

## **The Ottoman's Harem as an Institution of Female Elevation in the Power Politics**

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### **Abstract:**

*Ottoman's harem has certain political power because it is very close to sultan as his family lives there. Harem is organized like a pyramid each step has many group and peculiarities. It is possible to promote to princess-mother from concubine, whose features, education and environment acquire higher status in this promotion. This study aims to analyze the Harem and the class order as an institutional structure. Although its origins are based on much older histories, the Ottoman State has a hierarchical structure of the Harem as an important institution in a period of 623 years from its foundation to its collapse, how the status and roles of the people in this hierarchical structure are shaped, as well as the everyday life of men. In the Harem, which is a kind of education center for women such as education center and enderun, it will be tried to put forward the role of Ottoman woman, who has the chance to rise up from the concubine to the Valide Sultanate, and in this context, a historical evaluation of the subject. In the historical analysis of social structure and social change, the hierarchical structure of the Harem is revealed, how the status and roles are shaped within this structure and influenced the political system of the Ottomans for a long time.*

**Keywords:** Ottoman, Harem, Women, Power Politics, Sultan

## **Introduction**

The historians and the researchers always has the desire to learn and explore various aspects of their lives, institutions and the people, by seeing the palaces of the rulers who ruled the vast areas of the world. Especially in the case of the palaces of the Ottoman sultans who ruled over three continents for centuries, the sense of curiosity increased a little more.

In the Ottoman Empire, the Harem, in the name of 'Darus-Saade', has always been the subject of curiosity. The entrance is a place surrounded by high walls and the entrance is forbidden except for the men who have only certain duties, and when we add beautiful concubines in it, this institution has turned into a full secret. In the face of such a mysterious institution, many writers have often described this institution as a place adorned by fantasies and fantasies.

The word 'harem' constructed from Arabic h-r-m which means 'covering, hiding, disgusting, separating, securing from others,' means "protected, holy and venerable thing or place' in Arabic. In the houses, mansions and palaces, the sections, which are usually planned to face the inner courtyard, where women live comfortably without encountering foreign men are called is harem Eve. The holy places of Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and Khalil, where disrespectful behaviors are being banned, for the purpose of worship, are also called harems Say; the word also bears the meaning of 'taste'.<sup>1</sup> Harem, which is the part of the palaces and mansions allocated to the ladies in the Ottoman Empire and the counterpart of the greetings, is the most important part of the palace and the whole state protocol; because the harem is the house of the sultan. The harem is not only an Oriental community. Chinese, Indian, Byzantine, ancient Iranian and even Renaissance Italian palaces have an outward part of the family. Here, women have also lived indoors. In the Ottoman palace, however, the Harem is an institution, and from the Enderun view, this is an educational space for women.<sup>2</sup> It is an old tradition to find a special area for women in pre-Islamic period. At the back of the houses in the

ancient West, there were sections of the Greeks and Romans in their homes apart from their men, which they called tu gynaikeion ded (women). The "women's house" in which a barren woman was sent on a Sumerian tablet is probably a harem.<sup>3</sup>

In the harem part of the palace, the use of castrating servants first began with the Umayyad Caliph I Muawiya. This process led to an increase in women's influence on state administrators. The Abbasids began to feel this situation especially from the first periods. Ibn Tiktaka states that the influence of harem influence reached its peak in the period of Khalifah Mukh detailed, that the state was ruled by women and eunuchs. Some of the women in the harem were known for their intervention in state affairs, while others were well-known for their wealth.<sup>4</sup> In the Seljuks, it is known that the harem, whose wives and siblings lived in the Seljuks, had a unique organization, but no sufficient documents were available. The harem of the Seljuk sultans included their babies, their chambers, their servants and their concubines. The babes had their own divans, personalities and real estate.<sup>5</sup>

As in previous periods, women in the Seljuks were effective in the administration of the state. The establishment of the Ottoman palace from the foundation to the institution, however, has been developed during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror of Constantinople according to the tradition of the state structure. The upbringing from the lowest level concubine to the last order (except for the fact that it is a faulty and validated sultanate) is in many respects similar to the promotion system in Enderun. In this sense, Enderun sultan, the court and the state to run the service of men, Harem has been an institution that provides training for women.<sup>6</sup> Harem became a kind of school and provided a multidisciplinary education within the framework of the principles of knowledge, good manners, manners, proper speech and good work.<sup>7</sup> In this respect, the structure of the harem is like a pyramid. Each layer has its own qualities and the ability to move from one layer to another depends on personal characteristics, education and environment.

