

1 *The Imperial Harem and Its Residents*

The permanent move of members of the Ottoman dynasty to the harem at the New Palace in the sixteenth century gradually transformed the imperial harem (*Harem-i Hümayun*) into a well-organized, hierarchical, and institutionalized structure with rigid protocols and training, similar to that found in the Enderun. Indeed, the *Harem-i Hümayun* was also called Enderun-ı Hümayun in some sources.¹ In the eighteenth century, the general organization of the imperial harem was more or less the same as it had been in previous centuries. Even so, tracing the evolution of the imperial harem from the sixteenth century onward shows that, despite its institutional continuity, its organizational structure was never static. At different periods, the number of women living in the harem changed, and the importance attributed to various hierarchical positions within it could increase or diminish over time. Just as the Enderun experienced change in its organizational structure over time,² so too did the imperial harem evolve in terms of its physical and organizational structure.

The present chapter reconstructs the structure of the imperial harem and the relationships within it, with a central focus on its residents. This task is important, for it is only by understanding the web of

¹ For instance, in a document it is stated that female slaves were purchased for the Enderun-ı Hümayun (see BOA, İE. SM 4/340 [1089/1678]; İE. SM 1/111 [1091/1680]). According to her *waqfiyye*, Şuhi Kadın was listed as the chief administrative officer (*kethüda kadın*) in the Enderun-ı Hümayun (BOA, Evkaf Vakfiyeler Evrakı [EV. VKF] 26/1 [1199/1784]). Likewise, in some cases Enderun was named as Harem-i Hümayun. For several examples, see Osmanzade Ahmed Taib, *Hadikatü'l Vüzera* (Istanbul: Ceride-i Havadis Matbaası, 1271/1855).

² For instance, when the enthronement ceremony of Mehmed IV was delayed, pages in the imperial palace rebelled, and in 1675, the Greater Chamber (*Büyük oda*) and Lesser Chamber (*küçük oda*) in Enderun were abolished. Halil İnalçık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Klâsik Çağ (1300–1600)*, trans. R. Sezer (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 92. During the period of Ahmed III, Silahdar Çorlulu Ali Pasha made extensive re-arrangements within the Enderun (Tayyar-Zâde Atâ, *Osmanlı Saray Tarihi*, I, 260–265).

hierarchies within the harem that one can trace women's relationships with the imperial court during their harem service and following their transfer from the palace. The chapter identifies the residents of the harem through an analysis of their origins, families, names, occupations, and salaries, based on extensive research into the range of sources noted above. The available sources enable to construct both women's positions in the harem organization and the size of the harem population in the eighteenth century. The final section of this chapter evaluates the role of patronage relations within the broader network of relationships in the imperial harem. The long-lasting relationship between the imperial court and female palace slaves was rooted in the harem, and residents of the harem were attached to the household through various layers of patronage relationships.

Residents of the Imperial Harem

Tayinat (allowance), *masraf-ı şehriyârî* (royal expenditures), *mevâcib* (stipend), *inamat* (gifts), and *mübayaa* (purchase) registers are valuable sources that provide information about the structure of and residents in the imperial harem.³ Although these registers generally do not allow us to establish the exact numbers, positions, or names of all harem residents, some rare *mevâcib* registers do enable us to count the harem population at particular moments of time, to tease out the names of individual harem members together with their occupations and assigned salaries, and to know who possessed how many slaves in the harem.⁴

From the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the imperial harem's population at the New Palace gradually increased in connection with many developments realized in this period. Leslie Peirce provides a

³ The sources used in this section to examine the imperial harem institution of the eighteenth century include the following: for the period of Mustafa II (TSMA D 676); for the period of Ahmed III (TSMA D 7908 (1115/1703)); for the period of Mahmud I (TSMA D 8075); for the period of Mustafa III (TSMA E 53/2; Kamil Kepeci (KK) 7247, KK 7248; and D.BŞM 830); for the period of Selim III (TSMA D 2999); for the period of Mahmud II (*Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Atatürk Library*, Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*; TSMA D 9962).

⁴ These *mevâcib* registers belonging to the periods of Mahmud I, Mustafa III, and Mahmud II are: TSMA D 8075; TSMA E 53/2; Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

detailed analysis of the changing harem population for the period from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century. According to Peirce, the harem's population at Selim II's death in 1574 was forty-nine. During the subsequent reign of Murad III, it increased to 104, and then continued to grow during each successive reign. During the reign of Mehmed III, the harem population was 275; it rose to 295 in 1622, to 433 in 1633, and to 436 in 1652.⁵ Some European accounts provide information about the size of the imperial harem for this period, although their estimates of female members varied and were sometimes exaggerated. In 1573, for example, Costantino Garzoni reported that 150 women were living in the New Palace and in the Old Palace there were 1,500.⁶ According to Domenico Hierosolimitano, more than 800 women were fed regularly in the Seraglio.⁷ Ottaviano Bon, the Venetian bailo to Istanbul between 1604 and 1607, and Bobovius, who was a page in the Enderun in the seventeenth century, both claimed that the number of female slaves in the palace was between 1,100 and 1,200.⁸

⁵ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 121–122. Parallel to these developments in the imperial harem population, a similar development took place in the imperial kitchen. The number of staff working in the palace kitchen was around 100 during the period of Mehmed II. Toward the end of Bayezid's reign, this number rose to 160. At the beginning of the period of Süleyman I, the number exceeded 250. In the last years of the same sultan, the kitchen population approached 500. It rose above 600 during the period of Selim II. In the last years of Murad III, the number exceeded 1,000. From the beginning of Mehmed III's reign to the middle of the seventeenth century, the number reached 1,300 in sixty years. During the period of 1520–1595, then, the number of kitchen staff quadrupled (Arif Bilgin, *Osmanlı Saray Mutfağı* [Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2004, 44–45]).

⁶ Costantino Garzoni, "Relazione del impero ottomano [1573]," in *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato*, ed. Eugenio Albreri, series III, vol. I (Florence, 1840), 395.

⁷ For the account of Domenico Hierosolimitano, see *Domenico's Istanbul*, 23.

⁸ Ottaviano Bon-Robert Withers, *A description of the grand signour's seraglio*, 35–36; Fisher-Fisher, "Topkapı Sarayı in the mid-seventeenth century: Bobovi's description," 73. According to G. Sandys's account (1577–1644), the number of virgins in the palace was 500 (G. Sandys, *Relation of a journey began an dom 1610* [London, Published for W. Barren, 1615], 74). Fauvel noted that the girls in the palace were usually 400–500 (Robert Fauvel et al., *Le voyage d'Italie et du Levant, de Messieurs Fermanel Fauvel, Baudouin de Launay, et de Stochove* [Rouen, chez Jean Viret, 1670], 76, 79). Formanti gives the number of women as 3,000 (Don Neriolava Formanti, "Relatione del Serraglio degl'Imperatori Turchi Ottomani," in *Raccolta delle historiae delle vite degli imperatori ottomani sinoa a Mehemet IV regnante* [Venice, 1684], 15). Giovanni Sagredo (1617–1682) gives also an exaggerated number by stating 3,000 women lived in

The number of female palace slaves also changed during each sultan's reign. According to the *mevâcib* register from the period of Mahmud I (r. 1730–1754), there were 446 female slaves in the imperial harem.⁹ A *mevâcib* register from the period of Selim III (r. 1789–1807) shows that the number of female slaves in the imperial harem was around 720.¹⁰ By contrast, a *mevâcib* register from the period of Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839) lists only 473 female slaves in the imperial harem.¹¹ D'Ohsson, who lived in the second half of the eighteenth century, stated that the imperial harem was composed of 500–600 female slaves.¹² Likewise according to Melling's account, some 500 women populated the harem.¹³

The sources examined for this study reveal that during the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, the imperial harem's organization remained much as it had been during the seventeenth century. The Ottoman imperial harem had a hierarchically organized structure that encompassed various female slaves of different status. The harem's female slaves can be broadly categorized into two groups: the first comprised women who were directly linked to the sultan as consorts (*kadın* and *ikbal*), while the second included those who worked in the service of the sultan and the dynastic family, as well as those who served in various sections of the harem. Inexperienced female slaves who newly entered the imperial palace were called *acemi* (novice), and their early period of service was known as *acemilik* (novitiate). In time, the *acemis* attained the various ranks. D'Ohsson noted that female slaves in the harem were actually composed of five separate groups, namely “*cariye* (female slave), *şakird* (apprentice),

the palace (G. Sagredo, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman* [Paris, 1732], VII, 30).

According to the account of Carari, dated 1693, there are about 500–600 maidens in the Seraglio (John Francis Gemelli Carari, *A Voyage Round the World*, in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, eds. A. Churchill and J. Churchill [London, Printed by H. C. for Awnsham and J. Churchill, 1704], IV, 70).

⁹ TSMA D 8075. ¹⁰ TSMA D 2999.

¹¹ Muallim Cevdet B4, II, *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

¹² D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 69. According to Habesci, the number of women in the harem could change during the period of each sultan. For instance, Sultan Selim had 2,000, Mahmud I had 300, and Abdulhamid I had 1,600 (Habesci, *The Present State*, 145, 166). According to account of Beauvoisins, during the period of Selim III, there were 1,300–1,400 women in the imperial harem (Beauvoisins, *Notice sur la cour du Grand Seigneur*, 22).

¹³ Melling, “Intérieur d'une Partie du Harem du Grand-Seigneur”; there is no pagination.

usta (mistress), *gedikli* (who waited on the sultan in person), *kadın*.”¹⁴ The basis on which these women were promoted is not yet as clear as it was for the men in the Enderun.¹⁵

Consorts of the Sultans, Wet Nurse (*Daye Kadın*), and the Chief Administrative Officer (*Kethüda Kadın*)

Female members of the sultan’s family who lived in the imperial harem consisted of the sultan’s mother (*valide sultan*), his unmarried daughters, and his consorts. The *valide sultan* was the most important and powerful member of the dynastic family, and as such she constituted the chief authority over the harem. Senior and experienced slave women served in her entourage.¹⁶ Until the beginning of the sixteenth century, the sultans’ consorts included both married legal wives and slave concubines. From this period on, however, imperial marriages with the daughters of Christian dynasties and of the Anatolian emirates fell into disfavor. Instead, the Ottomans normally adopted the practice of maintaining slave concubines rather than marrying legal wives, although a few rare sultans continued to marry.¹⁷

As the archival sources reflect, the sultan’s favorite consort in the sixteenth through seventeenth centuries was named *haseki*. Even as late as the period of Mustafa II (r. 1695–1703), the title *haseki* was used.¹⁸ By the eighteenth century, though, the title *haseki* no longer appears in the records, seemingly having fallen out of official use and replaced by the title *kadın*. The consorts were not limited in number, although they were ranked by their status: the highest-ranking consort bore the title senior/head consort (*baş kadın*), followed by second consort (*ikinci kadın*), third consort (*üçüncü kadın*), fourth consort (*dördüncü kadın*), and so on. Promotion was possible among the consorts over time.

¹⁴ D’Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 64. This classification was repeated by Hammer, *Histoire de l’Empire Ottoman depuis son Origine Jusqu’a nos Jours* (Paris: Belliard, Barthès, Dufour et Lowell, 1841), XVII, 70–71.

¹⁵ For the functioning of the Enderun institution, see Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilâtı* 297–357; İnalçık, *The Classical Age*, 76–84.

¹⁶ For a detailed biography of a *valide sultan* who was the mother of two sultans, see Argıt, *Rabia Gülnuş Emetullah Sultan*.

¹⁷ Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilâtı*, 146.

¹⁸ MAD. d 5065; BOA, Cevdet Saray (C. SM) 1762 (1109/1697); (D. MSF 1-19) (1106/1695).

