Chapter 6

Guild Punishments, Ceremonies and Festivities

One way of assessing the religious character of Ottoman guilds, and, by extension, their relationship with dervish orders, whether in general or in Bosnia in particular, is to examine those guild activities closely related to futuwwa and tasawwuf traditions and to the activities of dervish orders. Some esnaf practices – such as those relating to mutual help and solidarity between the craftsmen, for instance – which are based on Akhi traditions and demonstrate the links between the Akhi corporations and later guilds, have already been mentioned. Apart from these more general traditions, however, there are certain esnaf customs the existence of which proves that the rules and regulations outlined in the guild fütüvetname documents were indeed observed by the guilds, and that the futuwwa codes contained in these documents were not just theoretical. Moreover, some of them also provide further information on the affiliation between the guilds and dervish orders, and show that the links indicated on paper existed in practice too.

A good example of such esnaf customs are those observed in relation to guild punishments. As will be recalled from the previous chapter, an outline of the punishments to be carried out in the case of those guild members who disobey the guild regulations and codes of conduct is, to a greater or lesser extent, a regular feature of fütüvetname documents. Thus, the tanners’ şecerename from 16561 contains two sections concerned with punishments applicable to the members of the tanners’ esnaf. One of the punishments prescribed in the document consists of ninety-nine blows with a stick (değnek) called the ‘ḥaqīqa flogging’ (tazir-i ḥaqīqa), carried out in the presence of the masters of the esnaf, and a fine of a thousand akçe, which is called the ‘ṭariqa penalty’ (ṭariqa cerimesi). After the execution of the punishment, the offender in question is required to perform the following procedure: he is to light three candles in his candleholder, put on his work apron (makrama), place his halva into his waist cloth (peştemal), hang his ‘hot iron’ (ḥarr demiri)2 under his left armpit and from his waist, and in the presence of the ṭariqa elders (erenler), while rubbing his face [with his hands] he is to exclaim “Forgive my impudence (küstahlık)” After this, we are told, the masters of the esnaf should forgive his transgression. This particular penalty apparently applies only to junior

1 Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, Inventar ANUBiH, Br. 174.
2 A tanning tool.
craftsmen, since the document then goes on to tell us that disobedient masters are required to pay a fine of three thousand three hundred and ninety-nine akçe and no beating punishment is mentioned in their case. The şecerename also provides for the possibility of government involvement and states that in the case of a particularly difficult dispute or offence, which “neither the Akhibaba, the kethüda, the yiğitbaşi, the fikke, nor the tekke elders (tekke-yi nishin olan azizler)” can resolve, the matter should be passed on to the kadi. The most severe punishment – short of the death penalty, which the şecerename prescribes in the case of those who had committed a crime so serious that they had to be referred to judges, beys and ağas – is banishment from the esnaf, which involves the cutting of the offender’s collar (yaka) and requisition of his esnaf hat (börk). Later on, in a separate section, another severe punishment is mentioned, that of the curse of the pirs (pirlerin laneti), which may be applied in the case of severe offences in addition to banishment from the esnaf.

Similarly, the fütüvetname of Sarajevo tailors,\(^3\) prescribes the bastinado punishment of ninety-nine blows, or ‘haqīqa flogging’, and a thousand akçe fine for the younger journeymen, the cutting of the collar, requisition of the esnaf hat and banishment from the esnaf for the older journeymen, and the curse of the pirs for more severe offences, such as disrespect to the kethüda and esnaf elders and disregard for their authority or the authority of the esnaf patron-saint.\(^4\)

The same punishments are also found in the çiftçis’ pirname.\(^5\) There, the ‘haqīqa flogging’ of ninety-nine blows and the ‘tariqa penalty’ of a thousand akçe are prescribed for those who disobey the esnaf ploughing restrictions and work on Muslim lands on Fridays. Again, one of the most severe punishments,

---

3 Sarajevo Historical Archives, ZAT-227.
4 What transpires from both documents is that the severity of the punishment depended not only on the offence but also on the seniority of the offender. Thus, in both cases, the mildest punishment – the bastinado and the fine of a thousand akçe – applies only to journeymen, and in the case of the tailors’ fütüvetname, only to the younger ones among those. Moreover, after the execution of this penalty, the offender, if he shows repentance in the manner described in the şecerename, is offered a pardon. This seems to indicate that those who were more likely to make mistakes were given a certain amount of leeway with regard to transgressing the esnaf rules of conduct. The more senior craftsmen, the older journeymen and the masters, were evidently considered to have passed the stage at which they can be simply reprimanded and were afforded much less tolerance for their offences. It should also be observed that the apprentices are not specifically mentioned in relation to any of the punishments listed, which leads to the conclusion that, since they were in the care of their respective masters, the latter were also responsible for punishing them and any particular prescriptions in that respect were considered unnecessary.
5 Gazi Husrev-begova Biblioteka, Sarajevo, A-3738.