioned to take border areas of Armenia, Kurdistan and Georgia.[41]

FIGURE 12 *Surname-i Vehbi*
Entertainers disguised as Safavids

[40] Carl Max Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism during the Reformation: Europe and the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 1972), 39-40.
[41] Ibid., 40.

By this time, there was growing opposition to the Ottoman-Safavid campaign resulting from the heavy losses sustained by the Ottoman armies, as well as the exorbitant cost of supporting such campaigns. In 1565, the sultan named to his court a Grand Vizier, the Bosnian Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, who strongly opposed the war with Persia for reasons of cost and what Kortepeter calls the "ultimate futility" of previous campaigns.[42] His opposition, however, was to be disregarded due to a particular sect of Shi'ism that was on the rise in Persia and was perceived to represent a serious threat to the Ottoman Empire.[43] Furthermore, the Safavids were attempting to take control of as much of Transcaucasia as possible and had begun to expand their trade partnerships through the Caucasus and across the Caspian Sea, trade routes that the Ottomans guarded jealously. For this reason and in retaliation for past grievances, and despite the Grand Vizier's repeated consul that the campaigns not continue, Süleyman launched a further campaign in 1577. Between 1578-80, the Ottomans regained control of a considerable portion of the Caucasus and placed their navy on the Caspian Sea. It was during this campaign that the Grand Vizier, who had gradually lost favour as the sultan's confidant and consultant (a role taken on by the Valide Sultan, as well as several other prominent members of the sultan's household) was finally murdered in 1579, stabbed through the heart at the hand of a Bosnian dervish.[44] In addition to the public discontent resulting from the murder of the Grand Vizier, the Ottoman-Safavid wars held disastrous economic results beyond the

[42] Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism,* 214.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

cost of supporting long campaigns at great expense. In their informative article outlining the Iranian silk trade, Willem Floor and Patrick Clawson detail the relationship between Iran and the Ottoman Empire as it concerned the silk trade, highlighting the absolute importance of this trade for both the Safavids as well as for the Ottomans. In fact, the silk trade became so vital that "silk was an important political weapon for each side" during their wars.[45] In the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth century, "silk was one of the most important commodities for the production of high profits and for the encouragement of commercial capitalism."[46] It was during a silver shortage resulting from hoarding brought on by debasement that the Ottoman state tried to prevent silver export to Iran. As Safavid Iran required gold and silver as the basis for their foreign trade and their own money supply, absence of Ottoman silver would place Iran in a greatly weakened financial state, thus impeding their ability to continue their war with the Ottoman Empire.[47] However, the tactic backfired and worsened the situation. Lack of silver export meant a shortage of silk import and as the revenue from the trade was a substantial factor in Ottoman state finances, the economic crisis was compounded.

**The Ottoman-Hapsburg War**

The epic Ottoman quest for expansion extended far beyond the battle with Persia. It was at tremendous cost that the Ottomans engaged in battle on two

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[45] Willem Floor and Patrick Clawson, "Safavid Iran's Search for Silver and Gold," International Journal of Middle East Studies 32 (2000): 346.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid., 345.

fronts: with the Safavids and with the Hapsburgs. In addition to repeated campaigns against the Safavids, the Ottoman army marched through Europe and into North Africa, conquering territory as far away as Budapest and Egypt. Süleyman twice attempted to capture Vienna and twice his campaigns failed. The first siege was launched in the spring of 1529 and from the onset the army found itself facing ever-growing difficulties that were compounded by the Ottoman armies insistence on using inflexible and increasingly outdated techniques of war.[48] For example, the overflowing rivers and mud that were common in the region in spring and autumn hampered the army's forward progress and caused them to leave behind their biggest guns and cannons. By the time the Ottomans reached the Viennese walls, they were in possession of a fraction of their artillery. The battle endured for three weeks after which time Süleyman admitted defeat and the army retreated, but not without substantial loss of life and equipment. A second campaign was led against Vienna in 1683 and again, the Ottomans suffered defeat and great loss.

Regardless of repeated defeats in Vienna, the Ottomans succeeded in gaining control of vast tracts of territory including Budapest and Belgrade. These holdings, however, would eventually be lost to Austria.

In the late summer of 1697, the Ottoman Sultan Mustafa II led one last large expedition northward but was soundly defeated by the Austrians. Mustafa finally agreed to negotiate and a peace congress met in 1698 at the village of Karlowitz,

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[48] İnalcık undertakes a thorough discussion of the Ottoman campaign against Vienna. See Halil İnalcık, The *Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, (New York; Praeger Publishers, 1973), 35-40.

near Belgrade, for 72 days. For the first time the Turks agreed to negotiate with a coalition of European nations, to accept mediation by neutral powers, and to admit defeat. In 1699, the Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Karlowitz, a peace settlement that ended hostilities between the Ottoman Empire and the Holy League (Austria, Poland, Venice, and Russia), which deprived the Ottomans of significant territories that they had previously held.[49] Transylvania and much of Hungary returned to Austrian control, significantly diminishing Turkish influence in east-central Europe and establishing Austria as the dominant power there. Regardless of wars between the Europeans and the Ottoman Empire, the Ottomans maintained cordial relations with Europe throughout the duration of the Empire. Unlike the Safavids, whose participation in the festivals was limited to their role as the subject of mockery or to public conversions to Sunni'ism, in contrast, the Europeans are depicted as invited guests at the celebrations, as shown in a miniature of the *Surname-i Vehbi* in figure 13. European presence in the court of the sultan was noted in the early years of the Ottoman Empire. Mehmed II, educated in European history, culture, and art, regularly invited European artists to come to Istanbul and paint and sculpt him.[50] Subsequent sultans, despite the political situation during their reign, maintained good relations with the European powers.

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[49] For a discussion of the Treaty of Karlowitz see Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey I*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 217-225.

[50] Julian Raby, "A Sultan of Paradox: Mehmed the Conqueror as a Patron of the Arts," Oxford Art Journal 5:1 (1982): 4.

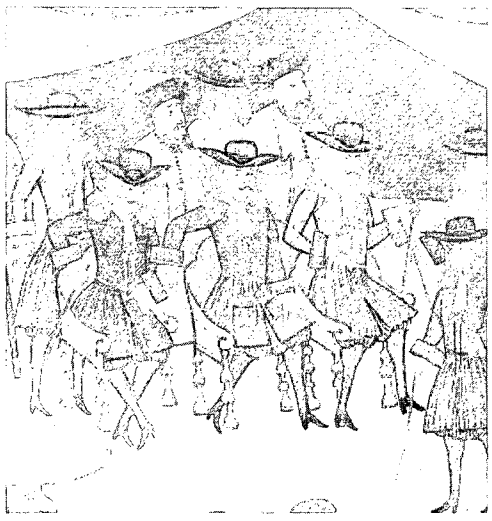

FIGURE 13 *Surname-i Vehbi*
European guests attending the festival

## The Celali Rebellions

The effects of the economic troubles of the Empire and the resulting social upheaval fed additional turmoil for the Ottomans and led large segments of the population to either join or support rebel groups that had formed to revolt against the ruling class. A series of uprisings was taking place throughout Anatolia in the late sixteenth and throughout much of the seventeenth century. These rebellions, known as the Celali revolts, involved Anatolian *sipahi,* defected soldiers from the Ottoman army, gangs of landless peasants, and as Stanford Shaw notes, "[s]ome of the most serious of the Celali revolts were led by the Kurdish Canbulat family in northern Syria."[51] As inflation continued to rise and the Empire's coffers to shrink, the state placed ever-increasing financial pressure on the sultan's subjects. The result was a large percentage of the population who were forced to leave the country to find employment in the city, a migration which contributed to rapid urban population growth. The cities themselves were then subject to unemployment, disorder and social decay. Barkan summarized the resulting chaos of the city as follows: "At the precise moment of threat to its economic structure the Ottoman Empire was undergoing population growth too heavy for its means of subsistence. This

[51] Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey I,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 188.

exceptional demographic increase, even more than inflation and agrarian crisis, increased the army of unemployed, heightening the scope and destruction of the malcontents." [52]

The malcontents to whom Barkan refers were the uprooted and now landless peasants who flooded the cities to find subsistence. Some of these peasants were employed by the military (ongoing wars meant there was always a need for soldiers), while others found employment in the personal armies of wealthy men in rural areas. In these mercenary armies as opposed to highly disciplined corps such as the janissaries, soldiers were self-organized and developed their own customs and standards of behavior. If they found themselves without an employer, they were forced to fend for themselves, essentially living off the land and resorting to banditry to survive. Others among the groups of landless peasants came to the cities where they depended on pious foundations for support: the *waqf* foundations were soon overwhelmed and quickly attained their limit for resources to support an ever-growing population. Where these organizations were unable to support them, some groups organized themselves into gangs and returned to the countryside where they extorted support from remaining peasants. Inflation also took its toll on the *sipahis* who, over the course of time, grew increasingly impoverished. As mentioned previously, the *sipahis* were required to provide all personal equipment and food required for a campaign and the high prices for necessary equipment made it difficult or impossible to participate. Furthermore, lack of funds meant that the *sipahis* were

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[52] Barkan, "Price Revolution," 27.

