



**ISTANBUL MEDENIYET UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL OTTOMAN STUDIES

**The Daughters of Ottoman Sultans in the Context of Dynastic  
Marriages (1450-1650)**

Master's Thesis

Sevva Deniz Bulut

August 2024



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Advisor  
**Assoc. Prof. M. Zahit Atçıl**

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## **THESIS JURY APPROVAL**

This M. A. thesis titled "The Ottoman Dynastic Marriage Policies and Marriages of Ottoman Ottoman Princesses (1450-1650)" written by Sevva Deniz Bulut at the Department of International Ottoman Studies was accepted by our jury.

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## **STATEMENTS**

### **Style and Reference Manual Statement**

Having reviewed this thesis written under my supervision, I confirm that it has been written in accordance with Chicago Manual of Style and used its footnote reference format consistently throughout the entire text.

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### **Declaration of Originality**

I hereby declare that all information in this dissertation has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conducts, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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## GENİŞ ÖZET

### Hanedan Evlilikleri Bağlamında Osmanlı Sultanlarının Kızları (1450-1650)

Bulut, Sevva Deniz

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Uluslararası Osmanlı Çalışmaları Anabilim Dalı

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Bu tezin temel ve en önemli amacı, on beşinci yüzyılın ortası ile on yedinci yüzyılın ortası arasında yaşamış Osmanlı padişahlarının kızlarının evliliklerini incelemektir. II. Mehmed ile Sultan İbrahim arasındaki Osmanlı sultanlarının kızlarının evlilikleri Osmanlı sultanlarının evlilikleri bağlamında incelenmektedir. Osmanlı prenseslerinin evlilikleri için benimsenmiş politika veya politikaların olup olmadığı tartışılmaktadır. Ayrıca; bu tez Osmanlı prenseslerinin hayatlarını, onlar hakkında önemli bir bilgi kaynağı olan evliliklerini inceleyerek aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. On beşinci yüzyıl ortası itibariyle benimsenmiş olan ve uzun süre uygulanan evlilik stratejisinin, Osmanlı padişahlarının kızlarının köle kökenli devlet adamları ile evlendirilmeleri, incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Elde edilen tüm bilgiler ışığında, Osmanlı sultanlarının kızlarına yönelik tek ve yeknesak bir evlilik politikası olmadığı, aksine birden fazla evlilik politikası olduğu görülmüştür. Yüzyıllar boyunca meydana gelen değişikliklere rağmen Osmanlı hanedanının imparatorluk ailesinin kadın üyelerinin evliliklerine ilkeli bir şekilde yaklaştığını açıkça görülür. On beşinci yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren görülen tekrar eden bir evlilik şekli vardı; sultanların kızlarının Osmanlı bürokrasisinin omurgasını oluşturan köle kökenli devlet adamlarıyla evlendirilmeleri.

Bu çalışmanın ilk bölümünde Osmanlı sultanlarının hayatlarına yönelik bir inceleme vardır. Osmanlı sultan kızı olmanın ne anlama geldiği ve onların hayatlarının nasıl olduğu hakkında bilgi verilmektedir. Sultan kızlarının mimari patronaj yolu ile inşa ettirdikleri yapılar ve kurdukları vakıflar ile görünür oldukları görülmektedir. Sultanların kız çocukları başkentin önemli yerlerinde mimari patronaj ile inşa ettirdikleri yapılarla görünürlük kazanmışlardır. Osmanlı prenseslerinin bu yollar ile

sonraki zamanlara kalıcı bir iz bırakmaları söz konusu olmuştur. Sultan kızlarının özellikle on altıncı yüzyıl ile imparatorluk gücünün paylaşımına dahil olması ve siyasette etkin rol sahibi olma durumları öne çıkan örnekler çerçevesinde tartışılmıştır.

Tezin ikinci bölümünde, I. Osman'dan Sultan İbrahim'e kadar Osmanlı padişahlarının evlilikleri incelenmektedir çünkü Sultan İbrahim, Sultan Abdülmecid'e kadar evlenmeyi, yani yasal ilişki yolunu tercih eden son padişaktır. Osmanlı hanedanının varlığı hükmeden tek hanedan olması sebebiyle Osmanlı sultanlarının eş tercihleri ve ilişki biçimleri incelenmeye değerdir. Osmanlı sultanlarının eş ve ilişki tercihlerinin zaman içerisinde hanedanın dönüşümü sonucunda değişime uğramıştır. Bazı Osmanlı sultanları süregelen ilişki biçimlerini ve eş tercihlerinin tamamen aksini tercih etmiştir. Öte yandan; Osmanlı sultanlarının ve şehzadelerinin ilişki ve eş tercihlerine yönelik uzun süre devam eden bir politika veya politikalar olmadığını iddia etmek doğrudur. Hanedanın erkek üyelerinin ilişki biçimlerine yönelik ilkeli bir yaklaşım yoktur. Osmanlı sultanlarının ilişki tercihlerinin arkasında pragmatik yaklaşım olduğunu varsaymak doğrudur, ancak ortaya çıkan değişiklikler için tarihlendirme açısından kesin şeyler söylemek zordur. Hanedanlar arası evliliklerin yan ısıra cariyeler ile ilişki içinde olmaları durumu için birinin ne zaman terkedildiğinin ve ötekinin ne zaman ön plana çıktığının zaman açısından açıklanması zordur; bu konuda kesin şeyler söylemek mümkün değildir.

Tezin üçüncü bölümü tezin ana konusuna odaklanır ve Osmanlı padişahlarının kızlarının evliliklerini inceler. Bu bölümde on beşinci yüzyıl ortası ile on yedinci yüzyıl ortasını içeren zaman diliminde Osmanlı prenseslerinin nasıl evlendikleri, bu dönemde tekrar eden bir evlilik şeklinin; örüntüsünün olup olmadığı anlaşılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Osmanlı sultanları için görülen hanedanlar arası evlilikler on beşinci yüzyıl ortası öncesi dönemde sultan kızları için benimsenmiştir. On beşinci yüzyılın ortalarına kadar komşu hanedanlarla yapılan, Osmanlı sultanlarının kızları için Anadolu beylikleriyle, hanedanlar arası evlilikler her iki tarafın da çıkarlarına hizmet eden bir evlilik yoluydu. Açıkça görülüyor ki; hanedanlar arası evlilikler barışı sağlama ve ittifak kurma aracı olarak kullanıldı. Bu evlilik politikasının o dönemin koşullarının normal bir sonucu olarak görülebilir.

II. Mehmed' in saltanatı, Osmanlı padişahlarının kızlarına yönelik süregelen evlilik politikasında bir deęişiklik olarak görünmektedir. Anadolu beylikleri olan komşu Müslüman hanedanlarla hanedanlar arası evlilikler düzenlemekten, Osmanlı prenseslerini kul devlet adamları ile evlendirmek yönünde bir dönüşüm vardı. Osmanlı prenseslerinin köle kökenli devlet adamlarıyla evlendirilmesi yolu veya evlilik tipi ilk kez II. Murad'ın kızları için yapılmış gibi görünmektedir. Öte yandan; bir evlilik politikası benimsemek anlamına gelmemektedir. II. Bayezid'in kızlarının çoęu devlet adamlarıyla evlenmiş ve bu evlilik yolu II. Bayezid'in kızları için tek evlilik yolu olarak görünmektedir. Yeni yönetici elit, II. Mehmed'in tercihiyle saltanat döneminde var olmuştur ve Osmanlı prenseslerinin kızları için uygun eş adayları olmuşturlardır. Osmanlı hanedanının olası müdahalelerden kaçınmak için komşu hanedanlarla veya Türk elitleriyle hanedanlar arası evliliklerden uzak durmayı tercih ettięi anlaşılmaktadır. Osmanlı hanedanının deęişen statüsü ve gücü, komşu hanedanlarla veya yerel eşraf ile yapılan evliliklerin sona ermesine yol açmıştır. Osmanlı sultanları ve şehzadeleri için hanedanlar arası evliliklerin sonu, Osmanlı sultanlarının kızları için hanedanlar arası evliliklerin son bulması ile paralellik göstermektedir. İki grup için de bu tür evliliğin, bu evlilik politikasının, son bulmasının sebepleri benzerdir. Bu evlilik şekli uzun sürdü ve bu da Osmanlı prenseslerinin evlenmesi için ilkeler ve politikalar benimsendiğini kanıtlıyor. Yüzyıllar boyunca Osmanlı hanedanının deęişen statüsünün evlilik veya ilişki yollarında deęişikliklere yol açtığı görülüyor. Hem Osmanlı padişahları ve oęulları hem de kızları için hanedanlar arası evlilikler yoluyla ittifaklar kurma gereklilięi ve ihtiyacı, Osmanlı hanedanının artan gücü ve statüsü nedeniyle ortadan kalktı. Bununla beraber hanedanlar arası evlilikler terk edildi. Köle kökenli devlet adamları, Babürler, Memlükler veya Safeviler gibi dięer Müslüman hanedanların varlıkları göz önüne alındığında Osmanlı sultanlarını kızlarına eşdeęer olabilecek tek grup olmasa da, Osmanlı hanedanı Osmanlı prenseslerinin kocaları olarak kul devlet adamlarını seçmiştir. Osmanlı sultanlarının kızları için benimsenen bu evlilik politikasının benimsenmesinin arkasındaki temel neden, Osmanlı sultanlarının dięer hanedanların siyasi işlere karışmasını ve müdahale etmesini önlemeye çalışmasıdır.

Bu evlilik politikası her iki tarafının da hangi yüzyılda olursa olsun kendi çıkarlarını gözettięi iddia edilebilir. Kul devlet adamları hanedana sadık oldukları için

uygun damatlar olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Osmanlı hanedanı devlet adamlarının sadakatini kullanmıştır. Osmanlı padişahları, beğendikleri ve başarılı olabileceklerini düşündükleri, gelecek vaat eden devlet adamlarını evlilik yoluyla kendilerine yakınlaştırmışlardır. Devlet adamlarının devletin işleyişini ve geleneklerini bilen, imparatorluk ve padişah için çalışan uygun hizmetkarlar olması damat olarak seçilmelerinde rol oynamış gibi görünmektedir. Köle kökenli devlet adamları evlilikler yoluyla Osmanlı sultanlarına ve Osmanlı hanedanına bağlı hale geldiler. Kul devlet adamları Osmanlı prenseslerinin kocaları olarak seçildikten sonra daha yüksek rütbelere terfi ettiler. Osmanlı sultanlarının genel eğilimi damat olarak seçilen köle kökenli devlet adamlarına vezirlik vermektir. Damatları yüksek rütbeli kişiler arasından seçmek daha mı yaygındı yoksa evliliklerden sonra daha yüksek rütbelere ulaşmak daha mı yaygındı? Daha spesifik olarak, sadrazamların damat olarak seçilmesi daha mı yaygındı yoksa damatların sadrazam olması daha mı yaygındı? Devlet adamlarının damat seçildikten sonra kariyer yolları nelerdi? Damat olduktan sonra sadrazamlığa terfi etmek gibi bir kariyer yolu var mıydı? Bu temel sorular damat olmanın avantajlarını ve damatların evlilikten sonraki kariyerlerini anlamak içindir. Kısacası; damat olarak sadrazamların seçilmesinin değil de sadrazamların damatlar arasından seçilmesinin yaygın olduğu anlaşılıyor. I. Süleyman döneminde yaygınlaşan pratik de bu durum için örnek teşkil etmektedir.

Damat devlet adamları görevlerini azami dikkatle, görevden alınma ve idam korkusuyla yerine getirirken, durumları diğer devlet adamlarından daha hassastı. Hanedan ile ailevi ilişki kurulduğu için diğer devlet adamlarından daha dikkatli olmak zorundaydılar. Osmanlı hanedanı üyeleriyle yakın ilişkiler, damat olan devlet adamlarını daha hassas bir duruma sokuyordu. Bir Osmanlı sultan kızının eşi ile arasındaki sorunların Osmanlı sultanlarına yansıma olasılığı vardı, hatta bu çok yüksek bir olasılıktı. Evliliklerindeki sorunlar veya boşanmaları, bazı durumlarda damat devlet adamlarının görevden alınmasına yol açabilirdi, ve bunun örnekleri vardı. Damat olan devlet adamlarının görevden alınması, onların Osmanlı sultanlarının kızları ile aralarındaki ilişkiyi ve damatlar ile Osmanlı sultanları arasındaki ilişkiyi zedeledi. Osmanlı sultanlarının kızları eşleri için babaları ya da erkek kardeşleri olan sultanlardan ricacı oldular, isteklerde bulundular.

Osmanlı prenseslerinin eşleri olan devlet adamlarının Osmanlı sultanları ile yakın olduğu olduğu örnekler vardır. Benzer şekilde, Osmanlı padişahlarının damatlarının gözde cariyelerin, hasekiler, veya valide sultanlar ile yakın ilişkiler ve kurduğu ve işbirliği içerisinde olduğunun örnekleri olduğu da görülür. Bazı Osmanlı prensesleri kocaları veya anneleri sayesinde etkili olma şansına sahip oldular. Güçleri, prestijleri ve konumları nedeniyle eşleri sayesinde ön planda olma şansına sahip olabiliyorlardı. Görünür ve kalıcı olma şansını mimari alandaki hamiliklikleri ve kurdukları vakıflar aracılığı ile elde ettiler. On altıncı yüzyıl ortası ile Osmanlı sultanlarının kızlarının mimari hamiliğe katılımı arttı ve ölçeği büyüdü. Osmanlı yönetici sınıfının üyeleri olan köle kökenli devlet adamlarıyla evlenme politikası Osmanlı padişahlarının kızları için iç veya dış siyasete dahil olma, daha güçlü olma ve daha fazla servete sahip olma şansı yaratabildi. Bu tezin kapsamı olan zaman diliminde yaşamış ve bu şartlara sahip olan, en ön planda ve güçlü olan Osmanlı prensesi Mihrimah Sultan'dı.

Öyle görülüyor ki; Osmanlı prenseslerinin evlenme yaş ortalamasının 17-18 olduğunu iddia etmek doğrudur. I. Ahmed saltanatı yani on yedinci yüzyıl ile sultan kızlarının evlilik veya nişanlanma yaşları fark edilebilir bir şekilde düştü. Sultan kızlarının devlet adamları ile evlendirilmesi politikasına yeni bir şey eklendi. Osmanlı sultanları kızlarını küçük yaşlarda *suri* yani göstermelik olarak evlendirdiler veya namzet gösterdiler. Bu durumun arkasında da pragmatik bir yaklaşımın olduğu açıkça görülmektedir. Osmanlı sultanlarının kızlarının çok küçük yaşlarda evlendirilmesi veya nişanlandırılması daha önceki dönemlerde yaşayan Osmanlı prenseslerine nazaran birden fazla kez evlenmeye daha meyilli oldular. Osmanlı sultanlarının kızlarının evlilik biçimlerine I. Osman ve Sultan İbrahim arasındaki Osmanlı sultanlarının eş ve ilişki tercihleri bağlamında bakıldığında, ikisi karşılaştırıldığında, uzun vadeli politikalar benimsenerek Osmanlı sultanlarının kızlarının evliliklerine karşı daha ilkeli bir tutum sergilendiği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Sonuç olarak; Osmanlı padişahlarının ilişki ve eş tercihleri için bir politika ve ilkeli tutum yoktur. Öte yandan; Osmanlı sultanlarının evliliklerine karşı ilkeli bir yaklaşım vardı. Erken dönemlerde ortaya çıkan çeşitli evlilik biçimlerinin ve on beşinci yüzyılın ortalarında baskın model haline gelen evlilik biçiminin karşılaştırmalı analizi,

esneklięe izin vermeyen daha katı kurallarla karakterize edilen evlilik politikalarının varlığını ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Evlilik Politikaları, Osmanlı Sultanlarının Kızları, Hanedanın Damatları, Kul Devlet Adamları, Düęün Törenleri

## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Daughters of Ottoman Sultans in the Context of Dynastic Marriages (1450-1650)**

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The main and most important aim of this thesis is to examine the marriages of the daughters of the Ottoman sultans, who lived between the mid-fifteenth century and the mid-seventeenth century. It is aimed to discuss the marriage ways and patterns of the Ottoman princesses in the context of the relationship ways of male members of the imperial family; sultans, and princes. This thesis aims to elucidate the lives of the Ottoman princesses by examining their marriages, which represent a significant source of information about them.

It is seen that the Ottoman princesses were involved in sharing imperial power and involved in politics, especially within the sixteenth century. The visibility of the Ottoman princesses existed through architectural patronage and the pious foundations. The daughters of the sultans had a chance to be visible through the complexes, buildings, and other structures in important places of the capital, and other cities, through the architectural patronage. The marriages of these individuals exerted a significant influence on their respective spheres of influence and involvement in politics. Despite operating independently of their marriages, their marriages also triggered this more.

There is an also examination on the consort and relationship preferences of the Ottoman sultans. The inter-dynastic marriages with neighboring Muslim and Christian dynasties, which were arranged as a result of mutual interests, were replaced by different way of relationship. Ottoman sultans became highly tended to prefer concubines as their consorts within the mid-fifteenth century. By this period, the Ottoman sultans had ceased to adhere to the established legal way of relationship, marriage. They demonstrated a preference for concubines over legal wives. This change, the abandonment of legal marriage and the preference of concubines as consorts as the only way of relationship, coincided with the marriage policy which was adopted for the daughters of Ottoman sultans. The inter-dynastic marriage policy adopted for male and female members of the Ottoman dynasty was abandoned

at almost the same time for similar reasons. This was part of a transformation of the dynasty. The changes and strengthening of the state during the reign of Mehmed II led to changes in the marriage policies for both Ottoman sultans and their sons and daughters.

**Keywords:** Dynastic Marital Policies, Daughters of Ottoman Sultans, Sons-in-law of Dynasty, Slave-Origin Statesmen, Wedding Ceremonies

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I am aware that I need greater motivation and hard work to do better studies in the future. This is a beginning that I wish I had prepared enough well until I reach the best version of myself and produce better studies. At the beginning of this journey, it was impossible to arrive at the destination but today dreams came true and I achieved the desire of finishing my thesis. At the end of a process that was difficult and stressful, I would like to thank everyone and everything that contributed to the completion of this thesis and made easier and bearable this process.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>GENİŞ ÖZET .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: BEING THE DAUGHTER OF THE OTTOMAN SULTAN: THE LIVES OF OTTOMAN PRINCESSES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Life of Ottoman Princesses in the Harem Atmosphere .....	9
1.2 Education of Ottoman Princesses .....	17
1.3 Exercise the Power in a Visible Way: Architectural Patronage.....	19
1.4 Exercise the Power: Involvement in State Affairs .....	24
<b>CHAPTER 2: MARRIAGE POLICIES OF THE OTTOMAN DYNASTY: CHANGING TRENDS THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES .....</b>	<b>32</b>
2.1 Relationship Ways and Consorts of Ottoman Sultans until Suleyman I .....	32
2.2 Concubines as Consorts of Ottoman Sultans .....	45
2.3 The Consorts and Marriage of Süleyman I .....	51
2.4 Consorts of Ottoman Sultans between Süleyman I and İbrahim I .....	55
<b>CHAPTER 3: MARRIAGES OF OTTOMAN PRINCESSES BETWEEN THE MID-FIFTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES .....</b>	<b>61</b>
3.1 Inter-Dynastic Marriages of the Ottoman Princesses .....	63
3.2 Marriages with Slave-Origin Statesmen .....	67
3.3 An Appreciated Position: <i>Damad-ı Şehriyari</i> .....	72
3.4 Marriages of Ottoman Princesses .....	73

3.5 The Dynamics between Ottoman Princesses and Their Husbands .....	79
3.6 Marriages of Granddaughters of Ottoman Sultans .....	85
3.7 Age of Marriage for the Daughters of Ottoman Sultans .....	88
3.8 Marriages at Child Age and Suri Marriages .....	89
3.9 Wedding Processes and Ceremonies of Ottoman Princesses between mid- Fifteenth and mid-Seventeenth Centuries .....	95
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>114</b>

## **List of Tables**

Table 1. Consorts of the Ottoman Sultans .....	114
Table 2. Career Path of the Some of the Sons-in-Law .....	115

## INTRODUCTION

The principal focus of this thesis is to examine and exemplify the marriages of Ottoman princesses through the illustrative examples that occurred between mid-fifteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries. This thesis tries to examine the marriages of the daughters of Ottoman sultans in the context of dynastic marriages. The principal objective is to undertake a detailed examination of the potential motivations and reasons behind the marriages of Ottoman princesses, rather than merely listing the existing information about their husbands. This thesis discusses the reasons and results behind the arranged marriages between Ottoman princesses and slave-origin statesmen, and understands the nature of this marriage pattern, and policy. This study seeks to answer the following questions; how were the daughters of the sultans married, and was there a consistent pattern? If so, was this pattern consistent across daughters? What were the potential career consequences of marriages between the daughters of sultans and slave-origin statesmen? In addition, this study will examine how Ottoman princesses exercised power, engaged in politics and promoted architecture. The involvement of Ottoman princesses into politics through factions was seen as steps for achieving their interests. There will be a discussion on how Ottoman princesses mostly efforted to convince Ottoman sultans as favor of their husbands. The sponsorship of architecture as sign of benevolence, power and prestige meant being visible for Ottoman princesses. Their architectural activities are another matter dealt with in this study, as major aspect of their lives.

The examination of the marriages of Ottoman princesses who lived between the mid-fifteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries will contribute to the existing corpus of knowledge regarding the family history of the Ottoman dynasty. This will be achieved by demonstrating how these princesses exercised power and participated in power relations with their husbands, and by providing insight into the relationship between the sons-in-law statesmen and the Ottoman dynasty. The study prioritizes reshaping the material and thinking the existing information in a new perspective. This thesis covers a review of the existing literature revealed an insufficiency of studies on Ottoman princesses who lived during the period. Most of the existing studies on Ottoman princesses have concentrated on those from later periods. Therefore, we aim

to contribute to the existing knowledge in this area and provide new perspective to this topic. The sources have been carefully selected and handled in a way that will contribute to the existing literature. This study differs in terms of examining marriages of Ottoman princesses in the context of marriages of Ottoman sultans and princes. There is an attempt, in addition to primary objective of this study, to ascertain whether there was a relationship between the two sets of marriages. Moreover, this study examines the concept of being the daughter of an Ottoman Sultan, providing information about their lives.

A comparison of the marriages or consort and relationship preferences of the Ottoman sultans with the marriage ways of the Ottoman princesses reveals that there was a more principled attitude towards the Ottoman princesses through adopting the long-term policies. A comparative analysis of the diverse forms of marriage that emerged during the early periods and the form of marriage that became the dominant model by the mid-15th century reveals the existence of marriage policies characterized by more specific and stricter rules that did not allow for flexibility. The changes in the relationship way of Ottoman sultans and marriage policies towards Ottoman princesses, end of the inter-dynastic marriages seemed parallel. The marriage pattern of giving the daughters of Ottoman sultans to slave statesmen was primarily because of their royalty. They did not want to risk the possibility of interference by dynasties of equal power and therefore avoided inter-dynastic marriages.