### **Institutions of the Imperial Palace:**

The Imperial palace of the Ottomans provided a clear model of administration to other administrative body of the empire, especially for the princes of royal family who sent out as governor in the Anatolian provinces to learn the tactics of good governance.<sup>8</sup> The imperial palace system was divided structurally and symbolically between the segregated areas, the inner section (*harem*) and the outer sections (*birun*) in which included the first and second courts as well.<sup>9</sup> Private quarter of Ottoman sultan was Imperial Harem that is consisted of the residence of his wives, concubines, favourites as well as the imperial descendants.

The Royal harem at the Topkapi palace was dynamic. The Topkapi palace was divided into three sections and third innermost courtyard of palace specified for the imperial harem. The harem of Ottomans remained simple in structure as long as the Ottomans maintained their simple tribal institutions but it became more complex when it moved to the Topkapi palace (Yeni Saray or New Palace) in the early sixteenth century.<sup>10</sup> A woman governed this little world with staunch precision and accuracy. The Imperial Harem of the Topkapi palace was the biggest of its time with 300 to 400 rooms and comprising more than 800 women.<sup>11</sup> The harem itself was very organized because of disciplinary and administrative officers, all of them overseen by the Valide Sultan. In the palace administrative system, every member performed specific duties and had to comply with strict rules and regulations of it.<sup>12</sup> In the harem system, mother of reigning Ottoman Sultan was at the highest position while others divided into the members of the royal family (offspring, under-age boys and girls, royal consorts, unmarried and widowed princess) and the harem administrators and servants. Some of the harem women would never actually see the Sultan and instead became servants that were necessary to keep the harem functioning. There has been explained a formal administrative and institutional structure of the imperial Ottoman harem where the women especially mother of the Sultan enjoyed the luxurious and esteemed life as the supreme authority.

### **Valide Sultan as Sovereign in the Harem:**

In the Ottoman Empire *Valide Sultan* possessed a top position in harem hierarchy. As the Valide Sultan she enjoyed the highest status and power in the Ottoman harem and most devoted ally of all the members in his palace. During sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman women, especially Valide Sultan left deep rooted impact on the political life of the Empire. She was concerned with the Sultan's relations with his wives, children and others. She was responsible to maintain all system of the inner portion of the palace, but had personal servants, who followed her instructions and remained loyal to her.

- Treasurer
- The personal Secretary (Kira)
- The seal bearer
- The mistress of robes
- The water pourer
- The coffee maker
- Mistress of sherberts and miscellaneous work etc.

Sultan gave protection and honor to his mother and had general authority over all other females of harem. Under her supervision, royal harem's system controlled and handled by various officials and the servants. High ranking administrators including women received prestige and stipends. They managed numerous chores such as training of those girls who had been chosen for marriage to pasha or viziers or to provide services to Sultan or Valida-e-Sultan of Ottoman Empire. In short, the girls and women of the harem trained for services to the dynasty.

In the harem, after valide Sultan, the girl who was mother of the Sultan's first son had great importance. However, mothers of other sons considered in second category of the importance but mothers of daughters did not enjoy much consideration of the Sultan because major task of the royal women was to produce male heirs in order to ensure the continuation of the Ottoman dynasty. Each of these favoured ladies had her own suite of apartments, her business staff under a woman known as

her steward or housekeeper (Kiaya), and her group of personal and domestic servants. Yet, the Kiaya of the queen mother enjoyed great importance.<sup>13</sup> The group of slave girls who were the Sultan's personal and domestic servants also kept under the supervision of Kiaya and her assistants.

The Ottomans exclusively relied on the concubines rather than the wives so the ratio of huge strength of wives in harem was low. There were several advantages of this concubine system and one of them was the prevention from the danger of remaining without male heir as often happened with the European royal families.

Husband and wives were bound to each other through Islamic constitution. This would have been an intolerable restriction on the Sultan's absolute authority. The powerful concubines gained their power not through legal guarantee but by their ability to play political games. Even an ambitious girl's desired goal was to give birth to Sultan's son.<sup>14</sup> So, this type of act raised her status as compare to other concubines, it also provided opportunities to become future valide Sultan of the Ottoman dynasty. Within the harem, she was able to play her son's concubines and therefore created politically strategic alliances with royal damads or sons in law.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the harem was a political arena necessarily generated political factions and dissensions within the women's apartments. With the passage of time, changing significance of female roles affected the hierarchy of power and thus caused conflict between the royal women as the role of mother became more important than that of the Sultan's wife and his favorites.<sup>16</sup> There was a fierce political struggle to secure Ottoman Empire throne for one's male offspring by the side of mother and sons lived within the limits of harem that was included in palace.<sup>17</sup> People not only from inside of palace but also from outside gathered and supported their candidate.