unable to pay replacements to represent them in the campaigns.[53] Rather than participate unarmed in the campaign, an increasing number of the *sipahi*s joined armed bands of rebels. Shaw notes that the ranks of the rebels revolting against the sultan were filled with soldiers who had either deserted the army or become separated from their ranks as a result of the general state of chaos that had consumed the military. Following an Ottoman victory at Haç Ova, the Grand Vizier Sinan Paşa had ordered anyone who had left the battlefield to be executed and all of their land and property forfeited to the central treasury: it is estimated that between 25,000 to 50,000 men fled into the countryside for fear of their lives and joined the armed bandit groups who were growing in size.[54] Landless *sipahi*s were joined by members of the nobility who had lost their possessions and, supported by the religious students of Istanbul, launched a massive campaign against the sultan in 1603. Soon thereafter, the janissaries launched a counter attack against the rebel group and succeeded in ousting them from their barracks. The fugitive rebels who had survived the coup fled to the countryside and joined the Celali movement which continued through much of the seventeenth century.[55]

### The Tulip Era

In order to complete the overview of the Ottoman Empire between the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, it is necessary to outline the cultural era known as *Lâle Devri* (the Tulip Era). This relatively peaceful and stable period is associated

[53] İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 115.
[54] Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, 186.
[55] Ibid.

with the reign of Ahmed III and was known for its opulence and beauty with an emphasis on art, literature, music and nature. It is also noted as a time of general improvement in the Empire's economic conditions and the Ottoman masses, for the first time, could benefit from luxuries previously available only to the upper ranks of society. Art, architecture and entertainment were meant to appeal to the senses and to bring pleasure to the beholder. For example, the most characteristic buildings of the Tulip Era were pavilions that were situated in magnificent gardens filled with lush greenery and flowers, most notably the tulip, for which the era is named. The pavilions themselves, intended primarily for use during feasts and festivals, were lavishly decorated with tile work bearing flower motifs and boasted panoramic views over the Bosphorous and the city. Another architectural feature that was characteristic of the Tulip Era was the public fountain. These elaborate structures were decorated with elaborate ironwork and gilding, and featured verses from the Qur'an or verses of poetry that were painted in elegant calligraphy. An example of such a fountain is shown in figures 14 and 15.

Not all agreed, however, that the Tulip Era was a period of enlightenment. Critics of this period considered it one of extreme hedonism and loss of morality among leaders and subjects and took the attitude that the Tulip Era, in fact, led to the breakdown of Ottoman society. One such critic, a teacher of a religious college named Ahmed Cevdet, was commissioned to write a history of the period and in his twelve-volume *Tarih-i Cevdet*, he condemns the "pleasure-oriented attitude"

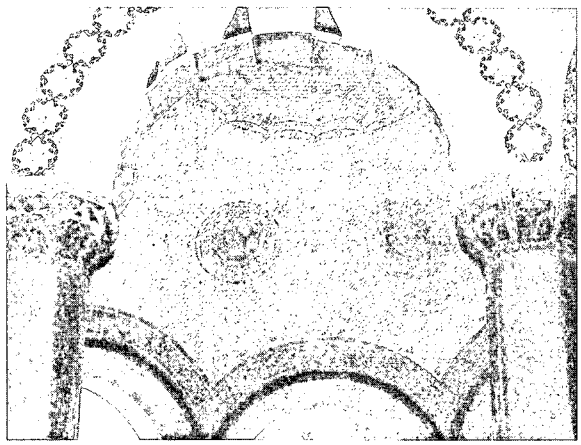

FIGURE 14 Public fountain, Istanbul (detail)

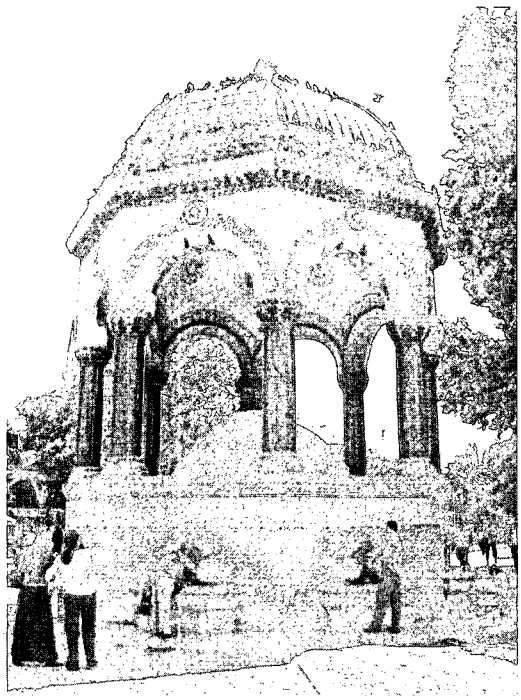

FIGURE 15 Public fountain, Istanbul

and the moral breakdown that had progressed as far as Muslims "partaking of the consumption of alcohol."[56] He laments that "[e]ven the [common] people became predisposed towards the curse of hedonism and the enjoyment of [the world's] delights so that everybody became engulfed in varieties of enjoyment and amusement. And afar from the soldiery's discipline being restored, the old rules and customs which were respected by the people, and even the natural ties between husband and wife were broken."[57]

Morality aside, it is generally accepted among scholars that the Ottoman Empire aligned itself more towards Europe during the Tulip Era and diplomatic relations between the Europeans and the Ottomans were strengthened. In his entry in the Encyclopedia of Islam,

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[56] Can Erimtan, *Ottomans Looking West? The Origins of the Tulip Age and its Development in Modern Turkey* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008) 13.
[57] Ibid.

Harold Bowen states that the Ottoman Empire "witnessed a remarkable change of taste in poetry, music and architecture and a new inclination to profit by European example."[58] Indeed, as evidenced by travel writers such as Lady Mary Montagu, wife of the British ambassador to the Ottoman court, cultural exchanges between the two groups were common and European visitors became an almost regular presence in the Empire. As noted above, groups of European guests are depicted with some regularity in the festival paintings of the 1720 *surname.*

In addition to the regular presence of Europeans, the miniatures of the *Surname-i Vehbi* reflect other characteristics of the Tulip Era such as the reemergence of nature as a subject for art and decoration, and the emphasis on beauty and pleasure. For example, in figure 16, we note the opulence of the festival grounds, the ornate pavilions from which the spectators observe the festivities, as well as the elaborate displays of fireworks.

The economic and social settings depicted in the festival *surname*s reflect that the festivals took place in periods that were as beautiful as they were chaotic. The magnificent festivals, while functioning as a celebration of the circumcisions of the Ottoman princes, also served to distract the population from the troubles of the Empire. Financial difficulties resulting from ongoing wars over territorial expansion were a significant cause of the social unrest that plagued the Empire, evidence of which can be found in the miniatures of the *Surname-i Vehbi* and the *Surname-i Hümayun.* The effects of these economic crises endured through the

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[58] Erimtan, *Ottomans Looking West?*, 2.

eighteenth century and will be shown to have had a profound effect on the guilds as discussed in chapter 3.