There are many studies on prominent Ottoman imperial women. The studies about the harem and queen mothers may contain information on the daughters of Ottoman sultans. The books of Çağatay Uluçay and Necdet Sakaoğlu give preliminary information about Ottoman imperial women.<sup>1</sup> Leslie Peirce's significant book *Imperial Harem Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* represents a significant advancement in the field of historical discourse, moving beyond the mere discussion of the harem to encompass the marriages of Ottoman sultans and the daughters of sultans within that context. Ahmed Refik Altınay's book examines the

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<sup>1</sup> Çağatay Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları*. (Istanbul: Ötüken, 2011); Çağatay Uluçay, *Harem II*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1971); Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*. (Istanbul: Alfa, 2015).

influence of Ottoman imperial women on politics between 1550 and 1656.<sup>2</sup> Ali Akyıldız examines the palace, the harem and the dynamics of the ruling dynasty over a considerable period of time. His book is a major contribution to the field.<sup>3</sup>

A number of studies have been carried out on various subjects related to the daughters of Ottoman sultans. Biographical studies of Ottoman princesses have also been carried out. The studies on Ottoman princesses for the period covered by this thesis are comparatively limited when considered in the context of later centuries. The majority of studies on Ottoman princesses for the period covered by this thesis focus on their pious foundations. Apart from this, studies on Ottoman princesses mostly focus on those who lived in the later centuries of the Ottoman dynasty. Akyıldız's biographical study of Refia Sultan, the daughter of Sultan Abdülmecid, is an important contribution to the history of Ottoman princesses.<sup>4</sup> Burçak Ersöz's study of Beyhan Sultan, the daughter of Mustafa III, is a notable example. Şaduman Tuncer's comprehensive study provides detailed information on the family of Ahmed III, including his daughters. She provides information on the education of Ahmed III's daughters, their marriages and his communication with them, and offers an insight into the life of an Ottoman princess and the experiences of being the daughter of an Ottoman sultan. In another study, Merve Çakır's work focuses on the family of Mehmed IV and mentions the names of Mehmed IV's daughters and sisters, namely those of Sultan İbrahim, Murad III, Ahmed I and Murad IV. It provides preliminary information on these individuals.<sup>5</sup>

Biographical studies of queen mothers can also shed light on the daughters of sultans. Leslie Peirce's book on Hürrem Sultan provides information on how an Ottoman princess was involved in factional politics with the company of her mother and husband. *Empress of the East* gives an idea of the nature of the relationship

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<sup>2</sup> Leslie Peirce, *Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Ahmet Refik Altınay, *Kadınlar Saltanatı*, ed. İbrahim Delioğlu. (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Ali Akyıldız, *Saray, Harem ve Mahrem* (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Ali Akyıldız, *Mümin ve Müsrif Bir Padişah Kızı: Refia Sultan* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Burçak Ersöz, "III. Mustafa'nın Kızı Beyhan Sultan ve Hayatı" (PhD diss., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2020); Tuncer, Şaduman. *Sultan III. Ahmed: Günlük Yaşantısı, Yakın Çevresi ve Şahsiyeti* (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2023); Merve Çakır, "IV. Mehmed Ailesi ve Hanedan Politikası" (PhD diss., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2024).

between the Ottoman Sultan and his consort. In addition to this point; her book provides information on Mihrimah Sultan.<sup>6</sup> Pınar Kayaalp's study focuses on the Atik Valide Mosque and the power of Nurbanu Sultan and her involvement in politics. It also examines the patronage of architecture by the imperial woman. Another study on Nurbanu Sultan and her waqf is by Tijen Sabırlı. Özlem Kumrular focuses on Nurbanu Sultan and her son's favourite Safiye Sultan by examining their lives and influence.<sup>7</sup> The life of Turhan Sultan is examined by Lucienne Thys-Şenocak, Erhan Afyoncu and Uğur Demir, and Nurdan Şafak.<sup>8</sup> Betül İpşirli Argıt's biographical study of Gülnuş Emetullah Sultan and Muzaffer Özgüleş's study of her architectural patronage activities are important contributions to Ottoman imperial women's studies.<sup>9</sup> Ali Akyıldız's book is a comprehensive study of all queen mothers, in addition to the studies carried out on numerous queen mothers. This book examines the nature of the queen mother.<sup>10</sup>

However, there is a notable lack of studies that focus directly on the marriages of the daughters of the sultans. There are not many biographical studies of the Ottoman princesses who lived between the years covered by this thesis. The most prominent work on the subject is Juliette Dumas's *Au Coeur du Harem*. In this text, Dumas provides information on the lives of Ottoman princesses, whom she identifies as a group that has been largely overlooked by historians. She analyses the lives and marriages of the sultans' daughters between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries,

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<sup>6</sup> Leslie Peirce, *Empress of the East: How A European Slave Girl Became Queen of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Pınar Kayaalp, *The Empress Nurbanu and Ottoman Politics in the 16th Century* (London: Routledge, 2018); Tijen Sabırlı, *Afife Nurbanu Valide Sultan Vakfiyesi* (Istanbul: Libra Kitap, 2018); Özlem Kumrular, *Haremde Taht Kuranlar: Nurbanu ve Safiye Sultan* (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Lucienne Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders: The Architectural Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan*, (London: Routledge, 2016); Erhan Afyoncu and Uğur Demir, *Turhan Sultan*, (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2015); Nurdan Şafak, *Hayırsever Bir Osmanlı Valide Sultanı: Hatice Turhan Valide Sultan ve Vakfiyesi*, (Istanbul: Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Betül İpşirli Argıt, *Rabia Gülnüş Emetullah Sultan: 1649-1715* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2014); Muzaffer Özgüleş, *The Women Who Built The Ottoman World: Female Patronage and the Architectural Legacy of Gülnüş Sultan* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Ali Akyıldız, *Haremin Padişahı Valide Sultan: Haremde Hayat ve Teşkilat*, (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2017).

suggesting that there were evolving marriage strategies in parallel with the changes and transformations in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>11</sup>

The marriages of Ottoman princesses are studied by looking at and analysing primary sources such as archival documents, chronicles and travellers' accounts. A review of the archival documents on Ottoman princesses shows that the archival documents are mostly related to financial matters such as their incomes, properties and pious foundations. There are also documents related to the accounting of the foundations, as well as documents that inform the people in charge of managing the foundations, their duties and salaries. In addition to these points, archival documents provide information on the properties of the daughters of Ottoman sultans. There are also documents that provide more detailed information, including personal details. These can provide details about the marriages of Ottoman princesses. For example, the mehir received at the time of marriage, the gifts given at the wedding and the wedding ceremonies. The dates of the marriages can be determined from the archival documents. They contain some information, however small, that contributes to the accuracy of their marriages. General information about the husbands of the Ottoman princesses, such as their names and duties, can be verified.

A detailed examination of the marriages of Ottoman princesses is carried out through the primary sources which are Ottoman chronicles, reports of Venetian ambassadors and archival documents. The Ottoman chronicles of Peçevi, Selaniki, Naima, Ruhi, Neşri, Aşıkpaşazade, Bostanzade Yahya, Oruç, Ahmedi, Şükrullah, Naima and Kühü'l Ahbar are used to trace the history of the marriages of Ottoman sultans and their daughters. The Ottoman chronicles mostly cover the background of the marriages of the Ottoman sultans. The Ottoman chronicle writers tended to exclude the details of Ottoman princesses. It seems that they considered the women of the dynasty and family of the Ottoman sultans as a private matter. For example, Ottoman chronicle writers regularly behave in a particular way that excludes details of wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses. For example, Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali and Peçevi İbrahim Efendi do not mention the wedding ceremony of Mihrimah Sultan, although

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<sup>11</sup> Juliette Dumas, *Au Coeur du Harem: Les Princesses Ottomanes à L'aune du Pouvoir* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

he talks about the circumcision ceremony of princes that these two ceremonies organised together.

In addition to the Ottoman chronicles, works by foreigners who came to the Ottoman Empire for various reasons, such as Oigier Busbecq, Stephan Gerlach, Luigi Bassano and Paul Rycaut, convey their thoughts about what they experienced in the Ottoman Empire. Those who arrived as emissaries had the opportunity to make contact with people in the palace and thus gain direct access to information. In addition, those who had travelled to the Ottoman Empire for various reasons recounted anecdotes about the Sultan's family that they had heard from other sources. Busbecq and Rycaut were sent to the Ottoman Empire on diplomatic missions. Busbecq, who was appointed by Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I in the mid-sixteenth century and includes account on Rüstem Paşa. Paul Rycaut describes in detail the various aspects of the Ottoman Empire.

The reports of the Venetian ambassadors differ considerably from the Ottoman chronicle writers in that they include anecdotes about the marriages of the daughters of the Ottoman sultans and their lives are more detailed. This thesis includes the reports of the Venetian ambassadors Marco Minio, Tommaso Contarini, Pietro Zen, Pietro Bragadino, Tommaso Mocenigo, Daniello de Ludovisi, Alvise Renier, Bernardo Navagero, Domenico Trevisano, Giovanni Moro, Lorenzo Bernardo, Matteo Zane and Leonardo Dona. The reports of these Venetian ambassadors were written between 1522 and 1534, between 1549 and 1554, and between 1590 and 1596. It is possible to obtain information about marriages and husbands of Ottoman princesses by looking at the reports of these Venetian ambassadors. Furthermore, the reports of Venetian ambassadors may contain details about Ottoman princesses that are not recorded in the Ottoman chronicles.

The first chapter of this thesis focuses on the Ottoman princesses as tracing that how was being the daughter of the Ottoman sultan. It examines the lives of the Ottoman princesses to understand being a daughter of the Ottoman sultan and being a female member of the Ottoman dynasty, the imperial family. This chapter consists of background information on their early lives in the harem and the ceremonies that were

arranged for the birth of princesses and their education in the harem. In addition, the participation of Ottoman princesses in the exercise of power as female members of the dynasty and their architectural patronage activities are discussed in the first chapter. The involvement of Ottoman princesses in politics took place through the accompaniment of their husbands and as a bridge between their husbands and fathers or brothers, the Ottoman sultans. This chapter shows that there were not completely equal conditions for all Ottoman princesses, for example, the economic circumstances of all Ottoman princesses were not the same.

The second chapter tries to establish links between the relationships of the Ottoman sultans and the marriages of the Ottoman princesses. There is a brief look at the relationship patterns and consort preferences of Ottoman sultans and their sons. It seems that; Ottoman sultans and their sons chose the legal way of relationship; they married. In the early period of the dynasty, they married daughters of important people, local notables. Later, they began to marry royal women from both Muslim and non-Muslim neighbouring dynasties, which was called inter-dynastic marriage. A situation of being married, which was a legal way of relationship, did not prevent polygamy. These factors show how the Ottoman sultans adopted a pragmatic approach towards marriages. This chapter discusses the dynastic marriage policy towards the marriages of Ottoman sultans and princes.

The third chapter deals with the main topic of this study and discusses the marriage practices of Ottoman princesses between the mid-fifteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries. The Ottoman dynasty adopted a principled approach to the marriages of Ottoman princesses. Moreover, it seems that there was a more principled approach towards the marriages of Ottoman princesses. It is true to say that there was a marriage policy rather than a single and uniform marriage policy. The marriages of Ottoman princesses changed over the centuries. It is easier to determine the changes and transformations in the marriage customs of Ottoman princesses. The change in the marriage policy towards Ottoman princesses and their marriages with statesmen of slave origin coincided with the change of dynasties. Inter-dynastic marriages with neighbouring dynasties emerged as a result of the circumstances of the earlier period of the Ottoman dynasty. This chapter aims to show that the marriage policies adopted were related to the power and status of the dynasty. Moreover, the adoption of new

policies was parallel to the change and transformation of the state. This chapter also examines the experiences of some of the Ottoman princesses for sharing imperial power and involvement in state affairs that existed through the companionship of their husbands.

## **CHAPTER 1: BEING THE DAUGHTER OF THE OTTOMAN SULTAN: THE LIVES OF OTTOMAN PRINCESSES**

The daughters of Ottoman sultans were among the highest-ranking royal women of the Ottoman dynasty. The positions of Ottoman princesses were higher than other royal women, such as favourite concubines of sultans, mothers of princes and mothers of queens. The daughters of Ottoman sultans were female blood relatives of the sultan, therefore they could exercise power and had a higher status. However, the daughters of the Ottoman sultans could not be as powerful and influential as the queen mothers and some of the haseki sultans, the favourite wives of the Ottoman sultans. It is necessary to examine their lives to understand what it was like to be the daughter of an Ottoman sultan and a female member of the Ottoman dynasty, the imperial family.

The main aim of this chapter is to provide an insight into the lives of the daughters of Ottoman sultans and their role as Ottoman princesses. This chapter aims to provide a concise overview of the lives of Ottoman princesses, spanning a period of centuries between the reigns of Mehmed II and Ibrahim I. This chapter will provide background information on their early lives in the harem and examine what it was like to be an Ottoman princess. It includes ceremonies that were arranged for the birth of princesses and their education in the harem, which were related to the issue of being daughters of Ottoman sultans. In addition to this point, the participation of Ottoman princesses in exercising power as female members of the dynasty will be discussed in this chapter.

### **1.1 Life of Ottoman Princesses in the Harem Atmosphere**

The first step should be to clarify the division between the Old Palace and New Palaces, and the harems of the two palaces before the attempt of examining the life in harem. The conquest of Istanbul by Mehmed II was followed by the decision to build a palace in the area of today's Beyazıt district which became known as the Old Palace after the construction of the New Palace in Istanbul. Mehmed II returned to Edirne after the conquest and stayed a month in Istanbul. There was also a construction

process in Edirne, the capital of the Ottoman state, which was the New Palace.<sup>12</sup> It seems that the same process continued in Istanbul after Edirne, which was the last capital before the conquest of Istanbul. Mehmed returned to Istanbul the following year. The construction of this palace lasted until 1455, but it seems that it was finished in 1458.<sup>13</sup> It seems that the end of the construction of the Old Palace in Istanbul implies the completion of other buildings and parts of the palace. Mehmed II decided to build a palace in Istanbul and the area of the New Palace was the old Byzantine Acropolis. The construction of the New Palace, also known as Topkapı Palace, was completed by the end of the 1460s.<sup>14</sup> In the first decades of Suleyman I's reign, Topkapı Palace was enlarged and changed. In addition to this point, the 16th century can be marked as a crucial period that contributed to the latest version of Topkapı Palace; by the end of this century, Topkapı Palace was close to the current version.<sup>15</sup> The construction of new structures, such as gardens and kiosks, led to the transformation and enlargement of the palace and also the imperial harem of this palace.

The construction of the New Palace in Istanbul led to the creation of two imperial harems. There were two imperial harems located in the Old Palace and Topkapı Palace. It is obvious that the construction of the New Palace during the reign of Mehmed II made the Old Palace the residence of the Ottoman princesses, concubines and harem officials. The harem of the New Palace came into being as a residence for the limited number of concubines who were collected as sexual partners for the sultans, but the visits of the Ottoman sultans to the Old Palace did not end. It is not possible to present certain information about the harem for the period before and during the reign of Mehmed II due to the lack of information and primary sources on this subject. Kritovoulos speaks of a special palace for women in the palace of Mehmed II.<sup>16</sup> The account of Iacopo de Campis Promontorio shows the separation of the harems

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<sup>12</sup> Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, trans. Charles T. Riggs (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1954), 22, 85.

<sup>13</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1991), 3; Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, 104.

<sup>14</sup> Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, 4; Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, 140, 207.

<sup>15</sup> Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, 22-23.

<sup>16</sup> Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, 207.

of the Old and New Palaces and the existence of the harem during the reign of Mehmed II. Furthermore, the Old Palace is described by Promontorio as a women's palace under the control of low-ranking eunuchs.<sup>17</sup>

During the reign of Süleyman I, after the death of his mother Hafsa, Sultan Süleyman opened the doors of Topkapı Palace to the Hürrem, allowing her to be influential within the premises. The harem of New Palace was enlarged with the participation of female relatives of Ottoman sultans in the sixteenth century. Old Palace emerges as the residence of the Queen Mother until the early sixteenth century.<sup>18</sup> As the circumstances of the harem changed, the political characteristics of the harem grew along with its inhabitants, showing the expansion of the imperial harem. Necipoğlu argues that Hürrem and her children moved to Topkapı Palace, and the move of Hürrem led to the abandonment of the old palace during the reign of Süleyman I.<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that this might be not a complete move to Topkapı Palace.

On the other hand, the ties between the Old Palace and the New Palace never ended. The Old Palace continued to be the residence of the female members of the dynasty. The Old Palace also became a place for women who were not favoured, such as mothers of former sultans and mothers of children of former sultans. Ottoman princesses lived in the Old Palace with Ottoman princes until they became princes in the Ottoman provinces. A ceremony called *valide alayı* was held to move the mother of the new sultan from the Old Palace to the New Palace. The Queen Mother and other female relatives of the Sultan returned to the Old Palace after the death of the Sultan.

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<sup>17</sup> Iacopo de Campis Promontorio, "Die Aufzeichnungen des Genuesen Iacopo de Promontorio de Campis über den Osmanenstaat um 1475," in *Governo et Entrate del Gran Turca 1475. Stato del Gran Turco*, ed. Franz Babinger, *Sitzungsberichte, Jahrgang 1956, Heft 8, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-Historische Klasse*. Münih, 1957, 44-45, quoted in Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, p. 160.

<sup>18</sup> Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, 161.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, 163.

Selaniki gives an account of the return of the daughters, children of Murad III and their attendant nannies and other concubines to the Old Palace after his death.<sup>20</sup>

The birth of the children of the Ottoman sultans was called *veladet-i hümayun*, which means imperial birth. New members of the imperial family were welcomed and their births were celebrated with ceremonies that were planned and organised on a grand scale. The Ottoman dynasty took birth ceremonies very seriously. Bayezid II ordered a celebration to be held for his grandson, his daughter's baby, who was born during his troubled times. Bayezid's order in the matter of decorating the cities is accepted as the first birth ceremony in the capital.<sup>21</sup>

The birth of the new baby changed the atmosphere of the palace. The first step was the announcement of the baby's birth, which was carried out in a planned and hierarchical manner, as well as a whole celebration. The news was announced to the harem by the head of the harem, *Darıssaade Ağası* (Agha of the Gate of Felicity). He gave this news to the chief officer of Enderun (Inner Palace); *Silahtar Ağa*. The chief officer *Silahtar Ağa* spread the news of the baby's birth throughout the palace. The officer who announced the birth of a baby to the Grand Vizier depended on the sex of the baby. In the case of the birth of a girl, the news was conveyed to the Grand Vizier by an edict from one of the higher agha of the palace. On the other hand, the news was given to the grand vizier with *Darıssaade Ağası*.<sup>22</sup> In each room of the Enderun, three animals were sacrificed to celebrate the birth of a girl, and five animals were sacrificed for the birth of a boy. In certain places, the birth of a baby was announced to the public verbally by the *Tellalbaşı* (town crier) and with cannon shots. There was a difference according to the sex of the baby and the number of cannon shots varied according to the sex of the baby. Three cannon shots were fired in honour of the baby girl and the cannon shots were repeated five times during the day.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* Volume 1. ed. Mehmet İpşirli. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1999), 432; Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* Volume 2, ed. Mehmet İpşirli. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1999), 436.

<sup>21</sup> Ahmet Önal, "Payitaht İstanbul'da Osmanlı Merasimleri", *Antik Çağ'dan XXI. Yüzyıla Büyük İstanbul Tarihi*, <https://istanbultarihi.ist/91-payitaht-istanbulda-osmanli-merasimleri> (19.04.2024).

<sup>22</sup> Dündar Alikılıç, "17. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Saray Tefrişatı ve Törenleri," (Doktora Tezi, Atatürk Üniversitesi, 2002), 161.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, 161.

Ceremonies were also held in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Senior officers such as the chief mufti, captain, head of the janissaries and other pashas celebrated with the sultan after the announcement of the birth of a new baby. The Ottoman palace was opened to the guests to offer their best wishes to the Sultan on the birth of a baby. A large meal or feast was prepared for the guests. Ottoman sultans gave gifts to the people in honour of the newborn baby. The birth of a baby was welcomed and led to the creation of a cheerful and colourful atmosphere in the harem. Celebrations and entertainment continued for almost a week, much to the amusement of the public.<sup>24</sup> The celebrations in the palace went beyond the palace itself and were reflected in the public of the capital and other provinces. The imperial family shared their happiness with the common people, the public.

*Beşik alayı* (Crib Procession) was an important part of the birth celebrations and was organised to give cribs and gifts to the baby. Two separate crib processions were organised by the Queen Mother and the Grand Vizier. These two crib processions were organised at different times and to different extents. The baby's grandmother, the Queen Mother, prepared gifts for the baby, such as a crib, a cover for the crib and a blanket. In the absence of the queen mother, this responsibility would pass to the head of the harem. The crib procession of the Queen Mother's was from the Old Palace to the New Palace. The prominent officers of the Queen Mother and the Ottoman *Mehteran* (military band) joined the crib procession.<sup>25</sup> The public of the capital witnessed this crib procession. Before the birth of a baby, the queen mother ordered a crib to be made, which is recorded in the archives. The crib procession arranged by the Grand Vizier was more pompous and crowded than the crib procession of the Queen Mother, and the Grand Vizier's crib and gifts were more pompous and fancy than those of the Queen Mother. The grand vizier's gifts included precious stones such as pearls, diamonds and emeralds. The gifts of the Grand Vizier and the Queen Mother were shown to the guests invited to the nativity procession. Guests were invited to the Grand Vizier's palace the day before the crib procession.<sup>26</sup> The gifts were shown to the people as a sign of prestige and economic power. The ceremonies associated with the birth of

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, 163.

<sup>25</sup> Semiha Nurdan, "Saray Geleneklerine Göre: Veladet-i Hümayun" *Karadeniz Uluslararası Bilimsel Dergi*, (58), 53.

<sup>26</sup> Alikılıç, " 17. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Saray Tefrişatı ve Törenleri," 168.

the baby and the procession of the crib show the ways in which the new baby was welcomed. Regardless of the scale, both ceremonies show how a baby was welcomed and the power and wealth of the dynasty was displayed through the gifts given to the baby.

The education of Ottoman princesses began with the *bed'i besmele* ceremony, which was arranged for children when they began their education. It means to start with *besmele*, which is a crucial phrase for Muslims. *Besmele* means to begin with the name of Allah, the Creator, who is the Compassionate and Merciful. This ceremony was held on the first day of the princes' and princesses' education. They started their education with their tutor when they were five or six years old.<sup>27</sup> The *bed'i besmele* ceremony of the Ottoman prince was held with the participation of high-ranking officers. Ottoman princesses began their education with a ceremony that was arranged without the participation of dignitaries of the ruling class.<sup>28</sup> It seems that the *bed'i besmele* ceremonies of Ottoman princes were more detailed and formal because of the participation of high-ranking officers. It was also because Ottoman princes were seen as sultans of the future.

The life of the Ottoman princesses began in the harem with pompous ceremonies and planned celebrations. Moreover, the way in which special occasions were celebrated shows how the empire displayed its power and prestige. The birth of a child was celebrated, and moreover, the Ottoman dynasty seemed to miss no opportunity to demonstrate its power. It seems that studies of ceremonies and celebrations tend to focus on the Ottoman sultans and princes. The reason for this is that the ceremonies and celebrations organised for princes are more often recorded in primary sources. It also seems that the celebrations and ceremonies for male members of the dynasty were more extravagant.

The wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses were another important celebration and ceremony for the daughters of Ottoman sultans, except that the ceremonies were arranged for other occasions. The wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses were ways of demonstrating the prestige and power of the Ottoman Empire

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, 173.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, 174.

in the situation of Ottoman sultans and princes abandoned marriage, and therefore one of the most important ceremonies; wedding ceremonies became unique to Ottoman princesses. The wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses will be discussed in the next chapter with a discussion of their marriage customs.

The lives of Ottoman princesses and other Ottoman royal women lasted in their residences which became a social sphere for them as a natural consequence of their lifestyle and the interaction between the inhabitants of the harem. They lived their lives under strict and powerful guardianship, which made it impossible for foreigners to enter. The harem was kept secret and secure in the Third Court. The secret rooms of the Sultan were entered through a third door. The security of these rooms was provided by people called eunuchs, headed by the Head Door-keeper, who waited outside this door with about thirty eunuchs. Describing how carefully this part of the palace was preserved, Bassano compared the harem to a monastery.<sup>29</sup> The experience of high-ranking Ottoman dynastic women in social life and participation in the public sphere was limited. Their experience of the outside world was possible with official permission and in the company of officials. The state of being away from people appears as one of the characteristic and primary aspects of the harem and the lifestyle of its inhabitants. The harem was seen as a place to be protected and kept private. The Ottoman dynasty attached the privacy of the Ottoman sultans and their families to the imperial palace. The situation of the harem gives an idea of the life of the Ottoman princesses, who remained in the shadows. It is true that the seclusion of Ottoman royal women included keeping away from people and the public, wearing a veil and modest clothes. The clothes of Ottoman imperial women had to cover their body parts. Even women's voices were accepted as a part of the body that was hidden from men. The terms *avret* and *muhaddere* explain the idea of the seclusion of Ottoman royal women.<sup>30</sup> A woman could protect her status by being morally and religiously correct through these factors which make it possible to understand the life of Ottoman royal women. It seems that there was a situation of protection under the rules and authority.

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<sup>29</sup> Luigi Bassano, *Kanuni Dönemi Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Gündelik Hayat*, trans. Selma Cangi (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2015), 50, 53, 57.

<sup>30</sup> Nina Ergin, "Ottoman Royal Women's Spaces: The Acoustic Dimension," *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 26, Number 1, Spring 2014. 90-91.

High-ranking Ottoman women went to their destinations as invisibly as possible, it was not possible to see them and they chose not to show themselves.<sup>31</sup>

Ottoman princesses grew up with their nannies, who were concubines, who looked after them and related to their needs when they were little. In their later life, some concubines supervised the Ottoman princesses and were interested in their needs. After their marriages and leaving the imperial palace, the accompaniment of concubines around them continued. Ottoman princesses left the palace and moved to the residences of their husbands with the marriage and there was a chance to turn back to the palace at the end of their marriages, their lives in the imperial harem might be continued. It seems that this depended on the preference of marrying again or not. Most of the Ottoman princesses remarried in the time of following the death of their husbands or divorce which was not common but there were examples of divorce between Ottoman princesses and their husbands.

Peirce makes connections between sexual relations and active involvement in some areas; such as sponsoring architecture, etc. According to her, the demonstration of power and wealth began with the end of their sexual relations. This period may have contributed to the careers of the daughters of Ottoman sultans, and Ottoman princesses who managed to be powerful and important were widows. One of the main reasons for being less famous and important was having an active sex life. Peirce gives the example of Mihrimah Sultan, and Peirce says that Mihrimah started building a complex in Edirnekapı shortly after her husband's death.<sup>32</sup> In fact, Mihrimah offered her hand in marriage to Semiz Ali Pasha, Rüstem Pasha's successor in the Grand Vizierate. The Venetian ambassador, Daniele Barbarigo, attributes Mihrimah's desire to remarry to maintain her power and prestige after her husband Rüstem Paşa.<sup>33</sup> It seems that Peirce's assumption is wrong when considering the examples of companionship and cooperation in the patronage of architecture that were built through the sponsorship of couples. It seems that the state of having an active sexual life did

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<sup>31</sup> Bassano, *Kanuni Dönemi Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Gündelik Hayat*, 26, 51.

<sup>32</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 23.

<sup>33</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Senato, *Dispacci Costantinopoli*, Filza 3-C, n. 73, fol. 220r-v. quoted in Zahit Atçıl, "Osmanlı Hanedanı'nın Evlilik Politikası ve Mihrimah Sultan'ın Evliliği," *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 34 (2020), 21.

not always limit and inhibit the activities of Ottoman princesses. Mihrimah Sultan continued her life as a single woman, whether she decided to or not.

The details of the married life of an Ottoman princess and her husband, their love and family life remain in doubt and vague, not known in detail. It is not possible to obtain certain information about the details of the marriage of an Ottoman princess. As a member of the royal family, sister or daughter of the Ottoman Sultan, an Ottoman princess was in a higher position than her husband, who may have been respectful to his wife for this reason. The nature of the marriages of the members of the Ottoman dynasty was formal, as the average dynastic marriages had formal aspect.<sup>34</sup> However, this assertion cannot go further and remove the doubts. The relationship between the Ottoman princess and her husband was undoubtedly balanced. Due to the position of Ottoman princesses, small problems could become big problems. Bad behaviour towards Ottoman princesses could lead to the dismissal of sons-in-law from their positions and even end their careers. The divorce of Şah Sultan and Lütfi Paşa was an example of this situation. They disagreed over the punishment to be meted out to a woman accused of prostitution. Şah Sultan considered this punishment to be harsh and violent and debated with her husband Lütfi Paşa, which ended in divorce.

## 1.2 Education of Ottoman Princesses

The harem was also a sphere of education for its inhabitants, imperial wives, concubines and officials. It is difficult to give detailed information about the education of Ottoman princesses. When Ottoman princesses were five or six years old, the first step in their education was reading and writing. The main aim of the education was to read the Qur'an very well, reading and writing, mathematics, history and geography were included in the curriculum.<sup>35</sup> As stated above their education started with a ceremony named *bed'î besmele*. It seems that their education could not be limited to reading, writing and the Qur'an; in addition to this curriculum, Ottoman princesses may have been trained in etiquette, sewing, embroidery, etc... The education curriculum of concubines in the harem included sewing, embroidery, etiquette, music,

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<sup>34</sup> Süleyman İnan, "Political Marriage: The Sons-in-Law of the Ottoman Dynasty in the Late Ottoman State" *Middle Eastern Studies* 50:1 (2014), 61.