Below the consort (*kadın*) ranked a lower level of concubine who bore the title *ikbal* (favorite, fortunate one). Like the consorts, these concubines were ordered by seniority, as senior *ikbal*, second *ikbal*, third *ikbal*, fourth *ikbal*, etc. The available sources reveal that Mustafa II, Mahmud I, and Mustafa III each had *ikbals*.¹⁹

In the imperial harem, not only sultan but also each other member of the dynastic family, including the sultan's mother, sons, daughters, and the consorts as well, possessed their own cadre of female slaves assigned to their personal service. During the reign of Mahmud I (r. 1730–1754), twenty female slaves were assigned to the service of the head consort, while another five consorts had various numbers of female slaves in their service, ranging from eight to thirteen.²⁰ The head consort and other high-ranked consorts also enjoyed the service of an *agha* (palace officer) and personnel responsible for the coffee service (*kahvecibaşı*).²¹ In the period of Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839), consorts were served by between three and thirteen female slaves, again in accordance with their status.²² The number of female slaves assigned to the service of senior *ikbal* and other *ikbals* of Mahmud I ranged from four to six.²³

In both of these periods, the sultan's sons and daughters typically had more female slaves than most of the consorts. For instance, in the period of Mahmud I, the number of slaves in the princes' service ranged from seven to nineteen; during the reign of Mahmud II, the numbers were slightly lower. In the latter period, female slaves serving the sultan's daughters ranged in number from five to fourteen.²⁴

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Another woman who held great influence within the imperial harem in every period was the sultan's wet nurse.²⁵ She had a prestigious

¹⁹ For the estate register of Mustafa II's *ikbal* named Şâhin Fatma, see TSMA D 9988; Mahmud I had four *ikbals* (TSMD D 8075). For information about the *ikbals* of Mustafa III, see KK 7247, KK 7248.

²⁰ TSMA D 8075. ²¹ TSMA D 7908.

²² Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*. ²³ TSMA D 8075.

²⁴ TSMA D 8075; Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

²⁵ Wet nurses were also highly influential in the Near Eastern (and South Asian) imperial courts. For information on the importance and influence of wet nurses in the Mughal Harem organization, see Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 188–193. On the importance of wet nurse at the Fatimid court, see Delia Cortese-Simonetta

position, recognized through the honorific title “respectable” (*izzetli*) that was attributed to her.²⁶ In some cases, young wet nurses for the sultan’s children were admitted to the imperial harem together with their own daughters. In fact, the *mevacib* list belonging to the period of Mahmud II reveals that a wet nurse’s daughter (*daye kızı*) appeared in the service of both prince Abdulmecid and Mihrimah sultan (one of the sultan’s daughters), earning a personal salary.²⁷

The high status position held by the wet nurses was also reflected in their allowances. In the registers of the imperial harem’s food allocations (*tayinat*), only the sultan’s family members, the chief administrative official (*kethüda kadın*), and the wet nurse are listed individually. The remaining harem residents are listed as an undifferentiated single group. To give but one example from a large number of possibilities, a food allocation (*me’kûlât*) register from the period of Mehmed IV, dated 1643, shows the wet nurse being allocated the almost same amount of food as the sultan’s mother.²⁸ According to an expenditure register delineating purchases and disbursements for privy purposes (*harc-ı hassa*) from the period of Mustafa II, the wet nurse received a higher allowance than the head consort or any of the other consorts.²⁹ As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, wet nurses were usually married to a high-ranking state official, in accordance with their status.

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The chief administrative officer (*kethüda kadın*) acted as the superintendent of the imperial harem, and as a result had an influential and prestigious position.³⁰ The honorific titles attributed to her, such as prosperous, virtuous, respectable (*saadetli, iffetli, izzetli*), reflected her

Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 82.

²⁶ TSMA D 7908 (1115/1703).

²⁷ Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

²⁸ BOA, Bab-ı Defteri Başmuhasebe Kalemi (D.BŞM) 10523.

²⁹ TSMA E 68-10 (1108–1109/1697–1698), quoted in Hans George Majer, “The Harem of Mustafa II (1695–1703),” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* XII (1992): 440.

³⁰ For instance, Canfeda Hatun, who was a chief administrative official in the harem during the reign of Murad III, had great influence. See Pedani, “Safiye’s Household,” 23–25.

status in the harem.³¹ In the archival registers, while the large number of female palace slaves are mentioned as a single group, the chief administrative officer is always listed individually. Ottoman chroniclers have left us with information concerning the duties and importance of this chief administrative officer. Historian Silâhdar informs us that following the death of Hadice Turhan Valide Sultan, mother of Mehmed IV, in 1683, the chief administrative officer became responsible for taking delivery of her possessions, for maintaining the order of the harem, and for guarding the princes.³² Likewise, her predecessor, Kösem Valide Sultan (d. 1651), instructed the chief black eunuchs that whenever an important issue took place they should inform the chief administrative officer to ensure their access to the sultan's mother.³³

European accounts frequently emphasized the role and status of the chief administrative officer. Generally, she was referred to as *kahya kadın*, and reportedly she had a privileged position in the imperial harem, being its governess and lady matron to all the women.³⁴ She examined all the girls who were brought to the palace and ensured their adherence to the harem's rules and orders.³⁵ According to European

³¹ Chief administrative officers played important roles in the Near Eastern palace. For the roles of the administrative officer in the Abbasid palace, see Nadia Maria El-Cheikh, "The Qahramâna in the Abbasid Court: Position and Functions," *Studia Islamica* 47 (2003): 41–55.

³² Nazire Karaçay Türkal, "Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa Zeyl-i Fezleke (1065-22 Ca-1106/1654-7 Şubat 1695)" (Ph.D. diss., Marmara University, 2012), 910–911.

³³ Pınar Saka, *Risale-i Teberdariye fi Ahval-i Darüssaade, Derviş Abdullah, Darüssade Ağalarının Durumu Hakkında Baltacı'nın Raporu* (Istanbul: İnkılâp, 2011), 139.

³⁴ This information was repeated in several European sources. For several examples, see Bassano, *I Costumi*, 18; Lorenzo Bernardo, "Relazione [1592]," in Eugenio Albèri, ed. *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato* (Florence, 1840), series III, vol. II, 360; Ottaviano Bon-Robert Withers, *A description of the grand signour's seraglio*, 147; Baudier, *The History of the Serrail*, 55; Beauvoisins, *Notice sur la cour du Grand Seigneur*, 26–28; Habesci, *The Present State*, 166, 169; Antoine Laurent Castellan, *Moeurs, Usages, Costume des Othomans et Abrégé de leur Histoire* (Paris 1812), III, 62–63; C. Pertusier, *Promenades Pittoresque dans Constantinople et sur les rives du Bosphore* (Paris, 1815), II, 290.

³⁵ Ottaviano Bon-Robert Withers, *A description of the grand signour's seraglio*, 37; Deshayes de Courmenin, *Voyage de Levant fait par le Commandement du Roy en l'année 1621*, Paris, 1632), 158; Fauvel, *Le voyage*, 77; Sagredo, *Histoire*, VII, 30. It is told that she would correct any immodest behavior among the residents of the harem (Rycaut, *The Present State*, 39).

accounts, *kahya kadın* also took care of the women who were destined to become the sultan's consorts.³⁶ D'Ohsson noted that the *kethüda kadın* was selected by the sultan from among the most experienced women and from the ranks of *gediklis*.³⁷ He added that as a sign of her high status, the *kethüda kadın* carried a cane and an imperial seal.³⁸

The chief administrative officer's privileged position can also be seen in the network of gift exchange that existed within the imperial court. For instance, during a birth ceremony that took place during the reign of Ahmed III, the chief administrative officer received gifts alongside the sultan's mother, his daughters, his consorts, and the wet nurse.³⁹ The *mevâcib* registers likewise point to the chief administrative officer's high status and prestigious position. According to a register from the period of Selim III (r. 1789–1807), the chief administrative officer received 500 *akçe* daily, more than the sultan's mother, who received 400 *akçe*.⁴⁰ During the reign of Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839), the chief administrative officer continued to receive 500 *akçe*, while the sultan's children received only 100 *akçe* each; the head consort and other six consorts received much less, only 40 *akçe* per day.⁴¹

³⁶ For the account of Domenico Hierosolimitano, see *Domenico's Istanbul*, 32; Matteo Zane, "Relazione [1594], in *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato*, ed. Eugenio Albèri, series III, vol. III (Florence, 1855), 412; Courmenin, *Voyage de Levant*, 158; Baudier, *The History of the Serrail*, 51; Rycaut, *The Present State*, 40; Fauvel, *Le voyage*, 77; Giovanni Battiste de Burgo, *Viaggio di cinque anni in Asia, Africa, & Europa del Turco* (Milan, 1686), 376; Sagredo, *Histoire*, VII, 30; J. C. Hobhouse, *A Journey through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia to Constantinople During the Years 1809 to 1810* (London: Published for James Cawthorn, 1813), I, 853.

³⁷ D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 69. This information was also noted by Hammer (Hammer, *histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, XVII, 70–71).

³⁸ D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 69. Sieur de la Croix also noted in the seventeenth century that *kahya kadın* always carried a cane (Sieur de la Croix, *Mémoires de Sieur de la Croix* [Paris, 1684], I, 367). As a matter of fact, in a visual material appearing in Fenerci Mehmed Album, the chief administrative officer is depicted with a cane (*Osmanlı Kıyafetleri Fenerci Mehmed Albümü/Ottoman Costume Book, Fenerci Mehmed*, ed. İlhami Turan, trans. Robert Bragner [Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 1986], no 23).

³⁹ BOA, Bab-1 Defteri Başmuhasebe Kalemi Defterleri (D.BŞM.d) 1210 (1124/1712).

⁴⁰ TSMA D 2999.

⁴¹ Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*. Besides, in *mevâcib* registers, a category named "*mahlûl kethüda kadın*" appears. In the period of Selim III, the allocated amount for this category was 667 *akçe* (TSMA D 2999); in the period of Mahmud II, it was 867 *akçe* (Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*).



اندرون همامونده كهدا كادين

Enderun-ı Hümayun'da Kethuda Kadın

Figure 1.1 “Chief administrative officer in Enderun-ı Hümayun (*Enderun-ı Hümayun'da kethüda kadın*).” *Osmanlı Kıyafetleri Fenerci Mehmed Albümü/Ottoman Costume Book*, Fenerci Mehmed, ed. İlhami Turan, trans. Robert Bragner (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 1986) no. 23.

D'Ohsson noted that since 1689, the chief administrative officers had enjoyed a large pension of 7,500 piastres per year, granted to them by Süleyman II.⁴²

Like members of the dynasty, the chief administrative officer had her own suite, in accordance with her status. She had an eunuch *agha*,⁴³ personnel responsible for providing the coffee service,⁴⁴ and female slaves in her personal service. In the period of Mahmud I, she had four female slaves; during the reign of Mahmud II, this was increased to five. Her slaves, in turn, were ranked, and their daily stipend ranged from five to forty *akçe*.⁴⁵

Like the wet nurse, the privileged position of the chief administrative officer in the harem hierarchy was also reflected in the amount of food assigned to her. According to the sources, the chief administrative officer always received less food than the chief black eunuch, but higher amounts than the princes and sometimes even the sultan's consorts.⁴⁶

Gedikli- Usta- Şakird- Cariye

Gedikli was below the rank of *kadın*. The *gediklis* were girls destined for the sultan's personal service. These women had similar employment to that of the officers of the privy chamber (*bas oda*), and they carried the titles of their offices. For instance, the person who was responsible for table service was called *çaşnigir usta* (mistress of the table service). The woman who was in charge of laundry service was, likewise, named *cameşuy usta* (mistress of the laundry service). In the suite of each *gedikli*, there were female slaves who helped her and were trained at the same time. When his *kadın* died or was sent to the Old Palace, the sultan chose her replacement from among these girls. Those who were

⁴² D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 73. ⁴³ TSMA D 7908 (1115/1703).

⁴⁴ Şuhi Kadın, who was a chief administrative officer in the imperial harem in the eighteenth century, had personnel responsible for the coffee service (*kahvecibaşı*) (EV. VKF 2I/1).

⁴⁵ TSMA D 8075; Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

⁴⁶ D.BŞM.d 381 (1091–1096/1680–1685); D.BŞM.d 828 (period of Mustafa II); D.BŞM 3 85 (period of Ahmed III); KK 7248 (1176/1763); KK 7252 (period of Abdulhamid I). According to a *me'külât* register dated 1698, the monthly allocation of sheep to the sultan and his mother was forty, it was twenty for the chief administrative officer and the wet nurse, and thirty for the chief black eunuch (D.BŞM. MTE 2-45).

most distinguished would receive the title of *ikbal*, ranked below the *kadın* but in line for eventual promotion to the rank of *kadın*.⁴⁷

Ustas performed the same personal service for the sultan's mother, consorts, and children as the *gediklis* performed for the sultan. *Ustas* also had their own entourage of female slaves. Each *usta* was known by the work assigned to her and also by the name of the person she served.⁴⁸ Therefore, one finds in the records the sultan's mother's *cameşuy usta*, or Aşe Sultan's *kahveci usta* (the mistress of the coffee service), etc.