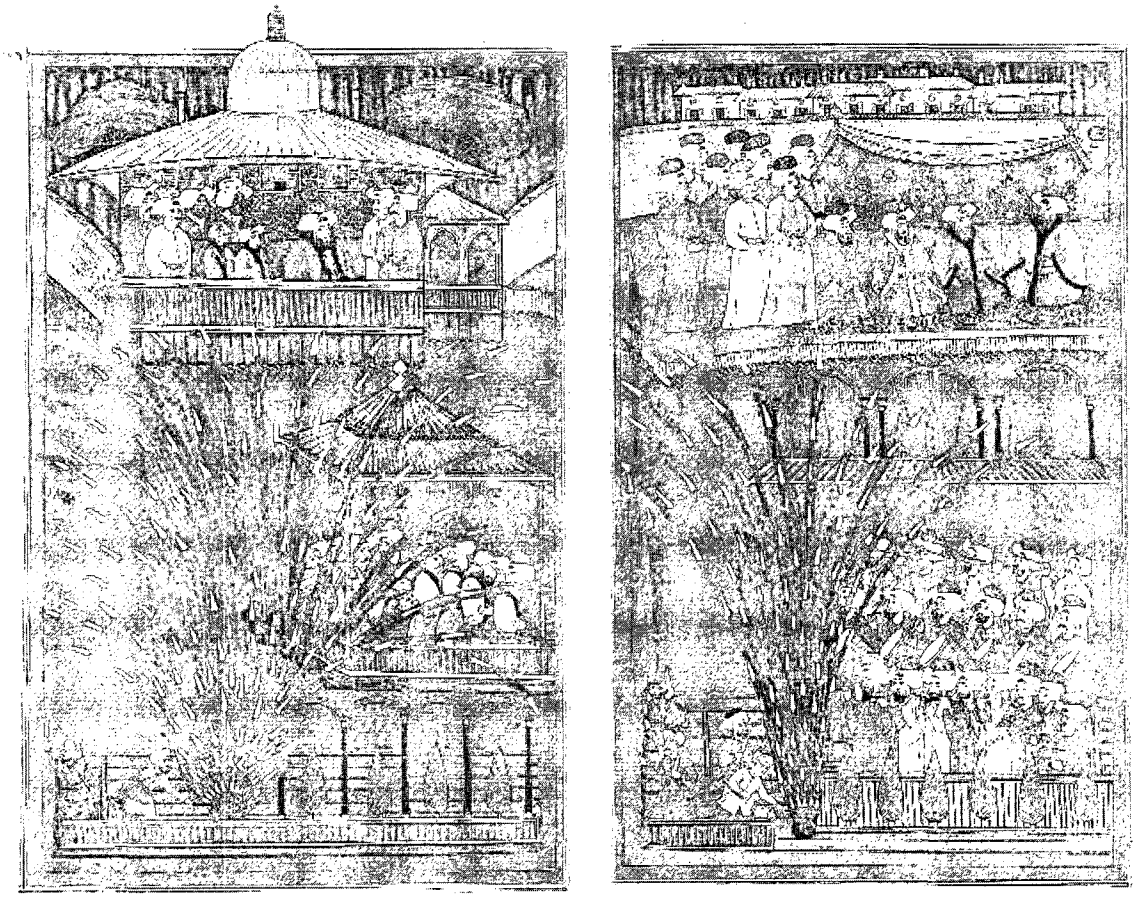

FIGURE 16 Fireworks display on the Golden Horn

## 3. An overview of the guild organizations

A prominent feature of the festival was the procession.[1] Parades served both as entertainment as well as an instrument to clearly demonstrate the hierarchy of the Ottoman society with almost every group within the society participating. For the state, the processions offered an opportunity to display their tremendous economic power and wealth to the foreign representatives in attendance thus legitimizing the Ottoman Empire's dominant position. To the Ottoman subjects, these parades presented more than simple entertainment: the processions were a departure from the ordinary and for the participants, they afforded the chance to obtain the sultan's favour with the gifts they presented. The processions also offered the occasion to present petitions or complaints to the sultan through a less formal protocol. The sultan's court, the sultan himself, visiting dignitaries and festival invitees arrived in hierarchically arranged processions: the sultan was the last to arrive and his entrance marked the official beginning of the festival. While waiting for the sultan's appearance, court dignitaries and officials, each dressed according to their rank and status, greeted guests in a receiving line formed as court protocol dictated. Members of the state apparatus such as *kadıs* and the *ulema*, appeared in the artisans' pageants demonstrating an intermingling of state and society (higher ranks of the state mixing with the

[1] Occasions that were often marked by a series of processions were the departure of the Ottoman army on military campaigns, imperial weddings, reception of a foreign ambassador, or a public court festivity. In contrast to the festival parades, military processions, while entertaining in their scale and grandeur, were solemn occasions.

merchant class) while all members of society, from the lowest to the highest, observed the processions. Of the parades that followed the arrival of the sultan and his guests, one group was particularly well portrayed: large processions of artisans featured prominently among the festival events. The leader of each group would typically be a court servant responsible for supplying the palace or army with goods produced by the group he preceded. For example, the *kasap başı* (meat provider) led the butchers, cheese and yogurt makers' guilds.[2]

Guild processions did not merely involve artisans filing past the sultan; rather they were self-portrayals, practical entertainment celebrating the technical skills and craftsmanship of the guild. These pageants involved highly decorated carriages that were pulled by men, horses or oxen and featured craftsmen who sat on the carriages and demonstrated their trades. Occasionally, the guild procession became comic entertainment as tradesmen practiced their craft in an amusing or acrobatic manner, such as the barber who shaved his clients while standing on his head.[3] As they filed past the imperial

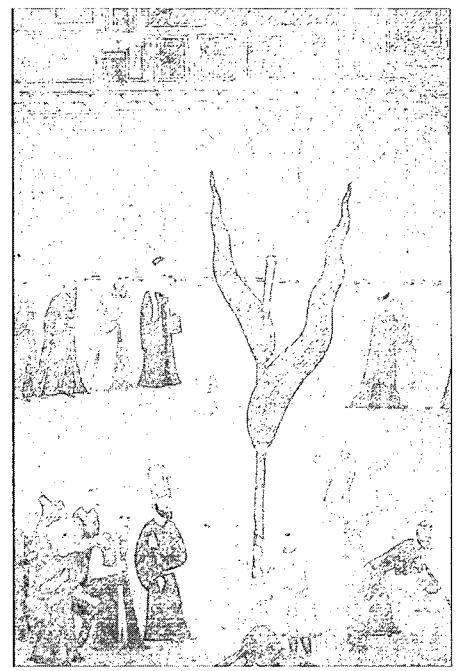

FIGURE 17 *Surname-i Hümayun*
Guildsmen presenting a giant paper tulip

[2] Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Tauris, 2000), 170.
[3] Gisela Procházka-Eisl, "Guild Parades in Ottoman Literature," in Crafts and Craftsmen of the Middle East: Fashioning the Individual in the Muslim Mediterranean, Suraiya Faroqhi and Randi Deguilhem, eds., (London: Tauris, 2005), 47.

spectators, the guildsmen presented gifts to the sultan and to the pashas who would distribute coins among the apprentices. As shown in figure 17, these gifts were often oversized versions of their product such as giant shoes, tree-sized paper tulips, or a giant cake that required several men to support it. Poorer guilds without carriages would suspend their products on poles, or simply walk carrying their wares in their hands. Costumes were always spectacular among wealthier guilds. For example, mirror makers would wear costumes consisting of small pieces of mirrors sewn into the cloth, while paper makers wore paper clothes.[4]

Often, the guilds took advantage of the opportunity to present petitions to the sultan.[5] For example, coffee was a fairly recent addition to Istanbul in 1550 and from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, coffee was consumed at home and in coffee houses where it became very popular. The coffee houses were faced with much objection for they were thought to provide illicit drugs. Furthermore, coffee houses inevitably became a meeting place for the urban population and the state could not control these gatherings. As a result, coffee houses were frequently shut down in the mid-seventeenth century causing the coffee trader guilds to petition the sultan during festivals. The guild procession provided an opportunity for the coffee sellers to present their trade as an entertainment thereby gaining the sultan's approval and that of his subjects and court.

While literature and paintings depicting the festivals clearly denote state and social hierarchy, the hierarchy of the guilds themselves within the festival

[4] Procházka-Eisl, "Guild Parades in Ottoman Literature," 47.
[5] Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582," 87.

processions is not clearly defined. Gisela Procházka-Eisl, in her work on guild parades in Ottoman literature, has studied the possibility that there was no general order criteria in the guild processions and has concluded that with the exception of the appearance of the wine shop keepers at the end of the parade, there is little to indicate any similarity in the order of presentation of the guilds in festival processions.[6] Regarding guilds associated with the ignoble trades such as tanners or coffin makers, literature suggests that they are not treated in a hierarchical manner that would differentiate them from other manual labourers such as bread makers or ship builders. For example, "[n]ear the end of the procession, one can see guilds which are traditionally despised in many cultures, such as blacksmiths, tanners and butchers, but they are mentioned along with the muezzins and imams."[7] It would appear, therefore, that there was no systematic order to the processions. Furthermore, within the *Surname-i Hümayun*, there are great differences in the lengths of the descriptions of the guilds participating in the processions. The shorter descriptions appear to refer to those guilds who participated without a carriage but instead filed past the sultan offering little of noteworthy value. For example, the members of the *ulema* offered a prayer for the sultan and receive one line mention in the *surname*. The same may be said of those guilds who were repairmen or those who sold everyday goods such as nuts, pickles, and brooms. There is no lack of prestige associated with the *ulema*, yet they are described merely in passing. This would suggest that the length of the description does not indicate any kind of hierarchy

[6] Procházka-Eisl, "Guild Parades in Ottoman Literature," 43.
[7] Ibid.

for the procession. There are long and detailed descriptions of the trade guilds such as the cloth traders and the coffee sellers and the author of the *Surname-i Hümayun* seems particularly drawn to those guilds whose members wore brightly coloured, richly decorated clothing or whose workshops featured very attractive boys. In fact, he goes so far as to spend an inordinate length of space describing the guild of the halva makers, not because of the apparent presence or absence of prestige of the guild, but rather because the guild members had tried to blow up a living rabbit with fireworks.[8]

**Function of the guilds**

The prominence of the guilds in festival processions indicates the enormous importance of these organizations in which a significant percentage of the working population were registered. Craftsmen were governed by their laws, were supported by the community and were nurtured and shaped by the leadership. Above all, guilds were social units that were governed by traditional sets of rules regarding members' behaviour, morality and work ethic. However, guilds also allowed the government to supervise the general population and provided an administrative link between the population and the state.[9] In addition to providing leadership to the members and ensuring their proper behavior, morality and adherence to regulations, the guild heads also functioned as state apparatus, implementing state orders or restrictions concerning such aspects as dress and production regulations. The state also required that the

[8] Procházka-Eisl, "Guild Parades in Ottoman Literature," 47.
[9] Baer, "Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," 32.

guild guarantee that official orders would be implemented. For example, "a baker was punished for using false weights, and he was allowed to resume his business only after the guild had given a guarantee that he would not repeat his misdeed."[10]

Another function of the Ottoman guilds was to supply services and labour to the state, while ensuring a steady supply of certain goods to the government. For example, the silversmith guild was charged with maintaining a steady supply of high quality silver leaf to the court at a reasonable rate, while the construction or restoration of mosques also required a steady supply of marble. Furthermore, the guilds controlled distribution of restricted goods such as furs, and prevented them from being sold to an unintended market at exorbitant prices rather than being supplied to the palace. In times of war, guild members were recruited as civilian auxiliary when the army needed increased support and in times of financial difficulty, the guilds were called upon to fill the role of supplier to the military. The state normally employed their own suppliers for the army when the financial situation of the state treasury was stable.

