

# The Price of Justice: Fee Schemes and Revenue Generation in Ottoman Courts of Law

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## Abstract

This paper estimates the potential revenues of the Bursa and Kastamonu courts in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In our analysis, we estimate the possible financial outcomes of several compensation schemes that the courts might have employed in return for their judicial and administrative functions. Our findings indicate major variations in the potential revenues of the two courts as expected, but also in the earnings of a single court in different periods. Furthermore, they suggest that court-usage was anything but affordable for most court clients, including the wealthier ones. Finally, our estimations indicate the need on the part of the court staff to complement their income from the court's operations with alternative, legitimate and illegitimate, sources of revenue.