According to the archival sources, the following *ustas* lived in the imperial harem: *hazînedar usta* (head treasurer), *saray ustası* (mistress of the palace),⁴⁹ deputy mistress (*vekil usta*), *cameşuy usta* (mistress of the laundry service),⁵⁰ *çaşnıgir usta* (mistress of the table service), *ibrikdar usta* (mistress of the ewer service), *kahveci usta* (mistress of the coffee service), *kilerci usta* (mistress of the pantry), *berber usta* (mistress of the hairdressing service), *kutucu usta* (mistress of toilette services),⁵¹ *külhancı usta* (mistress of the bath service)⁵², and *kâtibe usta* (head scribe). Each *usta* also had a main assistant. D'Ohsson defined the head treasurer as the assistant to the chief administrative officer and defined her duties as being in charge of the sultan's clothes and the harem's finance, as well as accompanying the palace women when they were outside.⁵³ The head treasurer was followed by second treasurer (*ikinci hazînedar*), the third treasurer (*üçüncü hazînedar*), and sometimes a fourth treasurer (*dördüncü hazînedar*) and fifth

⁴⁷ D'ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 66–67; Hammer, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, XVII, 70–71; Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilâtı*, 148.

⁴⁸ D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 68. Hammer, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, XVII, 70–71; F. Davis, *The Ottoman Lady*, 6.

⁴⁹ According to Pakalın, the chief administrative officer (*kethüda kadın*) and the mistress of the palace were the same person (Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Terimleri ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü*, III, 127–128). In the *mevâcib* register from the period of Mahmud II, however, the mistress of the palace appeared separately from the chief administrative officer and the head treasurer (Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*).

⁵⁰ *Cameşuy usta* supervised the entourage who was in charge of laundry service, and her assistant was called second *cameşuy*.

⁵¹ *Kutucu usta* was in charge of toilette of sultan's consorts and daughters. She also supervised the articles for the bath and toilette and other similar objects (Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Terimleri ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü*, II, 333; Uluçay, *Harem II*, 136).

⁵² *Külhancı usta* supervised the women who heated and cleaned the baths in the imperial harem.

⁵³ D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 69–70.

treasurer (*beşinci hazînedar*).⁵⁴ The reputable position of treasurers was reflected in the number of female slaves assigned to their service. During the reign of Mahmud I, the second treasurer had three female slaves to herself.⁵⁵ In the period of Mahmud II, the head treasurer had two female slaves, one of whom was called the head female slave. The second and third treasurer each had one female slave.⁵⁶

In the eighteenth century, some head treasurers held an even more special place in the harem's hierarchy. For instance, Nevres Kadın, who was the third consort of Abdulhamid I, was the head treasurer, as was the sixth consort of Mahmud I. In the latter case, she had thirteen female slaves in her service, more than the number serving the sultan's fourth and fifth consorts.⁵⁷ In the period of Abdulhamid I, the head treasurer received a greater amount of food than even the chief administrative officer and the second consort.⁵⁸ The allowances assigned to *ustas* also reflected their relative positions in the imperial harem. For instance, during the reign of Mahmud I, the daily stipends assigned to *ustas* were higher than the amount given to the sultan's *ikbals*.⁵⁹ According to the *mevâcib* register from the period of Mahmud II, stipends allocated to *ustas* exceeded those assigned to the consort and sultan's children.⁶⁰ During the reigns of both Mahmud I and Mahmud II, each *usta* usually had one female slave in her service. The sources suggest that the *ustas*' hierarchical status remained

⁵⁴ In the period of Mahmud I, the second treasurer received 50 *akçe*, while the other three treasurers received 30 *akçe* each (TSMA D 8075). In the period of Mahmud II, the head treasurer received 120 *akçe* daily and the second treasurer received 80 *akçe* (Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*). The difference witnessed in this period must be due to inflation.

⁵⁵ TSMA D 8075. ⁵⁶ Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

⁵⁷ TSMA D 8075. ⁵⁸ KK 7250 (1188/1774); KK 7252.

⁵⁹ During Mahmud I's reign, the mistress of the palace (*saray ustası*), the mistress of the laundry service (*cameşuy usta*), and the mistress of the pantry (*kilerci usta*) each received 100 *akçe* daily; the *kâtibe usta* (head scribe) and the *berber usta* received 80 *akçe*; the *çaşnigir usta* (mistress of the table service), the *ibrikdar usta* (mistress of the ewer service), and the *kahveci usta* (mistress of the coffee service) received 50 *akçe*; the *ikinci kâtibe* (second scribe) received 60 *akçe*; the *ikinci cameşuy* got 35 *akçe*; the *ikinci kahveci* and the *ikinci çaşnigir* received 30 *akçe* each (TSMA D 8075).

⁶⁰ The *cameşuy usta*, *kahveci usta*, *kilerci usta*, *çaşnigir usta*, *berber usta*, and *ibrikdar usta* each received 120 *akçe* daily; the *kâtibe usta* received 80 *akçe*, as in the period of Mahmud I; the *ikinci kâtibe* got 40 *akçe*; the *ikinci cameşuy* and *ikinci çaşnigir* each received 35 *akçe*; the *ikinci kahveci* and *ikinci şâbûncu* received 30 *akçe* (Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*).



Figure 1.2 “An attendant of the Harem of the Grand Signior.” Octavian Dalvimart, *The Costume of Turkey* (London: William Miller, 1804).

relatively uniform across the eighteenth century, in terms of their stipends and the number of female slaves working for them, although there were some minor variations.

A lower category of women serving in the harem was the *kalfa*. *Kalfa* was a rank below that of *usta*.⁶¹ The entourages of the imperial

⁶¹ According to Pakalın, seniors of the palace *kalfas* were named as *usta* (Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Terimleri ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü*, II, 554). On the other hand, D’Ohsson writes that “the *ustas* otherwise known as *kalfas*” (D’Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 68).

family included *kalfas*. Among the female slaves given to the service of the sultan's children, for example, were nannies and wet nurses who carried the title *kalfa* (*daye kalfa- dadı kalfa*).⁶² Some of the sultan's *ikbals* were also called *kalfa*: four *ikbals* of Mahmud I were Miyase Kalfa, Fehmi Kalfa, Sırrı Kalfa, and Habbabe Kalfa.⁶³ Senior *kalfas* were also responsible for training the novices. Finally, according to D'Ohsson, the term *şakird* (apprentice) referred to those who were trained to fill vacant places among the *gediklis* and *ustas*.⁶⁴

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Apart from these specialized categories of women, the largest group within the imperial harem was the female slaves (*cariyes*) who performed various services.⁶⁵ *Cariyes* were the lowest-ranking members of a particular individual's suite and they performed the harem's ordinary menial tasks, such as cleaning, laundry, maintaining the baths and pantry, and other similar tasks.⁶⁶

Apart from sultan's family (which included his consorts), the *ustas*, and the *kalfas*, palace *aghas* also owned female slaves. The chief black eunuch had four female slaves, in addition to the head female slave called *ağa ustası*;⁶⁷ after the members of the imperial dynasty and highest-ranking members of the harem, this was the largest number of female slaves in one person's service. According to D'Ohsson's account, the chief black eunuch was the only palace officer who was allowed to have slave girls serving him.⁶⁸ However, the records show that the *agha* of the treasury (*hazînedar ağa*), the servant of the chamber (*oda lalası*), the chief door keeper (*baş kapı gulanı ağa*),

⁶² For the periods of Mahmud I and Mahmud II, see TSMA D 8075 and Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

⁶³ TSMA D 8075.

⁶⁴ D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 68. Hammer, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, XVII, 70–71.

⁶⁵ D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 68–69.

⁶⁶ Those assigned to serve in the boiler room (*külhan*) were called "*neferât-ı külhancıân-ı Harem- i Hümmâyün*" or "*külhancılarda olan cevâri*." Those who served in the pantry were called "*neferât-ı kiler der Saray-ı Cedid-i Âmire-i Harem-i Hümmâyün*," "*neferât-ı kiler*," or "*kilerde olan cevâri*" (TSMA D 8075; TSMA E 53/2; TSMA D 9962; Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*).

⁶⁷ TSMA D 8075, Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

⁶⁸ D'ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 54.



جاریه
Cariye

Figure 1.3 “Female Slave (*Cariye*).” *Osmanlı Kıyafetleri Fenerci Mehmed Albümü/Ottoman Costume Book, Fenerci Mehmed*, ed. İlhami Turan, trans. Robert Bragner (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 1986).

and the favorite (*musâhib ağa*) also had female slaves in their personal service.⁶⁹ Female slaves were likewise assigned to the service of dethroned sultans.⁷⁰

During the eighteenth century and in the reign of Mahmud II, the imperial harem’s structure remained largely as it had existed in the

⁶⁹ TSMa D 8075; Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

⁷⁰ On Mustafa I, see Hasan Bey-Zâde Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Bey-Zâde Tarihi*, ed. Nezihi Aykut (Ankara: TTK, 2004), III, 979. Likewise, when Sultan Ibrahim was dethroned, female slaves were assigned to his service (Mustafa Öksüz, “Şem’dânizâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi’nin Müri’t-Tevârih Adlı Eserinin (180B-345A) Tahlil ve Tenkidi Metni,” M.A.Thesis, Mimar Sinan University, 2009, 150).

seventeenth century, although there were some minor changes. For instance, while there were influential figures known as *musâhibe* (companion) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,⁷¹ references to this position do not appear in the eighteenth-century sources. Likewise, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and into the reigns of Mustafa II (r. 1695–1703) and Ahmed III (r. 1703–1730), there were women in the imperial harem called *bula*.⁷² However, the term *bula* did not appear in the examined sources from the rest of the eighteenth century. In the imperial harem, the importance and definition of certain positions and titles thus changed over time, just as they did in the Enderun.⁷³

A Female Slave's Entrance to the Imperial Harem

Female palace slaves were taken into the imperial harem in a number of different ways. Unfortunately, from the existing records it is not possible to determine in what ways each individual female slave arrived. However, as in the previous centuries, female slaves of the eighteenth century entered the service of the imperial harem either as gifts, through purchase, or as war captives.

⁷¹ Hubbi Hatun was a companion (*musâhibe*) of Selim II and was both a tutor (*boca*) of princes and a poet (Öksüz, “Şem’dânîzâde,” 61). Raziye Hatun was a famous companion during the reign of Murad III, while Şekerpare Hatun and Hubyar Agha were companions in the period of Sultan Ibrahim (Na’îmâ, *Tarih-i Na’îmâ*, ed. M. İpşirli [Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2007]).

⁷² Selânikî mentions that the “*bulas* of the harem” received gifts during the wedding ceremony of Fatma Sultan and Vizier Halil Pasha in 1593 (Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Târih-i Selânikî*, ed. Mehmed İpşirli [İstanbul: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989], I, 342). Evliya Çelebi mentions Şekerpare Bula and Meleki Bola (should be “*bula*”) (Evliya Çelebi, *Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnamesi: Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Bağdat 304 Numaralı Yazmanın Transkripsiyonu-Dizini*, 2. Kitap, ed. Zekeriya Kurşun, Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı. 2nd edition [İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006], 248). In the seventeenth century, Sieur de la Croix stated the names of officers of valide sultan as *boulla* (*baznedar boulla*, *çamaşır boulla*, *kutucu boulla*, *ibrikçi boulla*, *hamamcı boulla*, *kilerci boulla* . . .) (Sieur de la Croix, *Mémoires du sieur de La Croix*, I, 356–357. See also TSMA D 2350-0005) (1695); TSMA D 676; TSA E 118/12 quoted in Majer, “The Harem of Mustafa II,” 436 and TSMA D 2352.0382 (1115/1704).

⁷³ For example, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, the prestige of the sword bearer (*silahdar*) increased. He became the head of the privy chamber (*bas oda başı*), which was the highest level of the Enderun hierarchy (Tayyar-Zâde Atâ, *Osmanlı Saray Tarihi*, I, 264; Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilâtı*, 341–350).