<sup>35</sup> Funda Acar, "Osmanlıda Padişah Oğulları ve Kızlarının Eşitlendiği Alan: Tefrişat" *Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 2015/1, c. 14, Sayı: 27. 194.

dance, and playing an instrument. Therefore, it is possible to say Ottoman princesses got an education in these subjects.

The major tutor, mentor, and role model of the daughters of Ottoman sultans were their mothers, sisters of their fathers, and grandmothers. Ottoman princesses education includes the things that they learned in their early ages. It might be related to the balances in the harem, the management, and hierarchy of the harem, and taking inspiration from their elders. This was not part of education, but these aspects meant learning life in the harem as well as in the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman princesses learned how to hold power in the harem. The life of the Ottoman princesses passed in a competitive atmosphere. There was competition between women who did not hesitate to reach higher positions. The harem was a training ground for the daughters of the Ottoman sultans and the royal women of the dynasty.<sup>36</sup>

Ottoman princesses were influenced by their mothers who were their guides and role models. For instance, Mihrimah Sultan followed her mother's way that Hürrem opened for the next generations.<sup>37</sup> The mothers of Ottoman princesses were concubines who were in a race or competition to be favored by the Sultan, to be the haseki; a favorite of the sultan, they were in a situation of determined struggle to remain liked and preferred. They were trying not to lose the status they had achieved. It is possible and natural that the daughters of Ottoman sultans, who have such mothers, would be girls who will care about being active and will embrace it and make an effort for it. Ottoman princesses had a role of companionship to their mothers in the palace. The relationship between a mother and her daughter was the most trusting one they could have. They trusted each other and would protect each other from threats. They were always the most reliable people for each other to work with. The mother was a guide to her daughter and the person closest to informing and educating her about palace life. In general, it seems that Ottoman princesses were trained to become the wives of high-ranking officials.

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<sup>36</sup> Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Mihrimah Sultan: A Princess Constructs Ottoman Dynastic Identity," in *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centuries*, ed. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schul (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2016), 153.

<sup>37</sup> Leslie Peirce, *Empress of the East*, 93.

### 1.3 Exercise the Power in a Visible Way: Architectural Patronage

The harem was both a political and social sphere for its inhabitants. This characteristic enabled the exercise of power by its main inhabitants, the mothers of queens, *hasekis* of Ottoman sultans and daughters of Ottoman sultans. As an institutional space, the harem was confronted with and witnessed the harsh power interests and clashes. Acquiring power by being close to the powerful was not the only way to exercise power. An Ottoman royal woman could exercise power and be a shareholder in imperial power in different ways. Women's participation and influence in the affairs of the state was achieved through patronage of architecture and participation in factions. The daughters of Ottoman sultans deserved to exercise power and hold influential roles and positions as members of the Ottoman dynasty, an imperial family through their blood relations with sultans. Therefore, they had more rights to participate in power relations and exercise power than other imperial women such as queen mothers and *haseki* sultans. The main aim of this section is to examine the practices of Ottoman princesses in exercising power. This part of the chapter deals with the patronage of architecture by prominent Ottoman princesses in the mid-fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire was based on also denseness of the settlements and pious foundations.<sup>38</sup> All the visible features of the Ottoman cities contributed to the increase of the imperial prestige. It was a perceivable way to prove the power, prestige, and benevolence of the empire. Imperial women's participation in the patronage system arose as a major way of representation of imperial women's power, prestige, and visibility. It seems that being a patron of architecture and establishing pious endowments were almost only visible ways of introducing themselves to the public and being the representative of sovereignty as female members of the dynasty. In addition to this point, it seems that the patronage system makes these things possible. Ottoman royal women's chance to be influential and visible thanks to the patronage system and pious foundations makes it possible to examine and understand the lives of the daughters of Ottoman sultans. These activities

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<sup>38</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 71.

present as a huge portion in the studies on the lives of Ottoman princesses. The information that can be acquired on the Ottoman princesses is mostly on the participation in the patronage system, and founding pious endowments.

One of the most important aspects of the Ottoman princesses' patronage of architecture was charity. Most of them were able to build structures and create waqfs to help people. Ottoman princesses chose to spend their wealth on benevolence. The complexes they built with the help of architecture included *imarathane* for serving food to people, which functioned as charity. The complexes, mosques, masjids, medreses, mekteb, public baths and other buildings built under the patronage of architecture show the benevolence of the Ottoman imperial women. These structures were built for the benefit of the people. The benevolence of Ottoman royal women through patronage was a way of representing the ability to continue the benevolence and magnificence of the Ottoman Empire and the Sultans throughout life. It arose as a given promise to help people all the time. It was like a message about the longevity of the Empire and the promise of long years of help and protection.

The daughters of the Ottoman Sultans contributed to the power, prestige, image and high reputation of the Ottoman Empire through the patronage system. The capital and other cities of the Ottoman Empire, especially the former capitals, contain structures that were built with the patronage of Ottoman princesses. They also create the status of being permanent members of the Ottoman dynasty. The patronage system emerged as a way to leave a mark for the future and make their names memorable. The most beneficial aspect of architectural patronage was an act of charity. Ottoman princesses who patronised architecture strengthened their position as imperial women..

Ottoman royal women, especially Ottoman princesses got a chance to show their power, and spatial presence, and also contributed to Ottoman architecture and the urban sphere of cities through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>39</sup> The daughter of Selim I, Şah Sultan, the daughter of Süleyman I, Mihrimah, and the daughter of Selim II, İsmihan, were prominent Ottoman princesses who left glorious buildings in important places in the sixteenth century. Before the sixteenth century, women

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<sup>39</sup> Firüzan Melike Sümertaş, "Female Patronage in Classical Ottoman Architecture: Five Case Studies in Istanbul" (MA Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2006), 2.

couldn't take on the construction of large complexes, and the patronage activities of women who lived in the fifteenth century were allowed in small lands.<sup>40</sup> It seems that this contrast between the fifteenth century and sixteenth century lies in the difference in the amount of imperial women's income. The positions of Ottoman princesses in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were in charge of minor patronage activities because of their moderate income.<sup>41</sup> The imperial women in the fifteenth century took the responsibility of small-scale construction like *mekteb*, *masjid*, and mosques. They stayed away from buildings that were needed for higher incomes. The main differences depended on the income levels of the Ottoman princesses, who lived in different periods..

Fatma Hatun, the daughter of Murad II, had a *masjid* and *mekteb* in one of the old capital of the Ottoman Empire, Bursa. Selçuk Hatun, the daughter of Mehmed I, had not extended buildings in the different places. During the time of Bayezid II women could be patroness of large-scale construction activities.<sup>42</sup> The patronage of architecture was not the only way of patronage system. Especially before the sixteenth century, women preferred to maintain existing foundations. The daughter of Bayezid II; Fatma Hatun did not choose architectural patronage, instead, she became patron of some *tariqas*.<sup>43</sup> The position of imperial women concerning the involvement in patronage activities in the sixteenth century was wider in comparison with the situation of women in the fifteenth century. The imperial women who had a chance to be patroness more freely in the sixteenth century owed their positions to the circumstances of the sixteenth century and their status in their own families. Not all of the daughters of Ottoman sultans became prominent and patroness of expended complexes. The scale of their sponsorship of architecture was not the same even if produced in the same period. It seems that this feature of patronage of architecture and founding *waqfs* was related to the differences in income of Ottoman princesses who lived in the same periods.

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<sup>40</sup> Ayşe Çıkla, "Architectural Patronage of Women in the Early Ottoman Era" (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 2004), 37.

<sup>41</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 301.

<sup>42</sup> Çıkla, "Architectural Patronage of Women in the Early Ottoman Era," 37-38, 43, 72.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, 77.

The patronage of architecture was worked by the companionship of imperial women with architects. The most well-known architect of the classical age of the Ottoman Empire was Architect Sinan. He was behind the significant structures that were built by the patronage of Ottoman royal women. Hürrem's complex in the heartland of the capital which was the first time for the Ottoman Empire in terms of having a complex and sponsorship of architecture by haseki in the capital, was a valuable work of Architect Sinan. The other important works of Sinan were built with the architectural patronage of Mihrimah Sultan. Sinan contributed to Ottoman architecture by systemizing classical Ottoman architecture, and he had characteristic classical aspects of his architectural style.<sup>44</sup> Sinan arises as the main companion of imperial women in their visibility and demonstration of Ottoman sovereignty, glory, and benevolence in the sixteenth century. The complex of Mihrimah Sultan in Üsküdar and Edirnekapı where heartland of the capital city of the empire, were precious examples of the Ottoman princess's patronage of architecture. Mihrimah's Complex in Üsküdar became the symbol of Üsküdar with its splendidly located and architecturally designed complex. Her complex at the entrance of the Üsküdar from the sea shines as a pearl. Until the construction of the mosques of Mihrimah, there were no buildings of Ottoman princesses in the capital city of the empire. The complex of Mihrimah Sultan was the first complex in Istanbul which was constructed by the daughter of the Ottoman sultan.<sup>45</sup> The neighborhood and places that her complexes built show the crucial status of Mihrimah both in her intimate family and among all of the Ottoman princesses. As the only daughter of Sultan Süleyman and Hürrem, she was honored with privileges that no other daughters of Ottoman sultans had.<sup>46</sup> Therefore; it is possible to obtain more information concerning her. The construction of Mihrimah's complex in Üsküdar was started in 1543 around and continued until 1548, which includes a madrasa, caravansary, imaret, and guesthouse.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Isom-Verhaaren, "Mihrimah Sultan: A Princess Constructs Ottoman Dynastic Identity," 157; Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 301.

<sup>46</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 296.

<sup>47</sup> Isom-Verhaaren, "Mihrimah Sultan: A Princess Constructs Ottoman Dynastic Identity," 157-158.

Mihrimah Sultan was also the patroness of a complex in Edirnekapı. Its construction was completed in the reign of Selim II. The two complexes of Mihrimah were not the same as each other which reflects the circumstances of Mihrimah in different portions of time. The position of Mihrimah changed during his brother's reign which was seen in the comparison of the two complexes.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand; it seems that her economically advantageous situation never changed. After the death of her husband Rüstem Paşa, her wealth increased. Moreover; the highest income of female members of the dynasty belonged to Mihrimah. Mihrimah became the most benevolent Ottoman princess with the influence of her mother.<sup>49</sup>

As stated above the situation of Mihrimah was unique in the sixteenth century and before the sixteenth century, and not all the Ottoman princesses got a chance to construct large-scale buildings and have a higher income to manage large-scale construction projects. There was no equality between the daughters of Ottoman sultans even for who lived in the same period. One of the prominent figures among the Ottoman princesses who lived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was Şah Sultan; the daughter of Selim I and aunt of Mihrimah Sultan. Şah Sultan's major sponsorship of architecture arose in Eyüp district and it includes a mosque and convent complex.<sup>50</sup> It is not as large scale as the complexes of her niece Mihrimah. Nevertheless; Şah Sultan was a different figure.

Mihrimah's niece İsmihan Sultan who was the daughter of Selim II sponsored to construction complex in the Kadırgalimanı with her husband Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. The complex in the Kadırgalimanı was close to their palace.<sup>51</sup> Another daughter of Selim II, Şah Sultan, and her husband Zal Mahmud Paşa did corporate for the patronage of architecture. They sponsored to construction of a complex in the Eyüp by Architect Sinan. Şah and Mahmud established also pious endowment. The love of Zal Mahmud Paşa and Şah Sultan was so intense. They got sick and died in closer times.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 296.

<sup>49</sup> Peirce, *Empress of the East*, 19.

<sup>50</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 294.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, 331.

<sup>52</sup> BOA. C. EV. 00012.00594/1; BOA. İ. EV. 00012. 00043/1; BOA. İE.ENB.00007.00719/1; Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Künhü'l Ahbar*, ed. Ali Çavuşoğlu (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2019), 415b 898; Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevi*

The patronage of architecture of two sisters İsmihan Sultan and Şah Sultan existed through the corporation with their husbands. It might be because of the higher income and wealth of Ottoman princesses in comparison to their husbands for patronage of architecture. Nevertheless, despite the more significant contributions of İsmihan Sultan and Şah Sultan, their roles were eclipsed by their husbands. Their contributions were erased, and these complexes were named after their husbands.<sup>53</sup> The complexes of these daughters of Ottoman sultans were constructed by the Architect Sinan which, was one of the major features of the sixteenth century.

#### **1.4 Exercise the Power: Involvement in State Affairs**

A state of setting women apart from men led to division based on gender, between public and private spheres. Ottoman imperial women lived in the private sphere mostly. On the other hand, it is not true to indicate Ottoman imperial women to the harem.<sup>54</sup> They lived in the private sphere, imperial residence, however, they got a chance to be influential. Their influence went beyond harem through involvement in state affairs. The approach of narrowing the roles of imperial women to the family issues and subordinating them to male members of the royal family seems not true. Moreover, the involvement of the Ottoman imperial women in politics and exercising power was not prohibited.<sup>55</sup> The daughters of Ottoman sultans could participate in the sharing of imperial power by being part of a small organized group that was interested in politics and being influential on state affairs. This section of the present chapter will discuss how Ottoman princesses involved in politics through factions.

Ottoman imperial women started to exercise political power in the sixteenth century more than in previous centuries which was primarily because of an increase in closeness to the sultan through the centralized style of government. The imperial family centralized in the capital and got closer to the sultan during the reign of

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*Tarihi* Volume 1. ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal. (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981), 309-310.

<sup>53</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 372.

<sup>54</sup> Leslie Peirce, "Beyond the Harem Walls: Ottoman Royal Women and the Exercise of Power," in *Servants of the Dynasty: Palace Women in World History*, ed. Anne Walthall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 82.

<sup>55</sup> Peirce, "Beyond the Harem Walls: Ottoman Royal Women and the Exercise of Power," 84.

Süleyman I.<sup>56</sup> During his reign; Hürrem, his favorite concubine and legal wife later on, abandoned the common tradition which was an accompaniment of the prince by his mother during his principedom in the province. In the following time after the death of Hürrem who was known as the influencer on Süleyman and a passionate lover of him, the proximity of Mihrimah to Süleyman increased. His love for his only daughter gave chance to be influential to Mihrimah. The status of Mihrimah can be explained through the relations of Süleyman with his favorites. He was promoting his favorites which was not a familiar situation.<sup>57</sup> He found different relation type with his favorites. Furthermore, Mihrimah was born into a power struggle and this situation led to learning the necessity of being powerful and exercising power. Her mother Hürrem had dedicated herself to increasing her status among the favorites of the sultan and other royal women. She was involved in a rivalry with Mahidevran who was the mother of the Şehzade Mustafa, and had to sustain and increase her status.

It is hard to trace the positions of all the Ottoman princesses in sharing imperial sovereignty, exercising power, and participating in politics. It is not possible to present certain things on this issue for most of the Ottoman princesses. It is hard to know the involvement of another Ottoman princess in factions or the involvement of their mother in factions with their sons-in-law. Mihrimah was almost the most prominent Ottoman princess of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It seems that there was no influential and politically involved Ottoman princess as Mihrimah. She arises as a symbol of the glorious and powerful times of the empire. She is the Ottoman princess whom we can obtain the most information on her life among princesses of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. For these reasons, the discussion on the exercising power of Ottoman princesses through the factions is on the Mihrimah Sultan.

The cooperation and unity of Mihrimah with her husband Rüstem, and her mother Hürrem was interpreted as the creation of an alliance, which means faction. The major reason behind the alliance between them was staying in the capital of Hürrem. The marriage of Rüstem and Mihrimah was in favor of Rüstem who had a

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<sup>56</sup> *ibid*, 85-86.

<sup>57</sup> Isom-Verhaaren, "Mihrimah Sultan: A Princess Constructs Ottoman Dynastic Identity," 151.

chance to increase his status and power. It was also advantageous for the promotion of one of the sons of Hürrem as successor.<sup>58</sup> Bernardo Navagero mentions the desire of Rüstem that his brother-in-laws get the throne after Süleyman I. Rüstem worked for this wish with his mother-in-law Hürrem who desired accession of one of her sons to the throne. She denigrated Mustafa to Süleyman. Navagero claims that Rüstem wanted Prince Selim as a successor of Süleyman.<sup>59</sup> Venetian ambassador Navagero states that Mustafa was loved by the public and servants of the Sultan, and common tendency to see Mustafa as a successor of Süleyman. Furthermore, Mustafa was treating everyone well and giving gifts. Navagero says that in addition to these characteristics, Mustafa has never acted against his father.<sup>60</sup>

Hürrem Sultan was seen as the main cause of Mustafa's tragic death at the hands of his father. As Busbecq mentions, Hürrem needed Rüstem's help to eliminate Mustafa as Sultan Süleyman's heir. Hürrem Sultan wanted to keep her sons away from fratricide in the situation of Mustafa's accession. Busbecq implies that Hürrem was responsible for Mustafa's execution. The alliance between Hürrem and her son-in-law Rüstem served her political interests. Hürrem took advantage of his position and intelligence.<sup>61</sup>

Hürrem Sultan and Rüstem Paşa were blamed for the execution of Şehzade Mustafa, and their public image was not good. Rüstem was dismissed from the Grand Vizierate for his involvement in the execution of Şehzade Mustafa. After Rüstem Paşa's dismissal, Ahmed Paşa was appointed to the Grand Vizierate. However, Ahmed Paşa's reign as Grand Vizier did not last long as he was executed and Rüstem Paşa was reinstated as Grand Vizier. Rüstem Paşa's second appointment as Grand Vizier was made possible by the efforts of Mihrimah and her mother Hürrem. Gerlach highlights the influence of Mihrimah and Hürrem in the reappointment of Rüstem as Grand Vizier. In addition to this point, Gerlach mentions Ahmed Pasha's reluctance to

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<sup>58</sup> *ibid*, 155.

<sup>59</sup> Erhan Afyoncu, ed., *Venedik Elçilerinin Raporlarına Göre Kanuni ve Şehzade Mustafa*, trans. Pınar Gökpar and Elettra Ercolino (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2012), 42-43.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid*, 41-42.

<sup>61</sup> Ogier Ghislain Busbecq, *Türk Mektupları*, trans. Derin Türkömer (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), 31-32; Zahit Atçıl, "Why Did Süleyman the Magnificent Execute His Son Mustafa in 1553?," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 48, (2016): 68; Atçıl, "Osmanlı Hanedanı'nın Evlilik Politikası ve Mihrimah Sultan'ın Evliliği," 16.

become grand vizier because of Hürrem's involvement in state affairs. Hürrem and Mihrimah denigrated Ahmed Pasha to Sultan Süleyman.<sup>62</sup> The cruel end from which Ahmed could not escape is described by witnesses as a way to make Rüstem grand vizier again. Hürrem and Mihrimah looked after their interests. According to Mustafa Ali, Ahmed Paşa was innocent and there was no reason for his execution. He judges Rüstem's appointment as Grand Vizier for the second time as mekr-i zenan (women's trick). He suggests that Rüstem reached this rank thanks to Hürrem and Mihrimah.<sup>63</sup>

The Venetian ambassador Bernardo Navagero shares the same view as Mustafa Ali. Navagero highlights the influence and efforts of both Mihrimah and Hürrem to promote Rüstem to higher ranks. The reason for Rüstem's rapid rise was the influence of Mihrimah and Hürrem. It was with their help that ensured his rise to the top.<sup>64</sup> The Venetian bailo after the Navagero, Domenico Trevisano, points out the efforts of Mihrimah for her husband's career and shares his ideas about Rüstem Paşa. Trevisano predicted that Rüstem Paşa would be appointed Grand Vizier for a second time and that he would be more respectful and influential. However, despite Rüstem's grooming, there was no intimacy between İbrahim and Süleyman. Although Rüstem Paşa was the son-in-law, he could not be as close to Süleyman as İbrahim. He could not enter or leave the palace without the Sultan's permission and could not act on his own.<sup>65</sup> Rüstem Paşa seemed to take advantage of the situation of being the husband of the Sultan's daughter. In parallel with this claim, Alvise Renier mentions that Hürrem and Mihrimah could make the Sultan do whatever they wanted.<sup>66</sup>

Mihrimah's entry into politics is also evident in her diplomatic efforts with the King of Poland, Sigismund II Augustus. Mihrimah Sultan and Hürrem Sultan communicated with Sigismund II through letters. They sent letters to Sigismund II

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<sup>62</sup> Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü 1577-1578* Volume 2, trans. Turkis Noyan (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006), 729.

<sup>63</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Künhü'l Ahbar*, 360a 715; Atçıl, "Osmanlı Hanedanı'nın Evlilik Politikası ve Mihrimah Sultan'ın Evliliği," 16.

<sup>64</sup> Afyoncu, *Venedik Elçilerinin Raporlarına Göre Kanuni ve Şehzade Mustafa*, 52, 59-60.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, 132, 134.

<sup>66</sup> Erhan Afyoncu, ed., *Venedik Elçilerinin Raporlarına Göre Kanuni ve Pargalı İbrahim Paşa*, trans. Pınar Gökpar and Elettra Ercolino (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2012), 143.

because he acceded to the throne in 1548.<sup>67</sup> It seems that the possible reason for this was not a lack of power and authority, but rather an attempt to maintain good relations with the King of Poland and Mihrimah's active involvement in diplomacy.<sup>68</sup> The origin of Hürrem may have paved the way for this diplomatic effort.<sup>69</sup> Mihrimah was also involved in the struggle between her two brothers, Selim and Bayezid. She tried to minimise the tension between them. Hürrem's death opened the way for Mihrimah to become Sultan Süleyman's advisor in Hürrem's absence, which was deeply felt by Süleyman as he lost his love and closest person. In Hürrem's absence, the scope of Mihrimah's power was widened and she was promoted to a position that replaced that of her mother. After Hürrem Sultan died without seeing which of her sons would ascend to the throne, Mihrimah began to make efforts in this struggle. All daughters of Ottoman sultans could influence or demand something from the sultans and use their position for something, but Mihrimah was a suitable and sure example of it.

Mihrimah's circumstances as an Ottoman princess gave her power and space. She owed her position to the fact that she was the only daughter of one of the most powerful Ottoman sultans. In addition to this, the position and status of her mother, Hürrem Sultan, played a crucial role in shaping Mihrimah's circumstances, character and career. Hürrem Sultan was the legal wife and only sexual partner of Süleyman I until around 1534. Hürrem's status increased after the marriage and there was no stronger rival. The main mentors and role models of Ottoman princesses, their mothers, influenced their careers. It seems that there was no such influential Ottoman princess as Mihrimah between the mid-fifteenth and the end of the seventeenth century. Moreover, there are no Ottoman princesses who can provide detailed information about their lives as Mihrimah Sultan. She is different from other Ottoman princesses who lived in those centuries. In those years, there were not enough sources about the lives of Ottoman princesses, except for a few. It is difficult to clarify the situations of Ottoman princesses except for the well-known ones. Mihrimah's career as an Ottoman princess may not reflect the circumstances, positions and status of all

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<sup>67</sup> Nejat Uçtum, "Hürrem ve Mihrimah Sultanların Polonya Kıracı II. Zigmund'a Yazdıkları Mektuplar," *Belleten* 44, 176 (1980): 708.

<sup>68</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 297.

<sup>69</sup> Uçtum, "Hürrem ve Mihrimah Sultanların Polonya Kıracı II. Zigmund'a Yazdıkları Mektuplar," 703, 715.

Ottoman princesses; however, Mihrimah's life reflects what we understand by being a princess of an imperial family.

Mihrimah continued her powerful and unique status during the reigns of her brother Selim II and her nephew Murad III. It is likely that her strong financial position strengthened her position and made her a respected figure. When Selim II ascended the throne, he needed Mihrimah's financial help to make payments, as he did not yet have access to the treasury. Mihrimah gave 50,000 gold to her brother Selim for cülus payments.<sup>70</sup> She did succeed in continuing her involvement in politics and sharing imperial power after the reign of her father with new alliances. Mihrimah picked Ahmed Paşa as the husband of her daughter Hümaşah Ayşe in 1561, and ally of herself. This seems like a natural result of her circumstances such as the lack of a loyal man in her family.<sup>71</sup> She attempted to sustain her powerful and politically influential status.

The situation of Mihrimah as being involved in politics and influential over her father and husband was not unique to her. However; it is true to claim that Mihrimah's set of circumstances was unique and nobody reached her status and became influential as Mihrimah. The daughters of Ottoman sultans were involved in politics by being influential over the decisions of sultans for the careers of their husbands. Venetian bailo Giovanni Moro and Lorenzo Bernardo highlight the effect of the sultans daughters in the appointments of their husbands. One of the daughters of Murad III, Ayşe had a contribution to her husband İbrahim Paşa's career. Ayşe was a negotiator between her husband and father. She requested forgiveness from her father for her husband.<sup>72</sup> The daughter of a sultan might attempt to get the favor and grace of the sultan again after dismissal. As Giovanni Moro tells Gevherhan, the sister of Murad III, was one of them who tried to remedy her husband Mehmed Paşa's situation after his dismissal.<sup>73</sup> The practices of involvement in state affairs did take place for the

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<sup>70</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* Volume 1, 43.

<sup>71</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 297-299. The name of Ayşe Hümaşah's husband is given as Semiz Ahmed Paşa. Zahit Atçıl, "Osmanlı Hanedanı'nın Evlilik Politikası ve Mihrimah Sultan'ın Evliliği," 21; Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 258; Feridun Emecen, "Semiz Ahmed Paşa," TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/semiz-ahmed-pasa> (07.05.2024).

<sup>72</sup> Erhan Afyoncu and Ahmet Önal, ed., *Venedik Elçilerini Raporlarına Göre Osmanlı'nın İhtişamlı Yılları*, trans. Erendiz Özbayoğlu (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2017), 58-59, 105.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid*, 59.

daughters of Ottoman sultans through the role of being a bridge between their husbands and fathers in general. They asked for something in their husbands' favour, such as appointment to higher ranks and exemption from discharge, punishment and dismissal..