The traditional place of business of the guilds was the *çarsi* (bazaar), around which trade grew. The *çarsi* was of fundamental importance to the city and provided Ottoman citizens with their basic necessities as well as with luxuries. Ottoman cities were centered around the *çarsi* which consisted of three or four central sections. The first section contained the businesses and people associated with money and exchange such as the mints, tax collectors, *muhtasib*,

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[10] Baer, "Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," 34.

and porters. In the centre of the *çarsi* was located the *bedestan*, the section where foreign goods and objects of great value such as jewelry were held. This section could be closed down and locked at night for security and was generally located in the centre of the *çarsi* complex with lines of shops branching out along both sides of the road leading outward. The third section contained goods and businesses associated with women and women's roles, such as bakers, butchers, and other foodstuffs. The university and mosque were usually attached to the *çarsi* and comprised the final section. The guilds were located in internal markets situated within the bazaar and were grouped according to type of craft. Commercial buildings such as the *bedestan* and the *çarsi* traditionally belonged to the pious foundations who were generally responsible, both administratively and financially for the buildings and the trades and crafts that functioned within these commercial spaces would be required to pay a certain amount to the foundation in the form of rent.[11]

Guild members received both spiritual and financial support from the organization. Funds were contributed both voluntarily and mandatorily by guild members of all ranks. Upon promotion of their apprentices to journeymen or their journeymen to master craftsmen, guild masters contributed a sum to the organization. Funds collected were used for various purposes such as insurance for members. Guildsmen in need of money were provided with a loan, and interest on these loans (charged at a rate of 1%) was given to charity for guild members for such uses as food for poor or destitute members, assistance for

[11] Bernard Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," The Economic History Review 8:1 (1937): 20.

illness, or funerals for those with insufficient income for this purpose.[12] Lewis notes that there existed a form of unemployment and sickness insurance into which all members paid.[13] A portion of these funds were also used for religious purposes. For example, during the period of Ramadan, funds were used to pay for the recitation of the Quran in the Eyüp mosque.[14] Regarding the spiritual function of the guilds, Ines Aščerić-Todd notes that guilds throughout the Ottoman Empire were connected through a spiritual leader who embodied the religious aspects of the guild organization and ensured observance of customs and rituals, as well as mediated disputes and oversaw such aspects as production quality and election of guild officials.[15] She does not indicate whether this official spiritual supervisor oversaw the spiritual guidance of the non-Muslim guilds, however, based on the presence of mixed faith guilds as outlined by Baer and Yi, it is possible that the spiritual leader oversaw both single and mixed-faith guilds.

### Origins and evolution of the guilds

Several contrasting arguments have been presented about the origins and evolution of the Ottoman guilds. In 1937, the well-known historian Bernard Lewis, in his article "The Islamic Guilds", presented a theory originally proposed by Louis Massignon, who hypothesized that the guilds originated from a ninth century religious movement, namely the anti-Sunni, anti-Caliphate Qarmati

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[12] Baer, "Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," 45.
[13] Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," 35.
[14] Baer, "Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds,"45.
[15] Aščerić-Todd, "The Noble Traders," 162-163.

movement. The philosophy of the Qarmatis recognized the relativity of all religions and based itself "on a system of justice, toleration and complete equality."[16] Professor Massignon's theory stated "that it was the Qarmati movement which created the Islamic guilds and gave them their distinctive character which they have retained until to-day."[17] The Islamic guild, he says, was essentially a powerful weapon used by the Qarmati propagandists as they fought to assemble the labouring classes of the Islamic world into a force capable of overthrowing the Caliphate and all it represented. The Qarmatis created and dominated the guilds in an attempt to reach the artisans and the craftsmen, who, Massignon points out, "came to have a double character, being at once professional guilds and Qarmati fraternities."[18] Lewis was a strong advocate that Qarmatism played a major role in the development of Islamic guilds. However, Eunjeong Yi, a modern expert on Ottoman guilds, has countered Massignon's theory, and argues that there is a glaring lack of evidence to support the interrelation between Qarmatism and trade organizations and therefore, that the link between the two as established by Lewis and Massignon is tenuous at best, and is, most likely, non-existent.[19] Furthermore, Yi highlights both Massignon's and Lewis' troublesome treatment of the Islamic guilds as a single entity rather

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[16] Qarmatism was a movement of Ismā'īlism which gained a following in the ninth century. The Qarmatis revolted against and refused to recognize the claims of the Fāṭimid caliphs to the imāmate. For more details pertaining to Qarmatism, see the Encyclopedia of Islam Online 2nd ed., s.v. "*karmaṭī*," http://www.brillonline.nl/ (accessed December 14, 2008).

[17] Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," 23.

[18] Ibid., 25.

[19] Eunjeong Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul: Fluidity and Leverage* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 7.

than a large group of complex, ever-evolving organizations who were as varied as their membership and cultural location. While they may have shared some similarities in membership and rituals, the Istanbul bakers' guilds of the sixteenth century differed greatly from those of seventeenth century Baghdad. The implication that the guilds were a homogenous body at any stage in their evolution is short sighted and inaccurate and Yi reminds us that Massignon's theory has been largely discredited among scholars and he has been criticized for his inaccurate use of the word guild.[20]

Massignon and Lewis were not alone, however, in hypothesizing that the guilds descended from religious origins. Aščerić-Todd links Ottoman guilds to the *futuwwa* tradition and the descendent *akhi* movement. *Futuwwa* means literally "the qualities of the young man" and the term has evolved to denote various movements and organizations of men, such as early military organizations, which, until the beginning of the modern era, were wide spread throughout the urban communities of the Muslim East. Hammer-Purgstall considered the *futuwwa* as a form of chivalry, an interpretation that is still repeated by scholars. Initial *futuwwa* associations were connected with Sufism and consisted of groups of young men living by a common set of guidelines and rituals and who followed a particular moral code governing their behaviour. This code required members to be generous, hospitable, charitable, pious, tolerant, self-chastising and forgiving. The rituals and traditions of the artisan and crafts guilds such as the code governing personal and business conduct are associated with those of

[20] Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul*, 7.

*futuwwa* associations.[21] Aščerić-Todd reminds us that there also existed among early groups of craftsmen a code governing honour and conduct, which evolved eventually into the traditions of the trade guilds.[22] Customs and rituals of guilds such as apprenticeship and initiation rituals, as well as guidelines for everyday life of the members were determined by those of the *futuwwa* associations.[23] The Anatolian *akhi* organization, responsible for the organization and unification of trade and craftsmen, represented a step in the evolution of the *futuwwa* tradition. This fourteenth century movement was headed by a leader known as an *akhi baba*, who controlled, partly personally, partly through his representatives who resided in the various towns, the guilds of the tanners and of related leather workers (i.e., saddlers, shoemakers) in Anatolia and the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire and who gradually succeeding in extending his influence over almost the whole of the Turkish guild organization.[24] Aščerić-Todd highlights the guilds' links to the *akhi* movement and asserts that over the course of the fifteenth century, the *akhi* organizations gradually declined and were replaced by guilds. Furthermore, she credits the professional trade guilds for the survival of the *futuwwa* traditions well into the Ottoman age.[25]

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[21] Encyclopedia of Islam Online 2nd ed., s.v. "*futuwwa*," http://www.brillonline.nl/ (accessed December 8, 2008).
[22] Aščerić-Todd, "The Noble Traders," 161.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Encyclopedia of Islam Online 2nd ed., s.v. "*akhi*," http://www.brillonline.nl/ (accessed December 2, 2008).
[25] Aščerić-Todd, "The Noble Traders," 159-173.

Scholars have presented differing arguments on what the guild really is. While Lewis treats the guilds as a single corps of craftsmen, (i.e., Islamic guilds) and does not seem to differentiate among them based on religious affiliation or cultural location, he defines guilds as not purely professional organizations. He asserts that the guilds formed part of members' spiritual guidance and followed highly defined rituals and moral and ethical codes.[26] Others such as Aščerić-Todd refer to religious organizations such as the *akhis* as guilds: "The akhis were young craftsmen organized into guilds that provided a framework for both their professional and personal lives."[27] She portrays the group as very much a guild organization citing the organization of the group and their strict adherence to rituals and traditions that were incorporated into the later Ottoman guilds. Some of these traditions include shared possessions and earnings among members, working and non-working life centred around their lodges, and food and lodging provided for the poor and for travelers. In contrast, Eunjeong Yi considers the guilds as organizations of craftsmen who are bound by common customs and a related trade, but who differ depending on their origins and location in the Ottoman Empire. Gabriel Baer, on the other hand, considered guilds from an administrative and economic point of view and consistently throughout his works presents guilds as organizations of urban population, not merely referring to trade or craftsmen. In his extensive work on the Turkish guilds, Baer outlines several conditions to determine the existence of a guild. First, he reminds us that above all, a guild is a professional organization but is not merely a grouping of

[26] Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," 29.
[27] Aščerić-Todd, "The Noble Traders," 161.

individuals employed in the same (or similar) trade. The organization itself "fulfill[s] various purposes, such as economic, fiscal, administrative and social functions."[28] Furthermore, he stresses that there must be a framework of governance for the unit, chosen from within the organization and led by a designated head. If such conditions are met, the organization may be treated as a guild.[29] While he acknowledges the guilds' origins in the *futuwwa* or *akhi* movements, he maintains that such organizations were not professional and as such, does not treat them as guilds.