The Sultan's mother not only indulged in the empire politics but also developed a social relation with the Ottoman subjects. To deal with the public affairs and to contact with the officials of the state, she was provided a male intermediary from the

palace who worked as the linkage between inner and outer palace. She also arranged the princess' marriages in order to establish political and diplomatic ties with the officials of the state.

Harem also served the purpose of training of slaves, concubines and wives for Sultan or honorable people. Actually, the harem had a distinct position in the history of the Ottomans. The significance of the harem and its officials much increased when it shifted from the Old palace to the new palace (Topkapi or Seraglio palace) and the Sultan began to spend his much time in the society of the harem. Yet, deep rooted influence of harem royal women was increased that had given them a proper place in history.

Emeritz argued that the whole concept of the seclusion of women to their own space resulted in the development of a private society. The Ottoman imperial women established a community in the harem and operated in their own capacity. The organization of the harem hierarchy concerning women mirrored that of the eunuchs at Topkapi Palace.<sup>18</sup> During 16th and 17th centuries, the imperial harem became the centre of power of the empire because favourites and mothers of the Sultan influenced many of his political and administrative decisions, so the period is often referred the '*Kadinlar Sultanati*', or the reign of women.<sup>19</sup> It was the reign when the involvement of the Valide Sultan and the Sultan's favourites in state politics diminished the Sultan's power and position. With the passage of time, the institutional power of the Valide Sultan solidified because of her superior status, influence, authorities and the relation with the reigning Ottoman Sultan.

### **Concubines and Favourites in the Harem:**

It seemed that in the Ottoman harem, female slaves were used primarily as servants to the Ottoman family but some of these got the status of the concubines, favourites and wives as well. Actually, on the lowest step of the royal women ranks pyramid, there were the virgins who followed by the concubines (one

night stands), by the ikbals (favourites of the sultan) and lastly by the kadins on top (wives of the sultan, although he was not allowed to actually marry them but some Ottoman Sultans got marriage with their Ikbals). The virgins served as general servants in the harem but some of these were not seen to be beautiful enough to be presented to the Sultan. Yet, some were seen as potential concubines and were then trained to entertain the Sultan.

According to historical evidences, in the Ottoman imperial harem, the role of the favourites was much greater and influential as they played a major role in the royal reproduction because the Ottomans gave greater importance to it as a dynastic policy of reproduction. In the concubinage system, there were select only slave women at the top of the palace training system, who surpassed in intelligence, beauty, character and accomplishments. Often, these women and all others who gifted from other royal family members and highly placed officials were trained by the valide Sultan.<sup>20</sup> Other slave women in the imperial harem could desire to rise in the administrative ranks to a permanent career within the harem institution and hoped to be manumitted and married to a husband in the Ottoman military or administrative elite, who had their own harem according to their status.

- **Kadin or kadinefendis (wives)**

The most important women of the harem after valide Sultan were the kadins or kadinefendis. They were four in numbers and each had born a male child for the Sultan. They were highly respected in the harem. They had the facilities of separate apartments, slaves, eunuchs; property, dresses, jewellery, and salary, according to their new position.<sup>21</sup> However, they always involved in the harem activities and struggle to become the prominent in the eyes of Sultan. All the kadins (wives) wished to rule on the whole empire as a valide Sultan in future through their sons who may become heir after death of the reigning Sultan.



- **Ikbal (favourite of the Sultan) & Haseki:**

The Ottoman Sultan had his favourites called the Ikbal, who occasionally honoured by calling in the private chamber. If any ikbal gave birth to the child she would be regarded by giving the title of haseki. If a lady gave birth to the baby boy and also continued to be in favour of the Sultan, she would remain coveted kadin but could not become legal wife of Sultan. They were highly respected in a proportion to the honour of their new position by giving an apartment, jewels, dresses and allowances. Moreover, a number of slaves especially appointed for the services of a kadin.