### **1.5 Concluding Remarks**

Ottoman princesses were members of the dynasty who had the opportunity to exercise power, but not as much power as royal male members of the dynasty and queen mothers, and *haseki* concubines in some cases. The area to exercise power for Ottoman princesses was not as extensive as the opportunity to exercise power for other prominent figures of the imperial family. Ottoman princesses arose as shareholders of imperial power but in a limited way. The area of Ottoman princesses to exercise power mostly intersected with benevolence. They experienced exercising power through the patronage system and pious endowments, which carried the intention of benevolence as a common way of using their wealth. The information obtained about Ottoman princesses who lived in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, is mostly about whom they married and their activities on benevolence.

Ottoman chronicles written in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries or covering these years do not prefer to focus on the daughters of Ottoman sultans and do not provide detailed information, but of course, there are some exceptions. There are no detailed primary sources that describe the lives of the daughters of Ottoman daughters who lived in these centuries. Therefore, it is not possible to talk at length about the lives of Ottoman princesses. The most detailed subjects that can be talked about Ottoman princesses are their patronage of architecture, pious endowments, and marriages. It is possible to discuss what was like to be an Ottoman princess in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries and be a female member of the Ottoman dynasty in general terms.

Being the daughter of the Ottoman Sultan did not mean having and exercising unlimited power, being the most prominent woman and receiving a large income. It seems to be true that there was no standardisation of opportunities for all Ottoman princesses. They lived different lives from each other because they experienced being

an Ottoman princess under different circumstances in different centuries. The conditions that contributed to their power were not completely equal for all Ottoman princesses. The economic conditions of all the Ottoman princesses were not the same. Moreover, the political circumstances of the periods in which the Ottoman princesses lived affected their participation in the sharing of imperial power and their access to high incomes. Being an Ottoman princess varied from century to century and from sultan to sultan. There was no single model of an Ottoman princess, and it seems that there were different models of Ottoman princesses.

The main focus of this study is an examination of the marriages of Ottoman princesses, including the circumstances of these unions and the subsequent lives of the couples. The marriages of sultans and princes are analyzed first, followed by an examination of the marriages of Ottoman princesses. The marriages of Ottoman princesses between the mid-fifteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, which consisted of marriages with statesmen of slave origin, will be discussed in detail in the last chapter of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER 2: MARRIAGE POLICIES OF THE OTTOMAN DYNASTY: CHANGING TRENDS THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES**

The scope of this chapter is limited to the marriages of Ottoman sultans and princes. The purpose of this chapter is to provide background information on the relationships and consorts of Ottoman sultans. First of all, it is debatable to what extent it is correct to talk about the marriage policy of the Ottoman Empire. Is it correct to speak of a policy? Were the marriages and mate preferences of the male members of the dynasty the result of some adopted criteria? Was there standardization, even for a short period of time? If there was a policy, was it coherent and consistent? Was there a policy from the beginning of the state? To what extent did the marriage of an Ottoman ruler reflect the principles of dynastic marriage? Moreover, the term marriage is also controversial because relationships with concubines were not considered to be marriage. Marriage refers to the legal relationship between a woman and a man. These issues are discussed in this chapter.

### **2.1 Relationship Ways and Consorts of Ottoman Sultans until Suleyman I**

The vague picture of the marriages and consort preferences of the early Ottoman sultans makes it difficult to trace the names and origins of the partners, as well as the date and duration of their marriages. The lack of adequate primary and secondary sources of information and the uncertainty on this issue, especially for the early Ottoman sultans and princes, emerges as a major problem. One of the primary sources; Ottoman chronicles are not always interested in the wives of Ottoman sultans. Ottoman chronicle writers deliberately chose not to describe the family life of the sultans, which was considered a private matter. They tend to give limited information

about the marriages or partners of a small number of Ottoman sultans. The general picture of the mate preferences of Ottoman Sultans points to polygamy. They preferred relationships with more than one woman. Marriage with more than one woman, up to four, was accepted under Islamic law. However, a Muslim man could have an unlimited number of concubines. Early Ottoman sultans and their sons married Muslim and non-Muslim women, producing members of the dynasty. Their marriages were inter-dynastic. The daughters of neighbouring dynasties, Anatolian principalities and Christian dynasties were given to Ottoman sultans and princes. The creation of family ties through inter-dynastic marriages had political and diplomatic purposes. Over time, however, marriage as a legal form of relationship lost its importance and concubines took its place. The Ottoman sultans abandoned their preference for legal relationships and began to choose concubines rather than marriages. The dynastic marriage policy will be examined by looking at the wives of the Ottoman sultans between Osman I and Sultan Ibrahim.

It is not possible to present certain information on marriages or relationship way of Osman I. The wife or one of the wives of Osman was the daughter of Şeyh Edebalı. The major source of information comes from the dream narrative which is a crucial part of the empire's founding story. The famous dream narrative was like the resilient founding story of the empire and began to be told in the late fifteenth century.<sup>74</sup> Ottomans tried to legitimize and make stronger their ruling thanks to such a narrative. The well-known narrative creates a chance to trace the information on Osman's wife. There are two different versions of it that various Ottoman chronicles narrate.

In the most told one, the dream belonged to Osman I. In his dream moon arose from the breast of Edebalı. At that point, the moon came to the breast of Osman. After that, a tree grew from his navel and its shade went around the world. There were mountains under the shade and each mountain had streams. Osman told his dream to Şeyh Edebalı, Şeyh interpreted the dream as given sign of the founding of a new state, and the successes of Osman and his successors. Şeyh Edebalı also said that her

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<sup>74</sup> Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923*. (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 2.

daughter and Osman shall be married for the continuation of generations, raids, conquests, and holy war. Aşıkpaşazade was the earliest Ottoman chronicle that tells a dream like this. He gives the name of Edebalı's daughter and Osman's wife as Malhun.<sup>75</sup> Before him, Ahmedi doesn't mention the dream narrative in his *Iskendername*.<sup>76</sup> The suggestion of Edebalı on the marriage with his daughter has been told by chronicle writers to prove how reputable and legitimate the Ottoman dynasty was.<sup>77</sup>

For the second version of the dream narrative, a dream belonged to the father of Osman Beg; Ertuğrul. In the Anonymous *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman* which was edited by Frederick Giese, Ertuğrul shares his dream with Şeyh Edebalı. Edebalı says you will have a son and you should name him Osman. He would be successful and his successes would be continued by his successors. Şeyh Edebalı interpreted this dream and said that his daughter and Ertuğrul's son would be married. This account doesn't mention the name of Osman Beg's wife, but the mother of Orhan is mentioned as the daughter of Şeyh Edebalı.<sup>78</sup> The dream narrative gives preliminary information on the Osman's marriage.

Alderson mentions two women as Osman's wives, but it seems that he is not sure about their names. He mentions two different names for the two wives of Osman; Bala-Rabia Hatun and Mal-Kemeriye Hatun. Bala-Rabia was the daughter of Şeyh Edebalı, and Mal-Kemeriye Hatun was the daughter of Ömer Beg.<sup>79</sup> The mother of Orhan was Mal Hatun as Alderson mentions, however; Aşıkpaşazade sees the daughter of Şeyh Edebalı as the mother of Orhan. He mentions the Şeyh Edebalı as the

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<sup>75</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları'nın Tarihi: Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*. ed. Kemal Yavuz and M. A. Yekta Saraç. (Istanbul: K Kitaplığı, 2003), 57-58.

<sup>76</sup> Hüseyin Nihal Atsız, *Üç Osmanlı Tarihi* (Istanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2011), 137-165; Ahmedi added part to *Iskendername* as *Dâsitân-ı Tevârîh-i Mülûk-i Âl-i Osman* that tells the Ottoman history until the reign of Mehmed I. Ahmedi gave this part to Süleyman Çelebi who was son of Bayezid I.

<sup>77</sup> Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 32.

<sup>78</sup> Anonim, *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*, ed. Nihat Azamat. (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1992), 10.

<sup>79</sup> A.D. Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 163.

grandfather of Orhan.<sup>80</sup> In the waqfiya of Orhan Beg, Mal Hatun's name is mentioned as one of the people who were witnesses. Her name was given as Mal Hatun bint Ömer Beg. This waqfiya shows that she was alive after the death of Osman, therefore she could not be a daughter of Edebalı.<sup>81</sup> The daughter of Edebalı and the wife of Osman died when Osman was alive. Aşıkpaşazade's account includes that Osman witnessed both deaths of his wife and his father-in-law Edebalı.<sup>82</sup> The detail on the waqfiya of Orhan indicates that Mal Hatun bint Ömer Bey was a different person and mother of Orhan. Therefore, Osman could be married to two women. It is possible to talk about the consciousness of consort preferences whether Osman married once or twice. Osman preferred to marry ethnically and religiously familiar people to him.

Orhan's marriages were different from those of his father. Orhan's preferences created one of the most important aspects of the empire; inter-dynastic marriage and marriage with the non-Muslim woman. Orhan's preferences changed the way the Ottomans married. The pragmatic side of marriage, such as political and diplomatic advantages, became apparent in inter-dynastic marriages. The marriages with daughters and sisters of important political figures show that the Ottoman sultans and their sons married on purpose. During Orhan's reign, non-Muslim brides entered the dynasty and became the mothers of the following Ottoman princes and sultans.

The existence of Nilüfer and Asporça as wives of Orhan I is evidenced by Ottoman primary sources. As Ottoman chronicle writers tell the story of Osman's marriage with Şeyh Edebalı's daughter and dream narrative they also talk about the marriage of Orhan I and Nilüfer. Aşıkpaşazade gives detailed information on their marriage. Nilüfer was the daughter of the Byzantine governor of Yarhisar and she would marry the Byzantine governor of Bilecik. Osman was the guest of their wedding ceremony as well as other governors. However; they planned a trap for Osman Beg. He was informed by Köse Mihal that there would be an assault on him. Osman Beg went to the place where the wedding ceremony would be arranged. He attacked and

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<sup>80</sup> *ibid*, 165; Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*, 92.

<sup>81</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Gazi Orhan Bey Vakfiyesi," *Belleten* 5/19 (1941): 284.

<sup>82</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 92.

killed the Byzantine governor of Bilecik. Then Osman captured the bride of the governor. Osman Beg took Nilüfer to his son Orhan.<sup>83</sup> The marriage story of Orhan and Nilüfer doesn't exist in the Byzantine sources. Besides, there is no existing information among the Byzantine sources about Nilüfer Hatun.<sup>84</sup> Nilüfer was the mother of Murad I. According to Aşıkpaşazade, she was also the mother of Süleyman Paşa.<sup>85</sup> Ottoman chronicles after the Aşıkpaşazade; such as Neşri and Idris Bitlisi tell the same marriage story as Aşıkpaşazade. Idris-i Bitlisi highlights the beauty and benefactor of Nilüfer.<sup>86</sup>

Asporça Hatun was one of the women of Orhan. It is established beyond doubt that there was a woman named Asporça, and she was the wife of Orhan. The certainty about Asporça comes from waqfiya which belongs to Asporça Hatun. The waqfiya of Asporça Hatun dated 1323 and was written to grant lands for Asporça Hatun.<sup>87</sup> Except for this waqfiya; early Ottoman chronicles don't mention the marriage of Asporça Hatun and Orhan I. Asporça is mentioned as the third wife of Orhan. Ibrahim, Fatma, and Selçuk were born to Asporça Hatun.<sup>88</sup>

The marriage of Orhan and Theodora who was the daughter of Byzantine emperor John VI Kantakouzenos was written by Byzantine sources, however; most of the Ottoman chronicle writers don't talk about this marriage. Dukas gives details about this marriage. John VI Kantakouzenos sent ambassadors to Orhan with a request for help in 1345. Byzantine emperor offered to give his daughter to Orhan. Orhan accepted to marry Theodora, they married in 1346.<sup>89</sup> Orhan was attracted by Theodora. What's more, she did not convert to Islam, even though this marriage was not approved by the

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<sup>83</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 67-70.

<sup>84</sup> Feridun Emecen, "Nilüfer Hatun" TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/nilufer-hatun>, 124.

<sup>85</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 70.

<sup>86</sup> Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihan-Nüma: Neşri Tarihi* Volume 1, ed. Faik Reşit Unat and Mehmed A. Köymen. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1949), pp. 98-105. Vural Genç, "İdris Bitlisi Heşt Bihişt Osman Gazi Dönemi," (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 2007), 218-219.

<sup>87</sup> Kamil Kepecioğlu, *Bursa Kütüğü* Volume 1, (Bursa: Bursa Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2009), 146.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid*, 146.

<sup>89</sup> Dukas, *Bizans Tarihi*, trans. V. L. Mirmiroğlu (Istanbul: İstanbul Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1956), 19-20; Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 55.

Church.<sup>90</sup> John VI Kantakouzenos and Orhan looked after their interests. Orhan supported him, and their relationship strengthened through the marriage. The marriage of Theodora and Orhan led to the creation of alliance through family ties. The need for the Byzantine Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos to ally with Orhan shows the importance and success of the Ottoman dynasty. In addition to this point; their marriage proves how marriage was accepted and existed at that time. Political and diplomatic intentions emerged as the main reason for the marriages.

One of the women whom Orhan also married, was Eftendize or Eftandise. She was mentioned as the daughter of a Muslim man named Mahmud Alp.<sup>91</sup> As Alderson demonstrates Orhan was also married to Theodora/Maria and Bilun.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless; there is no information on them. It is not obligatory to know the names of women whom Orhan married. It is important to know his marriage ways. It seems that; he preferred legal relationships with non-Muslim and Muslim women, and there was a noticeable difference between Osman and Orhan in terms of their marriages. Orhan differed from Osman because he married non-Muslim women, unlike his father.

It seems that the ways of relationships of Murad I did not differ dramatically from those of his father, and he chose the legal way of relationships with women who were from both Muslim and non-Muslim neighbouring dynasties.<sup>93</sup> Tamara or Mara was the daughter of the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Shishman. Gülçiçek is considered to be the mother of Bayezid and a woman of non-Muslim origin. She had another husband besides Murad I, as her waqfiya shows that she has another son who is not the son of Murad.<sup>94</sup> Most of the Ottoman chronicle writers don't mention the marriage or marriages of Murad I. For example, Aşıkpaşazade's *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, which is an early example of Ottoman chronicles, doesn't mention the marriage of Murad I. The chronicle writer of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Neşri, mentions the marriage of Murad and the daughter of Tekvur-ı Konstantiniyye.<sup>95</sup> Neşri's statement is

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<sup>90</sup> Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 203-204.

<sup>91</sup> Kamil Kepecioğlu, *Bursa Kütüğü* Volume 2, (Bursa: Bursa Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2010), 19.

<sup>92</sup> Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 165.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid*, 166; Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 61.

<sup>94</sup> Kepecioğlu, *Bursa Kütüğü* Volume 1, 115-116.

<sup>95</sup> Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihan-Nüma: Neşri Tarihi* Volume 1, 237-239.

ambiguous because he uses *tekvur*, which means governor of a province. However, it is not possible to provide a basis for this claim in other Ottoman chronicles.

The facts provided about Bayezid's marriages are more detailed than those of his predecessors. It is more possible to obtain details and proven information about his relationships. However, occasional confusion in the sources makes it difficult to investigate some of Bayezid I's marriages.<sup>96</sup>

During the reign of his father Murad, Bayezid I married the daughter of Süleyman, who was the leader of Beylik of Germiyan. Bayezid I married her in 1381 which is mentioned by Aşıkpaşazade. He gives her name as Sultan Hatun. This marriage was proposed by Süleyman Beg.<sup>97</sup> Probably; Bayezid I married for the first time. There was a dowry tradition that the bride should take something mostly land from her own family. Devletşah did bring lands as a dowry. Murad I extended the borders of the state thanks to the marriage of Devletşah and Bayezid. Kütahya, Simav, Eğrigöz and Tavşanlı joined to Ottoman State. Aşıkpaşazade gives the date of this marriage as 1381.<sup>98</sup> It seems that both sides had their interests at heart. Suleyman Bey needed support against the Karamanid attacks. The main aim of Suleyman's marriage proposal was to find a powerful ally. The marriage of Bayezid and Devletşah meant new lands without any effort.

Mileva Olivera Lazarevic or Despina was the other wife of Bayezid I. She was the daughter of Serbian King Lazar I. Ottoman sources mention her father's name with the name of her grandfather. Aşıkpaşazade mentions her as the daughter of Vılandoğlu.<sup>99</sup> Bayezid and Mileva married after the death of their fathers. Murad I died in the Battle of Kosova, in 1389. Bayezid wanted to take revenge for his father's death and ordered the death of the Serbian king who was the father of Mileva.<sup>100</sup> It seems that Bayezid married Despina shortly after he acceded to the throne. Their marriage

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<sup>96</sup> Alderson presents with eight wives of Bayezid I. He gives the names of six; Angelina, Devletşah, Maria, Despina, Hafise, and Maria. Two of them are unknown. He touches on their parents' names. Except Devletşah others were non-Muslim in origin; Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 168.

<sup>97</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 117.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid*, 120.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid*, 132

<sup>100</sup> Mustafa Çağlayan Keskin, "Osmanlı Sarayı'nda Bir Sırp Prenses: Mileva Olivera Lazarevic," *bilig*, 82 (2017 Summer): 272.

was the result of an agreement that was favorable for both sides. The new Serbian king who was the brother of Mileva, celebrated Bayezid's accession to the throne with gifts.<sup>101</sup> The marriage of Bayezid and Despina is a suitable example of a dynastic marital policy, how the marriages of Ottoman sultans and their sons were based on political affairs, and how the Ottoman dynasty used marriage as a tool to reach their interests. An unfamiliar and traumatic fate of Bayezid I as a result of defeat against Timur created a negative narrative concerning Despina and marriage of her with Bayezid. This wife of Bayezid was accepted and blamed for his bad fortune which is seen in the Ottoman chronicles. There will be discussion and investigation on this issue.

The names of women except Despina and Devletşah are not included in Ottoman chronicles. Ottoman chronicles give a written account of the marriages of Bayezid I with Germiyan Süleyman Bey's daughter and Serbian King Lazar's daughter. The existence of Hafsa Hatun as the daughter of Isa Bey of Aydınoğulları is certain because of the mosque, fountain, and convent of dervishes that were built by Hafsa. It is not clear that she was married to Bayezid. There is no information about the marriage of Bayezid, and Hafsa in Ottoman chronicles. Çağatay Uluçay gives three names as wives of Bayezid I and claims that there is no information on names given by Alderson except Despina, Hafsa, and Devletşah.<sup>102</sup>

We cannot come across information on the partners of Mehmed I in the Ottoman chronicles. The narrative on him and his period mostly concerned military activities and interlude period of dynasty. Ottoman chronicle writer Mehmed Neşri mentions Dulkadiroğlu as the father-in-law of Mehmed I, but Neşri doesn't give information on the bride and other details.<sup>103</sup> Sultan Mehmed married the daughter of Nasır al-Din who was the ruler of Beylik of Dulkadir, as a result of an alliance between them. The son of Nasır al-Din; Süleyman Bey supported Mehmed I in the struggle

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<sup>101</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları'nın Tarihi: Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 132

<sup>102</sup> Çağatay Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları*, 23.

<sup>103</sup> Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihan-Nüma: Neşri Tarihi* Volume 2, ed. Faik Reşit Unat and Mehmed A. Köymen. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1957), 501.

with his brother during the interlude period.<sup>104</sup> Alderson gives the name of this woman as Emine and her father's name as Suli from Beylik of Dulkadir.<sup>105</sup> During the interlude period, Mehmed sought to find an ally to be successful against his brothers. In order to secure the throne, he was compelled to seek the support of one of the Anatolian principalities. This resulted in the founding of an alliance through the marriage between Mehmed and Emine.

Kumru Hatun is seen as another consort of Mehmed I. It is proved by the waqfiya of his daughter, Selçuk Sultan. Her mother's name is mentioned as Kumru Hatun binti Abdullah.<sup>106</sup> This type of expression shows Kumru Hatun's origin as a concubine. However, her father's actual name may be Abdullah. Şükrullah who witnessed the reign of Mehmed I, mentions that Mehmed I had five sons and the mothers of these sons were concubines.<sup>107</sup> His claim is not clear because Mehmed also married a Muslim woman from Beylik of Dulkadir. Moreover, the mothers of all the sons could not have been the same woman. Leaving aside this issue, Şükrullah's claim strengthened the argument that Mehmed had at least one wife of concubine origin. However, the legal status of this relationship is not clear. Alderson gives two names as wives of Mehmed I, and Alderson is not correct in the point of not mentioning Kumru Hatun, because the existence of Kumru and her being one of Mehmed's women is proven by the waqfiya of Selçuk Sultan.<sup>108</sup> The existence of bride from Beylik of Candar, and Kumru Hatun is almost certain. The situations of Mehmed's consorts were not clear. It is not possible to go one step further to know more detailed information concerning consorts and relationship preferences of Mehmed I.

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<sup>104</sup> J. H. Mordtmann, "Dhu'l Kadr" in *Encyclopedia of Islam* Volume 1, ed. M. TH. Housman, T. W. Arnold, R. Basset, and R. Hartmann (Leyden: Brill, 1918), 960.

<sup>105</sup> Alderson, *The Structure of The Ottoman Dynasty*, 169.

<sup>106</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Çelebi Mehmed'in Kızı Selçuk Hatun Kiminle Evlendi?," *Bellekten* 21/82 (April 1957): 254.

<sup>107</sup> Atsız, *Üç Osmanlı Tarihi*, 226-227. Şükrullah uses the word kırnak which means concubine. However; he doesn't give details on woman of Mehmed I.

<sup>108</sup> Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 169; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Çelebi Mehmed'in Kızı Selçuk Hatun Kiminle Evlendi?" 254.

The situation of Murad II, in terms of his relationships, were not different from his predecessors. He married both Muslim and non-Muslim women from neighboring dynasties. The same way of marriage was continued by him. Alderson talks about the five wives of Sultan Murad. According to him; three of Murad's wives; Hundi Hatun, Hadice or Halima and Hüma, were Muslim. One of the wives of Murad was unnamed. Another wife of him Mara was the daughter of Serbian king George Brankovich. Murad I also married the daughter of Ibrahim II who ruled the Beylik of Candar.<sup>109</sup> Çağatay Uluçay names four women as the wives of Murad II; Hatice Hatun, Hüma Hatun, Yeni Hatun and Mara.<sup>110</sup>

Murad II decided to move against Principality of Candar and annexed some lands of Principality of Candar. İsfendiyar Bey who was the ruler of this principality sent ambassador for peace. Moreover, he offered to give his granddaughter in marriage to Murad II. İsfendiyar saw Murad's good fortune and the increasing power of his state. Murad accepted the offer and married his granddaughter. Aşıkpaşazade doesn't give the name of the bride and the date of their marriage. The bride of Murad II came from Kastamonu to Bursa for the wedding ceremony.<sup>111</sup> Neşri highlights the power of Murad II in his marriage story. According to Neşri; İsfendiyar tried to prevent Murad's attack by offering him a bride.<sup>112</sup> Oruç Beg says this wife of Murad was the daughter of İsfendiyar. Murad moved to Kastamonu and Sinop against İsfendiyar who was defeated and Murad took his daughter as a result of the peace agreement.<sup>113</sup> Murad and İsfendiyar looked after their interests. They saw marriage as a solution to their problems and a means of bringing peace. The main advantage of marriage was the founding alliance to avoid acting against their interests.

Hüma Hatun is mentioned as one of the wives of Murad II. There is confusion and disagreement about her identity and origin. Sakaoğlu argues that Hüma was undoubtedly the mother of Mehmed II, but her origin is disputed.<sup>114</sup> The seventeenth

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<sup>109</sup> Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 170.

<sup>110</sup> Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları*, 31-35.

<sup>111</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 174-176.

<sup>112</sup> Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihan-Nüma Neşri Tarihi* Volume 2, 575-579.

<sup>113</sup> Atsız, *Üç Osmanlı Tarihi*, 67.

<sup>114</sup> Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 125.

century historian, Peçevi talks about the origin of Mehmed II's mother that the mother of Mehmed II was the daughter of a French king in origin and captured by pirates. She joined the harem of Murad II. She converted to Islam when she was pregnant with Mehmed II. He heard information about the origin of Mehmed II's mother from the French ambassador. The French ambassador claimed that there was a kinship between the Ottoman sultans after Mehmed II and the French king.<sup>115</sup> However; being French and the daughter of a French king does not make sense, because Peçevi heard this story when it had been almost a hundred years since Mehmed II was born. Dukas describes Mehmed II's mother as a concubine.<sup>116</sup> The undated and unnamed waqfiya does not mention the name of Mehmed II's mother but refers to her Hatun binti Abdullah. This waqfiya is seen as evidence of the origin of Mehmed II's mother and Hüma Hatun as well.<sup>117</sup> Probably; Hüma was a concubine and non-Muslim in origin, and her relationship with Murad II did not result in marriage.

Murad II also married Mara, the daughter of Serbian king George Brankovich, in 1435.<sup>118</sup> The Serbian king offered to give his daughter Mara in marriage in order to avoid Murad's demand for Serbian land. When Murad II returned to Edirne after his military campaigns in Hungary, he wanted to bring the bride with him and sent his vizier to Serbia. Dukas mentions that lavish wedding ceremonies were held in Edirne.<sup>119</sup> In contrast to Dukas, Aşıkpaşazade mentions that Mara came to Edirne for the wedding ceremony; however, Sultan Murad did not want to organize a wedding ceremony for the reason that arranging a ceremony for a non-Muslim man's daughter was unnecessary. Moreover, he did not accept the dowry of Mara that was given by the Serbian king.<sup>120</sup> This situation seems uncommon because previous Ottoman sultans accepted the dowry of brides. George Brankovich was under threat by Murad II. Therefore; he tried to find a middle ground with Murad. The marriage of Murad

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<sup>115</sup> Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi* Volume 1, ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal. (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981), 244-245.

<sup>116</sup> Dukas, *Bizans Tarihi*, 140.

<sup>117</sup> Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları*, 32-33; Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 128-129.

<sup>118</sup> Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453*, 366.

<sup>119</sup> Dukas, *Bizans Tarihi*, 124-126.

<sup>120</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 194.

and Mara was arranged for political and diplomatic purposes. The political interests became apparent regarding Murad's marriages.