The variations in arguments for the evolutionary path of the guilds have resulted in debate among scholars as to the time frame for the origins of the guilds. With the exception of Bernard Lewis, scholars place the existence of the first guilds in either the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Lewis determined that there was definite mention of existence of Muslim guilds as early as the tenth century and notes that there are references to pre-Islamic guilds (i.e., not of the characteristics of Islamic guilds) earlier, which are mentioned to be in existence "of some form of corporative organization of merchants and craftsmen" by the end of the ninth century.[30] Furthermore he notes the presence of a *muhtasib* in an excerpt from a 770 AD text by historian Ibn-ul-'Idhari that refers to a governor in Tunisia "who regulates the markets and allotted each craft to its place."[31] While he does not treat this mention of a *muhtasib* as definitive proof for the early existence of the guilds, it is significant for the link between market

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[28] Baer, "Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," 28.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," 21.
[31] Ibid.

regulation, the *muhtasib*, and the guilds. As Lewis treats the guilds as a homogenous entity, it is likely that his argument for the existence of guilds in the tenth century does not refer to the organization considered by scholars to constitute a modern guild, but rather refers to the early beginnings of the guilds. For this reason, the first guilds likely came into being considerably later than the tenth century and the theory for fifteenth or sixteenth century beginnings is quite acceptable. Because the *futuwwa* associations and the *akhis* were not professional organizations and so did not constitute true guilds, Baer suggests that the guilds did not exist in Turkey prior to the fifteenth century. Rather, he cites Taeschner and states that it is highly likely that *futuwwa* groups made the transition to guilds at the beginning of the sixteenth century.[32] His reason for determining this time period is as follows: by the end of the sixteenth century, there existed a significant number of documents referencing guilds as professional organizations which suggests that by then, the guild was a well established institution. Additionally, Baer provides further evidence that is found within a series of *firmans* (decrees) collected by the historian Ahmet Refik. These *firmans* mention *kethüdas* (chiefs), sheikhs, and *yiğit başıs* (officers) in reference to the leadership structure of the various guilds.[33]

Aščerić-Todd argues that crafts organizations were already in place in Ottoman Bosnia in the fifteenth century.[34] The details, extracted from the *defters* (court registers) of the Bosnian province lists blacksmiths, saddlers, bakers, butchers

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[32] Baer, "Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," 29.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Aščerić-Todd, "The Noble Traders," 162.

and halva makers, to name a few. Furthermore, Aščerić-Todd states that "Ottoman crafts and their trade-guilds appeared in Bosnia soon after the final fall of the country to the Ottomans in 1463."[35]

The debate about the timing of the first guilds highlights variations presented in the literature as to what constitutes a guild. In the miniature paintings of the *Surname-i Hümayun*, the guilds as they are depicted do not appear to be confined within Baer's parameters, but rather are portrayed as structured, but varied organizations. For example, the internal hierarchy of the guilds participating in the processions is quite clearly depicted, however, it is also evident that this hierarchical structure is not consistent among all of the guilds. To deny an organization's guild status based on this lack of consistency when they arguably demonstrate the qualities of a guild suggests that arguments such as Baer's are too restrictive. On one side, Baer presents very clear parameters defining what constituted a guild. Ottoman historian Robert Mantran excluded religious groups as guilds on the basis that religious and state officials, as well as the military were not organized into guilds.[36] In contrast, scholars such as Gisela Procházka-Eisl describe the *ulema* and other religious groups' participation in the guild processions in the 1582 *surname*. In her work on guild parades in Ottoman literature, she highlights descriptions in the *Surname-i Hümayun* manuscript that refer to the guilds who filed past the sultan during the guild processions to present him with gifts or prayers. For example, the members of the *ulema* offered a prayer for the sultan, an act which is described in one line in the

[35] Aščerić-Todd, "The Noble Traders," 159.
[36] Baer, "Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," 30.

*surname*. Procházka-Eisl further argues that the author of the 1582 *surname* often failed to include the word guild in the titles of all the artisan groups described in the work, referring instead to "javelin-makers, cloth-washers, and bucket-sellers".[37] Figure 18, shows a procession of readers of the Qur'an. Both the *surname*'s and Procházka-Eisl's description and inclusion of the religious groups in the guild processions seem counter to Baer's conditions and suggest that he was too strict in his definition of guild. While he is correct in his argument that guilds had administrative, social and economic functions, he is perhaps too narrow with his definition and in fact, one could consider *futuwwa* and *akhi* associations as guilds, referring to the same type of organization defined by Baer. Eunjeong Yi reminds us that Baer, like Lewis and Massignon, was guilty of the assumption that all guilds, regardless of cultural location, functioned the same way and considered that the norm for the guilds of Istanbul applied also to the guilds in general.[38]

FIGURE 18 *Surname-i Hümayun*
Procession of the Qur'an readers (detail)

## Guild structure and hierarchy

The illustrated festival manuscripts offer an excellent point of departure for a discussion of the guild structure and hierarchy. Examination of the miniatures of

[37] Procházka-Eisl, "Guild Parades in Ottoman Literature," 45.
[38] Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul,* 11.

the *Surname-i Hümayun* and the *Surname-i Vehbi* reveals a highly structured organization and well-defined roles of guild members. The portrayal of the guilds throughout the manuscripts depicts common elements that serve to outline the structure of the organization. For example, in the guild procession paintings of the *Surname-i Hümayun*, the difference in the attire of the guildsmen is a common thread that runs throughout. Consider the dress of the members of the bread makers' and potters' guilds shown in figures 19 and 20. The guildsmen seated on the moving carts and practicing the guilds' craft are depicted wearing shorter robes, or plain tunics and pants. In contrast, as shown in figure 21 those who accompany the carts and bear the gifts for the sultan wear longer, sometimes more elaborate robes and in some cases carry staffs. The difference in dress related to the tasks during the procession suggests a difference in status and role among those depicted. For example, it is highly unlikely that the apprentices would present gifts to the sultan, but would instead be associated with the carts, demonstrating the craft. Similar distinction in clothing is found in the miniatures of the *Surname-i Vehbi.* In this case, Atıl's notes that accompany the text outline specifically how guild masters are depicted in terms of dress. "[T]he parading guilds are led by several bearded masters attired in *kavuk*s and long coats."[39] Such distinction can be observed in figure 22.

[39] Atıl, *Levni and the Surname*, 98.

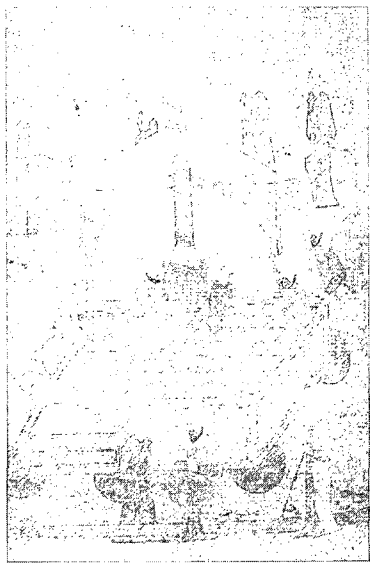

FIGURE 19 *Surname-i Hümayun*
Procession of the bread makers guild (detail)

FIGURE 20 *Surname-i Hümayun*
Procession of the potters guild (detail)

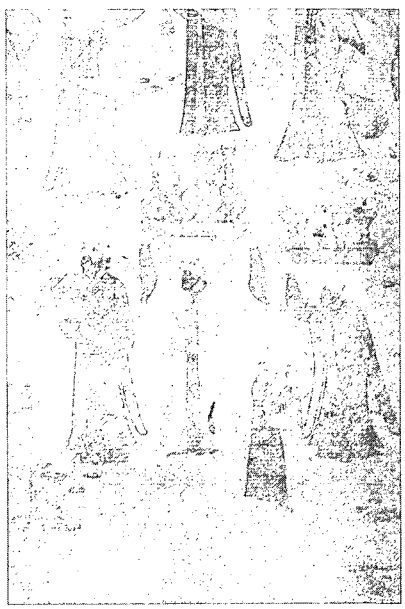

FIGURE 21 *Surname-i Hümayun*
Procession of the glass blowers (detail)

FIGURE 22 *Surname-i Vehbi*
Procession of the tentmakers, shoemakers, grocers, fruit dealers, turban makers, quilt makers, and fabric merchants

In his article describing the clothing laws of the Ottoman Empire, Donald Quataert notes that clothing was a distinguishing factor between the varying ranks of officials, members of the *ulema*, military hierarchy, as well as the

"ordinary classes".[40] Sultan Süleyman was responsible for rigorously codifying dress and headgear in the Empire in order to clearly distinguish between the different groups and Quataert reminds us that this codification reportedly remained relatively unchanged from the time of Süleyman until the eighteenth century.[41] The distinction between the attire of the different ranks of the guilds parallels that of the Ottoman society. Clothing and headgear served to identify not only the boundaries between social classes, but also distinguished members of specific religious, ethnic or occupational communities within Ottoman societies. İnalcık has noted that the sultan "ordered the members of each class to wear clothes indicative of their station in life, forbidding craftsmen and shop-keepers to wear the luxurious garments of the upper class."[42] At the same time, outsiders were easily identifiable by attire. As the clothing of guild apprentices reinforced their subordinate position, so too did the state enforce dress regulations to reinforce gender, religious and social distinctions.[43]