- **Gozde**

She was also the member of the harem, who succeeded in catching the eye of the sultan and may be on her way to becoming an Ikbal and eventually even a kadin. When the Sultan gives an indication that he likes the 'gozde' a room and some slaves given her where she waited for the summoned of the Sultan to the royal bedchamber.<sup>22</sup> If, the sultan did not pay any attention to her, she was returned her formal status as a member of the harem and served like other servants of the palace.

### **Administrative Staff of the Ottoman Harem:**

There was a proper system of administration in the harem where various institutions and officials served under the control of valide Sultan. Major staff of the royal harem was consisted on the following major servants who performed their duties just like independent institutions and collectively served the royal women in the Ottoman harem.

- **Kethuda or Kahya**

He was the chief of the slaves or housekeepers in the royal harem. He was responsible to handle all the matters of these servants and issued their pays as well.

- **Khaznedar Usta (Chief Treasure)**  
He dealt with all financial matters of the harem and kept record of all expenditures in the treasury register.
- **Kalfa (Chief Mistress of servants)**  
In the harem kalfa was the first secretary of the Valide Sultan. There were more than hundred ladies who carried the title of Kalfa but each kalfa had a number of 'halayiks' (servants) under the age of twelve to twenty and over, who constituted the lower rank in the hierarchy of the harem. Gradually, these servants could reach at the status of kalfa because of their expertise and good services. The kalfa was selected from those people who had expertise in their work. The chief kalfa was responsible to train six halayiks or lesser secretaries.
- **Chief mistress of Robes**  
The chief mistress of the robes performed the duties of the selection and preparation of the clothes for the royal women. She also had the subordinates who helped her to prepare and select cloths for other women (servants) of the harem. In other words it can say that she was the dress designer, selected and prepared the dresses for them according to the occasions.
- **The keeper of Baths**  
Who managed the cleanliness of baths (hamams) and arranged hot and cold water as per demand for the people of imperial harem.
- **The keeper of the jewels**  
The women appointed on said post were responsible to select the jewelry and ornaments for the royal women as per demand during ceremonies and other occasions. Furthermore, they were also bound to manage safety system for the security of precious jewelry and ornaments.

- **The Quran teachers**  
They were taught Quran to the female and children of the harem as well as recite the Holy Quran during religious ceremonies in the palace.
- **Cariye**  
The cariye were the women servants of the Ottoman harem who worked to serve food in the harem. They were never chosen from the subjects of the Sultan. They were non-Turkish and non-Muslim girls and have been received as gifts, purchases or booties. All the new cariyes came in the palace got training for their duties. They learned Turkish language and the teachings of the Muslim religion. The manners of presenting food to the Sultan, of preparing coffee, of presenting towels etc. were taught to the cariye. The talented cariyes were also taught the dance, singing and use of various musical instruments. After successful completion of their training period, they were eligible to be introduced into the imperial harem where they went with the hope to be noticed and admired by the reigning Sultan.
- **Gedikli**  
The gedikli were those women who were attended to the personal needs of the Sultan such as bathing and dressing etc. in the bath houses (royal hamams).
- **The Halayiks (servants) and scribes:**  
They were responsible to deal with various duties of the harem. African women usually worked as cooks and did menial tasks while white female slaves performed more specialized tasks like making and serving coffee. They were also work to arrange the dinner and also acted as the nursemaids. Ottoman Empire slavery system was not static such as the white women were obliged to serve as slaves for nine years but seven years for black women as their anatomy was not suited for cold environment.<sup>23</sup> When a woman was freed from slavery, she would receive a valid certificate of emancipation.

After the completion of her slavery period, she was free to go anywhere else as she could remain for the rest of her life with her former master's family.