Captive girls were presented to the palace in every period of the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁴ Gülnuş Sultan, mother of Mustafa II (r. 1695–1703) and Ahmed III (r. 1703–1715), for example, was born in the 1640s in Rethymno, Crete, which was at that point under Venetian rule. Led by Deli Hüseyin Pasha, the Ottoman army seized part of the island during the Crete War (1645–1669); the girl was then enslaved and sent to the palace.⁷⁵ According to Rycaut's account, during a campaign in 1697, Mustafa II wrote a letter to his mother stating that he would send her a present of young ladies from the region of Transylvania.⁷⁶ The admission of captive girls into the imperial harem continued during the eighteenth century.⁷⁷

Other female slaves entered the imperial harem as gifts from foreign rulers, local statesmen, and even between members of the Ottoman dynasty.⁷⁸ A person named Hamza Efendi presented Sanavber Hatun to Mustafa I, for example; later in the eighteenth century, when the ruler of the Güril did not submit his poll tax for several years, eight male slaves (*gulâm*) and four female slaves who had been sent as presents with the Georgian envoy were then sold in the bazaar to cover

⁷⁴ Menavino, *I cinque*, 134–136; Guillaume Postel, *De la republique des Turcs et, là au l'occasion s'offrera des meurs et loy de tous Muhamedistes* (Poitiers, 1560) 6, 34; Postel, *La tierce partie des Orientales Histoires* (Poitiers, 1560), 17, 18; Nicolay, *Les navigations*, 99; Francesco Sansovino, *Dell'Historia universale dell'origine et imperio de Turchi* (Venice, 1568), 32; Salomon Schweigger, *Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk, 1578–1581*, ed. Heidi Stein; trans. S. Türkis Noyan (Istanbul : Kitap Yayınevi, 2004), 113; Michael Heberer, *Osmanlıda Bir Köle Brettenli Michael Heberer'in Anıları 1585–1588*, trans. Türkis Noyan, ed. Kemal Beydilli (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2010), 238–239; Lubenau, *Reinhold Lubenau Seyahatnamesi*, I, 207; Courmenin, *Voyage de Levant*, 157; Baudier, *The History of the Serrail*, 50, 57; Rycaut, *The Present State*, 38; Formanti, “Relatione del Serraglio,” in *Raccolta*, 15; Carari, *A Voyage Round the World*, IV, 70.

⁷⁵ İpşirli Argıt, “A Queen Mother and the Ottoman Imperial Harem: Rabia Gülnuş Emetullah Valide Sultan (1640–1715),” 208.

⁷⁶ Paul Rycaut, *The History of Turks Beginning with the Year 1679* (London: Robert Clavell, 1700), 550–551.

⁷⁷ Hasan Paşa, who was governor of Çıldır, sent female slaves (*esir cariye*) to the sultan, to the grand vizier, and to the sheyhulislam in the second half of the eighteenth century (TSMA D 6561).

⁷⁸ The fifteenth-century gift exchange between the Mamluk rulers and the Ottoman sultans included male and female slaves sent from both sides (Elias I. Muhanna, “The Sultan's New Clothes: Ottoman-Mamluk Gift Exchange in the Fifteenth Century,” *Muqarnas* XXVII [2010]: 189–207).

the poll tax debts.⁷⁹ The Crimean Khans sent female slaves,⁸⁰ while female members of the dynasty and statesmen of various statuses likewise presented female slaves as gifts to the sultan on different occasions. Mustafa II's consort Hafife had been presented to the palace by Şirvanî Kara Ebubekir Efendi when she was ten years old.⁸¹ The eighteenth-century chronicler Şem'dânî-zâde likewise recorded that some female slaves were admitted to the imperial palace as presents, while European authors noted that girls in the imperial harem were presented as gifts from members of the imperial family, grand dignitaries, and provincial governors. It was also stated that Tatars presented young virgins to the sultan.⁸²

⁷⁹ On Mustafa I, see Hasan Yaşaroğlu, "Osmanlı'da Bir Darbe ve Tahlili: Genç Osman Örneği," *Turkish Studies* 8/7 (2013): 727. On the poll tax debt, see Bakkalzade Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa, *Zübde-i Vekayiat: Tablil ve Metin*: 1066–1116/1656–1704, ed. A. Özcan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), 753–754; Râşid, *Tarih-i Râşid* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1282), II, 561.

⁸⁰ C. SM 119/6997 (1155/1742).

⁸¹ Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), I, 380–381. Alderson gives her name as Hafise (A. D. Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956], Table XL). Uluçay states her name as Hafsa (Uluçay, *Padişahın Kadınları ve Kızları*, 74). Majer gives her name as Afife/Hafife (H. G. Majer, "The Harem of Mustafa II," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, XII [1992]: 431–443).

⁸² Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, *Şem'dânî-zade Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi Târîhi, Mür'î't-Tevarih*, ed. Münir Aktepe (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1976), I, 165. For Domenico Hierosolimitano's account, *Domenico's Istanbul*, 35; Nicolay, *Les navigations*, 99. Lubenau noted that some of the girls in the palace had been purchased by high-status men and then presented to the sultan (Lubenau, *Reinhold Lubenau Seyahatnamesi*, I, 207; Baudier, *The History of the Serrail*, 50, 57); Guillet de Saint-Georges talked about the period of Ahmed I and noted that *beğlerbeğs* (the General Governor of the entire province) and *sancak beğs* (governor of the given district) sent beautiful girls to the sultan (G. G. de Saint-Georges, *An Account*, 158). Jean Baptiste Tavernier noted that beautiful women of several countries by the chance of war, or otherwise, had fallen into the hands of the pashas and provincial governors, who then sent them up as presents to the sultan (Tavernier, *A new relation*, 88; Carari, *A Voyage Round the World*, IV, 70); A. Hill wrote that full-grown women were made a war prize and sent to the Seraglio by some pashas (Aaron Hill, *A full and just Account of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire* [London, 1709], 169; Demetrius Cantemir, *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire*, trans. N. Tindal [London: John James, Paul Knapton, 1734–5], 296; D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 63–64; Marchebus, *Voyage de Paris a Constantinople*, [Paris, 1839], 152–155; Antoine Ignace Melling, "Intérieur d'une parti du Harem du Grand Seigneur," in *Voyage Pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore* [Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1819]; there is

Upon a sultan's enthronement, gifts from statesmen played an important role in the making of a new cadre within the harem. Aubry de la Motraye noted that Ahmed III had received one hundred Circassian virgin slaves as presents following his accession to the throne.⁸³ Dallaway also noted that when the sultan came to the throne, the grandees presented him with virgin slaves who, they hoped, would become their patronesses.⁸⁴ As will be seen in Chapter 2, the enthronement of a new sultan could result in some female slaves in the previous sultan's harem being manumitted; as a result, the harem itself was regularly being renewed. Statesmen's goal of presenting new female slaves was to assist with dynastic reproduction. For instance, following the enthronement of Sultan Ibrahim in 1640, statesmen sent female slaves in order to ensure the continuity of the dynasty.⁸⁵

Female slaves were also presented during the wedding ceremonies of the dynastic family. At the wedding of Mehmed IV's daughter Hadice Sultan in 1675, the groom offered female slaves to the sultan's mother, to his wives, and to Princes Mustafa and Ahmed.⁸⁶ For the wedding between Mustafa II's daughters and viziers, the pashas of Bosnia, Erzurum, and Meskhetia sent female slaves.⁸⁷ Likewise, in a 1676 circumcision ceremony, the groom Musâhib Mustafa Pasha presented

no pagination]; Hammer, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman depuis son Origine Jusqu'à nos Jours*, XVII, 70–71). Hobhouse stated that the Imperial odalisques, belonging to the sultan's harem, were for the most part presents from the pashas, procured from the merchants who traded in Circassia and Georgia (Hobhouse, *A Journey through*, I, 852). On the issue of Tatars and virgins, see Ottaviano Bon-Robert Withers, *A description of the grand signour's seraglio*, 36; Baudier, *The History of the Serrail*, 57; Formanti, "Relatione del Serraglio," in *Raccolta*, 15; Sagredo, *histoire* VII, 30.

⁸³ Aubry de la Motraye, *Aubry de La Motraye's Travels*, I, 247.

⁸⁴ J. Dallaway, *Constantinople, Ancient and Modern with Excursions to the shores and Islands of the Archipelago and to the Troad* (London, 1797), 26. Likewise, Guillaume-Antoine Olivier (1756–1814) noted that the pashas and other state officials were eager to present beautiful girls to the sultan in order to benefit in the future (G. A. Olivier, *Voyage dans l'Empire Othoman, l'Égypte et la Perse* [Paris, 1803], I, 43).

⁸⁵ Na'imâ, *Tarih*, III, 1111 (1058/1648); Öksüz, "Şem'dânîzâde," 144.

⁸⁶ Salih Zorlutuna, "XVII. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Edirne'nin Sahne Olduğu Şâhâne Sünnet ve Evlenme Düğünleri," in *Edirne, Edirne'nin 600. Fetih Yıldönümü Armağan Kitabı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1965), 287.

⁸⁷ *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099–1116/1688–1704)*, ed. Abdülkadir Özcan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000), 225.

an artist female slave to the sultan's mother and bath attendant (*tellâk*) female slaves to each of the sultan's consorts.⁸⁸

The imperial palace also acquired female slaves from other members of the court. Before his death, Ahmed Agha (d. 1596), the steward of the door keepers (*kapıcılar kethüdası*) and great master of the stable (*büyük mirâhur*), had noted that Safiye Valide Sultan had the rights to his cash and his female slaves.⁸⁹ When Grand Vizier Hasan Pasha died in 1792, his property was confiscated and his female slaves were sent to the imperial palace.⁹⁰ In some cases, when manumitted female slaves who had already left the imperial palace died, their own female slaves were taken into the imperial harem. Again, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, the inheritance relationship between manumitted slaves and their manumitters was predicated on the fact that part of a palace woman's estate would be delivered to her master. When a female slave of a manumitted palace woman was taken into the imperial palace, the price of the slave was reduced from the sultan's share of the estate, as he was one of the heirs of the palace women. To give but one example from among various possibilities, when Bekdaş Hatun died in 1720, her female slaves were given to the reigning sultan Ahmed III.⁹¹

Purchase was another means of acquiring slaves for the palace.⁹² Eighteenth-century historians Subhi and Şem'dânî-zâde noted that a

⁸⁸ Zorlutuna, "XVII. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında," 287.

⁸⁹ Selânikî, *Târih-i Selânikî* II, 685. ⁹⁰ C. SM 5513 (1207/1792).

⁹¹ TSMA E 126-65. For several examples in this issue, see TSMA D 8193-1; TSMA E 126-14; TSMA E 126-90.

⁹² Female slaves were purchased for the palace in the seventeenth century (İE. SM 4/340 [1089/1678]; İE. SM 1-1111[1091/1678]), sometimes by the chief black eunuch and the master of the stable (*mîrâhur*) (İE. SM, 11-1117 [1091/1678]; İE. SM 11-1122 [1091/1678]). A document dated 1700 cites the purchase in Çatalca of a female slave for the Imperial Harem at a cost of 320 *kuruş* (TSMA E 88/179). Two female slaves were bought by *ağa babası* in 1712 (TSMA E 153-2). Eight female slaves of Georgian and Russian origin were bought for the imperial harem during the reign of Ahmed III (C. SM 80/4027 [1123/1711]). According to a decree from the time of Abdulhamid I, three Georgian slaves were bought for the palace for whom the treasury of the holy cities (*haremeyn hazînesi*) paid 49,000 *kuruş* (BOA, İbnü'l Emin, *Hattı Hümayun* 71-477 [1200/1785]). Female slaves who had children were bought for the imperial harem, and their cost was 9,400 *kuruş* (TSMA E 11113/1; TSMA E 11113/2). There are several examples of customs officials (*gümrük emini*) purchasing slaves for the imperial palace (Cevdet Hariciye [C. HR] 9223/185 [1188/1774]; TSMA E 267; TSMA E 117; TSMA E 1239; TSMA E 8799; C.SM 177/8884 [1188/1774]).

female slave was bought for Saliha Sultan, mother of Mahmud I, from a slave dealer.⁹³ Şem'dânî-zâde also added that the vizier of the period bought female slaves for the Valide Sultan from the slave market.⁹⁴ European accounts likewise provide numerous examples of the practice of purchasing female slaves for the imperial harem. According to Nicolas de Nicolay, who came to Istanbul in 1551 in the retinue of Gabriel de Luel, Sieur d'Aramon, French ambassador to the Ottoman court, some of the sultan's women and concubines were purchased from merchants.⁹⁵ Aubry de la Motraye noted that the women in Ahmed III's harem had all been bought.⁹⁶ Dallaway stated that the female slaves of the seraglio are either privately bought or exposed to sale in the Avrat bazar.⁹⁷

Especially slave wet nurses (*daye cariyes*) were purchased to meet the needs of the sultan's children.⁹⁸ Şem'dânî-zâde added interesting anecdotes to his account about female slaves taken to the palace for this purpose. During the reign of Abdulhamid I, the sultan's consort became pregnant, and a wet nurse thus became necessary. *Ulema* and *imams* informed the members of the neighborhood, and the inns were searched for Circassian or Georgian women who were three months pregnant. He added that these women were required to be pleasant and long-haired.⁹⁹

The prices paid for female palace slaves are rarely known, although it is possible to find some information. Certainly, the price of female slaves varied enormously according to their qualities. During the reign of Mehmed IV, artist female slaves were purchased at prices ranging

D'Ohsson also notes that those female slave who were bought for the palace were selected by the chief of the customs of Istanbul (D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 64).