Mehmed II and Sitti Hatun married in the reign of Murad II which was the possible first marriage of Mehmed II. Sitti was the daughter of Süleyman Beg who was the ruler of Beylik of Dulkadir. The relationship between Mehmed and Sitti was a legally recognized union. Murad II decided to take the daughter of Süleyman Beg. He wanted to establish kinship with the Anatolian principality. His decision seemed strategic. Aşıkpaşazade and Neşri tell the marriage of Mehmed with the same narrative. He sees Beylik of Dulkadir and Süleyman Bey trustful and worth Ottoman dynasty to become relatives. Murad II sent someone to Beylik of Dulkadir, Albostan/Elbistan, southeast of Anatolia. They chose a bride among the daughters of Süleyman Beg. Sitti Hatun came to Edirne.<sup>121</sup> It was around 1449. Murad II needed the help of Dulkadir in Amasya against Kara Yusuf and the leader of Beylik of Karaman. The magnificent wedding, which was held in abundance and with many gifts, was in Edirne.<sup>122</sup> Oruç Beg gives the name of the bride as Sultanzade who was the daughter of Süleyman Bey from Beylik of Dulkadir.<sup>123</sup>

To this point; it is hard to know how many times Mehmed II married. The large number of women with whom Mehmed was said to have had a relationship indicates that the majority of them were concubines. The way their names are recorded is evidence of this situation. Mehmed II legally married only once, as Ottoman chronicles indicate. This was before his reign, and he did not marry during his reign. It would appear that the earlier sultans were less tended to take concubines than Mehmed II. He married and had a relationship with concubines. It is not possible to present certain information regarding the consorts and relationship preferences of Ottoman sultans, because there is lack of primary sources on consorts and marriages of Ottoman sultans. On the other hand; the period after the Mehmed II seemed as the period following Mehmed II appears to have constituted a pivotal point in terms of the

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<sup>121</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 212-213; Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihan-Nüma: Neşri Tarihi* Volume 2, 675-677.

<sup>122</sup> Dukas, *Bizans Tarihi*, 136-137.

<sup>123</sup> Atsız, *Üç Osmanlı Tarihi*, 84.

cessation of inter-dynastic marriages and the increased prevalence of concubines, in comparison to previous period.

The information about the consorts of Bayezid II is not clear. There is confusion concerning names and preliminary information on them. It is not true, and possible to talk definitely and certainly concerning women of Bayezid. Alderson gives Ayşe, Gülruh, Mühürnaz, Şirin, Bülbül, Hüsnüşah and Nigar. He also gives one unknown name. According to him, Hüsnüşah was the daughter of Nasuh Karamanoğlu and Ayşe was the daughter of Alaeddin Bozkurt, the leader of Principality of Dulkadir.<sup>124</sup> Bostanzade Yahya mentions Ayşe as the daughter of Alaüddin, and mother of Selim I. He makes connection between the tendency of Bayezid to concubine and death of Ayşe Hatun. Bayezid preferred concubines as his consorts after the death of Ayşe.<sup>125</sup> Necdet Sakaoğlu points out that Bülbül, Hüsnüşah and Gülbahar were concubines because of their fathers' names.<sup>126</sup> The situation of Gülbahar Hatun as being concubine seems certain. This is indicated by the fact that her name appears as Gülbahar bint-i Abdüssamed in the archival documents.<sup>127</sup>

Most of the women with whom Bayezid got into relationships were concubines. Therefore we cannot reach detailed information. In addition to this point; it is hard to give certain information concerning whether Bayezid married or not. The relationships with concubines and having children from concubines are two apparent aspects of Bayezid's private life. Çağatay Uluçay mentions concubines and having children from them became permanent in Bayezid II's period.<sup>128</sup> It appears that both marriage and inter-dynastic marriage were terminated. The way of relationship, choosing concubines and having children from them, were followed by his successors. It seems that this way have become an only way of relationship within the reign of Bayezid II. On the other hand; this was not unique to period of Bayezid II. Ottoman sultans before him, were in relationship with concubines but it seems that this was not to the same extent.

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<sup>124</sup> Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 171.

<sup>125</sup> Bostanzade Yahya, *Duru Tarih*, ed. Necdet Sakaoğlu. (Istanbul: Alfa, 2016), 60.

<sup>126</sup> Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 183, 188-189.

<sup>127</sup> AE. SMMD. II. 00001

<sup>128</sup> Çağatay Uluçay, "II. Bayezid ve Ailesi," *Tarih Dergisi* 10, 14 (1959): 105-106.

It seems reasonable to conclude that relationships with concubines settled in the Ottoman dynasty and marriage was abandoned by time. This aspect is seen through the partner preferences of Selim I. The mother of Süleyman I is mentioned as Hafsa binti Abdulmuin as an expression indicating that she was a concubine. Most probably Selim I involved in relationships with other concubines except Hafsa.

Inter-dynastic marriages were advantageous for both sides. They found new alliances which were the result of becoming related. Marriage was used to take control of the rising powers and keep them away. Moreover, it made possible to protect lands against attacks, and other possible threats.<sup>129</sup> These factors give an idea of how the Ottoman dynasty adopted principles on the issue of marriage. On the other hand; the origin of brides might be a source of praise and a sign of success. Marriage patterns and reproduction choices were the way to reflect the prestige of the dynasty to both its subjects and other dynasties.<sup>130</sup> The consort and relationship preferences of Ottoman sultans demonstrate how they perceived marriage. It seems that political purposes were emphasized by the Ottoman dynasty and other dynasties for the arrangement of marriages. Moreover, whether Ottoman sultans chose legal way of relationship or having relationship with concubines, they adopted pragmatic approach.

## **2.2 Concubines as Consorts of Ottoman Sultans**

Concubines were female slaves, mostly enslaved during raids and conquests. It was another way to buy a concubine in the slave bazaars, or the concubine was given as a gift. They were used as labourers in various fields. Concubines were used by ordinary people as housekeepers. They could be used as sexual partners of Ottoman sultans in the Ottoman palace, as well as labourers in different areas of the imperial palace. Concubinage and sexual relations with concubines were not unique to the Ottoman Empire. Muslim dynasties, states and empires used concubines as wives for male members. Some of the female slaves who could work as servants were brought to the palace. They were interested in cleaning, laundry and some other work. Some of the concubines became wives of Ottoman sultans. Concubines were selected

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<sup>129</sup> Donald M. Nicol, *Bizans'ın Soylu Kadınları: On Portre 1250-1500*, trans. Özden Arıkan (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001), 6.

<sup>130</sup> Leslie Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 28.

according to certain criteria. Only a few beautiful girls were selected as potential sexual partners for Ottoman sultans, and only a few lucky women had a chance to remain permanently.<sup>131</sup> Some women slaves were carefully picked up for the sultan to get into a relationship.

There was a hierarchy around concubines. It differed from the positions of concubines to the sultan, having a child, and having a boy as an Ottoman prince. Girls who were chosen as potential sexual partners of sultans named as *has odalık*. The *has odalık* concubines were educated differently than other concubines. They should know how to behave in the presence of the sultan. Then; *has odalık* concubines were presented to the sultan, if the sultan liked them and had a sexual relationship they would be *gözde*, favorite. Their life in the harem was not like other concubines anymore. Favorite concubines had special rooms and servants. The birth of a child by a concubine led to a rise in her status. The favorite concubine who had a child became the *kadinefendi*. They would have a special place and an increased number of servants. The special gains were not limited to these things. The income of *kadinefendis* increased. They could get more amount of salary. The sex of a child affected the status of a *kadinefendi*. A *kadinefendi* who had a prince became *haseki* or *başkadinefendi*. Harem life was more comfortable for *has odalık*, *gözde*, and *kadinefendi* concubines than others. Concubines who had no sexual relationship with the sultan and childless concubines would marry. Peirce summarizes possible career choices of concubines as being the mother of an Ottoman prince, being the administrative officer in the harem, and manumission because of marriage with the Ottoman ruling elite.<sup>132</sup>

Concubines who were taken to the palace both as servants and consorts of sultans would be educated in the harem. Harem was a school for concubines. They learned reading and writing if they did not know. They also got an education in furnishing, sewing, embroidery, music, dance, and playing an instrument. According to Menavino's testimony, ten sewing teachers came to the old palace in the morning to teach people how to sew.<sup>133</sup> It seems that sewing and needlework were significant aspects of their education. It was an essential skill for ordinary harem inhabitants.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> *ibid*, 12.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid*, 142.

<sup>133</sup> *ibid*, 141.

<sup>134</sup> *ibid*, 141.

Concubines were educated in Old Palace, they were far away from the sultan, and not allowed to go out. The education of concubines was handled with an organized plan. Their education was crucial because they would serve in the harem, and they might be the consorts of the Ottoman sultan. Their attitude towards the sultan and other members of the dynasty should have been respectful. The primary aim of their education was this point. Concubines were educated carefully to be worthy to the sultan, and other members of the dynasty. The curriculum of concubines education aimed to teach Ottoman loyalty.<sup>135</sup>

In the fourteenth century and first half of the fifteenth century, Ottoman sultans arranged inter-dynastic marriages, taking legal wives, with both Muslim and non-Muslim neighboring dynasties. Ottoman sultans and princes took the princesses of Christian dynasties in the Rumelia and Muslim principalities in Anatolia. In the earlier years of the Ottoman Empire, male members made marriages with the daughters of local notables.<sup>136</sup> Ottomans were not as powerful as neighboring dynasties in establishing kinship and inter-dynastic marriages. Ottomans did not attract the interests of Christian and Muslim powers to establish marital alliances.<sup>137</sup> The nature of inter-dynastic marriages depended on the status and political position of the dynasty. Concubines became almost the only sexual partners of Ottoman sultans within the mid-fifteenth century. Ottoman sultans started to keep relationships with concubines over legal wives. In addition to this point there were examples of that Ottoman sultans also preferred to marry and have relationships with concubines at the same time.

It is not possible to say certain things on the beginning date of choosing concubines as consorts of Ottoman sultans. The information on concubines was not recorded if they did not give birth prince to the sultan. Even in this situation, the facts we know about concubines are not clear. Kumru Hatun was one of the women of Mehmed I, who is seen as a concubine. Before her, there was no mention of any of the woman of previous sultans as concubine. It is not clear whether the relationship between Kumru and Mehmed was legal or not. It seems that the last legal wife was the wife of Mehmed II, because; the origins and legal status of Bayezid's women were not

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<sup>135</sup> Betül İpşirli Argit, *Life After Harem: Female Palace Slaves, Patronage, and the Imperial Ottoman Court*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 6.

<sup>136</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 29.

<sup>137</sup> *ibid*, 32.

clear at all. There was uncertainty whether or not Bayezid II and Selim I married. Probably, after the mid-fifteenth century Ottoman sultans did not marry legally except for not typical cases such as the marriage of Süleyman with a concubine, Osman II's marriage with the daughter of the mufti, and Ibrahim I's marriage with a concubine. According to Peirce, the last inter-dynastic marriage of an Ottoman sultan belonged to Murad II. The princes married daughters of Anatolian principalities. She implies that Mehmed II and Bayezid II had inter-dynastic marriage, but they married when they were princes.<sup>138</sup> Mehmed II's inter-dynastic marriage is clear but Bayezid's is not. The preferences of concubines and having children from them became permanent in Bayezid II's period.<sup>139</sup>

The number of slaves and concubines increased over the centuries. Ottoman Empire conquered new lands and its dominion and control enlarged, also its subjects increased. The slavery institution grew through the expansion that brought slaves to important positions.<sup>140</sup> The increase in the source of slaves, and the rising number of slave; concubines might have directed Ottoman sultans to them as partners. The relationship with a concubine might have been attractive and reasonable for the Ottoman sultans because it was less responsible than marriage. A Muslim man's responsibilities for a concubine are lesser than responsibilities for a wife. There were no requirements and legal guarantees for concubine must be met, before and during the relationship. The major legal obligation of a Muslim man to his wife was *mehir*. The enslaved women had limited rights than legally married free women. For instance, concubines had no right to get *mehir* and inheritance which were rights of women who married. A concubine who had a child from the Ottoman sultan could get rights.<sup>141</sup> It might not be the primary reason for preferring concubines over legal wives. Ottoman sultans did not hesitate to give large amounts of *mehir* to their legal wives as proof of Ottoman sultans prestige and power. The requirements to be met were not a burden for the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, concubines could have money and use their money to show power and prestige. They might have a remarkable amount of wealth to

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<sup>138</sup> *ibid*, 29.

<sup>139</sup> Uluçay, "II. Bayezid ve Ailesi," 105-106.

<sup>140</sup> İpşirli Argıt, *Life After Harem*, 12.

<sup>141</sup> Zahit Atçıl, "Osmanlı Hanedanı'nın Evlilik Politikası ve Mihrimah Sultan'ın Evliliği," 6.

manage. In addition to this point, the Ottoman dynasty may have tried to avoid the powerful status of noble wives and possible interference in the internal affairs of the brides' families with the claim of right. The interference of noble wives and their dynasties could be possible with their children. Ottoman sultans may have tried to minimise and avoid any possible interference with the preferences of concubines as sexual partners and mothers of princes. The situation of forming alliances through marriages with neighbouring dynasties was not always advantageous. Family ties with neighbouring dynasties could lead to problems and conflicts.

The changing status of the Ottoman dynasty is one of the reasons behind the rise of concubines as partners of Ottoman sultans. In the earlier years of the dynasty; male members married with daughters of local elites. The creation of alliances with inter-dynastic marriages was not possible at that time. Ottomans were not powerful enough as Christian and Anatolian powers to attract their attention and interest in marital alliances.<sup>142</sup> Most of the brides came from neighboring dynasties like Anatolian principalities and Byzantine, Serbian, or Bulgarian dynasties, however day-by-day inter-dynastic marriages had fallen into disfavor. Anatolian principalities, major bride sources of the Ottoman dynasty, were eliminated during the reign of Mehmed II which also proves the success of the dynasty. Inter-dynastic marriages were being brought to an end because this pool dried up.<sup>143</sup> Ottoman sultans did not find powerful dynasties, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, as powerful as the Ottoman dynasty to take a bride. They did not consider other dynasties worthy of the Ottoman dynasty. Ottoman sultans began to see other dynasties as less important and they thought that there was no need for alliances with such kind of dynasties. The idea of founding alliances with such kind of neighboring dynasties lost its significance because of the changing status of the Ottoman dynasty.

The marriage of Bayezid I to Mileva Olivera and his fate after the Battle of Ankara is seen as the reason for the tendency to prefer concubines as wives of Ottoman sultans. Ottoman chroniclers explain the preference for concubines over legal wives with the situation of Bayezid I. Mileva Olivera, who was the daughter of the Serbian king Lazarevic, is the focus of hatred and target of Ottoman chronicle writers. Mileva

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<sup>142</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 32.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid*, 29.

appears in the Ottoman chronicles as responsible for Bayezid's bad habits, such as drinking and partying, and his humiliation. Bayezid I was humiliated by Mileva's inappropriate participation in the revelry organised by Timur during his imprisonment and by Timur's bad attitude towards Mileva. Mileva's inappropriate scenes were a lesson for Bayezid's successors and none of them took a Christian wife again and they abandoned the legal way of relationship. Aşıkpaşazade and Neşri blame the daughter of the Serbian king for Bayezid's tendency to drink alcohol and organise revels. Aşıkpaşazade says that no one from the Ottoman dynasty had ever drunk alcohol until Bayezid I.<sup>144</sup> Ottoman chronicle writers of the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries blame Maria Despina with harsher statements than previous history writers. Bostanzade Yahya who wrote in the sixteenth century, blamed Maria and drinking alcohol for the defeat of the Battle of Ankara.<sup>145</sup> As Bostanzade Yahya who wrote in the seventeenth century, Peçevi claims that Mileva was an undisciplined woman and not appropriate for being the wife of the sultan.<sup>146</sup> The attribution of his fondness for alcohol and revels, and the defeats of dynasty to his wife does not make sense. Ottoman chronicle writers tend to see Bayezid as a person who was open to manipulation, and purely innocent for his bad habits like alcohol and participation in revels. Ottoman histories even blame Mileva for the dynasty's defeat and temporary collapse.<sup>147</sup> While if it is true that Mileva might have contributed to Bayezid's defeat and the formation of unfavorable habits, it is nevertheless inaccurate to ascribe full responsibility to her for these outcomes.

The narrative of reasoning the preferring relationships with concubines over taking legal wives is explained by the bad experience of Bayezid I. The successors of Bayezid I might not want to experience what he lived. However, it is not true to explain the Ottoman sultans' preferences of concubines with such kind of claim. The use of assumptions to explain the Ottoman sultans' preferences for consorts does not make sense. Leslie Peirce is dubious about this point, arguing that it is questionable to base

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<sup>144</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 133; Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihan-Nüma: Neşri Tarihi* Volume 1, 333.

<sup>145</sup> Bostanzade Yahya, *Duru Tarih*, 41.

<sup>146</sup> Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi* Volume 2, 11.

<sup>147</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 32.

marriage policy on assumptions.<sup>148</sup> The fate of Bayezid I and the interlude period might have been traumatic for the Ottoman dynasty. The possibilities of defeat, death, and being enslaved were always valid for all Ottoman sultans. End of the legal marriages and inter-dynastic marriages was primarily because of the decreasing advantageous aspects of legal wives, the creating ties, and kinship with neighboring dynasties. In addition to this point, Ottoman sultans did not find powerful political organizations or dynasties to take brides. Legal and inter-dynastic marriages lost their politically favorable circumstances. Leslie Peirce claims that the rise of concubines instead of inter-dynastic marriages and legal wives was the product of the decreasing political benefits of legal and inter-dynastic marriages and the evolution of the state through the traditional Islamic lines. One of the reasons for the increase of concubines was the growing importance of slaves in the ruling elite.<sup>149</sup>

### **2.3 The Consorts and Marriage of Süleyman I**

The relationship between Süleyman I and Hürrem has been told as a passionate love story and there is no such love story of Ottoman sultans in the history of the Ottoman dynasty. The love story between Hürrem and Süleyman I is reflected in the letters between them. While Hürrem and Süleyman stayed apart because of military campaigns and conquests, Hürrem poured her heart into Süleyman I through letters. She wrote how much she loved Suleiman and how difficult it was to be away from him. Hürrem wants to see Sultan Süleyman's beautiful face right away, and she would usually tell Süleyman I about her longing.<sup>150</sup>

They carried their intense love one step further and they married. Sultan Süleyman's marriage with Hürrem was different than the marriages and relationships of his predecessors. In the sixteenth century, Ottoman sultans were a far away from taking legal wives. The marriage of an Ottoman Sultan with a concubine for the first time seemed to be remarkable and surprising. It seems that Ottoman sultans before Süleyman I did not marry concubines. Süleyman and Hürrem got married in 1534, two

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<sup>148</sup> *ibid*, 38.

<sup>149</sup> *ibid*, 38.

<sup>150</sup> Çağatay Uluçay, *Osmanlı Sultanlarına Aşk Mektupları* (Istanbul: Ufuk Kitapları, 2001), 36-40.

months after the death of Hafsa Sultan. Hürrem was a concubine for almost fifteen years.<sup>151</sup> They had five children; Mehmed, Mihrimah, Selim, Bayezid, and Cihangir. The marriage of Hürrem and Süleyman I was not recounted in detail by Ottoman chronicle writers. On the other hand, accounts of Mustafa Ali and Peçevi İbrahim Efendi confirm the Hürrem's situation as being a wife of Sultan Süleyman.<sup>152</sup> The primary reason for the lack of attention paid to imperial women was the attitude to respect the privacy of the sultans and female members of imperial family. Ottoman chronicle writers did not delve into the personal lives of the Ottoman sultans. It seems that matters such as married life, the wives and daughters of sultans, and wedding ceremonies were considered inappropriate subjects for Ottoman chronicles. Foreign resources, especially reports of Venetian bailos, provide more detailed accounts of the imperial women and their relations with sultans. One of the Venetian bailo who came to Istanbul during the reign of Süleyman I, Bernardo Navagero, points out the close relationship between Hürrem and Süleyman and describes her as the wife of the sultan that happened through flouting the tradition. Hürrem knew Suleyman very well. There was never a woman in the Ottoman Empire who was as influential as Hürrem.<sup>153</sup>

Hürrem and Süleyman married after the death of Süleyman's mother Hafsa Sultan. Why did Süleyman I decide to marry her lovely favorite concubine Hürrem after their fifteen-year-long relationship? Why did he wait almost fifteen years to marry Hürrem despite his unprecedented love? Queen Mother Hafsa Sultan died in 1534. She was the most authorized woman of the harem and palace. The marriage of Hürrem and Süleyman I was made possible by the death of Hafsa Sultan.<sup>154</sup> It seems that Hafsa Sultan would be against the marriage of her son with a concubine. It would be a disgrace and disrespectful to the queen mother. Maybe Hafsa Sultan would thought that her authority would be under threat because of the legal wife of Sultan Süleyman. The position of the sultan's wife would threaten the status of the queen mother. He tried to avoid possible conflict between Hafsa and Hürrem.

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<sup>151</sup> Leslie Peirce, *Empress of the East*, 131, 11.

<sup>152</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Kühü'l Ahbar*, 359a 714; Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi* Volume 1, 192.

<sup>153</sup> Afyoncu, *Venedik Elçilerinin Raporlarına Göre Kanuni ve Şehzade Mustafa*, 38-39.

<sup>154</sup> Leslie Peirce, *Empress of the East*, 20.

The absence of powerful authority after the death of Hafsa Sultan was filled by Hürrem. She was the legal partner and mother of five children of Süleyman I. She became the most authorized woman of the harem as the wife of the Ottoman sultan. It seems that wives of previous sultans did not exercise as much power and authority as Hürrem. Therefore, Hürrem's position and authority in the harem were different as being the legal wife of the sultan. There was a hierarchy in the harem and among concubines. As discussed above in this chapter; sexual relations with the sultan and having a child or children and having a boy from the sultan led to an increase in the status of concubines. Hürrem owed his noteworthy status in the harem to her children and being the legal wife of Sultan Süleyman. She was among the closest people to the Sultan. In addition to this point; her unique status came from her character which was able to be a prominent figure. Hürrem was attractive, easily noticed, and ambitious person, therefore her character made her an important person. Nevertheless, Hürrem was not recognized with good feelings and became the target of criticism due to the marriage.

The unique position of her and the marriage of the Sultan with a concubine were not familiar to Ottomans. There was a general thought that Hürrem Sultan tried to keep possession of the Süleyman I's love with philter and magic.<sup>155</sup> She was seen as dangerous and as a witch by the public, and they believed that Hürrem affected Sultan Süleyman with magic stuff. Hürrem Sultan was blamed for the execution of the Grand Vizier İbrahim Pasha and Şehzade Mustafa. Her image was destroyed severely once with the touching execution of Şehzade Mustafa. Hürrem Sultan and her groom Rüstem Pasha were deemed guilty. Hürrem was seen as responsible for the bad decisions of Sultan Süleyman. General tendency became apparent again; blaming women for bad aspects or decisions of the Sultan.

Hürrem was not the only mother of Süleyman's children and not the only woman of him. Mahidevran was another woman of the Sultan and they had a boy named Mustafa. Mahidevran was the last concubine who had a common concubine career. Concubines after her; did not fit the model career of concubines.<sup>156</sup> The model

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<sup>155</sup> Busbecq, *Türk Mektupları*, 52; Bassano, *Kanuni Dönemi Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Gündelik Hayat*, 55.

<sup>156</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 55.

career of concubines includes supervising their children, especially sons. The mother concubine had to accompany her son in the provinces during his principedom. Hürrem did not go to the provinces of her sons. She did not obey the suitable role that was assigned to the prince's mother. As a further matter, she affected the next concubines by not going to the province of their princes. As well as her career choices, her authority in the harem became a model for others. Hürrem changed the balance and nature of the harem and made it a place that wielded political influence.<sup>157</sup> She contributed to the increase in the political influence of the harem. It seems that concubines after her went beyond that and exercised power thanks to her guidance and the ways that she opened. Their intense love led to marry a concubine and not accompanying of concubine to her son in the province of a prince. Süleyman I chose to create a nuclear family among the polygamy.<sup>158</sup> He contributed to transforming the borders of concubines.

Venetian bailo Domenico Trevisano, who served in Istanbul between 1552-1554, mentions that Süleyman loved Hürrem from the time when they met and he did not get involved in a relationship with someone else instead of Hürrem.<sup>159</sup> Another break in the traditions of the Ottoman dynasty was the moving to the New Palace from the Old Palace. The different nature of Süleyman I and Hürrem's relationship led to major changes. Hürrem's status as a concubine was a break from established principles in the patronage system. Hürrem's patronage of art was also uncommon because she was Haseki and had no permission to build in the capital of the empire. Her corporation with Architect Sinan created a new mosque in the heartland of Istanbul. The complex of Hürrem includes a madrasa and primary school that provide education to the neighborhood.<sup>160</sup> It was not usual for someone who was not the queen mother to carry out construction activities in the capital.

The nature of the relationship and marriage of Süleyman and Hürrem transformed the nature of the relationship between a sultan and her favorite. It seems that the status of a favourite concubine, haseki, changed dramatically because of

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<sup>157</sup> Peirce, *Empress of the East*, 12.

<sup>158</sup> *ibid*, 14.

<sup>159</sup> Afyoncu, *Venedik Elçilerinin Raporlarına Göre Kanuni ve Şehzade Mustafa*, 130.

<sup>160</sup> Peirce, *Empress of the East*, 192.

Hürrem. Their period was the starting point for most of the changes in the harem. Nurbanu, Kösem and Safiye were prominent examples of powerful and influential concubines. Hürrem paved the way for her successors, and this was a remarkable step in Ottoman history. Hürrem's career as a concubine was unusual and surprising. When Hürrem and Süleyman married, there was no longer a dynastic marriage policy of taking a legal wife. Moreover, marriage with a concubine did not exist. Suleyman I did something that had never been done before and decided to marry a concubine.