### **The Eunuchs under Ottomans:**

The eunuchs were slaves of the Ottomans but considered the important pillars of the harem administration. After the grand vizier, the chief eunuch of the harem had a considerable status and assisted the Valide Sultan. Most of the slave eunuchs were originally orthodox Christians, who performed the duties of provincial governors and the military commanders but the numbers of eunuchs worked in the harem. According to the evidences, in the mid of sixteenth century, almost one thousand eunuchs were serving in the new palace (Topkapi). After the establishment of new palace, the white eunuchs from the Balkans, Hungary and Caucasus were guarded the threshold separating the palace's second court, where soldiers, ambassadors and other outside visitors might gather. From the third court, forbidden to all but the Sultan's family and personal servants, just pass this threshold stood the sultan's audience chamber. This male harem formed a counterpart to the female harem' inhabited by the Sultan's mother, sisters, wives and concubines, which until the reign of Suleyman I was located in the old palace, which established by the Sultan Mehmed (the conqueror of Istanbul) on the site of Theodosius. Initially, the harem eunuchs were a mixed group of black and white eunuchs, but after a huge supply of African slaves, from Abyssinia, Cairo and Sudan etc. just black eunuchs hold the responsibility of the royal harem and white eunuchs worked for men. In the reigning period of Murad III (1574-1595), when the population of harem too increased, more than one thousand eunuchs were appointed to work under the supervision of the chief eunuch whose official title was '*guardian of the Abode of felicity*' (Imperial harem).<sup>24</sup> The eunuchs were responsible for guarding the harem after castrated at an early age. There were two major groups of eunuchs who worked in the harem as white and black eunuchs.

### **The White Eunuchs of Ottomans:**

They were imported from the Caucasus and other European regions. The chief of white eunuchs called '*Kapi agasi or kapi agha*' was the head of inner services and personal confidant of the Sultan. He was also responsible for the management of palace school and infirmary. He was the chief gate keeper and head master of ceremonies of the palace. Under him there were other white eunuchs who called:

- **Haznedar Bashi (Treasurer):**  
In order to manage it he takes twenty men under him as the Superintendent of outer treasury. This person deposited robes of honor, archives of finance, golden clothes and satin purses used by the ministry to dispatch orders by the ministers.<sup>25</sup>
- **Kilerji Bashi**  
He cared for the food and the game of the Sultan, as well as managed the kitchen services and system of the palace. He supervised the bakers, scullions, cooks, confectioners, tasters and musicians, each to the number of from fifty to one hundred.<sup>26</sup> With these were allied the companies of tailors, shoemakers, furriers and goldsmiths, employed exclusively in the palace services.
- **The Agha of Saray**  
He was the head of the palace during the Sultan's absence and also assistant to the chief white eunuch as director of the palace school.
- **Has oda Bashi**  
He was the attendant to the Sultan's personal wants and also responsible for the precious objects in the royal apartments.<sup>27</sup>

### **Kizlar Agha (Chief Black Eunuch):**

Kizlar Agha (*kislar Agasi*) was the chief black eunuch who served the royal harem till his death and supervised all the girls in the Ottoman harem. Typically, the chief harem eunuch came

into conflict with a new Sultan, new grand vizier, the Sultan's mother, one of the Sultan's concubines and an official in the support of specific royal person. As a result, he was peacefully deposed from his office and sent to other areas of the empire.<sup>28</sup> By the late sixteenth century, this sort of dismissal was a routine part of the political careers of a wide range of Ottoman officials. The deposed chief eunuch and officials were exiled from the capital of the Ottomans because of suspected re-indulgence in the politics of the empire. In fact, *kizlar agha* was one of the influential persons of the empire and considered the prime minister of the valide Sultan. The *kizlar agha* acted as the liaison officer among valide sultan, the girls, outer world and Sultan.<sup>29</sup> He was appointed as commander of the 'baltacilar' with the rank of pasha. He was honoured to work for the intimate work of Ottoman Sultan and the high ranking vizier. He had permission to keep girls and eunuchs as slaves and could keep three hundred horses for personal use. In addition, he also worked as the director of the princes' school and in consultation with the Valide Sultan, appointed people to various posts in the palace and even outside. Some officials and black eunuchs were under him as:

- **Cadir-mehter Bashi**

Corps of eight hundred constituently divided into four section two hundred each were under his command. Forty chief among them called as *Vezendars* who were under command of *Veznedar-bashi* weight the money received by the Sultan. Inspector of the Public Treasury, which was situated in the First Court. The corps also furnished executioners, who awaited orders near the *Ortakapi*.

**Virile functionaries of the royal harem:**

In the virile functionaries of the Ottomans were included followings that performed important duties for the imperial women and the Sultan as well.

**Haznedar Bashi (Chief Treasurer):**

He had the charge of the Treasury and those who made the second chamber of the pages, experts and educated pages of

Sultan these corps of pages attached to the 'Hazine Oda' or Chamber of the harem treasury. The responsibility to keep into account all the inner services payments and Royal treasure lied on him.