⁹³ Subhi Mehmed Efendi, *Subhî Tarihi, Sâmî ve Şâkir Tarihleri ile Birlikte (1730–1744)*, ed. M. Aydın (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2007), 62.

⁹⁴ Şem'dânî-zade Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi *Târîhi, Mür'it-Tevârih*, I, 16–17.

⁹⁵ Nicolay, *Les navigations*, 99.

⁹⁶ Aubry de la Motraye, *Aubry de La Motraye's Travels*, I, 247.

⁹⁷ Dallaway, *Constantinople*, 28. D'Ohsson also states that most of the girls were acquired for money (D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 63–64).

⁹⁸ Slave wet nurses were bought for princes, and the expenses were taken from customs by customs official (*gümriük emini*) of Istanbul (İ.E. SM 24/2517 [1118/1706]). A wet nurse was bought for Fatma Sultan, daughter of Mahmud II (C. SM 29/1486 [1224/1809]).

⁹⁹ Şem'dânî-zade Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi *Târîhi, Mür'it-Tevârih*, III, 41.

from 36,000 to 406,000 *akçe*.¹⁰⁰ The prices of Georgian and Russian female slaves taken for the imperial harem in the reign of Ahmed III were between 150 *kuruş* and 250 *kuruş*, while others cost between 280 and 320 *kuruş*.¹⁰¹ During the reign of Abdulhamid I, a very high sum of 16,000 *kuruş* was paid for one Georgian slave,¹⁰² while a Russian slave was purchased for only 87 *kuruş*.¹⁰³ This discrepancy was observed in Melling's account, which pointed to beauty alone being a key indicator of price and thus value; talents and other interesting qualities counted for little.¹⁰⁴ This accorded to the value of female slaves within the broader Ottoman society, in which prices varied according to the girl's beauty, age, and other characteristics.¹⁰⁵

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When pages were taken for the Enderun, it was recommended that those from certain regions be preferred and that those from certain other places be avoided.¹⁰⁶ In the majority of cases, the available sources do not allow us to trace the geographic origins of individual

¹⁰⁰ Günnaz Özmutlu, "Harem Cariyelerinin Musiki ve Seyirlik Oyunlardaki Eğitimleri (1677–1687)," *Belleten* LXXVIII, 283 [2014]: 1038. The price of the female slave who was bought for the sultan in the same period was 750 *kuruş* (Bab-ı Defteri Başmuhasebe Hazînedarbaşılığı [D.BŞM. HZB] 2-6 [1060/1650]).

¹⁰¹ C. SM 80/4027 (1123/1711); TSMA E 88-179 (1112/1700); TSMA E 153-2 (1124/1712).

¹⁰² İE. HAT 5-477 (1200/1786).

¹⁰³ Cevdet Hariciye (C. HR) 127/6340 (1189/1786). The total price of the other six female slaves taken at the time of Abdulhamid I was 6,950 *kuruş* (C. SM 177/8884 [1188/1774]).

¹⁰⁴ Melling, "Intérieur d'une Partie du Harem du Grand-Seigneur," there is no pagination.

¹⁰⁵ G. A. Olivier (1756–1814) noted, by contrast, that the prices of slave girls varied according to supply and demand and generally ranged from 500 to 1,000 *kuruş* (G. A. Olivier, *Voyage dans l'Empire Othoman, l'Égypte et la Perse* [Paris, 1803], I, 174). For various examples of slave and female slave prices in the eighteenth century, see Mehmet Akif Terzi, "İstanbul 1131/1719 Tarihli Askeri Kassam Defteri," M.A. Thesis, Istanbul University, 1995; Zehra Özdener, "İstanbul Askerî Kassâm Defterlerinden 336 No'lu ve Hicrî 1184 (M. 1810) tarihli Tereke Defteri," M.A. Thesis, Istanbul University, 1996; F. Bozkurt, "Tereke Defterleri ve Osmanlı Maddî Kültüründe Değişim (1785–1875 İstanbul Örneği)," Ph.D. diss., Sakarya University, 2011. In these studies, female slave prices appear between 20,000 and 150,000 *akçe* (167–1,250 *kuruş*).

¹⁰⁶ Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli Efendi, *Mevaidü'n-Nefais fi Kavaidi'l-Mecalis*, ed. Mehmet Şeker (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997), 283–284, 341–342.

female palace slaves. It is clear, though, that slaves of various origins were taken to the imperial harem, including Circassian, Georgian, Abkhasian, Russian; women from Africa and Europe also became slaves. Angiolello noted that girls in the Old Palace are all Christians and that they had been brought from various parts of the world.¹⁰⁷ Other European writers stated that most of the women in the palaces were Christians from Greece, Hungary, Poland, Wallachia, Italy, or other regions.¹⁰⁸ D'Ohsson noted that there were women in the imperial harem who were brought from Europe, Asia, and Africa.¹⁰⁹ J. Dallaway and Ch. M. Deval also noted that female palace slaves were Circassian and Georgian.¹¹⁰ Archival documents from the eighteenth century provide corroborative evidence. An order was given to a governor (*beylerbeyi*) to purchase Circassian, Abkhazian, and Russian slaves for the imperial harem.¹¹¹ A woman named *Sarayî Şehbaz* (d. 1716) was from Malta, while *Sarayî Simten Kadın*, who was manumitted by Mustafa III, possessed a slave from Wallachia named *Lutfiye*.¹¹² In every period, black women from Africa also served in the imperial harem, although they were few in number. According to Ottaviano Bon's account, in the seventeenth century, black women were brought to the imperial court from Cairo.¹¹³ In the eighteenth century, at least two black women (*zenciye*) were present in the imperial harem: *Zenciye Saide* (d. 1776) and *Zenciye Halime*, who were

¹⁰⁷ Angiolello, *Historia Turchesca*, 128.

¹⁰⁸ Postel, *De la republique*, 34; Nicolay, *Les navigations*, 99; Lubenau, *Reinhold Lubenau Seyahatnamesi*, I, 207.

¹⁰⁹ D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 69.

¹¹⁰ J. Dallaway, *Constantinople*, 28; Ch. M. Deval, *Deux Années à Constantinople et en Morée (1825–1826)* (Paris, 1828), 101. Gibb and Bowen note that “from the end of the sixteenth century onward, the majority of the harem women were recruited from the Caucasus” (H. A. R. Gibb-Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West: A Study of the Impact of Western Civilization on Moslem Culture* I/2 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950], 74–75).

¹¹¹ TSMA E 1511. Another document from the eighteenth century also states that Circassian, Abkhasian, and Russian female slaves were taken for the imperial harem (TSMA E 1511).

¹¹² BOA, Bab-ı Defteri Başmuhasebe Muhallefat Halifelîği (D.BŞM.MHF) 58-56 (1775).

¹¹³ Ottaviano Bon-Robert Withers, *A description of the grand signour's seraglio*, 101–102. Bon noted that “the more ugly these black women were, the more they were valued. The pashas of Cairo were diligent in finding the most ill favoured, coal-black, blabber-lipped, and flat nosed girls to send them as presents to the sultan.”

manumitted by Âlicenab Kadın, Mahmud I's head consort.¹¹⁴ The varied origins of female palace slaves in the eighteenth century more or less reflect the situation of other slaves living in other parts of the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁵

It is not possible to determine at what age each female slave entered the palace, but it is understood that there was no standard practice concerning the age of entrance to the harem. Some of the slaves entered the palace as children, while others entered at a later age. It is said that Turhan, who later became the concubine of Sultan Ibrahim, was only four years old when she was captured by raiders and then presented to the palace.¹¹⁶ According to D'Ohsson's account, since some people intended to offer girls to the sultan as an act of homage, they carefully cared for the girls and sent them to the palace when they reached the age of ten or eleven.¹¹⁷ Sungur, who appeared at the beginning of this book, wrote to Selim III and stated that she had been taken to the palace at the tender age of five.¹¹⁸

Additionally, some features related to physical appearance and character were sought in women who were taken to the court, and in some

¹¹⁴ For the estate inventories of *Zenciye Saide* and *Zenciye Halime*, see D.BŞM. MHF 59-49, D.BŞM. MHF 13026.

¹¹⁵ Among the slaves living in Konya from the mid-seventeenth century to the eighteenth century, there were Circassian, Russian, Polish (*Leh*), and Abyssinian (*Habeş*) slaves (İzzet Sak, "Şer'iye Sicillerine Göre Sosyal ve Ekonomik Hayatta Köleler (17. ve 18. Yüzyıllar)," Ph.D. diss., Selçuk University, 1992, 92–97). In the eighteenth century, captives from Ukraine, South Russia, and Austria were brought to the Ottoman State (Nihat Engin, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Kölelik* [Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı, 1998], 109–110). Around 1700, there were manumitted female slaves in Galata who were mainly Austrian in origin, with a few being Venetian, Dutch, or French (Géza Dávid, "Manumissioned Female Slaves at Galata and Istanbul Around 1700," in *Frauen, Bilder und Gelebrt: Festschrift Hans Georg Majer*, ed. Sabine Prätör-Christoph Neumann [Istanbul: Simurg, 2002], I, 229–236). For a detailed information about the ethnic origins of slaves in the Ottoman Empire, see Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire*, 58–62.

¹¹⁶ Guillet de Saint Georges, *An Account*, 349. According to Uluçay, the Russian-origin Turhan Sultan was taken captive after the Tatar raids at the age of ten to twelve, and afterwards she entered the imperial court. He also noted that Russian-origin Hürrem was taken captive during the raid and entered the imperial court when she was between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. Venetian-origin Safiye Sultan was captured by pirates and entered the imperial court between the ages of fourteen and fifteen (Uluçay, *Kadınları ve Kızları*, 43).

¹¹⁷ D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 64.

¹¹⁸ Çetin, "Muhtaç Bir Cariyenin Sultan III. Selim'e Arzuhali," 37–39.

cases chronicles provide clues on this issue. For instance, according to Şem'dânî-zâde's account, a summer palace was constructed in Beykoz in 1764 and female slaves with eminent and desirable attitudes (*mümtaz ve müşteha tavırlı*) were selected in addition to pages.¹¹⁹

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Regardless of their geographical origins or the means through which they were acquired, girls started an entirely new life once they entered the palace. D'Ohsson noted that girls selected for the palace were first examined by a woman assigned to this office; the slightest bodily defect was sufficient to exclude the girl.¹²⁰ Female slaves were divided into Chambers similar to those of the pages in the Enderun.¹²¹ They were then trained under the supervision of more experienced women.¹²²

Following their entrance into the palace, the girls were converted to Islam through the repetition of the core Islamic creed, "There is no

¹¹⁹ Şem'dânî-zade *Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi Târîhi, Mür'it-Tevârih*, II A, 60–61.

¹²⁰ D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 64.