#### **2.4 Consorts of Ottoman Sultans between Süleyman I and İbrahim I**

In general, the successors of Suleiman I did not tend to legal marriages. However, there were exceptional examples among them. The legal marriage of Suleyman I and Hürrem affected their son; Selim II. Selim married her favourite concubine, Nurbanu, who joined Selim's harem during his reign in Manisa. Nurbanu became the favourite concubine; Haseki of Selim. Selim II was the crown prince, he would be the next Sultan. Nurbanu's career in the Ottoman Empire began around 1542 when she became the favourite concubine of Selim II.<sup>161</sup> Her chance was because of holding the highest status in the harem as a favorite concubine of Selim II during his reign. Nurbanu was the first prominent queen mother of the dynasty.<sup>162</sup> Her different status did not come from only being influential in the reign of her husband. Nurbanu had a chance to exercise more power during the reign of her son; Murad III. However; during the reign of her husband Selim II she had a central position in the harem as a powerful and influential figure.

Nurbanu was lucky because there wasn't a control mechanism over her like queen mother during the reign of Selim II. Hürrem Sultan did not accompany Selim during his principdom. Furthermore; Hürrem was not alive as queen mother in the reign of Selim II. Selim and Nurbanu married around 1571.<sup>163</sup> It's been almost thirty years since they met. Nurbanu became the legal wife of Selim II two years before his death. It seems that the legal status of Nurbanu would be more influential in the reign of

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<sup>161</sup> Pınar Kayaalp, *The Empress Nurbanu and Ottoman Politics in the 16th Century*, viii.

<sup>162</sup> *ibid*, 3. Pınar Kayaalp describes the Nurbanu as the first and one of the most influential queen mothers of the dynasty. Leslie Peirce says that Nurbanu was the first of great queen mothers. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 92.

<sup>163</sup> Kayaalp, *The Empress Nurbanu and Ottoman Politics in the 16th Century*, viii.

Murad III. The reign of Murad III as Queen Mother of Nurbanu was the time of the highest status in the harem. The situation of being a legal wife was economically advantageous for Nurbanu. Her wealth increased with the *mehir* that she gained by marriage. On the other hand, she would get more things due to marriage. Nurbanu was the first queen mother who was the patron of architecture in the capital of the empire. Nurbanu was not the only woman who had a relationship with Selim II. He has limited his sexual activity to a single concubine during his principedom. During his reign, he was in relationships with many concubines and he was the father of children who were born by concubines.<sup>164</sup>

Murad III's favorite concubine Safiye was one of the influential concubines and queen mothers of the Ottoman Empire. There is no agreement on the origin of Safiye Sultan. According to Stephan Gerlach, Safiye is a Bosnian woman who entered the harem of Murad III as a gift of Ferhad Paşa during his principedom in Manisa.<sup>165</sup> Venetian Bailos Morosini and Bernardo mention that Safiye was Albanian.<sup>166</sup> The issue of the legal status of their relationship is not clear. It is debatable and not certain whether or not Murad III and Safiye married. Safiye did not become the legal wife of Murad III as Morosino indicates.<sup>167</sup> The possible reason behind the decision of Murad III about marriage with Safiye was the suggestions of Queen Mother Nurbanu. He believed that it would be bad for him if he married.<sup>168</sup> Nurbanu seems to have achieved her goal of convincing his son not to marry Safiye. During the reign of Murad III, she exercised power and had a higher status. Safiye's status had nothing to do with marriage and being a legal wife. The only woman with whom Murad had a relationship before his reign was Safiye. Nurbanu, as Queen Mother in the reign of Murad III, did not allow him to have a relationship with only one concubine and tried to persuade

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<sup>164</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 92.

<sup>165</sup> Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü* Volume 2, 637.

<sup>166</sup> S. A. Skilliter, "Three Letters from the Ottoman "Sultana" Safiye to Elizabeth I" in *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, ed. S. M. Stern (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1965), 144.

<sup>167</sup> Gianfrancesco Morosini, "Relazioni di Gianfrancesco Morosini Bailo A Constantinopoli Letta in Senato L'anno 1585," in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ed. Eugenio Albèri, III, v.3 (Firenze: Societa Editrice Fiorentina, 1855), 283, quoted in Leslie Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 94.

<sup>168</sup> H. E. Rosedale, *Queen Elizabeth and the Levant Company* (London: Oxford University Press, 1904), 23. Ambassador says that Murad III did not give *mehir* to Safiye.

Murad to have more concubines. Although Murad had many children by more than one concubine, Safiye protected and maintained her status among the many wives of Murad and his mother Nurbanu. Safiye found a way to exercise power like Nurbanu and Hürrem, who were legal wives despite the lack of a legal marriage contract.

According to Leslie Peirce, Mehmed III did not raise the status of any of his concubines to his favorite concubine; *haseki*. None of the mothers of his sons would be as influential as the concubines of the previous Sultans.<sup>169</sup> However; Günhan Börekçi does not agree with Peirce and claims that Mehmed III had a favorite concubine, and Handan was his favorite.<sup>170</sup> The well-known concubines of Mehmed were Halime and Handan. They had sons, so; there was a struggle between them. It seems that the reign of Mehmed III was the highest point of Safiye's power as queen mother. The struggle of Handan and Halime was under the shadow and control of Safiye. There was a need for the queen mother to persuade Sultan Mehmed to choose his heir. Handan had sided with queen mother Safiye Sultan. After the execution of Prince Mahmud, who had been born of Halime, Handan found a chance to experience being a queen mother during the first two years of Ahmed I's reign. Peirce highlights the quiet and pale characteristics of Handan, who could not be an influential woman and did not raise her status.<sup>171</sup> Peçevi attracts attention to the good and pure intentions of Handan.<sup>172</sup> On the contrary; Günhan Börekçi assesses the Handan Sultan as an important political actor. According to him; Handan played a critical role in the early two years of Ahmed I's reign as a regent until her death. Moreover; the crucial position and critical role of Handan Sultan solidified the power of her successors. Therefore; Handan Sultan and her regency were an example for future queen mothers.<sup>173</sup> Mehmed III did not differ from her dad about consort preference. He continued to get into a relationship with concubines.

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<sup>169</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 127.

<sup>170</sup> Günhan Börekçi, "A Queen Mother at Work on Handan Sultan and Her Regency During the Early Reign of Ahmed I," *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 34 (2020): 48.

<sup>171</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 127.

<sup>172</sup> Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi* Volume 2, 11.

<sup>173</sup> Günhan Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites at the Court of Sultan Ahmed I and his Immediate Predecessors" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2010), 138.

Mahpeyker Kösem and Mahfiruz were the favorite concubines of Ahmed I. Mahfiruz was the mother of Osman II.<sup>174</sup> Kösem was the mothers of two sultans; Murad IV and Ibrahim I. The career of Kösem as the consort of the Sultan was familiar to Hürrem. Kösem had many children and she was the only sexual partner of Sultan Ahmed I. Kösem reached great power and influence as queen mother.<sup>175</sup> Kösem was one of the most well-known queen mothers in Ottoman history. Kösem succeeded in sustaining power during the reigns of her two sons; Murad IV, and Sultan İbrahim, and even in the reign of her grandson Mehmed IV. The early death of Handan Sultan opened the way for Kösem, and she had a chance to exercise power.

Osman II broke the ongoing tradition of his predecessors. Sultan Osman preferred to marry a Muslim woman like Ottoman sultans did in the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries. The bride of Osman II was the daughter of Chief Mufti Esad Efendi. Legal marriage with the daughter of local elites was the old dynastic marriage policy. It seems that the bad fortune of Osman II became a model for his successor for not marrying legally.

Murad IV ascended the throne after the dramatic death of Osman II. His mother Kösem kept her son Ibrahim away from Murad IV's fratricide. At this point, everyone predicted what would happen. There is no sufficient information about the concubines of Murad IV. It seems that Ayşe was the only favourite concubine of Murad IV for many years.<sup>176</sup> Undoubtedly, he continued relationships with more than one concubine. Murad IV had more daughters than sons, and his sons died young. So he had no successor. This was a serious problem that had to be solved. Ibrahim, the brother of Murad IV, took the throne. Because of the lack of a successor, Ibrahim had many concubines. Kösem encouraged him to have sexual relations. He had three sons by three different concubines. This encouragement led to Ibrahim I having an abnormal interest in sexual relations.<sup>177</sup> The fear about the continuation of the generations led to large in size consorts of Ibrahim. His abnormal tendency to have sexual intercourse was probably because of his unbalanced and unstable attitude. His

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<sup>174</sup> Naima, *Naima Tarihi* Volume 2, ed. Zuhuri Danişman (Istanbul: Zuhuri Danişman Yayınevi, 1968), 701. Naima also writes that Mahfiruz was *başkadın* of Ahmed.

<sup>175</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 105.

<sup>176</sup> *ibid*, 107.

<sup>177</sup> *ibid*, 107.

marriage with a concubine named Telli Hümaşah is seen as a result of his unbalanced attitudes. Ibrahim manumitted Telli Hümaşah and they married.<sup>178</sup> The legal marriage of Ibrahim I was unfamiliar among the status of queen mothers and *hasekis* of the seventeenth century. After the legal marriage of Ibrahim I there were no legal marriages until the nineteenth century, the marriage of Abdülmecid.<sup>179</sup>

Taking all this information into account, it is possible to say that taking legal wives was the relationship preference of Ottoman sultans until the mid-fifteenth century arounds, Concubines became consorts of Ottoman sultans, and it settled by the time. It was somewhat unexpected that Süleyman I chose to marry a concubine, a practice that was not particularly common at the time. A concubine was a woman with whom a Muslim man could be in a relationship without being married. On the other hand, after the reign of Süleyman I, in the second half of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, any of Ottoman sultans married legally except for the marriage of Selim II, Osman II and Sultan İbrahim. These marriages were different in nature. Selim II repeated the marriage way of his father. He and Sultan İbrahim married a concubine, but Osman II married a Muslim woman who was the daughter of the chief mufti.

In general; concubines became almost only consorts of Ottoman sultans within the mid-fifteenth century. Before that; there might have been a situation of being in a relationship with concubines but it is hard to ascertain this. The favorite concubines and queen mothers became politically influential by the second half of the sixteenth century. After the reign of Mehmed III some of the queen mothers became regent of their sons. This practice was a far cry from the Ottoman sultans of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the first half of the sixteenth century. Enslaved women, who were fortunate enough to become the consorts and favourites of sultans, rose considerably in status and began to become influential at the end of the sixteenth century. Not only did sultans' relationships and preferences for consorts change over

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<sup>178</sup> Mustafa Naima Efendi, *Naima Tarihi* Volume 4, ed. Zuhuri Danişman (Istanbul: Zuhuri Danişman Yayınevi, 1968), 1788-1789. Naima assesses the legal marriage of Sultan Ibrahim in the frame of previous marriage policy for Ottoman sultans which consisted of arranging legal marriage with female members of neighboring dynasties.

<sup>179</sup> Abdülmecid married in 1850s as Sakaoğlu and Uluçay mention. He manumitted concubine and married her. Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 18. Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları*, 210.

the centuries, but so did the status and influence of partners, regardless of their legal status.

The perspective of the Ottoman dynasty on marriage seems pragmatic whether preferring legal wives or concubines. The creation of political and diplomatic relationships with other dynasties and states arose as a pragmatic aspect of preferring legal wives. In addition to this point, there is a possibility to see pragmatic reasons for the preference of concubines as consorts of Ottoman sultans and princes. For Ottoman sultans, the question of whom to marry was crucial in terms of reproduction and generational continuity. Therefore, there should be a conscious and pragmatic approach to the marriages or relationships of Ottoman sultans and princes. when marrying or entering into a relationship. The Ottoman sultans had different policies over the centuries. However, the concern for the interests of their members remained constant. In conclusion, the partner preferences of the Ottoman sultans were not uniform. The information provided in this chapter shows that there was no single, determined and continuous policy towards the Ottoman sultans.

It is not easy to research wives, marriages and consorts of the Ottoman sultans because of lack of information. Irrespective of the veracity of the information in question, it is important to establish the nature of the relationships. In summary, Ottoman sultans in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries tended to marry daughters of neighbouring dynasties. They preferred legal wives. By the mid-fifteenth century, marriage had lost its importance. Mehmed II seems to have had only one legal wife. In general, he preferred concubines as partners to legal wives. In addition to this point; it is not true to claim that there was a pattern and single and uniform way of relationship towards the Ottoman sultans. Furthermore; it is not possible to state with certainty that a significant transformation took place or that the previous way of relationship was completely abandoned. On the other hand, it seems that the end of inter-dynastic marriages coincided with the period of Mehmed II. They adopted a pragmatic approach, favouring the most advantageous way. It would be wrong to suggest that a single policy was adopted; rather, it seems that one approach was not fully embraced.

### **CHAPTER 3: MARRIAGES OF OTTOMAN PRINCESSES BETWEEN THE MID-FIFTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES**

The first chapter focuses on the early lives of the daughters of Ottoman sultans in the harem and examines what it was like to be an Ottoman princess. It includes the discussion on the participation of Ottoman princesses to exercise power as female members of the dynasty will be discussed in this chapter. The second chapter of this thesis; tries to examine and discuss the marriage policy of the Ottoman dynasty towards the sultans and princes. The main focus of this chapter and the focus of this study is to discuss and evaluate the marriages of Ottoman princesses who lived between the mid fifteenth century and the end of the seventeenth century. The marriages of Ottoman princesses who were the daughters of sultans from Mehmed II

to Ibrahim I will be examined. In addition, this chapter aims to examine the changing trends in the marriage practices of Ottoman princesses. The marriage policy towards the Ottoman princesses will be discussed in the context of the dynastic marriage policy towards the Ottoman sultans and princes. The aim of this chapter is to evaluate the marriage practices of Ottoman princesses in the context of the dynastic marriage policies towards sultans and princes and to show the relevance between them. The examination of possible reasons for the marriages of Ottoman princesses and the careers of sons-in-law before and after marriages with Ottoman princesses are also points discussed in the present study.

It is true to say that there was a policy for the marriage of Ottoman princesses, because there were principles that were adopted, which seemed to be an overall plan. The marriage process of an Ottoman princess ran systematically, there were planned steps that happened without skipping, and it is valid for the marriage policy towards the Ottoman princesses. In this thesis, the marriages of Ottoman sultans who married between the mid-fifteenth and seventeenth centuries will be examined. The marriage of an Ottoman princess with slave-origin statesmen who lived in households is the main discussion topic of this study.

It is difficult to obtain certain information about all the daughters of Ottoman sultans, whether they lived in the early periods or later. There are no adequate sources to present detailed information for all Ottoman princesses, rather there is a blurred picture concerning the lives of Ottoman princesses. In addition to this point, there is no consensus on the husbands of some Ottoman princesses, no matter what period the Ottoman princesses lived in. It may be wrong to assume that princesses who did not succeed in becoming prominent did not carry out important activities, as there may be some who remained in the shadows despite having made important contributions. Some preliminary information about the daughters of the Ottoman sultans and their husbands can be clarified by studying the waqfiyas and official personal registers. These types of sources serve as proof of the existence of the Ottoman princesses mentioned.

### 3.1 Inter-Dynastic Marriages of the Ottoman Princesses

In this section of the present chapter, we will take a brief look at the marriages of the daughters of Ottoman sultans who lived before the middle of the fifteenth century. Inter-dynastic marriage with neighbouring dynasties was the main type of marriage for the daughters of Ottoman sultans, which was not only the case for Ottoman princesses, it was also the marriage policy of Ottoman sultans and princes, as explained in the second chapter of this study. If we leave aside the question of inter-dynastic marriages as a way of marrying Ottoman princesses, it is true to say that in the early years of the Ottoman dynasty, the daughters of Ottoman sultans married prominent men and their relatives such as cousins. The marriage of Hatice, the daughter of Orhan, to her cousin Süleyman, the son of Orhan's brother Savcı, was an example of this.<sup>180</sup> Osman and Orhan arranged endogamous marriages for their daughters despite the uncertainty about the lives of their daughters, with the consideration of the circumstances and status of the Ottoman dynasty, and the marriages of these two Ottoman sultans and their sons.

The daughter of Murad I, Nefise Melek was given in marriage to Alaeddin Bey who was the son of Halil Bey, the ruler of the Principality of Karaman.<sup>181</sup> It seems that the marriage of Nefise Melek and Alaeddin was the earliest example of inter-dynastic marriages for the daughters of Ottoman sultans, considering the situation of Osman and Orhan's daughters. Moreover; a state of uncertainty about the lives and marriages of Osman and Orhan's daughters supports this claim. On the other hand; this example can't be seen as a sign of the adoption of this way of marriage as a marriage policy in the reign of Murad I, because the marriages of the daughters of Bayezid I are not known.

The inter-dynastic marriages of Mehmed I's daughters with Anatolian principalities during the reign of Murad II are clearer thanks to Aşıkpaşazade's account. Three of them were given to the Beylik of Karaman, two of them were married to men from the Beylik of İsfendiyar, and there was an Ottoman princess who

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<sup>180</sup> Kamil Kepecioğlu, *Bursa Kütüğü* Volume 2, 169.

<sup>181</sup> Feridun Bey, *Münşeatü's-Selatin* Volume 1 (Istanbul: Takvimhane-i Amire, 1264-1265), 103-105; Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihan-Nüma* Volume 1, 213; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Osmanlı Tarihinin İlk Devrelerine Aid Bazı Yanlışlıklar," *Belleten* 21/81 (1957): 178-180.

was married to members of the Ottoman ruling elite.<sup>182</sup> The marriage of İlaldı Hatun and İbrahim Bey from Beylik of Karaman who became the leader of the Karamanids with the support of Murad II, is mentioned by Ottoman chronicles without the name of the bride.<sup>183</sup> The circumstances of İlaldı as an Ottoman princess and bride of one of the prominent Anatolian principalities presented as a bridge between two sides, and an arbitrator who was the pursuit of peace. İlaldı Hatun tried to get the forgiveness of Murad II to her husband İbrahim and minimize the tension between Ottomans and Karamanids. In that way, she contributed to peace between the parties.<sup>184</sup> The marriage of the daughter of Mehmed I and Karamanoğlu İbrahim Bey explains why dynasties wanted to found alliances through marriages and helps to understand the nature of inter-dynastic marriages.

It is not correct to claim that the practice of giving Ottoman princesses in marriage to Ottoman statesmen was adopted as a marriage policy towards the daughters of Ottoman sultans in the reign of Murad II. The abandonment of the inter-dynastic marriage policy towards the Ottoman princesses seems to have taken place during the reign of Mehmed II. Gevherhan, the daughter of Mehmed II, married Uğurlu Mehmed Bey. He was the son of Uzun Hasan who was the leader of Akkoyunlu state. The marriage of Gevherhan and Mehmed Mirza seemed to be inter-dynastic. This marriage was not by mutual consent and did not follow the norms of inter-dynastic marriage. Uğurlu Mehmed fled his homeland and sought refuge in the Ottoman Empire due to a conflict with his father. Mehmed Mirza rebelled against his father and took control of some of their father's lands. Mehmed Mirza requested permission to stay in the Ottoman Empire from Şehzade Bayezid during his princely residence in Amasya. Bayezid accepted Mirza's request with the approval of his father, Mehmed II. Mehmed Mirza came to Amasya and then Mehmed II wanted him to come

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<sup>182</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 176-177; Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihannüma: Neşri Tarihi* Volume 2, 643, 647.

<sup>183</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 177; Halil Erdoğan Cengiz and Yaşar Yücel, "Ruhi Tarihi," *Belgeler*, Volume 14 Sayı 18 (1989): 439; Hamit Şafakçı, "Osmanlı ile Karamanlı Arasında Bir Kadın: İlaldı Hatun," *Belleten* 84, 299 (Nisan 2020): 120.

<sup>184</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları'nın Tarihi: Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 204.

to Istanbul.<sup>185</sup> The policy of marrying Ottoman princesses to statesmen started to become the only way of marriage with the marriages of Bayezid II's daughters.

The quest to create alliances through the creation of family ties that served the interests of both sides was the main intention behind inter-dynastic marriages. The creation of family ties was a powerful way of establishing an alliance. In the earlier phases of the Ottoman dynasty, there was a need to expand power, which could be achieved through alliances. In the situation of lower prestige and status at the beginning of the dynasty, inter-dynastic marriages arose as a natural result of circumstances. It seems that the expansion of the frontiers was the main interest of the Ottoman dynasty. Most of the inter-dynastic marriages were created to avoid attacks and possible loss of lands, which shows how marriage was seen as a tool for peace and negotiation.

The male members of the neighbouring Muslim dynasties were considered suitable husbands for Ottoman princesses and sons-in-law for the Ottoman dynasty, because the Ottoman sultans may have considered the male members of other royal families as equal to the Ottoman dynasty and worthy of being the husbands of their daughters. On the other hand, this type of marriage replaced the previous one and emerged as an important way of marriage for Ottoman sultans and their sons and daughters, indicating the changing status of the Ottoman dynasty into growing importance as an Anatolian power.<sup>186</sup> In addition to this aspect, there was a common marriage policy for both male and female members of the Ottoman imperial family in almost the same period.

There were some familiar reasons behind the end of inter-dynastic marriages of both Ottoman princesses and sultans. As discussed in the first chapter of the present thesis; one of the primary reasons was the changing status of the Ottoman dynasty. Moreover, the abolishment of Anatolian principalities by Mehmed II meant the end of this marriage policy. In addition to this point, the Ottoman dynasty started to see other dynasties as not worth being allies and founding family relations. Ottoman dynasty's rising power and status contributed to the disappearance of the necessity of making

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<sup>185</sup> Kazım Paydaş, "Osmanlılara Sığınmış Önemli Bir Ak-Koyunlu Şehzadesi: Uğurlu Mehmed Bey," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları*, 199 (2012): 48-49.

<sup>186</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 29.

political allies through inter-dynastic marriages with neighboring dynasties. Ottoman sultans found themselves alone because they cleared their rivals. Therefore, the marriage policy towards Ottoman princesses which presented as marriages with princes of other dynasties gradually abandoned.<sup>187</sup>

Inter-dynastic marriages were adopted as marriage policy for Ottoman sultans, their sons, and daughters, on the other hand; there were major differences between inter-dynastic marriages of the Ottoman sultans and Ottoman princesses. Ottoman sultans married the daughters of both Muslim and non-Muslim dynasties, but they did not give their daughters in marriage to male members of non-Muslim dynasties. Marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man is prohibited in Islam, and for the marriage non-Muslim man must be converted to Islam. The foremost reason behind the tradition of not arranging the marriage between Ottoman princesses and non-Muslim dynasties male members lies in the religious set of norms. Therefore, there was a pattern of giving the daughters of Ottoman sultans in marriage to Muslim neighboring dynasties which were mostly Anatolian principalities until the mid-fifteenth century onwards.

Another major difference was the tradition of giving land as dowry to the daughters of the dynasties, which emerged as a crucial aspect of inter-dynastic marriages. A dowry is property, money or objects given to a bride by her family when she marries. The Ottoman Empire continued this tradition for the marriages of sultans. Female members of neighbouring dynasties took some provinces from their dynasties when they married Ottoman sultans or princes. The Ottoman dynasty expanded its borders thanks to these marriages. On the other hand, the daughters of Ottoman sultans did not take lands of the state as dowry when they married members of neighbouring Muslim dynasties. The Ottoman dynasty didn't lose any land through the marriages of Ottoman princesses with sons of Anatolian principalities. This was a state policy that reflected the intention to protect lands with a committed attitude. The Ottoman dynasty tried to prevent the outflow of its power and resources through the marriages of

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<sup>187</sup> Tülay Artan, "Royal Weddings and The Grand Vezirate: Institutional and Symbolic Change in the Early Eighteenth Century," in *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective*, ed. Tülay Artan, Jeroen Duindam, and Metin Kunt (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 342.

Ottoman princesses. The Ottoman dynasty adopted an endogamous marriage policy for the marriages of Ottoman princesses because of this intention.<sup>188</sup>

### 3.2 Marriages with Slave-Origin Statesmen

The Ottoman dynasty did not have a single and uniform policy regarding the marriages of Ottoman princesses. There were marriage policies for Ottoman princesses that were adopted and implemented in different periods. The Ottoman dynasty had a principled approach towards the issue of marriages of Ottoman princesses and despite the changes, the Ottoman dynasty applied new policies in the attitude of adaptation and cohesion. In addition to this point, the marriage policies show how the Ottoman dynasty considered the advantages and maintained the pragmatic approach. The marriage practices of Ottoman princesses changed as well as the dynastic marriage policies towards Ottoman sultans and princes. The dynastic marriage policy, which was adopted to establish an alliance because of their weak prestige and power, began to change under their control.<sup>189</sup> The changing status of the Ottoman dynasty through the centuries brought changes in dynastic marriage policies. After the mid-fifteenth century, members of the Ottoman ruling class of slave origin became suitable candidates for son-in-law. The statesmen chosen as sons-in-law were no longer from aristocratic backgrounds and Muslim dynasties. The possible reasons for this policy will be discussed in this part of this chapter.

The major break from the policy of inter-dynastic marriages for Ottoman princesses occurred during the reign of Mehmed II, because not all of Murad II's daughters were married to Ottoman statesmen, which means that there were no established consistent principles for the marriages of Ottoman princesses in his time.<sup>190</sup> It should also be noted that the uncertainty surrounding their lives made it difficult to obtain detailed information about the sons-in-law. The transformation of the Ottoman

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<sup>188</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 22.

<sup>189</sup> Zahit Atçıl, "Osmanlı Hanedanı'nın Evlilik Politikası ve Mihrimah Sultan'ın Evliliği," 7.

<sup>190</sup> According to Oruç Bey Hafsa Hatun, one of the daughters of Murad II, was married to Kaya Bey who was the grandson of Candaroğlu İsfendiyar Bey. See Atsız, *Üç Osmanlı Tarihi*, 72. Another daughters of Murad II, married to statesmen or local notables. See Cengiz and Yücel, "Ruhi Tarihi," 441; Kepeceioğlu, *Bursa Kütüğü* Volume 2, 41, 128.

dynasty during the reign of Mehmed II brought new elements to the ongoing dynastic marriage policy. The preference to avoid marriages with local notables overlapped with Mehmed II's policy of weakening the power of the Turkish ruling elite and increasing the power and dominance of the slave-descended elite.<sup>191</sup> The marriages of Ottoman princesses with statesmen took place under the influence of the current circumstances of the Ottoman Empire and the preferences of the sultans. Inter-dynastic marriages with neighbouring Anatolian Muslim dynasties lost their importance due to the changing status of the Ottoman dynasty. The complete abolition of the Anatolian principalities by Mehmed II could be seen as the reason for the change in the ongoing marriage policy towards Ottoman princesses. In addition to this point, it seems that the marriage of Ottoman princesses with statesmen was the only way for the daughters of Bayezid II to marry for the first time. After the period of Bayezid II, there was no other way of marriage.