The argument for the specific order of hierarchy of the guilds varies among scholars. Many take as a starting point the vivid and detailed descriptions of Evliya Çelebi, who described in great detail the organization of the guilds in Istanbul in the early seventeenth century. Çelebi described the guild hierarchy of Istanbul as consisting of the sheikh (head), *naquib* (vice-head), *çauş* (usher), *usta* (master), and *çırak* (apprentice). All of Istanbul's guilds were grouped into sections overseen by one person, usually the head of the principal guild within

[40] Quataert, "Clothing Laws," 406.
[41] Ibid.
[42] İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire,* 150.
[43] Quataert, "Clothing Laws," 406-407.

that section. Bernard Lewis' description of the guild structure places the sheikh at the head and notes this was an elected position which functioned as head, treasurer, scribe, and discipliner. The next highest position was held by the guild elders who were chosen from among master craftsmen. The elders generally functioned in administrative roles together with the sheikh. Elders were followed by master craftsmen and the last position was filled by the apprentices. Lewis notes that there was no fixed time of apprenticeship nor was any final project required of the apprentice. Rather, the timing for the apprenticeship was fixed by the master with whom the apprentice worked. Discipline and punishment were overseen either by the sheikh alone, or by a council comprised of the sheikh and the elders. Lewis himself acknowledges that there are slight differences to his description of the guild hierarchy that are noted in the literature.[44] For example, Gordlevsky notes that an apprenticeship of 1001 days was required, during which time the apprentice received no salary. Furthermore, the apprentice was required to present a masterpiece at the end of his apprenticeship and to participate in a formal initiation ceremony upon completion of which he became a *kalfa* (adjunct), a position he was required to keep for at least six months. Following the mandatory six-month period as *kalfa*, the former apprentice was permitted to establish himself as a master craftsman. Punishment for conduct and poor craftsmanship was overseen by a council composed of elders but unlike Lewis' description, this council did not include the sheikh's participation and was additionally tasked with overseeing the quality of

[44] Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," 31.

workmanship, as well as the purchase of raw materials.[45] Lewis notes other regional variations in guild structures such as the guilds in Damascus that were overseen by one person, the *Sheikh ul-Mashaikh* – Sheikh of Sheikhs, whose position was hereditary within a particular family, was not elected and could not be deposed nor replaced unless he died or resigned (or the sultan stepped in). He acted as the supreme judge governing all affairs of the guild, including punishments. The *naquib* was second in command and was followed by the sheikh of the guild, the *Sheikh ul-Hirfa*. In some instances, this position was hereditary while in others it was elected by the elders. The sheikh was appointed for life but could be replaced for not fulfilling his duties. Apprentices remained unpaid until they had mastered the craft, at which point they progressed to the position of journeyman. If the apprentice failed to master the craft, he remained at a very low wage and at the bottom of the hierarchy.[46] In Egypt, on the other hand, the position of *Sheikh ul-Mashaikh* did not exist and instead, guilds were controlled by the chief of police.[47] The head of the guild, called the *Sheikh ut-Taifa*, was responsible for supervision of workers, for conflict resolution and for determining punishment. Apprentices became *ustas* immediately upon initiation however a masterpiece was required to complete the apprenticeship. Yi outlines a membership stratum that differs slightly from Lewis in her ranking of apprentices who were divided between senior and regular apprentices. Additionally, she places master at the top of the ranking below the sheikh, and

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[45] Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," 31.
[46] Ibid., 34.
[47] Ibid.

regular apprentices at the bottom noting that only masters counted as full guild members along with the rights and duties that accompanied this designation. Some of these duties included paying the taxes imposed by the state, implementing the regulations determined by the state and enforcing adherence to internal guild regulations among membership.[48]

### Guild membership

When Evliya Çelebi compiled his in-depth descriptions of Ottoman Istanbul in the seventeenth century, he enumerated remarkable variations in guild sizes. Based on his account of guilds, the generally accepted theory among historians is that the entire population (at least of Istanbul) was organized into guilds. There are some, such as Taeschner, who have taken this view one step further and have argued that no one, including soldiers and state officials, was exempt from belonging to a guild, while others such as Mantran expected that the soldiers and state officials were exempted from guild membership.[49] The largest guilds included such crafts as saddle makers who numbered 5,000 members and 1,084 shops, and carpenters whose membership was approximately 4000 men.[50] The smallest guilds constituted a mere fraction of these numbers with guilds such as map makers numbering fifteen members and eight shops, and upholsterers who

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[48] Eunjeong Yi, "Guild Membership in Seventeenth Century Istanbul: Fluidity in Organization," in Crafts and Craftsmen of the Middle East: Fashioning the Individual in the Muslim Mediterranean, Suraiya Faroqhi and Randi Deguilhem, eds., (London: Tauris, 2005), 64.
[49] Baer, "Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," 29.
[50] Ibid., 32.

were twelve in ten shops.[51] The majority of the guilds however, fell somewhere in between these extremes. Çelebi also described the classification of the larger guilds that were broken down into specialist branches according to such things as craft technique or material. For example, Çelebi reports that the fishermen's guild was broken down according to the system of fishing and the type of nets used, and shoemakers were divided based on the type of shoe produced.[52] Baer has argued that this division was undertaken for reasons of better organization, quality control and supervision since the smaller sized guilds permitted the sheikh to keep better order of the guild if he knew all of his members personally[53].

The picture that has been presented of the Ottoman Empire and by extension, of the Ottoman guilds, is one where every aspect from moral behaviour to attire is strictly regulated. Given the tight control exercised by the state over the guild system, it would seem likely that membership would be equally as regulated, and scholarship has generally agreed that the government played a seminal role in controlling membership. Most scholars present the argument that guild membership was tightly controlled by the state. For example, Gabriel Baer argues that the guilds, by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had become an administrative link between the government and the urban population and as such were regulated quite tightly by the state. In his study of membership practices of the Turkish guilds, Baer states that the only way that a craftsman

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[51] Baer, "Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," 29.
[52] Ibid., 33.
[53] Ibid.

could become a master was to complete an apprenticeship and gain the approval of the guild authority. Specifically, he required the agreement of the *kethüda*, the *yiğit-başı* and the *ihtiyar* guild elders. Upon gaining approval, he was allowed to open a shop.[54] In contrast, in her enlightening work on guild membership, Eunjeong Yi has portrayed Ottoman guild membership as a relatively fluid entity. Based on extensive examination of Istanbul court registers, Yi counters with the notion that in fact, governmental control of guild membership was not so complete, especially where those guilds functioning before the seventeenth century are concerned and it appears that guilds controlled membership matters themselves with little interference from the authorities. The exception to this was the case where the state required a guarantor for those guilds whom they determined might participate in criminal acts or who might constitute a hazard to society such as the bandits and thieves guilds.[55] Beyond this requirement, the state seems to have played very little role in membership. One of her primary arguments for this is the great variation in the estimated number of guilds in Istanbul in the seventeenth century. Çelebi's account of the guilds lists several hundred guilds including state officials and religious men. Yet, the 1582 *surname* describes considerably lower numbers and a *kanunname* (lawbook) gives an even smaller number. Considering the Ottoman propensity for immaculate record keeping, such inconsistency in records suggests that perhaps the state

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[54] Gabriel Baer, "Monopolies and Restrictive Practices of Turkish Guilds," Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 13: 1 (1970): 146.

[55] Groups with dubious reputations such as bandits, thieves, beggars and pickpockets organized themselves into groups with structures that paralleled the guilds. For a discussion of these groups, see Eunjeong Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth century Istanbul: Fluidity and Leverage* (Boston: Brill, 2004).

was not so concerned with keeping every aspect concerning guilds under tight control. Furthermore, it seems that membership practices differed from guild to guild. For example, the tanners' guild in Kirşehir required a diploma from the guild, while the Istanbul greengrocers required the sanctioning of a magistrate.[56] These variations suggest that there was no central authority governing guilds, but rather that the individual guilds determined, within the greater tradition, the membership requirements. Yi also asserts that variations in terminology in the Ottoman registers suggest that the state was less concerned with controlling the guilds. Vocabulary such as *ta'ife*, which is traditionally used to refer to guilds, can also be applied to "any ethno-religious, professional or general social group, regardless of its degree of organization."[57] The vocabulary blurs the boundaries of what constituted a guild and for this reason the membership question seems less likely to be tightly regulated by the state. Further evidence in support of Yi's argument for less rigidly controlled membership is found in Ines Aščerić-Todd's claim that the guilds were self-governed. While it seems that the central bureaucracy was in charge of such things as trade and production regulations, the guilds were ultimately responsible for their own members and were keen to protect their interests from outside interference while functioning as their own administration. She states that "[t]he trade-guilds in Bosnia, like elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, were substantially independent and self-governed organizations that protected their respective crafts and the interests of their

[56] Baer, "Monopolies and Restrictive Practices of Turkish Guilds," 146.
[57] Yi, "Guild Membership in Seventeenth Century Istanbul," 58-59.