¹²¹ Rycaut, *The Present State*, 39 (Rycaut notes that similar to pages, maids were divided into two Chambers where they worked); C. G. Fisher and A. W. Fisher, "Topkapı Sarayı in the mid-seventeenth century: Bobovi's description," 72; Sieur de la Croix, *Mémoires de Sieur de la Croix*, I, 354. G. G. de Saint-Georges noted that in the period of Ahmed I, a girl from Athens was first taken to *küçük oda* (Chamber of Newcomers) in the palace (G. G. de Saint-Georges, *An Account*, 160). Guer noted that women's section consisted of four chambers. First chamber was called the greater chamber (*Büyük Oda*), where girls received education upon their arrival in the palace. The second chamber, called the supreme chamber (*Küçük Oda*), was allocated for those who were capable of amusing and entertaining the sultan. Girls were assembled in the third chamber to work and to wash laundry. Girls learned music and dance in the fourth chamber (J. A. Guer, *Moeurs et Usages des Turcs, Leur Religion, Leur Gouvernement Civil, Militaire et Politique* [Paris; Merigot & Piget, 1747], II, 57). Hobhouse noted that all of the odalisques lived and slept in two large dormitories (Hobhouse, *A Journey through*, I, 852). Habesci also claimed that girls who were taken to the palace were divided like the pages into two chambers (Habesci, *The Present State*, 165). European sources frequently stated that each girl had a separate bed and between the beds of every five or more girls laid an old woman who minutely inspected their conduct in order to prevent immodest and indecent behavior (Fauvel, *Le voyage*, 77).

¹²² Writing in 1534, the Italian Benedetto Ramberti noted that virgin girls were given to the government of many matrons (Benedetto Ramberti, *Libri tre delle cose de Turchi*. Venice, 1543. Excerpted and translated by Albert Howe Lybyer in *The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the Time of Suleiman the Magnificent* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913], 253); Nicolay, *Les navigations*, 99; Sieur de la Croix, *Mémoires de Sieur de la Croix*, I, 354; Rycaut, *The Present State*, 39; Fauvel, *Le Voyage*, 77.

God but Allah, Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah.”¹²³ During the first period of their enslavement, called *acemilik* (novitiate), they underwent training in court manners under the supervision of elders. They were employed in the activities to which they were best suited. They were given knowledge of the Islamic religion, they learned Turkish, and some of them even received education in sewing, embroidery, music, and dancing. Angiollello, who served in the palace during the reign of Mehmed II, described the training of women in the sultan’s harem. He noted that senior women taught the new ones how to speak and to read, instructed them in Muhammedan law, and showed them how to sew and embroider, to play instruments, and to sing. The girls also learned about Ottoman ceremonies and customs, to the degree that they had the inclination to learn.¹²⁴ D’Ohsson also observed that the newly acquired slaves were educated by older women; at the end of their novitiate, they began their service in the harem.¹²⁵

Names of Female Palace Slaves

Female slaves were given new names that usually accorded with their physical appearance and their personality.¹²⁶ These new names

¹²³ Postel, *De la republique*, 34; Ottaviano Bon-Robert Withers, *A description of the grand signour’s seraglio*, 36; Courmenin, *Voyage de Levant*, 157; Baudier, *The History of the Serrail*, 57; Formanti, “Relatione del Serraglio,” in *Raccolta*, 16.

¹²⁴ Angiollello, *Historia Turchesca*, 128. This issue was mentioned by several other European authors: Junis Bey and Alvise Gritti, *Opera noua la quale dichiara tutto il gouerno del gran turcho . . .* Venice, 1537. Reprinted in A. H. Lybyer, *The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the time of Suleiman the Magnificent* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 268–269. For the account of Hans Dernschwam (1494–1568), who visited Istanbul in 1553, see H. Dernschwam, *Istanbul ve Anadoluya Seyahat Günliüğü*, trans. Y. Önen (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1987), 189; Ottaviano Bon-Robert Withers, *A description of the grand signour’s seraglio*, 38; Baudier, *The History of the Serrail*, 50, 57, 58; Sieur de la Croix, *Mémoires de Sieur de la Croix*, I, 354. Girls were taught sewing and embroidery in the palace (Menavino, *I cinque*, 135; Ramberti, *Libri tre delle*, in Lybyer, *The Government*, 253; Postel, *De la republique*, 6, 33; Sansovino, *Dell’Historia*, 1568; Schweigger, *Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk*, 113).

¹²⁵ D’Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 64.

¹²⁶ Uluçay, *Harem*, 18. D’Ohsson notes that these female slaves received different names than those of free women (D’Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 69). For information about pre-Ottoman naming practices, for instance about practices in Egypt in the Middle Ages, see S. D. Goitein, “Slaves and Slavegirls in the Cairo Geniza Records,” *Arabica* 9 (1962): 8–9.

served as a break from old identities and the adoption of new ones; the girls' new life, then, was marked by the adoption of a new name and identity. In Ottoman society, female slaves generally were given Persian names, mostly related to flowers, fragrances, and other pleasures of life.¹²⁷ On the other hand, some female slaves bore Arabic names.¹²⁸

In Ottoman society, a person was called by his/her father's name. When a person became a slave, his/her new status was marked by renaming. Male slaves – and also devshirmes – were called “bin Abdullah” (son of a slave of God); female slaves, including those in the palace, were called “bint Abdullah” (daughter of the slave of God).

Archival records that provide information about the names and origins of female slaves who were taken to the palace offer the possibility of two naming alternatives. It is possible that some female slaves had already been given new names before they entered the palace, and they then kept these names following their admission. Other slaves were given new names only after they had entered the harem. From the eighteenth-century records, it appears that the great majority of slaves in the harem had Persian names, although a few had prestigious Arabic names associated with the family of the Prophet Muhammed, such as Ayşe, Fatma, Zeynep, and Hadice.¹²⁹ As far as the Persian names have been evaluated, girls were given names that can be categorized roughly into several types. Some girls were given names that reflected the manners, attitudes, and physical characteristics. Others carried names

¹²⁷ Suraiya Faroqhi, “Quis Custodiet Custodes? Controlling Slave Identities and Slave Traders in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Istanbul,” in *Stories of Ottoman Men and Women: Establishing Status, Establishing Control*, ed. S. Faroqhi (Istanbul: Eren, 2002), 248; Zilfi, *Women and Slavery*, 157–158.

Uluçay notes that Persian names given to female slaves were not considered appropriate for free-born Muslims (Uluçay, *Harem*, II, 37).

¹²⁸ In the mid-sixteenth century, in Galata, some muslim female slaves bore Persian names, while others bore prestigious Arabic names such as Ayşe, Fatma, Zeynep, Hatice, Rabia, and Meryem (Nur Sobers-Khan, *Slaves without Shackles: Forced Labour and Manumission in the Galata Court Registers, 1560–1572* [Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2014], 231–232).

¹²⁹ According to an archival record that states the names of female slaves who were sent to the imperial harem, some female slaves had Persian names, while some others bore Arabic names such as, for example, Ayşe and Hadice (C. SM 80/4027 [1711]). Additionally, for various examples of female slaves who had Arabic names during their stay in the imperial harem, see TSMA D 8075; TSMA D 2999; TSMA D 9962; Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

Table 1.1 *Categorization of the Persian names carried by palace women*

Names reflecting the manners and attitudes	Şirin (sweet), Edâlî (gracious), Şivekâr (coquettish), Nazlı (coquettish), Nazperver (coquettish), Gamzekâr (flirting), Mihrî (affectionate) Dilâver (brave), Şehsüvar (intrepid hero), Kahraman (hero), Üftade (in love)
Names reflecting the physical characteristics	Simten (fair-skinned), Çeşm-i Siyah (black-eyed), Periruhşar (fairy faced), Mehpâre (beautiful and bright like a moon), Mahpeyker (moon-faced), Afitab (beautiful face)
Names inspired by aspects of nature	Mehtab (moonlight), Bad-ı Sabâ (zephyr), Bad-ı Seher (morning breeze), Bağ-ı Cinan (garden of paradise)
Names related to flowers	Gonca (rosebud), Gülfem (rose mouth), Gülistan (rose garden), Goncafem (rosebud mouth), Gülbün (rosebush), Gülçehre (rose-faced), Gülkıyafet, Gülgün (rose-colored), Gülnuş (rose drink), Gülrühşar (rose-cheeked), Gülistan (rose garden)
Names related to precious stones	Gevher (jewel), Dürrî (sparkling like a pearl), Nefes (precious stone)
Names related to power and authority	Cihanşah (king of the world), Alemşah (king of the world)
Names that were given to the beloved in Divan literature	Şehbaz (royal falcon, royal, generous, noble), Şâhin (excellent falcon), Bâd-ı Sabâ ¹³⁰

that were inspired by aspects of nature. Some women bore names related to flowers, precious stones, and power and authority. Few women had names that were given to the beloved in Divan literature (Table 1.1)

¹³⁰ In Divan literature, lover is like a hunter, and both Şehbaz and Şâhin are pursued and hunted by the lover. For the case of Bâd-ı Saba, lover misses his beloved, and the wind carries the smell of her to him. İskender Pala, *Ansiklopedik Dîvân Şiiri Sözlüğü*, 2 vols. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989.

Families of the Female Palace Slaves

Since a person was called by his or her father's name in Ottoman society, an examination of the names of manumitted female palace slaves provides information not only about their origins but also about the identity of their fathers. In the available registers belonging to female palace slaves, the great majority of them (97 percent) are listed as *bint* (daughter of) Abdullah,¹³¹ as was also the case for other Ottoman women of slave origin. The name Abdullah was used interchangeably with the names of Abdülmennan, Abdülkerim, Abdürrahim, and some other names relating to God. An example of a woman who was not listed as “bint Abdulah” is *Sarayî* Amine Hatun bint Ahmed Beşe bin Abdullah.¹³² The identification of the mother is more difficult than that of the father. As a requirement of Islamic law, living parents including mothers appeared in estate registers as heirs as long as they were alive. However, among the examined examples, it was extremely rare that parents appeared as heirs in the estate registers of manumitted female palace slaves.

The story of *Sarayî* Necef, also known as Saliha bint Abdullah bin Abdülmennan, is unique and thus very important in revealing the family network of female palace slaves. In a court case dated 1715, Necef Hatun's estate was divided among her heirs. She had been manumitted by Hadice Sultan (1662–1743), who was the daughter of Mehmed IV (r. 1648–1687). Necef's heirs were her previous master Hadice Sultan, her husband, el-Hac Halil Agha bin Ali bin Himmet, her minor daughter Emine, and, interestingly, her mother *Sarayî* Zeynep bint Abdullah, who was also of slave origin.¹³³ One year later, *Sarayî* Zeynep, who was also manumitted by the same Hadice Sultan, appeared in the law court and stated that her grandchild Emine had died; she thus demanded her rights over the estate of the young girl.¹³⁴ The case of Necef bint Abdullah is unique for various reasons: it shows a palace woman who had knowledge of her mother, and both daughter and mother were manumitted by the same master. It is possible that

¹³¹ Among the examined examples, the fathers of 381 female palace slaves were mentioned. Of these, 371 (97 percent) were listed as “binti Abdullah.”

¹³² Evkâf-ı Hümâyün Müfettişliği (Inspectorate of Imperial Foundations), nr. 114, p. 70 (1135/1722).

¹³³ Evkâf-ı Hümâyün Müfettişliği, nr. 103, p. 7 (1127/1715).

¹³⁴ Evkâf-ı Hümâyün Müfettişliği, nr. 112, pp. 30–31 (1128/1715–1716).