Bayezid II had many children from more than one concubine, and there is no detailed information on his daughters. It is not possible to clarify the marriages of them. Alderson claims that Bayezid II had eleven daughters and all of them were married to statesmen.<sup>192</sup> Furthermore; Çağatay Uluçay highlights the difficulty in determining the names and marriages of Bayezid II's daughters, as the records refer to them as daughters instead of their names. He gives the names of Bayezid II's sons-in-law with reference to the *Mevacib* record of 1503.<sup>193</sup> Leslie Peirce claims that the policy of giving Ottoman princesses in marriage to statesmen began with the daughters of Bayezid II and became commonplace; a norm by the time of Selim I.<sup>194</sup> However, it seems that the policy of giving Ottoman princesses to pashas emerged apparently during the reign of Murad II, and became a permanent and only way of marriage with the marriages of Bayezid II's daughters. After the reign of Mehmed II, Ottoman princesses were only given to statesmen.

It seems that the issue of whom to marry Ottoman princesses was crucial for the Ottoman dynasty because the husbands of the Ottoman princesses were involved

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<sup>191</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 66.

<sup>192</sup> Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 177.

<sup>193</sup> Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları*, 47.

<sup>194</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 65.

in the dynasty as sons-in-law, which led to integration into the imperial family and getting a chance to be close to the Ottoman sultans. There was a need for a lot of attention to the marriages of Ottoman princesses. Ottoman princesses were essential to the dynasty due to the political alliances that were created through their marriages. Their marriages were crucial in terms of this aspect.<sup>195</sup> Another major concern in their marriages was the worthiness of the sons-in-law for the Ottoman dynasty. The sons-in-law of the dynasty had to have nobility that was worthy of the Ottoman dynasty.<sup>196</sup> On the other hand; this approach was abandoned through the way of arranging marriages between Ottoman princesses and statesmen of slave origin.

Devshirme statesmen were among the slave-origin statesmen. They were recruited boys who were taken from non-Muslim families in the conquered lands. They converted to Islam after the selection and had a chance to enter the army or get an education in the palace. Education in the inner palace meant a chance for employment in the Ottoman bureaucracy and there was a chance to be appointed to the highest positions in the bureaucracy. They were chosen for their good features that might lead to being seen as suitable sons-in-law to the dynasty. Slave-origin statesmen gained higher status and power from the Ottoman sultans through the education in the Ottoman palace. Therefore, they were grateful to the sultan. It is possible that slave origin statesmen were also prisoners of war, in addition to being devshirme.

Their gratefulness to the Ottoman dynasty and the sultans strengthened their ties and loyalty which arose as major reasons behind the new marriage policy towards the Ottoman princesses that consisted of marriages with slave-origin statesmen. The ties between devshirme boys, who were recruited at a young age, and their families weakened or broke. A state of weakened ties between devshirme statesmen and their families may seem like the circumstance that the Ottoman sultans wished for. This situation was one of the factors that made the devshirme statesmen favourable in the eyes of the Ottoman sultans. It seems that the loyalty of the devshirme statesmen was created and strengthened during their education. The education of recruited boys

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<sup>195</sup> *ibid*, 259.

<sup>196</sup> İnan, "Political Marriage: The Sons-in-Law of the Ottoman Dynasty in the Late Ottoman State," 61.

created a sense of belonging and devotion. They grew up under the wing of the Ottoman dynasty, in the Ottoman palace, with the consciousness of being part of the Ottoman household and empire, which contributed to serving the sultan and the dynasty wholeheartedly. The loyalty of slave-origin statesmen was one of the factors that led to their selection as husbands for Ottoman princesses. It could lead to the idea of being loyal to their wives and serving the interests of the Sultan.

Leslie Peirce assesses the Ottoman Empire's new marriage policy which was adopted towards the Ottoman princesses, as an endogamous marriage policy.<sup>197</sup> If we consider this issue in this context; it is seen that the Ottoman Empire accepted slave-origin statesmen as members of the dynasty or imperial family. They were imperial insiders and product of the sultan's household because they mostly raised in empire. It is true to talk about affinity between Ottoman dynasty and imperial sons-in-law.<sup>198</sup> The slave-origin statesmen became the best choices for daughters of sultans within the mid-fifteenth century and later on. Ottoman sultans seemed to try to create advantageous circumstances for themselves. The idea might have been to create loyal administrative elites who knew the Ottoman bureaucracy and administration through their palace education and who were devoted to the dynasty. This situation played an important role in the marriage policy of arranging marriages with Ottoman ruling elites.

As discussed in previous part of this chapter, the main reason behind the adoption of new marriage policy for Ottoman princesses was a decrease in the importance of founding alliances with Muslim neighboring dynasties and the abolishment of Anatolian principalities which was related to the changing status of the Ottoman dynasty. Their status as suitable husbands and sons-in-law was related to the lack of equal and worthy sons-in-law candidates that arose with the abolition of the Anatolian principalities in the reign of Mehmed II. The fact that they were chosen as sons-in-law and married to Ottoman princesses indicates that they were approved by the Sultan and considered suitable for both the dynasty and the princesses. These

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<sup>197</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 22.

<sup>198</sup> Olivier Bouquet, "The Sultan's Sons-in-Law: Analysing Ottoman Imperial Damads," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 58 (2015): 328-329.

factors helped to open the way for slave-origin statesmen to marry Ottoman princesses and to introduce a new marriage policy.

Another possible reason, perhaps the most comprehensive and significant one, for the adaptation of the new marriage policy towards Ottoman princesses after inter-dynastic marriages with neighbouring dynasties could be the intention to avoid the transfer of power and potential intervention in state affairs outside the dynasty. The changing status of the Ottoman dynasty and its emergence as a powerful empire led to a number of measures to avoid a loss of power. The Ottoman sultans avoided the flow of imperial power, sovereignty, lands and resources through the daughters of the Ottoman sultans.<sup>199</sup> They did not want to share powerful status with another dynasty, and the intervention of other dynasties.

The intention of avoiding the outflowing of power and resources can be seen obviously in the tradition of not giving lands as dowry contrary to ongoing tradition. Ottoman princesses never brought dowry when they were given marriage to Anatolian principalities. It stands as a proof of how the Ottoman dynasty avoided the loss of land and the outflow of power and resources as a dowry of Ottoman princesses. They did not take the land as a dowry and revenues of their lands when they married the members of Muslim dynasties. The lands and revenues that belonged to Ottoman princesses were transferred to endowments in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>200</sup> This principle explains why Ottoman sultans started to give their daughters in marriage to statesmen who were *kul* of the dynasty, non-Muslim origin slaves. On the other hand, Ottoman sultans enlarged the borders through the lands which were taken as a dowry of brides who married with Ottoman sultans. The brides from non-Muslim dynasties got lands mostly as a result of an agreement between the two dynasties. Muslim Anatolian dynasties gave their daughters in marriage to Ottoman sultans and princes in the company of lands as a dowry of their daughters which led to gaining new lands to the Ottoman dynasty without any effort.

It seems that the marriage of Ottoman princesses with devshirme origin statesmen served the interest of both sons-in-law and Ottoman sultans. Ottoman

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<sup>199</sup> *ibid*, 22.

<sup>200</sup> *ibid*, 22.

sultans might have tried to create administrator elites for themselves who were linked to the dynasty and imperial family with family ties. Ottoman sultans used marriages of their daughters to create the rising ruling elite and bind these men to themselves.<sup>201</sup> The importance of arranging marriages between Ottoman princesses and high-ranking statesmen might lie in ensuring their support for the Ottoman sultan, through which Ottoman princesses embraced great significance roles, as their importance and value increased.<sup>202</sup> This may indicate the involvement of the Ottoman princesses in state affairs indirectly. It is debatable to what extent an Ottoman sultan needed the support of high-ranking statesmen while he was holding greater power, authority, and sovereignty. However, there may be situations where it is necessary to get support and have a cooperation in difficult times, such as rebellion, discontent and the risk of deposition. The Sultan could get into trouble and lose his power. It is not possible for all the Ottoman Sultans to hold the ultimate power and to be very powerful. The need for someone, strong or not, who could support them was met by bringing high-ranking statesmen closer together by marrying them to Ottoman princesses.

### **3.3 An Appreciated Position: *Damad-ı Şehriyari***

The titles used for the sons-in-law of the dynasty; *damad-ı şehriyari* and *damad-ı hazreti şehriyari* which means son-in-law of the glorious sultan, indicate privileged positions of sons-in-law statesmen.<sup>203</sup> The positive statements of historian Mustafa Naima Efendi prove the favorable circumstances of being chosen as the sons-in-law of the Ottoman sultans. He uses words of favor, and grace, to be honored, achieve honor, and increase in honor and renown when talks about being chosen as a son-in-law.<sup>204</sup> Marriage policy towards Ottoman princesses which offered marriages with devshirme statesmen led to the creation of favorable circumstances for Ottoman sultans, their daughters, and devshirme statesmen. The best luck for a devshirme was to become the son-in-law. The son-in-law statesman could gain more power through appointments to higher ranks and a chance of intimacy with the sultan and the dynasty

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<sup>201</sup> Atçıl, "Osmanlı Hanedanı'nın Evlilik Politikası ve Mihrimah Sultan'ın Evliliği," 7.

<sup>202</sup> Artan, "Royal Weddings and Grand Vizierate," 342-343.

<sup>203</sup> İnan, "Political Marriage: The Sons-in-Law of the Ottoman Dynasty in the Late Ottoman State," 61-62.

<sup>204</sup> Mustafa Naima Efendi, *Naima Tarihi* Volume 4, 1661-1662, 1719, 1723, 1980.

to a lesser extent. The husbands of Ottoman princesses strengthened their positions by being closer to the sultans.

The news of marriage with an Ottoman princess was given pasha mostly with the news of appointment to a new duty. It mostly included appointments to higher ranks in the Ottoman administration which arose major advantages of being imperial son-in-law for sons-in-law statesmen. Moreover, son-in-law statesmen were mostly appointed as viziers, and their vizierate continued with their major duties until their dismissal. The ranks of sons-in-law statesmen as vizier went further and their status improved. It is true to claim that there was a tendency to pick up viziers or grand viziers among sons-in-law of the Ottoman dynasty. The position and status of the son-in-law change after the marriage to an Ottoman princess.

### **3.4 Marriages of Ottoman Princesses**

In a state of marriage to high-ranking statesmen, the Ottoman princesses could acquire different circumstances, which were more important status and opportunities to exercise more power parallel to the career and status of their husbands. The status of the Ottoman princesses and the scope for exercising power were not entirely dependent on the status of their husbands, although the princesses had a higher status than their husbands. The status of the other seemed to be linked and contributed to their positions. Ottoman princesses could cooperate with their husbands in various activities. The most important evidence of this seems to be the fact that couples were involved in the patronage of architecture and the establishment of religious foundations. On the other hand, this marriage policy may not have been considered advantageous by the princesses in the centuries when the marriage policy was already established and no other option was possible.

It is almost impossible to determine what people thought when this policy emerged and such marriages proliferated. Probably, Ottoman sultans were positive about the idea of marrying their daughters to statesmen because this policy lasted long. In the situation of not existence of dynasties to give Ottoman princesses in marriage, choosing husbands of their daughters was accepted as normal. Marriages with devshirme origin statesmen were seen as ordinary and well-welcomed. Ottoman

sultans seemed to ignore the ethnic and socio-economic background of devshirme origin statesmen.

On the other hand; marriages between members of imperial families and slave-origin statesmen might be illogical for others. Luigi Bassano seems surprised about the marriage of Mihrimah, as a daughter of Sultan Süleyman I, and Rüstem Paşa, as a slave of the Sultan. Bassano assesses slave-origin sons-in-law as inferior captives and humiliates their origins.<sup>205</sup> He says that Rüstem's family is a farmer, which implies that he is not worthy of the Sultan Süleyman and her daughter Mihrimah Sultan. Bassano was marveling at the marriages of the sultans daughters with non-noble and slave-origin statesmen who were from a low-status family.<sup>206</sup> A state of being a slave and non-noble seemed not taken into consideration by the Ottoman dynasty. Ottoman sultans did not approach the idea of arranging marriages between Ottoman princesses and devshirme statesmen as Bassano did obviously. If this situation had been taken into consideration, marriages between statesmen and Ottoman princesses would not have taken place. The abandonment of inter-dynastic marriages with Muslim neighboring dynasties might be seen as a sign that the status of the sons-in-law's family was losing importance.

In contrast to Luigi Bassano, the Venetian bailo Lorenzo Bernardo was positive about the statesmen of slave origin. He points out that statesmen of slave origin were appointed to important and high-ranking positions, and that the control of the armies was left to them; he says that the Venetian Republic should imitate the Ottomans in this respect. The best grand admirals and governors were created by the Ottoman Sultan from statesmen of slave origin, and he gave them dignity. He says that loyal service without ransom, desertion or betrayal is possible by training people from the lower classes and bringing them to high positions. Their loyalty and obedience held the empire together and made it strong.<sup>207</sup>

The perception, thoughts, and response of Ottoman princesses towards the marriage policy of the time after the mid-fifteenth century were not clear because it is not possible to obtain certain information on these issues. The question of whom

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<sup>205</sup> Bassano, *Kanuni Dönemi Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Gündelik Hayat*, 61.

<sup>206</sup> *ibid*, 61.

<sup>207</sup> Erhan Afyoncu and Ahmet Önal, *Venedik Elçilerini Raporlarına Göre Osmanlı'nın İhtişamlı Yılları*, 106, 116.

daughters of Ottoman sultans married differed over the centuries. Therefore, their perception and thoughts towards their marriages have differed from centuries and marriage policies.

The uncertainty regarding this matter opens only a narrow door to guess the possible thoughts and manners of the Ottoman princesses towards being married to kul statesmen. The marriage policy goes back to the fifteenth century onwards. Slave-origin statesmen began to be a major part of the Ottoman ruling elite from the mid-fifteenth century. As this marriage policy became established over time, it became ordinary for the daughters of the sultan in the sixteenth century and later on. Therefore, it seems that it is true to claim that the idea of marrying high-ranking Ottoman statesmen was an established, and usual thing that was considered a common norm because there was no other option. The prestigious positions of statesmen probably led to a positive image in the eyes of Ottoman princesses as well as their fathers. A state of being high-ranking officials, who were the most suitable son-in-law candidates when considering conditions of the Ottoman dynasty towards the marriages of dynasty's members might have contributed to their positive image for the Ottoman princesses. Ottoman princesses did perceive devshirme statesmen as suitable husbands in these circumstances like the socio-economic positions of statesmen. Men who belonged to lower positions of level were not seen as suitable for being sons-in-law of the dynasty, and husbands of Ottoman princesses.

In addition to the matter of the possible perception and reaction of Ottoman princesses towards arranging marriages for them with statesmen, their involvement in the decision process is another point to discuss. Taking into consideration the conditions of the period, it is possible to say Ottoman princesses were not involved in decisions concerning the candidates of sons-in-law, at least for their first marriages. Ottoman princesses did not have the right to say something about decisions on their marriages and husband candidates. However, there was a chance for the son-in-law candidate to deny the marriage with the daughters of the Ottoman sultans. There were examples of this situation. Ottoman sultans had authority during the decision-making process for the marriages of their daughters which was primarily because of the patriarchal order that provided high respect to male members of the family. Moreover, the possibility of opposition from Ottoman princesses decreased to almost the lowest

point. They mostly got married at the ages of 17-19, therefore they could marry again after their first marriage. It is not possible to present certain information and approaches towards to what extent they were involved and expressed their opinions in the decision process for their marriage once more, to what extent their father or brothers considered Ottoman princesses' opinions. It seems that after the end of the marriage Ottoman princess could decide whether to remarry again or not. On the other hand, their fathers, brothers, nephews, and uncles also had a voice in their decisions. The possible reason for that situation might be her age when she was married for the first time.

The situation of İsmihan or Esmehan Sultan, the daughter of Selim II and Nurbanu Sultan and the wife of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, is a prominent example of how an Ottoman princess was involved in the decision-making process of her marriage. İsmihan Sultan was described as an ugly, short but cheerful lady.<sup>208</sup> Sokollu Mehmed Paşa was 56 years old and Ismihan was 17. Sokollu Mehmed was already married and had children, but he divorced his wife to marry Ismihan Sultan. Sakaoğlu mentions that Sokollu Mehmed Paşa had two wives before he married Ismihan Sultan.<sup>209</sup> Sokollu Mehmed was Grand Vizier during the reigns of both his father-in-law, Selim II, and his brother-in-law, Murad II, in addition to being Grand Vizier during the reign of Süleyman I. The marriage of İsmihan Sultan and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha ended with the death of Sokollu in 1579, when İsmihan was 34 and a widow. However, she decided to remarry after Sokollu Mehmed's death, and the stories about her second marriage and the events surrounding it suggest that this was her decision. She wanted to marry Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa, but he refused on the pretext of his existing marriage.

The governor of Budin Kalaylıkoz Ali Paşa was chosen by İsmihan who was also already married but it was not an obstacle to the marriage with an Ottoman princess. Ali Paşa divorced his wife to marry İsmihan Sultan.<sup>210</sup> They married in 1584 and Ali Paşa was appointed as seventh vizier. İsmihan and Ali were not foreign to each

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<sup>208</sup> Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü* Volume 2, 584.

<sup>209</sup> *ibid*, 584.

<sup>210</sup> Uluçay, *Padişahın Hanımları ve Kızları*, 69. Çağatay Uluçay mentions that the marriage of Kalaylıkoz Ali Paşa and İsmihan Sultan, and the sadness of Ali Paşa's family led to a unpleasant feelings and revolt in the Budin.

other, their acquaintance went back to the time when Ali was a slave of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa.<sup>211</sup> Ottoman chronicles draw a dramatic picture of this marriage. As they mention, Kalaylıkoz Ali Paşa had to divorce his wife because of the edict of the sultan. The formal request to marry an Ottoman princess which was not deniable led to intense sadness for his wife and children. Moreover; the death of İsmihan, when she was pregnant, is seen as a result of bad wishes which came from Ali Paşa's wife.<sup>212</sup> Kalaylıkoz Ali Paşa was perceived as exhibiting an ambitious and arrogant attitude, which was attributed to his status as the husband of the Ottoman princess.<sup>213</sup> The second marriage process of İsmihan Sultan constitutes an extraordinary situation, and this example did not reflect the general tendency and situation of other Ottoman princesses. İsmihan found a chance to be involved in the decision-making process of her second marriage unlike her first marriage.

The issue of the marriage of Sultan Süleyman I's favourite and close friend, İbrahim Paşa, is a controversial one in Ottoman historiography. In the literature, there is an approach that accepts İbrahim Paşa as the son-in-law of the imperial family and the husband of Süleyman I's sister; Hatice Sultan.<sup>214</sup> The wedding of İbrahim Paşa reported by Hammer was not the wedding of an Ottoman princess. He claims that İbrahim Paşa's wife was the sister of Süleyman I without providing any evidence.<sup>215</sup> Ebru Turan states that the claim on this issue goes back to Hammer, he was the first to state the wife of İbrahim Paşa as a sister of Süleyman I.<sup>216</sup> He did not mention the name of the bride, however, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı gives the name of the bride as Hatice Sultan with the acceptance of the Hammer's claim that İbrahim Paşa was the

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<sup>211</sup> Pál Fodor and Balázs Sudár, "Ali Paşa'nın Evlilik Öyküsünün Tarihsel Geri Planı ve Osmanlılarla İlgili Yanları," *Bellekten* 70, (2006): 987-988.

<sup>212</sup> Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi* Volume 2, 24-25.

<sup>213</sup> Fodor and Sudár, "Ali Paşa'nın Evlilik Öyküsünün Tarihsel Geri Planı ve Osmanlılarla İlgili Yanları," 989.

<sup>214</sup> Uluçay, *Padişahların Hanımları ve Kızları*, 56-57; Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 202, 205; Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 67-68, 72.

<sup>215</sup> Hester Donaldson Jenkins points out that there is no evidence for Hammer's claim on bride's identity. Hester Donaldson Jenkins, *Ibrahim Pasha: Grand Vizir of Suleiman the Magnificent* (New York: Columbia University, 1911), 38.

<sup>216</sup> Ebru Turan, "The Sultan's Favorite: İbrahim Pasha and the Making of the Ottoman Universal Sovereignty in the Reign of Sultan Suleyman (1516-1526)" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2007), 211.

son-in-law of the imperial family.<sup>217</sup> The marriage of İbrahim Paşa and the sister of Süleyman I was not mentioned by contemporary Ottoman history writers. Celalzade Mustafa Çelebi, who was one of the closest people around İbrahim Paşa, does not talk about the situation of being İbrahim Paşa's son-in-law to Süleyman I and the names of İbrahim Paşa's wife in his work *Tabakatü'l Memalik*.<sup>218</sup> Another contemporary Ottoman historian Lütfi Paşa, husband of one of the daughters of Selim I and grand viziers of Süleyman I talks about the wedding ceremony of İbrahim Paşa without the matter of being son-in-law. If there was a situation such as being a son-in-law to the imperial family, it would of course be mentioned because Lütfi Paşa, was one of the people who were both contemporary of İbrahim and in a position to access this information at the first degree, just like Celalzade Mustafa. Uzunçarşılı enlightens the issue of İbrahim Paşa's wife through the waqfiya of Osman Şah Bey which shows Hatice Sultan as the wife İskender Paşa and mother of Osman Şah Paşa.<sup>219</sup>

As İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı admits in his book *Osmanlı Tarihi Vol. II*, İbrahim Paşa was not married to Hatice Sultan in 1665 and was not Süleyman I's son-in-law. İbrahim was probably married to Muhsine, as evidenced by the letters exchanged between them. These letters seem to indicate that İbrahim's wife was not an Ottoman princess as there are no signs of her being an Ottoman princess in the letters.<sup>220</sup> İbrahim Paşa was not the son-in-law of the Ottoman dynasty, as Uzunçarşılı proves. But who was the Muhsine? According to Ebru Turan, Muhsine was the granddaughter of İskender Paşa, and İskender Paşa's family was one of the most noble and important families in Istanbul. His family served the dynasty since the conquest of Istanbul.<sup>221</sup>

Although İbrahim Paşa was not the son-in-law of the imperial family, he married the daughter of an important and noble family. In addition to this, the wedding

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<sup>217</sup> *ibid*, 211.

<sup>218</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'ın Vezir-i Azamı Makbul ve Maktul İbrahim Paşa Padişah Damadı Değildi" *Belleten* 29, no. (1965): 355-356; Zeynep Yelçe, "Evaluating Three Imperial Festivals: 1524, 1530 and 1539," in *Celebration, Entertainment and Theatre in the Ottoman World*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi and Arzu Öztürkmen (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2014), 85.

<sup>219</sup> Uzunçarşılı, "Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'ın Vezir-i Azamı Makbul ve Maktul İbrahim Paşa Padişah Damadı Değildi," 356.

<sup>220</sup> *ibid*, 356, 358, 360-361.

<sup>221</sup> Ebru Turan "The Sultan's Favorite: İbrahim Pasha and the Making of the Ottoman Universal Sovereignty in the Reign of Sultan Suleyman (1516-1526)," 215, 220.

ceremony of İbrahim Paşa in 1524 was extremely lavish and the most splendid ever organised for a statesman. It is possible that reading the accounts of this wedding could lead the reader to believe that the Paşa married a princess. His lavish wedding ceremony shows the extent to which the grand vizier and companion of the Ottoman sultan exercised power.

### **3.5 The Dynamics between Ottoman Princesses and Their Husbands**

It should be remembered that being a son-in-law of the imperial family brought disadvantages as well as advantages. The responsibility of being married to a member of the imperial family seems to be as heavy as being married to an ordinary woman, and in some cases it could be difficult to cope with. These responsibilities and obligations were not just responsibilities within the relationship and were related to it. There are financial responsibilities for sons-in-law during the marriage process, which can be challenging for them. In addition to this, in the situation of being chosen as the son-in-law of statesmen, if they were already married, they had to divorce their wives in order to marry Ottoman princesses. It seems that these characteristics made it less advantageous to marry Ottoman princesses and to be son-in-law of the dynasty. The situation of being a son-in-law of the Ottoman dynasty was not a blessing for the Ottoman statesmen because Ottoman princesses were expansive wives.<sup>222</sup>

It is true to claim that the relationship established between the daughters of the Ottoman sultans and the devshirme statesmen was a very sensitive one. A rift between husband and wife, or a break might have resulted in dismissal. On the other hand, the worst aspect of their marriages with statesmen seems to be the possibility that their mistakes are not always forgiven and that they are executed regardless of whether or not they were sons-in-law. Ferhad Paşa was the husband of Selim I's daughter Beyhan Sultan. He was executed in 1524 with the charge of bribe during his duty in Cairo. According to the account of Venetian ambassador Pietro Bragadino, Sultan Süleyman was convinced by his mother and her sister who was the wife of Ferhad Paşa, to listen to him in Edirne. Ferhad denied the charges and blamed İbrahim Paşa which led to the irritation of Süleyman I, and he ordered the execution of Ferhad Paşa. Ferhad resisted

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<sup>222</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 69.

against the executioner but did not succeed and died. Hafsa Sultan, mother of Süleyman saddened because of the execution of her son-in-law Ferhad Paşa. Sultan told his mother that he ordered Ferhad to be imprisoned, and that he did not want Ferhad to be killed, but when Ferhad resisted, he had no choice. Ferhad Pasha's wife, sister of the sultan, dressed in black, came to the palace and confronted the Sultan and said to him: You killed my husband, I hope that I will soon come out of this mourning that I have to go through because of you. She did not want to marry anyone again, and the sultan never saw or talked to her sister again.<sup>223</sup>

Beyhan seems to have reacted to the execution of her husband by walking away from her family which seems a negative reaction. It is possible to imagine to what extent Ottoman princesses were saddened after the execution of their statesman husbands; however, providing precise information concerning both this issue and their attitudes towards remarriage seems to be difficult. A state of being sons-in-law of the dynasty and high-ranking statesmen together might lead to intricate circumstances.

