

Turkey's 100-year-old brands

For those who refuse to give up the pleasure of taking notes on paper despite the dazzling developments in the digital age, what the Moleskin brand is to the rest of the world, Ece Ajandası (Ece Agenda Book) is to Turkey.

Last year, Ece Ajandası celebrated its hundredth anniversary. It is a company that has survived every economic crisis from World War I to the Liberation War to the declaration of the Republic. Consequently, it has witnessed an exceptionally significant time frame. It is known that (modern Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal) **Atatürk** and İsmet İnönü have taken notes on what was called in those days the "Muhtıra" agenda book.

In 1932, after Keriman Halis became Miss World, the agenda book was named Ece, which means queen. In 2008, third-generation owners took over the company, thus starting a renewal process. Today, the product range of Ece Ajandası is quite wide compared to the past. It is continuing to expand.

It has launched such new categories, maybe unique in the world, like booking books, football agendas, festival agenda books, agenda books for pregnant women and an agenda book for Ramadan.

The sales and marketing manager of Ece Ajandası, Seydali Gönel, believes that despite digital technological leaps, where a new item emerges every day, paper products will remain permanent.

United under the same roof

Gönel associates the passion to take notes by hand to the wish to "slow down life." It might be a correct philosophy.

Gönel is married to one of the third-generation owners of Ece Ajandası, Emine Gönel. On one hand, he is striving to upgrade such a valuable brand; and on the other, he has attempted to unite other brands in Turkey that are also a century old under one roof.

In June, he set up the Association of Turkey's 100-year-old Brands (100YMB). As a matter of fact, the existence of 100-year-old brands in Turkey has excited me.

When Gönel counted those brands among the founders of the association, I came across quite a number of brands I recognize from my daily life. I had no idea most of them had such a history.

To give a few examples of founding members, I can list Bebek Badem Ezmesi (Bebek marzipan), Cemilzade (marzipan confectioner), Pandelli Lokantası (restaurant), Konyalı Lokantası (restaurant), Güllüoğlu Baklavaları (baklava bakery), Komili Zeytinyağı (olive oil producer), Vefa Bozacısı (boza - a Turkish millet drink), Koska Helva (halva confectioner), Bomonti Bira (beer), Emgen Optik (optician), Rebul (pharmacy), and Ece Ajandası (notebook).

Common ground of brands

Did the brands listed catch your attention?

Except the last three, all of them are brands involving food and drinks.

In parallel with Turkey's deep-rooted food and drink culture, this sector developed at

quite early stages.

Considering that the Turkish cuisine today is not as well-known as the Italian, Chinese or the [French](#) Cuisine in the world, this is quite a paradoxical situation. We have brands that go back 100 years but Turkish cuisine is not as well known as it deserves to be.

The almond paste marzipan brand of Cemilzade and the famous Italian Barilla brand emerged almost in the same year in the early 1880s.

When you enter a randomly selected market in Turkey today, you can easily find the Barilla brand. But ask an Italian about the Cemilzade and does he know it? I am sure he will look at your face with bewilderment.

I hope that the Culture and Tourism Ministry has finally decided to act and promote the Turkish cuisine this year so we can continue to make use of those 100-year-old brands mentioned above

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