Necf and her mother Zeynep had been taken to the palace together.¹³⁵ There are certainly several examples showing that daughters of wet nurses also lived in the harem.¹³⁶

The story of Zeynep and Necf leads to the definition of another category, that of *sarayî* daughter (*sarayî kızı*). In some very rare examples, palace women are listed as *sarayî kızı*. It is possible that those girls who had at least one parent affiliated to the imperial court were named *sarayî kızı*. One of the defining features of this group of *sarayî kızı* was that their fathers were not listed as Abdullah. In general, the *sarayî kızı* had a palace-affiliated mother. For instance, *Sarayî kızı* Emetullah was the daughter of *Sarayî* Zeynep and Halil Agha bin Himmet,¹³⁷ while *Sarayî kızı* Fatma Hatun was the daughter of Usta Ahmed bin Osman and *Sarayî* Hanife.¹³⁸

Brothers and sisters also appear extremely rarely in the examined estate registers. In my examination of 460 estate registers in which inheritors are recorded, I found only four women who had a named mother, only four who had named sisters¹³⁹ and only one woman who had a brother.¹⁴⁰ Sisters of the examined palace women did not carry the title *sarayî*.¹⁴¹ This raises the possibility that the siblings may have been brought to the capital together, and then one was taken to the palace while the others were sent to different households. For instance, Reftâridil was sold together with her sister, but only Reftâridil was taken to the palace where she became the consort of Murad V.¹⁴²

The very rare appearance of family members as heirs in the estate registers raises the question of how much contact these palace women were able to maintain with their natal families. In 1864, a minor female slave was presented to Behice Sultan (b. 1848), the daughter of Sultan Abdulmecid. A document was prepared stating that the girl's relatives

¹³⁵ The daughter of famous sixteenth-century companion Raziye Hatun was also in the harem, and she read and wrote the sultan's letters (Pedani, "Safiye's Household," 25).

¹³⁶ Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

¹³⁷ Evkâf-ı Hümâyün Müfettişliği, nr. 103, p. 139 (1128/1715).

¹³⁸ Evkâf-ı Hümâyün Müfettişliği, nr. 101, p. 81 (1126/1714).

¹³⁹ TSMA E 126-59; TSMA E 126-73; TSMA D 8254-3; Evkâf-ı Hümâyün Müfettişliği, nr. 117, p. 172.

¹⁴⁰ Evkâf-ı Hümâyün Müfettişliği, nr. 120, p. 64 (1143/1730).

¹⁴¹ On the other hand, in a seventeenth-century example, *Sarayî* Ayşe Hatun binti Abdullah had a sister named *Sarayî* Anelîb Hatun (Evkâf-ı Hümâyün Müfettişliği, nr. 65, pp. 83–85 (1092/1681)).

¹⁴² Uluçay, *Kadımları ve Kızları*, 167.

would not interfere with her. This implies that it was not considered appropriate for female slaves who were taken to the imperial palace to be contacted by their families.¹⁴³ Yet some rare examples from earlier periods do reveal that some female palace slaves were in contact with their family members, but only those who had some link with the imperial court. In the seventeenth century, the famous Canfeda Hatun, a chief administrative official in the harem, had two brothers that she looked after, both of whom held the rank of pasha.¹⁴⁴ Likewise, Hadice Turhan Valide Sultan's (d. 1683) brother Yunus Agha (d. 1689) was living in Istanbul.¹⁴⁵

In sum, the high ratio of "bint Abdullah" and the extremely rare appearance of family members, such as mothers and siblings as heirs, imply that the great majority of these girls lost contact with their family members. These girls came from many different regions, but all were divorced from their own lineage as they were gathered into the harem. This situation impacted their relationship with the imperial court and strengthened their sense of belonging.

Relations within the Imperial Harem

Very little is known about the internal functioning of the harem, or of the relationships that developed between its residents. The account of Derviş Abdullah, halberdier (*teberdar*) of the Old Palace, provides an idea about how female palace slaves were perceived within the palace. He noted that "female slaves were regarded as daughters, and since it was a religious duty for Muslim believers to protect their children, it was also compulsory to protect female slaves."¹⁴⁶ Likewise, in one

¹⁴³ TSMA D 8079(1281/1864), quoted in Uluçay *Harem II*, 14.

¹⁴⁴ Pedani, "Safiye's Household," 24.

¹⁴⁵ Ahmet Refik [Altınay], *Hicri Onikinci Asırda İstanbul Hayatı: 1100-1200* (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1988), 1. There might be a difference in terms of female palace slaves' contact with their families in the nineteenth century compared to previous periods. It is known that especially after the second half of the century, the number of Circassian female slaves coming from the Caucasus to Istanbul increased and also some Circassian girls were sold as slaves by their families. It can be assumed that this situation differentiated the ability of female slaves to connect with their families compared to the previous centuries. One Circassian family who was reluctant to sell their daughter was given permission to visit her once or twice a year (Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and Its Suppression*, 188).

¹⁴⁶ Saka, *Risale-i Teberdariye*, 202.

archival record, female palace slaves were defined as those who were nourished, cared for, and educated by the imperial court.¹⁴⁷

The long-lasting relationship between the imperial court and its female palace slaves was rooted in the harem, and residents of the harem were attached to the household through various layers of associations that were often based on emotional and material bonds. Residents of the imperial harem, much like those of the Enderun, occupied various ranks within the hierarchy and were protected and provided with benefits during their service period. Importantly, household members were related to the household through a patronage relationship. Household heads were responsible for providing for their dependents, safeguarding their best interests, and ensuring their welfare. The principle of Islamic tradition ordering that slaves should be treated well might have been influential in their attitude toward slaves. Patronage relationships were fostered in the imperial court and were realized across various layers, and this shaped the dynamics among the members of the imperial court.

*

In every period, male and female members of the imperial court received regular stipends called *mevâcib* and *ulufe* in return for their services. This practice was not enacted exclusively at the Ottoman palace: in a similar manner, residents of harems across the Near East and South Asia received monthly salaries.¹⁴⁸ A person's position within the imperial harem, or in the Enderun, played a major role in determining their stipends.¹⁴⁹ According to the *mevâcib* registers belonging to the periods of Selim III and Mahmud II, female palace

¹⁴⁷ C. SM 7226. At this point, it should be noted that in some cases it may be the rhetoric and may not reflect the actual reality. This discourse may have been used to support and perpetuate slavery.

¹⁴⁸ For information about Mughal stipends for harem residents, see Ruby Lal, *Domesticity*, 178.

¹⁴⁹ Ottaviano Bon (d. 1622) stated that female palace slaves were paid from the sultan's treasury according to their rank. Some received 15 or 20 *akçe* a day, while others received 4 or 5 *akçe*. They were paid every three months. Haseki Sultan received 1,000 or 500 *akçe* daily (Ottaviano Bon-Robert Withers, *A description of the grand signour's seraglio*, 49). According to D'Ohsson, each *gedikli* and *ikbal* received 200 piastres for three months, *usta* got 200, *şakird* received 50, and *cariye* received 35 (D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 73).

slaves received between 5 and 500 *akçe* per day.¹⁵⁰ In a *mevâcib* register from the period of Mahmud I, 446 female palace slaves were recorded and, of these, 52 received between 20 and 100 *akçe*, 21 received 15 *akçe*, and 67 received 10 *akçe*. The vast majority (306) received only 5 *akçe*.¹⁵¹ Among 473 female palace slaves listed in a *mevâcib* register from the period of Mahmud II, almost 20 percent (92) received 20 *akçe* or more, but the rest received no more than 15 *akçe*.¹⁵² Additionally, some members of the harem received a share of the customs.¹⁵³

Residents of the imperial harem were assigned food, listed in the records as *me'kulât*.¹⁵⁴ The great majority of female slaves are listed together under a general category.¹⁵⁵ Higher-status residents, such as the chief administrative officer and the wet nurse, were listed separately. Female slaves in the imperial harem were also assigned clothing, called *melbûsât*.¹⁵⁶ Writing in 1534, Benedetto Ramberti noted that

¹⁵⁰ TSMA D 2999; Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*.

¹⁵¹ TSMA D 8075.

¹⁵² Muallim Cevdet B4, II. *Mahmud Mevâcib Defteri*. For several similar examples in the Enderun from the period of Mustafa III, see Tahir Güngör, "Enderun Saray Mektebi'nde Has Oda Teşkilatı," M.A. Thesis, Marmara University, 2007, 59.

¹⁵³ BOA, Cevdet Maliye (C. ML) 132/5704 (1195/1781); HAT 1467/44) (1212/1797); HAT 1483/26 (1217/1802).

¹⁵⁴ For several examples from the eighteenth century, see D.MSF 4-32; D.MSF 1-19; D. MSF 1-25; D.MSF 1-32; D. MSF 2-39 (1113/1702); D. MSF 3-16 (1704); D.MSF 2-39; D.MSF 3-25; D. MSF 3-85; D.BŞM. d 41561, p. 15 (1206-1213/ 1791-1799); D.BŞM 828 (1107/1696); D. BŞM 830; BOA, Bab-ı Defteri Başmuhasebe Matbah-ı Âmire Emîni defterleri (D.BŞM. MTE d.) 2-45; KK 7129; KK 7242, KK 7248 (1176/1763); KK 7252 (period of Abdulhamid I); KK 7254 (period of Selim III); KK 7255 (period of Selim III); KK 7258 (1226/1811). The issue of providing food was also mentioned by Fauvel (Fauvel, *Le voyage*, 79).

¹⁵⁵ In the documents, the food assignment to this large group of female slaves was stated as "*sofra-yı horendegân-ı harem-i hümayun-ı ismet makrun der matbah-ı has*," "*tayinat-ı horendegân-ı harem-i hümayun*," and "*tayinat-ı harem-i hümayun*."

¹⁵⁶ Archival records provide rich information about clothes and fabrics assigned to members of the imperial court in every period: D.BŞM.d 1658 (1142/1730); Bab-ı Defteri Büyük Ruznamçe Kalemi Evrakı (D.BRZ. d) 20933; MAD 1917; MAD 19174 (1159-1169/1746-1756); TSMA D 210; TSMA D 676 (1109-1114/1697-1703); TSMA d 689; TSMA d 688; TSMA D 681 (1108/1695); TSMA D 5922 (1192/1778-1779); TSMA d 7961; TSMA d 5969; TSMA D 9478; TSMA D 9962. For information about fabrics given to the head of the privy chamber (*has oda başı*), see Güngör, "Enderun Saray Mektebi'nde Has Oda Teşkilatı," 56, 60.

“the sultan gives pay of ten to twenty aspers per day to the girls in the Palace and twice every year at the two Bairams he has them clothed in stuffs of silk.”¹⁵⁷ Other objects that the harem members needed were also provided.¹⁵⁸

Apart from salaries, clothing, food, and other necessities, harem residents received extra payments and gifts called *in‘âm*, *ihsân*, or *‘atiyye* on specific occasions. These gifts paved the way in strengthening the ties between the imperial household and the members of the imperial court.¹⁵⁹ These gifts included goods of various kind and quality.¹⁶⁰ Habibe Kadın bint Abdullah, who was the consort of Mahmud I (r. 1730–1754), designated monetary and tangible gifts, including several types of textile furnishings, to several harem residents including the black eunuch Beshir Agha and the female slaves of the head treasurer, of the mistress of the pantry, of several *kalfas*, and others.¹⁶¹

The possession of female slaves by various people in the imperial harem paved the way for a diversification of patronage relations. Members of the imperial court acted as benefactors and offered patronage, depending on their status in the hierarchy. For instance, Süleyman Agha bin Abdülmennan, the Agha of the Old Palace, donated several items as a trousseau to his slave Hibetullah bint Abdullah in 1740 while she was still a child. The objects and jewelry assigned to this young slave were astonishing, both in number and value: the

¹⁵⁷ Ramberti, *Libri tre delle*, in Lybyer, *The Government*, 253. This issue is also mentioned in Schweigger, *Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk*, 113; Heberer, *Osmanlıda Bir Köle*, 239; Ottaviano Bon-Robert Withers, *A description of the grand signour's seraglio*, 49; *Histoire Generale des Turcs* (Paris, 1662), II, 29.

¹⁵⁸ Goods were bought for the chambers of sultan's mother, consort (*haseki*), chief administrative officer (*kethüda kadın*), aghas, and servants (*borendegân*) in Edirne Palace (D.BŞM.d 874 [1108/1696]). On the goods given to the harem slaves, see İE. SM 1215 (1083/1672); TSMA d 2357-0005 (1126/1714); MAD d 771 (Safer 1115/1703).

¹⁵⁹ A record from the period of Mustafa II, for example, reveals that the head consort received 150 *kuruş*, while the *kethüda kadın* and *daye kadın* were assigned 60 *kuruş*; the *hazinedar usta*, *saray usta*, *cameşuy usta*, *berber usta*, *leğen ibrikçi usta*, *çaşnigir usta*, and *kilerci usta* received 40 *kuruş* each (TSMA D 2350-0005 [1695]).