members from those outside the guilds, including the local authorities and the central government."[58]

Given the scarcity of documentation pertaining to membership, as well as the considerable variation amongst the individual guilds, it is difficult to determine exactly how the Ottoman guilds handled matters of membership. However, based on Ottoman court documents, Yi has outlined some membership practices that serve as a solid point of departure. Different guilds had different membership regulations which were determined by such things as the size and nature of the guild, degree of cohesion and geographic location, level of religious homogeneity and skill level. Generally, the establishment of new shops was closely regulated by the guilds themselves to ensure that unskilled and unqualified outsiders were prevented from competing with established craftsmen. New members were accepted as apprentices and upon completion of an apprenticeship under a master and with the approval of guild authorities, could become independent masters and open legitimate shops. Membership could also be hereditary. Sons of masters could become apprentices and prior to the establishment of the *gedik*[59] system, shop leases which had been acquired from pious foundations could be passed on to the shop tenant's son provided that he had been properly trained and was of legal age. There are several examples, however, that suggest that not all guilds viewed membership the same way. Yi's examination of the court documents shows the existence of many soldiers and immigrants accepted into the guilds which suggests a flexibility in

[58] Aščerić-Todd, "The Noble Traders," 162.
[59] See pages 94-95 for a discussion of *gedik*

guild membership. Furthermore, court documents reveal that shops could freely change hands by sale, sublet or lease with little, if any, involvement from guild authorities, again suggesting fluidity in membership. Some guilds certainly seemed more tolerant of outsiders so long as those outsiders were at least connected in some way with the existing guild. For example, Yi cites the case of the Üsküdar saddle makers who, when outsiders opened a shop in direct competition with them, simply requested that the new shop be taxed as well.[60] Subletting tools, shops and commodities was also practiced regularly as was renting or purchasing a shop from an administrator of a pious foundation. If the guildsman found himself unable to pay the rent on the shop, he went out of business and the shop was sold with all existing tools and commodities to the highest bidder.

When the shops changed hands, it is unclear whether the transfer of the business was confined to members of the same ethnic or religious community. While Ottoman guilds were shaped by Islamic law, practices and thought, their membership was not restricted to Muslims. Unlike their European counterparts, Ottoman guilds could be mixed-faith and many guilds consisted of Muslim, Christian and Jewish members.[61] Certainly, some guilds were composed strictly of Jewish members while others were Christian only. Based on Çelebi's descriptions of the guilds, Baer asserts that in the seventeenth century, guilds that were confined to a single community were far more prominent than mixed guilds. For example, he highlights the mustard and sausage makers who were

[60] Yi, "Guild Membership in Seventeenth Century Istanbul," 67.
[61] Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," 34.

Albanians, the fish cooks who were Greeks, the parchment makers who were Jewish and the druggists who were both Muslim and Jewish but who had separate guilds. One of the few seventeenth century mixed guilds consisted of the linen skull cap makers.[62] In some cases, labour was divided along religious lines such as a guild of shoemakers where certain types of shoes were made only by Muslims, another type by Christians, yet another made by both Christians and Jews. However, membership was not necessarily restricted by trade and even guilds with religious dimensions such as coffin makers could be mixed. It appears that the religious lives of non-Muslim guild members were more or less respected however this is not to say that ethno-religious relations within the guilds were entirely harmonious. Certainly, there was an element of Islamic bias within the guilds. Prior to the seventeenth century, in guilds of mixed denomination, "the principal guild official, the *kethüda*, who acted as an intermediary between guild and government, had always been appointed from amongst the Muslim members."[63] Even guilds composed of all non-Muslim members had a Muslim *kethüda.* Baer maintains that single-faith guilds remained the norm into the eighteenth century.[64]

The assumption has been made by historians that the distribution of wealth among guild members was more or less egalitarian. In general, ethno-religious relations among guildsmen were based on equality and justice and many guilds

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[62] Baer, "Monopolies and Restrictive Practices of Turkish Guilds," 157.
[63] Onur Yıldırım, "Ottoman Guilds as a Setting for Ethno-Religious Conflict: The Case of the Silk-thread Spinners in Istanbul," International Review of Social History 47 (2002): 415.
[64] Baer, "Monopolies and Restrictive Practices of Turkish Guilds," 159.

retained mixed ethno-religious membership until well into the nineteenth century. Lack of quantifiable evidence such as court litigations proving otherwise suggests that different ethno-religious communities coexisted relatively peacefully within the guilds. Indeed, this is one of the prime attributes of pre-eighteenth century Ottoman guilds. However, conflict emerged during the eighteenth century, particularly among guilds producing for external markets. Later on, this "translated into an even more hostile attitude when throughout the Ottoman Empire the demonization, discrimination and expulsion of various ethno-religious groups became the rule of the day."[65] A potential source for this ethno-religious conflict among guild members was the subversion of the guild principle of economic equality among masters[66] During the eighteenth century, the non-Muslim communities and manufacturing sectors which were organized according to traditional guild structure and which catered to European needs came increasingly under the control of non-Muslims. Accordingly, Muslim and non-Muslim guild members began to behave differently in their market activities. All retained common administrative structure and traditional procedures in their crafts and in their relations with the state. However, Muslim craftsmen stayed within guilds while in contrast, non-Muslims either organized themselves in separate guilds or gradually became independent artisans, craftsmen or shopkeepers. The resulting emergent attitude was that non-Muslims were subordinate.

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[65] Yıldırım, "Ottoman Guilds as a Setting for Ethno-Religious Conflict," 419.
[66] Ibid., 416.

As outlined in chapter 2, the economic difficulties experienced by the state directly affected the population of the Ottoman Empire and more specifically, the Ottoman guilds. In particular, the effects of the Price Revolution and the Celali rebellions affected such aspects as membership and production practices. Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ottoman cities experienced extraordinary urban population growth resulting from both increase in population (e.g., increased birth rate) as well as migration from the countryside towards the cities and towns. It is estimated that the Ottoman Empire experienced an estimated 80 per cent increase in the urban population during this period.[67] Increased taxation and inflation, along with the resulting chaos contributed to a shift from a rural to a largely urban population, a situation which, as Onur Yıldırım reminds us, was occurring throughout the rest of Europe: The rural and agrarian nature of the Ottoman society faced the first major challenge posed by this secular trend of population growth, which went hand-in-hand with a wholesale urbanization movement, a process that was simultaneously underway throughout the entirety of the European continent.[68] New immigrants to the cities were in some cases absorbed into the non-guild market and some worked in concert with the recognized craftsmen while others, unable to enter the guild system, opened shops with little regard for the established guilds. In such cases, the effect on the guild establishment was highly troublesome. A large proportion of the urban population was involved in non-

[67] İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire,* 158.

[68] Onur Yıldırım, "Ottoman Guilds (1600-1826): A Survey," The Return of the Guilds: Utrecht, Utrecht University (5-7 October 2006): 5. http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/papers/guilds-yildirim.pdf (December 2, 2008).

guild related manufacture or trade. For example, many Ottoman subjects tended their own urban gardens or vineyards and from these drew a source of income.[69] In fact, many in the cities subsisted on urban agriculture which would imply that either within or immediately surrounding the cities there was a reasonable population of agricultural bodies, with a large percentage of the population involved in agriculture. It is reasonable, then, to expect that at least some proportion of the migrants to the city would find employment, working within these small-scale agricultural pursuits. Another avenue developed to absorb the influx of population to the cities was the putting out system which allowed guild and non-guild artisans to co-exist, at least in industries where demand was substantial such as the silk industry. The Bursa silk guilds offer a good example of this system that saw guilds coexisting with non-guilds for overall production. Within the boundaries of this scheme, silk production was outsourced to unassociated migrants working within their homes as well as to unaffiliated artisans who performed a portion of the production, similar to an assembly line. Merchants were also involved in organization of silk production, and were responsible for hiring and investing. Perhaps it was due to the prominent position of the silk industry however that these groups coexisted during the seventeenth century and that Bursa's economy experienced significant growth.[70] In this particular case, skilled guild groups were able to absorb the influx of

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[69] Suraiya Faroqhi, *Men of Modest Substance, the House Owners and House Property in 17th Century Ankara and Kayseri* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 54.
[70] Yıldırım, "Ottoman Guilds (1600-1826): A Survey," 16.

unskilled labour and the threat of increased competition with no major consequences.

Mutually beneficial co-existence was not always the outcome of the increased population. The guilds' response to urban migration varied according to local and regional economics, however whether or not immigrants from the rural areas were able to find employment with the guilds was more dependent on the particular guild: some were less rigid in their structures and admissions than others. Yıldırım refers to the silversmiths whose membership was hereditary and so would not likely absorb any immigrant population, while plumbers and porters were much more flexible in their membership.[71] In the sixteenth century in the Ottoman Balkan provinces a large number of craftsmen not affiliated with the guilds arrived from the countryside in significant enough numbers to constitute a threat to established guilds as they set up their own productions and operated outside of the guild structure.[72] In addition to the increased competition presented by these newcomers, the threat to the established guildsmen was higher prices for raw materials, and the majority of the complaints heard before the *kadıs* involved the unofficial craftsmen who were driving up the prices of raw goods.

