

Monetization Processes and Changing Societal Relations in Bursa, 1740-1800

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This paper examines the deep monetization processes in Bursa between 1740-1800. Deep monetization is the process of increased use of small denominations and involvement of more social actors in small change. Deep monetization is not a linear process since the use of small denominations has changed over centuries, even decades. Initially, this paper concentrates on the global monetization processes and their relationship with production relations. On the one hand, the works of the British, Dutch, and Indian historiographies demonstrate that the deep monetization processes had socioeconomic effects on the society, which shaped the relations of wage labor, media of exchange, and access to coinage. On the other hand, Ottoman historians only use the concept of monetization as a proxy explanation to support their arguments regarding social, political, and economic transformation in the Empire. There is no specific study in Ottoman historiography that directly addresses the concept of monetization. Therefore, monetization appears as a blurred concept.

This paper on deep monetization in the Ottoman Empire focuses on Bursa, one of the central hubs of economic activity and cultural exchange. The social actors in this paper are artisans and laborers, who were among the primary actors in the deep monetization process. The paper benefits from the court cases of creditor-debtor relations and probate inventories to demonstrate the changing deep monetization level and its impact on society. Overall, this paper provides insights into the complex and dynamic changes that occurred in the Ottoman Empire during 1740-1800 and highlights the importance of deep monetization in the transformation of early modern states and societies.