¹⁶⁰ On the items given to members of the imperial harem and Enderun, see MAD 15867 (1677–1683); TSMA D 1219-0002 (1085/1674); TSMA D 2354/0003; TSMA d 980/0001; TSMA d 2354/0006.

¹⁶¹ TSMA E 3055-6.

trousseau included two pairs of emerald and diamond earrings, a gold bracelet, two emerald belts, fourteen rings made of various gems, and other accessories made of gold and precious stones. The value of furs and other clothing items was not less than that of the jewelry: three furs of different qualities, fifteen caftans, twenty dresses, and other clothing items. The trousseau also contained a variety of household items, including textile products, candelabra, trays, a coffee ewer, a basin, a thurible, a rose water flask, and even a clock. The total value of all these items was 12,080 *kuruş*, which was a huge amount compared to the generosity of Habibe Kadın. Since Hibetullah was too young to take care of these items, Süleyman Agha entrusted these objects to Fatma Hatun, who was another of his slaves.¹⁶²

Harem residents received gratuities called *ıydiye bahşisi* on religious holidays.¹⁶³ D'Ohsson noted that in two bairams, harem residents were given gratuities.¹⁶⁴ They also received *muharremiye*, which was pocket money given out at greeting ceremonies held at the beginning of the month of *Muharrem*.¹⁶⁵ Harem residents were also granted favors before imperial departures (*hareket-i hümayun*). For instance, when Ahmed III moved from his waterside residence in Eyüb to Istanbul, he bestowed gratuities upon the harem residents.¹⁶⁶

Weddings and birth ceremonies within the imperial dynasty were special occasions during which harem residents received presents as members of the household. Presenting gifts to the residents of the imperial harem on the occasion of imperial weddings was an ancient tradition.¹⁶⁷ When Emine Sultan, a daughter of Mustafa II, married

¹⁶² Evkâf-ı Hümayun Müfettişliği, nr. 193, p. 13a (1188/1775).

¹⁶³ MAD d 3338. ¹⁶⁴ D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, VII, 73.

¹⁶⁵ BOA, HAT (Hatt-ı Hümayun) d 27067; HAT 32810. At the beginning of the month of Ramadan, when the Nativity poem of Prophet Muhammed was chanted, members of the Enderun were given benevolence in the name of "*mevlüdiyye*"; Güngör, "Enderun Saray Mektebi'nde Has Oda Teşkilatı," 56. In the seventeenth century, Koçi Bey notes that *mevlüdiyye* or *mevlüd bahşisi* was given to members of the Enderun following a *mevlid*; Ali Kemal Aksüt, *Koçi Bey Risalesi* (Istanbul: Vakit Matbaası, 1939), 82. The same situation might have been the case for the members of the imperial harem.

¹⁶⁶ TSMA D 2369/0001 (1138/1726).

¹⁶⁷ During the wedding ceremonies of Mustafa II and Ahmed III's daughters, grooms offered gifts to female palace slaves (TSMA D 10590, quoted in Mehmet Arslan, "III. Ahmed'in Kızı Fatma Sultan'ın Düğünü Üzerine Bir Belge," in *Osmanlı Edebiyat-Tarih-Kültür Makaleleri*, ed. Mehmet Arslan [Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2000], 545; TSMK, Hazine no: 1573/2, quoted in Mehmet Arslan, "II. Mustafa'nın kızları Ayşe Sultan ve Emine Sultan'ın Düğünleri

Çorlulu Ali Pasha, the latter offered gifts to the head treasurer of the Sultan and the Valide Sultan, to the mistress of laundry and her staff, and to the female slaves who were sent to Emine Sultan's palace.¹⁶⁸ Likewise, as reflected in the registers of *velâdet-i hümâyün* (imperial birth ceremonies), members of the imperial harem were presented with gifts following the birth of members of the dynasty.¹⁶⁹

The education given to members of the imperial harem can also be evaluated in the context of patronage relations. As mentioned above and resembling what took place within the Enderun, female slaves received education in accordance with their capacities and position.¹⁷⁰ Some harem residents received education in Islamic sciences, reading, calligraphy, sewing, and embroidery, as well as several branches of art such as literature, poetry,¹⁷¹ dance and music,¹⁷² shadow puppetry, and other theatrical skills.¹⁷³ In addition, some female slaves had training in medical fields.¹⁷⁴ Bobovi, who was a page in the

Üzerine Bir Belge," *Osmanlı Edebiyat-Tarih-Kültür Makaleler*, 565; TSMA D 10591, quoted in Mehmet Arslan, "II. Mustafa'nın kızı Safiye Sultan'ın Düğünü Üzerine Bir Belge," in *Osmanlı Edebiyat-Tarih-Kültür Makaleler*, ed. Mehmet Arslan [Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2000], 573–574).

¹⁶⁸ TSMK, Hazine no: 1573/2, quoted in Mehmet Arslan, "II. Mustafa'nın kızları Ayşe Sultan ve Emine Sultan'ın Düğünleri," 565.

¹⁶⁹ TSMA D 974; D.BŞM.d 1210 (1712).

¹⁷⁰ Angiolello offered information about the education given to male members in Mehmed II's palace (Angiolello, *Historia Turchesca*, 126). Bobovius described the training in the Enderun (Fisher and Fisher, "Topkapı Sarayı in the mid-seventeenth century: Bobovi's description," 77–79; Barnette Miller, *The Palace School of Muhammed the Conqueror* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941], 82; Necipoğlu, *Architecture*, 111–112). About courses taken in the Enderun, see TSMA D 4783/1, quoted in Güngör, "Enderun Saray Mektebi'nde Has Oda Teşkilatı," 111.

¹⁷¹ This issue will be mentioned in Chapter 5.

¹⁷² D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, IV, 421, 426; *Tableau*, VII, 64. For information about music education given to female palace slaves, see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Osmanlılar Zamanında Saraylarda Musiki Hayatı," *Belleten*, 41 (1977): 79–115; Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilatı*, 150; Metin And, "Sanatçı Cariyeler," *Sanat Dünyamız* 73 (1999): 69–77; Günnaz Özmutlu, "Harem Cariyelerinin Musiki ve Seyirlik Oyunlardaki Eğitimleri (1677–1687)," 1033–1074.

¹⁷³ Usturacı Mehmed Çelebi provided puppet training to female palace slaves (*hassa cariyes*) in his house (İE. SM 10/949 (1090/1679). D'Ohsson noted that in the harems, women performed games and comedies in a stupid manner, almost always trying to counterfeit the Christians and to ridicule them. He added that sometimes women dressed up as men and took up the European costume to make their jokes even more piquant (D'Ohsson, *Tableau*, IV, 412).

¹⁷⁴ Some have noted that Jewish women taught needlework to female members of the harem, or the secret of some excellent medical recipes for the healing of their

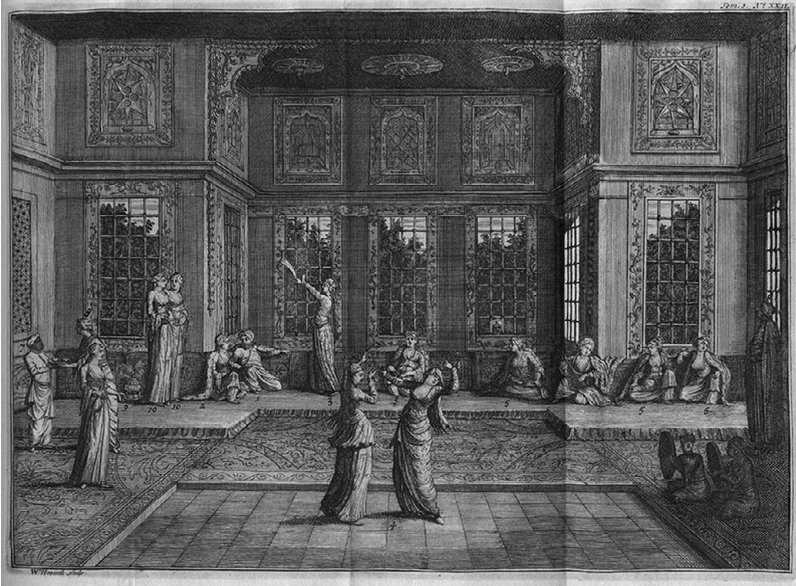


Figure 1.4 “Women dancing in the Harem.” Aubry de la Motraye. *A. De La Motraye’s Travels Through Europe, Asia and into Part of Africa* (London: Printed for the author, 1723).

seventeenth century, stated that the primary aim of education in the harem was to teach Ottoman court culture and loyalty to the imperial household.¹⁷⁵

The education given in the imperial harem was important when we take into consideration the future roles of female palace slaves following their transfer from the imperial court. As will be discussed in the following chapters, following their departure from the palace, these women were absorbed into the local communities with an intact “palace identity.” This allowed them both to establish social and communal relationships with people, especially with members of their

infirmities or the conservation of their health (Baudier, *The History of the Serrail*, 62; Guer, *Moeurs et Usages*, II, 34). D’ohsson noted that in many harems, only women practiced medicine. Even though women had little knowledge, he claimed, their long experience made them skillful. They were also in charge of childbirth (D’Ohsson, *Tableau*, IV, 319).

¹⁷⁵ Ali Ufkî Bey/Albertus Bobovius, *Saray-ı Enderun Topkapı Sarayı’nda Yaşam*, trans. Türkis Noyan, 76–77.

neighborhood, and to represent court culture outside of the palace. The women were married primarily to members of the *askeri* class (members of the ruling elite), and it was thus important that they be trained properly, considering their future positions in the outside world. A statement used in one court register hints that some harem residents were trained as meticulously as one would train one's own child (*evladiyet üzere terbiye edib*).¹⁷⁶ This approach seems to have been informed by Islamic theory.¹⁷⁷

There is no doubt that apart from the patronage relations, an emotional bond was formed among the members of the imperial court. Halberdiers of the Old Palace called each other *ocakdaş*, referring to their affiliation to the same institution.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, the common harem experiences of the female slaves of various ages and standings strengthened their attachment to each other. Lost contact with their family members obviously strengthened these ties. It is difficult to reach into the emotional bonds that developed among women in the palace. However, during their palace service, feelings of sisterhood (*ahiret kardeşliği*) developed among the residents. *Sarayî* Okumuş Ayşe Hatun bint Abdullah was the adopted daughter (*ma'nevî kız*) of Hâce Emetullah Hatun bint Abdullah bin Abdulmennan, who was herself previously the mistress of patients (*hastalar ustası*) in the Old Palace.¹⁷⁹ Likewise, a moral and sometimes emotional bond was created between master and female slaves. Hadice Sultan (1768–1822) regarded her head treasurer, Dilpezir Hanım, as her daughter.¹⁸⁰

The depiction of the harem as an always harmonious institution would be misleading, though. Exceptional situations and distressed relationships certainly existed. Several records across various time periods reflect examples of intrigue, hatred, and competition. Thievery was another fact in the imperial harem. Indeed, it is said that a fire was set in the New Palace in 1665 in order to conceal jewelry thievery in the harem.¹⁸¹

In sum, a reconstruction of the harem hierarchy and an examination of the network of relationships that developed in the harem are critical

¹⁷⁶ Evkâf-ı Hümâyün Müfettişliği, nr. 120, pp. 111, 116 (1143/1731).

¹⁷⁷ Master is recommended to train his/her female slave in a proper way (Brunschvig, "Abd," *EI*², I, 25).

¹⁷⁸ Saka, *Risale-i Teberdariye*, 196.

¹⁷⁹ Evkâf-ı Hümâyün Müfettişliği, nr. 193, p. 51a (1188/1774).

¹⁸⁰ C. SM 6268 (1212/1797); C. SM 3317 (1227/1812).

¹⁸¹ Shirley, *The history of the state of the present war*, 301.

for understanding how manumitted female palace slaves maintained their ties with the imperial court over the longer term. This will serve as a point of departure into the investigation of the lives of these women as they left the harem, which will be addressed in detail in the following chapters.

As I discuss in the next chapter, the slave's transfer from the palace through manumission did not end her relationship with the imperial court, but rather established a new type of relationship that lasted until her death. Having completed their service period in the imperial harem, female palace slaves were manumitted and transferred from the palace to begin a new life in society. The next chapter examines the process of transfer from the palace and the relationship with the imperial court following these former slaves' transfer from the palace.