If court officials sided with the complainant, the resolution was the order that "all artisans were to observe the established order in both the supply of the raw

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[71] Yıldırım, "Ottoman Guilds (1600-1826): A Survey," 7.
[72] N. Todorov, *The Balkan City, 1400-1900* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1983), 119.

materials and in the production of the goods".[73] Such a result, however, did not necessarily prevent the unregulated practices of the unaffiliated craftsmen and the established guilds continued to feel the effects. Based on a study by Peter Sugar, Yıldırım suggests that the Balkan guild structure was eventually weakened considerably and crafts came to be regularly practiced by those not belonging to guilds, with the exception of those craftsmen who were the sole suppliers of a commodity to the Ottoman court, for example the makers of wool for the suppliers of clothing for the janissaries. The craft guilds in Sofia were faced with a group of skilled but unofficial immigrants who established shops and began to practice crafts such as shoemaking. Although the official guildsmen complained to the state, their complaints were unresolved and these unsanctioned workshops became the dominant form of production throughout Bulgaria. [74] The result of such weakening of the guild structure was such that,

> Unlike the craft guilds in Istanbul, the guilds in various Balkan cities failed to manipulate the support of the Ottoman state in order to ward off various threats to their existence (e.g. internal migration, price fluctuations, etc.). Although their appeals to Istanbul proved to be inconclusive most of the time, craft guilds in the Balkan towns and cities continued to invite the government authorities to intervene in case of arising problems for the rest of the eighteenth century.[75]

The troubles that were developing within the guilds as a result of the economic and social situation in the Empire were reflected in the miniatures of the festival *surname*. The entertainment of the 1720 festival included a series of mock punishments of artisans who had violated market regulations. In two such

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[73] Todorov, *The Balkan City*, 119.
[74] Yıldırım, "Ottoman Guilds (1600-1826): A Survey," 16.
[75] Ibid., 9.

scenes, shown in figures 23 and 24, a baker accused of using defective weights is paraded among his fellow guildsmen (figure 24): the defective weights were a way around the price controls that had been set by the state. The man in figure 23 has been accused of "impersonating a licensed bread seller and for using defective weights."[76]

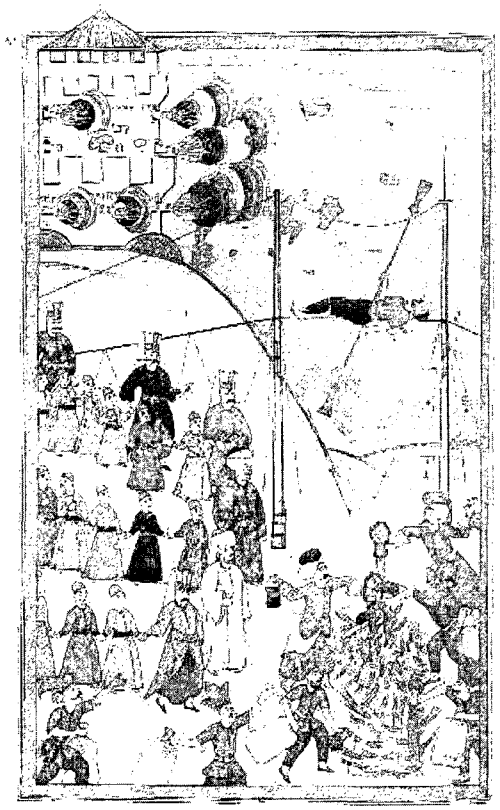

FIGURE 23 *Surname-i Vehbi*
Punishment of bread seller accused of using false weights

FIGURE 24 *Surname-i Vehbi*
Punishment of baker accused of using false weights

Literature describing the 1720 festival describes the mock punishment as follows: "The guilty bread baker appeared with his wooden cap covered with black rockets and his garments lined with gunpowder so that when the *tulumcus*

[76] Atıl, *Levni and the Surname,* 176.

and the *çavuşes*, charged with keeping order in the festival, lashed him, he caught fire. The mock punishment continued with the *tulumcus* throwing water on the burning man and the *çavuşes* more fire."[77] One of the main tasks of the guilds was to ensure quality in production and to prevent unskilled labour from producing inferior products. Additionally, since production was tightly controlled according to state regulations, guilds were responsible for ensuring that their members adhered to measures, weights, and production standards. As mentioned previously, guild literature presents varying arguments about the responsibility of punishment of guildsmen. In his article outlining the functions of the guilds, Gabriel Baer notes that in cases where members strayed from regulations, the guild was not empowered to punish them directly, but rather was required to inform the authorities. For example, in the case of the sword makers, the guild "denounced one of its members to the *kadı* for making hilts from inferior wood and painting them black to imitate ebony. He was severely warned by the *kadı* not to do this again." This example shows that the authorities, rather than the guild head were responsible for punishment.[78] This argument counters Lewis' previously outlined claim that the guild head was responsible for overseeing punishment. Baer does, however, point out that there were exceptions to this rule. In the case of the tanners and shoemakers, the guilds themselves had the right to determine and execute the punishment of their own members.[79]

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[77] Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582," 91.
[78] Baer, "Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds," 37.
[79] Ibid., 43.

An additional problem facing the guilds that arose from the state's economic difficulties and the resulting demographic shift resulted in the implementation of a policy that was a contributing factor to the eventual degradation of the guild system. This policy, known as *gedik,* confirmed the right of the guildsman to practice in a particular workshop or trade, as well as the master's right to a craft monopoly. Within this system, master craftsmen registered their tools and workshops with the *kethüda* who acted as the intermediary between the guild and the government. Introduced in the eighteenth century, the *gedik* system was intended to stabilize the number of craftsmen who worked on a particular item and to eliminate competition. The problem with the system, however, was that the increased financial pressure from the state resulted in a degraded guild system rather than a stabilized one, and at the same time as the *gedik* system was developed, state-imposed tax farming was seriously compromising guild workshops. The tax farmers' desire for and ability to demand an increase in their income meant that rent and related fees for workshops increased and more craftsmen were forced to either take loans at inflated interest or to abandon their shops and to auction their *gedik* to the highest bidder thus (potentially) placing production of a craft in the hands of an unskilled artisan and allowing that artisan the legitimate right to practice.[80] Furthermore, *gedik* eroded the tradition that guilds must practice in a particular area (i.e., outside of the traditional *bedestan*). The policy permitted the craftsmen to relocate themselves where the rent was less expensive, or wherever was more convenient for them

[80] Yıldırım, "Ottoman Guilds (1600-1826): A Survey," 15.

and this increased mobility, combined with the increased competition caused by legitimizing of unskilled craftsmen through the auction of workshop holdings was a key factor in the deterioration of the guild system.

## Conclusion

It has been shown over the course of this project that the miniatures of the *Surname-i Hümayun* and the *Surname-i Vehbi* are reflections of life in the Ottoman Empire during the centuries in which they were produced. Within the framework of this thesis, examination of the festival miniatures has specifically revealed details of the Ottoman guilds and has situated these organizations within the context of the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.

The economic situation of the empire during these time periods was often one of financial crisis resulting in social unrest and chaos. While the ever-expanding empire acquired vast sums of wealth from conquered territories during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, its financial requirement to support expansion and the requisite armies consumed this wealth at an astounding rate, resulting in a shortage of capital that necessitated heavy taxation of the Ottoman subjects in order to replenish the state treasury. A similar scene was revealed in the eighteenth century. The ensuing migration caused by increased taxation and obligatory support of the army by the Ottoman subjects resulted in a chaotic scene of unemployment and disorder within the cities. As it has been shown, this movement to the cities certainly affected the guilds in terms of their membership structure and practices. While some of the guilds were able to absorb the outsiders, chiefly the artisans and craftsmen, with little or no difficulty, others found themselves facing increased competition from unskilled or unofficial craftsmen. Evidence of the effects of this augmented competition can be found in the festival miniatures as we note scenes of

mock punishment of guildsmen who have been found guilty of dishonourable practices.

Additionally, the social context of the Ottoman Empire is evident in the miniatures and it has been demonstrated that the clearly defined social hierarchy of Ottoman society paralleled that of the guilds. As the high officials and notables of the court were easily distinguished from the lower classes by such aspects as attire, so too were the varying ranks of guildsmen depicted in distinctive clothing and headgear. Certainly it is clear from the festival *surnames* that the Ottoman subjects, particularly the Ottoman guilds, were tightly regulated by the state but that within the individual organizations, there existed a significant degree of variance and flexibility that must not be overlooked.

Within the scope of this thesis, several potential areas of study have arisen and would constitute worthwhile undertakings that would contribute greatly to the field of Ottoman history and Ottoman guilds. Further work could be undertaken on the influence of international relations and trade on the guilds. As noted in chapters 2 and 3, the Ottomans' relations with European powers, most notably Italy (Venice, Genoa, Tuscany), were cultivated throughout the centuries. We note the significant reciprocal influences of Italian art on Islamic art which highlights the interrelation between the east and west. Beyond the European desire for Ottoman raw materials, a study of the foreign influence on the guilds reflected in such aspects as rituals and membership could potentially produce fruitful results.

While many studies have been produced on Islamic art and figural representation, still further work may be undertaken on the guilds as they appear in miniatures in general from the point of view of art history. Such research would undoubtedly contribute to a better understanding of the field of Turkish art in general, but more specifically of Turkish miniatures, given the small body of work existing on this subject.

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