#### **The Kilerji-bashi:**

He oversaw all those chefs (cooking experts) who prepared food for the Ottoman Sultan and his harem. He also controlled the whole system and expenditures of the kitchen and its workers.<sup>30</sup> It is argued by the historians that for all the members of the Topkapi palace was specified separate portions of the kitchens as:

- The Sultan
- The Valide Sultan
- The Sultanas or the kadins (wives)
- The Kapi Agha
- Divan's Member
- The Pages of Sultan (servants)
- Topkapi palace's Humble Members
- Other slave women
- The kitchen staff and others<sup>31</sup>

It seemed that the food system was prepared according to the status of the people. The royal Ottomans were enjoyed variations in the salty and sweet dishes.

#### **Bezirgan Bashi (Laundryman):**

He was also called the purveyor, responsible to handle the laundry matters like fabrics, linens, muslins, and same type of things demanded in the royal harem.<sup>32</sup>

#### **The Baltacilar:**

They ranked same as the gardeners and the gate keepers, but were specially selected for their skills and physical strength. They were utilized as wood cutters, food porters and cleaning men for the Ottoman harem. They performed the duties as bodyguards when some members of the harem were moving from one quarter to another. In such instances they carried their balta (halberds) from which they took their name.

**Zulflu Baltaciar (halberdiers with tresses):**

They were the servants who specially acted as the porters and guards for the Ottoman harem. Corps of servants responsible for outside of palace services was divided into two categories. One of them served the selamilk and the second one was confined to harem. Generally they all were responsible for manual works as wood cutting and general portage.<sup>33</sup> They had three to five aspers but were also helped with the cloths and other needs of life. Furthermore, the Sakkas also included in this category carried water on horseback in leather sacks and received three to five aspers each as the salery.<sup>34</sup> Their quarters were situated just outside and next to the carriage gate (araba kاپisi), entrance of the harem.

**Bash Mussahib:**

He acted as liaison officer between the Sultan and the Kizlar Agha (black eunuch). He had eight to ten officers under him, called Mussahibs who bounded for full day services to carry orders from the Sultan to the royal women of the harem.<sup>35</sup> The eunuchs were also entrusted with taking and receiving messages between the Sultan and the royal women (Sultanas), transacting business, visited the men's apartments, carried notes to the Kapi Agha for him to deliver to the Sultan, and many other similar duties. Yet, they didn't allow to leave the Topkapi palace without special permission from the royal woman (valide sultan), even though not tried to do something by one of the lesser wives.<sup>36</sup>

**Piskeshji Bashi:**

He looked after all gifts presented to the Sultan and the royal women by his own subjects and by the ambassadors on behalf of the governments. Other officers were the *Oda Lala*, (Master of the Chamber), the *Bash-Kapi-Oghlariy* or (Chief Gatekeeper of the Apartments) and the *Yailak-Bash-Kapi-Oghlan* including his assistants.



### **Medical staff of the harem:**

In the case of illness, the harem had its own infirmary, head nurse (a kalfa), midwives and other expert female servants. They had the medical instruments as well but a doctor should be needed. In emergency, the doctor could enter in the harem between two rows of black eunuchs and the sick lady would be treated by her extended hand.<sup>37</sup>

The Ottomans had dual, the harem and the empire, system of administration. The institutions of both departments were working parallel of each other under the supervision of two powers, the Sultan and Valide Sultan. It was the flexible system of administration which provided an opportunity to the Ottoman women to be aware about the management and the politics of the empire. As a result, the powerful women for a long time highly influenced the political system and institutions of the Ottomans.

### **Conclusion:**

The harem or inner part of the palace (royal household), where Sultan's mother, his sisters, concubines, their children, slave girls and other harem administrative staff lived, was a learning and training institution for them, where the valide Sultan and sultan's favourites (concubines) involved in the power assertion activities. However, the Valide sultan dominated and managed the system of inner portion of the palace. She developed new forces and relations, which pressed toward the center of the political stage, could only act and build power through available political system. In the end, I have to stress the influence that women had on the political decision making within the Ottoman Imperial Harem. The queen mothers in particular had extensive power and influence within Islamic Empire. The Imperial Harem played an influential role in determining the Empire's political actions and the most powerful member of its hierarchy was the Valide Sultan. The sixteenth century after the political and administrative history of the Ottoman harem life and its organization is generally accepted as the deterioration and degeneration occurred. This situation, starting from Ahmed I, almost all seventeenth

century, the age of the saints of the board as a child to be established and cannot dominate the management for a long time. After the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire began to experience a pause in every field, and in this case one of the most important factors in the court has been the harem organization.

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