It is useful to mention the situation of Selim I's daughter, Şah Sultan, and her husband, Lütfi Paşa, here again, because it is a good example of how delicate the condition for a statesman was as a son-in-law statesman. Lütfi Paşa and Şah Sultan disagreed on the issue of punishment for the woman who was blamed for prostitution. They had a bitter quarrel over the sentence given to the woman who was charged with prostitution, and Şah opposed this punishment she assessed this sentence as a heavy punishment. Therefore, their disagreement resulted in Lütfi Paşa's physical violence to Şah Sultan. Şah Sultan wanted to divorce Lütfi Paşa, and their divorce brought an end to Lütfi Paşa's vizierate; he was dismissed and exiled to Dimetoka.<sup>224</sup> The sensitive balances in the relationship between a sultan's daughter and a statesman had to be considered. Although the sons-in-law were statesmen who were members of the Ottoman bureaucracy and were not complete foreigners, they were not members of the dynasty; or imperial family by birth, and in the situation of something bad happened to the daughters of the Ottoman sultans, dismissal might be perceived as a normal

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<sup>223</sup> Erhan Afyoncu, *Venedik Elçilerinin Raporlarına Göre Kanuni ve Pargalı İbrahim Paşa*, 57-58. Mustafa Ali does not give details, he talks on Ferhad Paşa's execution in Edirne. See Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Künhü'l Ahbar*, 362a 719.

<sup>224</sup> *ibid*, 357b-358a 710-711.

consequence. It was a strong reaction that sons-in-law were faced with divorce and dismissal after mistreating Ottoman princesses.

In addition to the example of Şah Sultan and Lütfi Paşa, the account of Sokollu Mehmed and İsmihan Sultan, the daughter of Selim II, proves that marriages with Ottoman princesses were a delicate issue and could be disadvantageous and difficult for statesmen. Stephan Gerlach uses the example of İsmihan and Sokollu Mehmed to illustrate the situation of an Ottoman statesman as the husband of an Ottoman princess. Paşa was his wife's slave, he had to do whatever she said and he could not object to anything. Mehmed Paşa avoided meeting concubines in their residence and if the Ottoman princesses noticed that their husbands had their eyes on concubines, their wives would have eliminated the concubines. It is said that many concubines were killed because Ottoman princesses were jealous of their husbands.<sup>225</sup> It is also said that İsmihan Sultan frequently treated her husband with disrespect and Sokollu Mehmed Paşa was afraid of her.<sup>226</sup> Sokollu Mehmed was quite older than İsmihan Sultan. Therefore, this might be wrong or exaggerated. On the other hand, it might be possible that the daughters of Ottoman sultans reminded their husbands that they had a higher status as daughters of the Ottoman sultans and that their husbands were the slaves of the Ottoman sultan.<sup>227</sup>

The marriages of some of the prominent Ottoman princesses should be examined and discussed to demonstrate the nature of the marriage policy towards them. It should be noted that the nature of marriages differed over centuries, but the marriage policy towards Ottoman princesses which consisted of marriages with devshirme statesmen remained. As discussed in the second chapter of this study, the unique status of Mihrimah made it possible to obtain information on her and her marriage with Rüstem Paşa. It seems that Mihrimah arises as the only Ottoman princess among the Ottoman princesses who lived in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries who more detailed information can be obtained. In addition to Mihrimah, Selçuk Sultan, daughter of Mehmed I, arose as an Ottoman princess more detailed information can be obtained than her contemporaries and successors. The

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<sup>225</sup> Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü* Volume 2, 584, 638.

<sup>226</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 43-44.

<sup>227</sup> Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü* Volume 2, 585.

precious position of Mihrimah creates a opportunity to understand the nature of marriage between an Ottoman princess and a devshirme statesman, their marriage process, and their married life.

The story of choosing Rüstem Paşa, governor of Diyarbekir, as the husband of Süleyman I's precious daughter Mihrimah Sultan arises as almost the only example that is accounted by Ottoman chronicle writers. Sultan Süleyman was seeing Rüstem Paşa as a suitable husband for her daughter Mihrimah for a while. He chose Rüstem as his son-in-law. In addition to this point, Süleyman aimed to appoint Rüstem Paşa to a higher position.<sup>228</sup> Venetian ambassador Daniello De Ludovisi points out the sincerity between Rüstem and Süleyman through the account of Rüstem Paşa's appointment by İbrahim Paşa. İbrahim took Rüstem away from the Sultan by assigning him to a remote corner of Anatolia. Rüstem tells the Sultan that he is very sorry to be separated from him, and asks for permission from the Sultan not to go on this duty. Süleyman says that he will talk to İbrahim on the issue that Rüstem can return to the palace.<sup>229</sup> This account shows that İbrahim was jealous of the sincerity between Rüstem and Süleyman, and Süleyman's positive thought that it might be possible to choose Rüstem as his daughter's husband.

A state of being the only daughter of the Ottoman sultan made marriage with her more advantageous and this situation highlighted the advantages of being married to her. It seems that the possibility of marrying Mihrimah Sultan became desirable to everyone which caused the creation of speculations about the son-in-law candidate. The rumor circulated about Rüstem was that Rüstem had leprosy. Sultan Süleyman sent a doctor to understand the situation of Rüstem, and the doctor found lice on Rüstem that helped to eliminate the possibility of disease. A very small lice on him brought a fortune as being son-in-law of the sultan. Therefore, there was a given nickname to Rüstem Paşa, *kehle-i ikbal*, louse of good fortune. Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali met this doctor in Damascus and verified the story of sending a doctor to Diyarbakır to check the body of Rüstem for disease.<sup>230</sup> Afyoncu assesses this account as not true and a reflection of political conflict in the chronicles. However, such a situation should

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<sup>228</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Kühü'l Ahbar*, 358b-712.

<sup>229</sup> Erhan Afyoncu, *Venedik Elçilerinin Raporlarına Göre Kanuni ve Pargalı İbrahim Paşa*, 96.

<sup>230</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Kühü'l Ahbar*, 358b-359a-712-713.

always be taken into account, as rumours were normal in the context of political conflicts. Peçevi and Mustafa Ali paint a positive picture of Rüstem Paşa, contrary to the general negative thoughts about him. Peçevi describes Rüstem as pious, benevolent, well-mannered and intelligent. Rüstem Paşa is praised for his contribution to the imperial treasury.<sup>231</sup>

Marrying the only daughter of the sultan was such an honor that opened to a way of exercising more power and increased domination. Süleyman's favorite and legal wife, and a prominent woman figure of his times and the Ottoman Empire, Hürrem showed appropriate manner for her characteristic features. As Bernardo Navagero accounts, Hürrem saw someone else as suitable for her daughter who was the governor of Egypt, Davud Paşa because of his handsomeness.<sup>232</sup> However; Hürrem seems to have been unable to influence Süleyman in this regard, despite her most said great influence on Süleyman. This situation might be related to Süleyman's intention to appoint and promote Rüstem to high ranks.

Rüstem's being the son-in-law of Hürrem must not have been such a bad thing for Hürrem, because Rüstem would have been her companion in achieving her goals. It seems that Rüstem was her closest collaborator who could support Hürrem in creating a good future for Hürrem's sons. The cooperation between Rüstem and Hürrem was necessary to ensure the succession of Suleyman I by one of Hürrem's sons. Rüstem and Hürrem maintained their influence by forming a faction that included Mihrimah. This gave them more power and influence than their contemporaries. It is true to say that it is difficult to find such a triumvirate of mother, daughter and son-in-law. Leaving aside the marriage between Mihrimah and Rüstem, Mihrimah wanted to remarry after Rüstem Paşa's death. She chose Semiz Ali Pasha, who had become Grand Vizier after Rüstem Pasha, and offered him her hand in

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<sup>231</sup> Erhan Afyoncu, "Rüstem Paşa", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/rustem-pasa> (10.05.2024); Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi* Volume 1, 17; Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Künhü'l Ahbar*, 358b-359a 712-713.

<sup>232</sup> Afyoncu, Venedik Elçilerinin Raporlarına Göre Kanuni ve Şehzade Mustafa, 59.

marriage, but he refused.<sup>233</sup> Her attempt to remarry might be because she intended to continue her influence with powerful man.

In the situation of marrying the daughters of Ottoman sultans with devshirme statesmen; sons-in-law had to leave the capital because of the possible intervention in state affairs in the early days of this policy. Therefore; son-in-law statesmen have endured their careers away from the capital. They were appointed to provinces as governors and they governed outside of the capital for the rest of their lives.<sup>234</sup> Later on, Ottoman sultans started to appoint sons-in-law to the grand vizierate and choose grand viziers as sons-in-law, therefore sons-in-law stayed in the capital. According to Koçi Bey, this situation led to disorders in the system, and it seems that Koçi Bey assesses this way as unfair which might have led to incompetence.<sup>235</sup>

The practice of appointing grand viziers and viziers among the husbands of the daughters of Ottoman sultans might be because of the intention to avoid the leave of their daughters from the capital. The husbands of Ottoman princesses stayed in the capital in this way and were involved in the sultans' nuclear families like the mothers and brothers of Ottoman princesses. A prominent example of this is the state of Mihrimah Sultan, her mother Hürrem and her husband Rüstem Pasha. The sons-in-law of the Ottoman dynasty might be the most reliable and close companions of Ottoman sultans. During the reign of Süleyman I most of the grand viziers were sons-in-law of the dynasty which arose as a common feature of his reign. Sons-in-law were chosen among the most powerful devshirme origin statesmen and linked to the imperial family through marriages.<sup>236</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, the faction between Hürrem, Mihrimah, and Rüstem proves how devshirme statesmen were seen as trustful companions, and there were strengthened ties between them.

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<sup>233</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Senato, *Dispacci Costantinopoli*, Filza 3-C, n. 73, fol. 220r-v. quoted in Atçıl, "Osmanlı Hanedanı'nın Evlilik Politikası ve Mihrimah Sultan'ın Evliliği," 21

<sup>234</sup> Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, ed. Zuhuri Danışman (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1972), 67.

<sup>235</sup> *ibid*, 67; Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 69-70.

<sup>236</sup> *ibid*, 65-66.

### 3.6 Marriages of Granddaughters of Ottoman Sultans

The marriage policy towards the Ottoman princesses was also adopted for the daughters of both princes and princesses. It is not possible to present certain information about the marriages of all the granddaughters of Ottoman sultans and claim that there was such kind of marriage towards the granddaughters of Ottoman sultans. It has been proved that the policy of marrying the daughters of Ottoman sultans to devshirme statesmen was continued for some of their granddaughters. The most prominent example of this feature was the marriage of Ayşe Hümaşah, the daughter of Mihrimah Sultan and Rüstem Paşa. Hümaşe Ayşe's first husband was Semiz Ahmed Paşa.<sup>237</sup> They married in 1561 when Ahmed was the head of the Janissaries. Mihrimah chose him as her son-in-law because he had been involved in defending the resident of Rüstem Paşa against a sack from the resident. In addition to this point, Mihrimah might need a man in her family after the death of his son and husband.<sup>238</sup> After the death of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa during the reign of Murad III, he was appointed Grand Vizier for six months.<sup>239</sup>

Ayşe Hümaşah married again in 1582 after the death of Semiz Ahmed Paşa. Feridun Paşa gave 35.000 gold as *mehir* to Hümaşah Ayşe. However, the immediate death of Feridun Paşa shortly after their marriage prevented the happiness of Ayşe.<sup>240</sup> As well as the daughter of Hümaşah and granddaughter of Mihrimah, Saliha Hanım, married Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa who was the grand vizier of Mehmed III.<sup>241</sup> Cigalazade Yusuf Paşa was appointed as grand vizier during his marriage with the granddaughter of Mihrimah Sultan, Saliha. It seems that they married before 1577 and Sinan Paşa was the Head of Janissary in 1577.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* Volume 1, 27, 37; İbrahim Peçevi Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi* Volume 1, 308.

<sup>238</sup> Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 297, 298

<sup>239</sup> Feridun Emecen, "Semiz Ahmed Paşa," TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/semiz-ahmed-pasa> (07.05.2024).

<sup>240</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* Volume 1, 130-131, 139.

<sup>241</sup> Lorenzo Bernardo's report includes information on his marriage with imperial women. See Erhan Afyoncu and Ahmet Önal, *Venedik Elçilerini Raporlarına Göre Osmanlı'nın İhtişamlı Yılları*, 271, 277-278.

<sup>242</sup> Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü* Volume 2, 535. He was grand admiral in 1591. See Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Selaniki Tarihi* Volume 1, 253.

This shows how the next two generations of Mihrimah continued the marriage policy toward Ottoman princesses which consisted of marriages with Ottoman statesmen. In addition to this point, the grandson of Saliha, who was the granddaughter of Mihrimah Sultan, Mehmed Paşa became a grand vizier during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim I.<sup>243</sup> Not only Mihrimah Sultan but also two generations in her family, her daughter and granddaughter, married high-ranking statesmen who were served also as grand vizier proves the significant position of Mihrimah, and her relevance in state affairs.

The existing marriage policy which was towards the daughters of Ottoman sultans was applied to granddaughters during the reign of Süleyman I. Hüma Sultan, a daughter of Şehzade Mehmed who was the eldest son of Süleyman died of a fatal disease, was given in marriage to vizier Ferhad Paşa.<sup>244</sup> He arranged marriages for his granddaughter, the daughters of the next sultan, Selim II, with his time's high-ranking officials of Ottoman bureaucracy. Three of his granddaughters, as well as daughters of Selim II, İsmihan, Şah, and Gevherhan, married in 1562 which was the last years of his time. İsmihan Sultan was given to Sokollu Mehmed Paşa who was the second vizier when they married. Another granddaughter Şah Sultan was given to Çakırcıbaşı Hasan, the Head of the Janissary army, who had been promoted to vizierate. Gevherhan Sultan was another granddaughter of Süleyman I who married Grand Admiral Piyale Paşa in this wedding ceremony.<sup>245</sup>

The wedding ceremony of 1562, organised by Suleyman I to arrange marriages for his granddaughters, could be seen as his highly voluntary way of adopting the marriage policy of arranging marriages with high-ranking officials of devshirme origin. There may be a tendency to choose high-ranking officials as sons-in-law and it seems that the reign of Suleyman I can be distinguished as the high point of the coherent adoption of this marriage policy. The extent to which the marriage policy for the daughters of Ottoman sultans, offering them to marry devshirme statesmen, was

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<sup>243</sup> Feridun Emecen, "Mehmed Paşa, Sultanzâde", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/mehmed-pasa-sultanzade> (07.05.2024).

<sup>244</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Künhü'l Ahbar*, 363a 721; Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Selaniki Tarihi* Volume 1, 27.

<sup>245</sup> *ibid*, 367a 729, 451b 898; Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi* Volume 1, 29, 309; BOA, C. EV. 00144.07191/1. Gevherhan Sultan married for a second time with Cerrah Mehmed Paşa. See BOA, TS. MA. e. 1202/50/1.

seriously and importantly adopted during the reign of Süleyman I can be seen. However, Süleyman refrained from arranging marriages for the daughters of his other son; Şehzade Bayezid. Suleyman preferred to arrange marriages and joint weddings for three of the daughters of his heir, Selim. The marriages of the three granddaughters took place after Süleyman I had declared his son Selim as his successor. It seems that Suleiman did not want to create a powerful alliance for his sons.<sup>246</sup> In other words, Suleyman I arranged marriages and joint weddings for the daughters of the next Ottoman Sultan. The organisation of the wedding ceremony for the daughters of Şehzade Selim during Suleyman's reign meant that the new sultan was introduced to the public through a ceremony and celebration that were tools for demonstrating imperial power and prestige. Moreover, the attempt to increase the loyalty of leading statesmen was a sign of the effort to secure Selim's future by creating a reliable circle and environment around him.<sup>247</sup> It shows how the marriages of Ottoman princesses were used as a means of demonstrating prestige and power. On the other hand, dowries of the remaining daughters of Şehzade Bayezid, who was executed by Selim during the struggle between them for accession to the throne, were given by Selim II.<sup>248</sup>

Apart from the granddaughters of Suleyman I, there are examples of marriages between Ottoman statesmen and granddaughters of other Ottoman sultans. The important issue is the marriages of granddaughters born to daughters of Ottoman sultans, most of the granddaughters who married during the reign of Ottoman sultans were daughters of princes. However, it is not possible to give certain information about the marriages of all the daughters and granddaughters of Ottoman princesses because of the vague picture of the marriages of Ottoman princesses. One of the grand viziers of Selim I; Yunus Paşa's wife, Asılhan Hatun, was the daughter of Selçuk Hatun, who was the daughter of Bayezid II.<sup>249</sup> Yunus Paşa, one of the grand viziers of Selim I, married the grandson of Bayezid II. He was one of the grand viziers who became son-

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<sup>246</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* Volume 1, 171; Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 67.

<sup>247</sup> Leslie Peirce, *Empress of the East*, 346-347.

<sup>248</sup> BOA, TS. MA. e. 3173/1.

<sup>249</sup> Feridun Emecen, "Yunus Paşa", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/yunus-pasa> (09.04.2024); Sakaoglu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 194.

in-law and became an example of the marriage policy towards Ottoman princesses by marrying statesmen. The granddaughter of Bayezid II, Selçuk, married again after the death of Yunus Paşa and her second marriage was also with a statesman. Another daughter of Selçuk, Hatun, married Halil Paşa's son.<sup>250</sup> One of the daughters of Ayşe Sultan married Dukakinzade Ahmed Bey, and her other daughters also were married to members of the ruling elite families.<sup>251</sup> Even if they did not marry the pashas, they married their sons or other important people. This feature was common for the daughters of Bayezid II, which shows the importance of son-in-law preferences and the validity of the ongoing marriage policy towards Ottoman princesses. It can be seen that granddaughters of Ottoman sultans were given in marriage to important people such as the sons of statesmen. The marriage policy of arranging marriages with statesmen of devshirme origin was also adopted for granddaughters of Ottoman sultans.

While it is likely that queen mothers could be involved in arranging marriages of daughters and granddaughters, this does not seem to have been common in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is not known to what extent the mothers of Ottoman princesses were involved in the process of choosing sons-in-law, as there are no primary sources on the subject. Ottoman chroniclers tended not to include such matters in their works. It seems that this role of the queen's mother emerged in the seventeenth century through the regency. Prior to this, there is no known example of the involvement of queen mothers in the marriage process. Arranging marriages for their granddaughters may have served their interests in finding alliances within the Ottoman bureaucracy to maintain their power. Kösem Sultan was one of the most powerful and prominent women and sultans of the Ottoman dynasty, and the regent of her son and grandson, who was involved in choosing sons-in-law for Ottoman princesses.

### **3.7 Age of Marriage for the Daughters of Ottoman Sultans**

The average age of marriage for the daughters of Ottoman sultans might be 17-18 up to the existence of marriage in the child age, which is called *suri* marriage, so-

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<sup>250</sup> Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları*, 52.

<sup>251</sup> *ibid*, 48-49.

called marriage. It seems that this age average was not unique to the sixteenth century. On the other hand, it is not possible to obtain trustworthy information on the marriage ages of all the Ottoman princesses, because there was a lack of certain information about the lives of Ottoman princesses. Marriage age average was in the frame of legal doctrine which presents suitable marriage age as reaching the majority; age 12-13 for girls. The birth dates of well-known ones show that the daughters of Ottoman sultans mostly married around the ages 17-18 in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Selçuk Hatun, the daughter of Mehmed I married when she was 18 years old. Rüstem Paşa and Mihrimah married in 1539 when Mihrimah was around 17 years old. Three of the daughters of Selim II married in 1562 when they were 17-18 years old.<sup>252</sup> Most of the princesses who lived in this period which is the scope of this study are not mentioned because of the uncertainty regarding their birth dates and it is not possible to present certain information on their marriage ages. However, it can be said that they are in this age range until the emergence of marriages at child age.

Taking the marriage age average of Ottoman princesses into consideration, it seems that the nature of the marriage policy for the daughters of Ottoman sultans which consisted of marriages with devshirme origin statesmen arose as an age gap relationship. Their husbands were mostly older than them. It is true to claim that the husbands of Ottoman princesses were chosen as older men. According to Sakaoğlu; there are two reasons behind the choice of older statesmen as husbands of Ottoman princesses. The major reason lies in the possible attitudes of the pashas for the daughters of Ottoman sultans who were mature, affectionate, reliable, committed to their duties, and who would not double-cross their wives or harass them.<sup>253</sup> It seems that the age gap between Ottoman princesses and their husbands did not matter, rather Ottoman sultans gave importance to the positions and success of prospective sons-in-law.

### **3.8 Marriages at Child Age and Suri Marriages**

The circumstances of the seventeenth century did bring new ways to the ongoing marriage policy towards the Ottoman princesses which were marriages in

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<sup>252</sup> *ibid*, 28, 65-70; Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 103, 254, 271, 275.

<sup>253</sup> *ibid*, 271.

their childhood and marrying more than once differing from the previous centuries. Multiple marriages were also seen before the seventeenth century; however, it was not like in the seventeenth century. In this part of the present chapter there will be an examination of marriages at child age and marrying more than once as a natural result of the marriages at child age. There will be an attempt to find an answer to the question of why *suri* marriage started to be the preferred way of marriage. How and why did *suri* marriage appear and Ottoman princesses married at ages before their maturity? What is the major motivation for this marriage way?

*Suri* marriage term implies the situation of marriage in a feigned way which is being not involved in ordinary marriage life until their maturity. Ottoman princesses who married at early ages, before puberty, did not get into sexual intercourse with their husbands. Islamic law which was applied by the Ottoman Empire saw girls as children before their menstrual cycle. According to Islamic law, girls were seen as underage and children until the ages of 12-13, sexual maturity is accepted as 8-9. Moreover, they did not have a voice in their lives. Their parents, especially fathers, had a voice in their lives.<sup>254</sup> In this situation, marriage decisions belonged to the fathers of girls. In the examples of Ottoman princesses marriages at child age, puberty was mandatory for sexual intercourse. *Suri* marriages turned into normal marriages after the menstruation of Ottoman princesses. There were also princesses whose husbands died before they reached puberty and who never had a normal married life. It is not certain how the waiting period up to puberty is experienced. It is not known whether princesses were with their parents in the palace or were waiting at the residences of their husbands without having sexual intercourse with them.<sup>255</sup> Princesses who married at a very young age may have gone to the residences of sons-in-law with concubines who accompanied and were responsible for their care, but they may have also stayed with their parents because of their young age.

The daughters of Ahmed I were distinguished from princesses before the seventeenth century in terms of marriages. One of his daughters Ayşe was married seven times and another daughter Fatma married six times. Tables 2, 3, and 4 include

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<sup>254</sup> Mahmoud Yazbak, "Child Marriage," in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures* Volume 3, ed. Suad Joseph (Leiden, Brill, 2006), 57.

<sup>255</sup> Şaduman Tuncer, "Padişah Kızlarının Küçük Yaşlarda Yaptıkları Şekli Evlilikler: III. Ahmed'in Kızı Fatma Sultan Örneği," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi* 43, (2020): 70.

the names of husbands of Ayşe and Fatma Sultan. It is true to claim that Ayşe and Fatma were Ottoman princesses who had the highest number of marriages between the mid-fifteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries. There was not a case of having the highest numbers of marriages like Ayşe and Fatma before and after them in this period. In addition to this point, the daughters of Ahmed I mostly married at early ages. The situation of marrying more than once in this period might be seen as a feature and result of giving Ottoman princesses in marriage at child ages. It seems that political interests were considered, and marriages of Ottoman princesses were used as a tool to get favorable circumstances. The idea of benefit from the wealth of chosen sons-in-law might be considered.

One of the well-known stories on child-age marriages belonged to the Kaya İsmihan Sultan, the daughter of Murad IV. She married Tırnakçı Melek Ahmed Paşa in 1644 when she was eleven. Melek Ahmed Paşa was appointed as dome vizier with news of his marriage with Kaya Sultan when he was in Erzurum. Melek Ahmed was gifted to Sultan Ahmed I, and he was trained in the palace. The title of Melek Ahmed Paşa was given by Ahmed I.<sup>256</sup> They married when Kaya was 11-13 years old around, however, Ahmed Paşa was 40 years old. Kaya was scared and ran away from the Melek Ahmed Paşa and did not let him near.

Kaya Sultan's marriage was reflected in Evliya Çelebi's travelogue, *Seyahatname*, due to his closeness with Melek Ahmed Paşa, and a state of being witness to their life. Evliya Çelebi and Melek Ahmed Paşa were relatives, and Evliya served Melek Ahmed during his governorship in provinces since 1650.<sup>257</sup> Evliya Çelebi tells about their great love and how Kaya's early death saddened the pasha. As Evliya Çelebi mentions in his traveling book, *Seyahatname*, Kaya Sultan died at 27 years old and she died while she was giving birth to a baby girl.<sup>258</sup> Evliya Çelebi puts the dramatic love story in his traveler accounts as a subplot to support his book's main

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<sup>256</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname* Volume 1 Book 1, 242; Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, "Melek Ahmed Paşa," TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/melek-ahmed-pasa> (10.05.2024).

<sup>257</sup> Robert Dankoff, *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesmen Melek Ahmed Paşa (1588-1662)* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 3-6.

<sup>258</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname* Volume 1 Book 1, 317.

plot. It is possible that the author's intention was to attract the attention of his audience through his travel accounts.

As Robert Dankoff describes, the life story of Melek Ahmed Paşa and Kaya İsmihan Sultan was the private life of an Ottoman statesman.<sup>259</sup> On the other hand; it seems that Evliya Çelebi did not hesitate to tell the love story of a statesman and Ottoman princess, he was the messenger of Melek Ahmed, therefore he was a witness of their relationship and private life. Evliya had a chance to get to know Kaya Sultan closely. Nuran Tezcan approaches Evliya Çelebi's accounts about Ahmed and Kaya with suspicion. According to Tezcan; this narration arises as fiction because of its some wrongnesses and inconsistencies. Evliya fictionalized the marriage life of Kaya and Melek as a love story.<sup>260</sup>

Kaya and Melek Ahmed had a daughter, Fatma Sultan, who lost her mother shortly after she was born, and it is not clear who she grew up with. Fatma had a chance to acquire a relatively large wealth, which she inherited from his mother and father.<sup>261</sup> This situation is seen by the things she left behind. Her possessions show how the daughters of Ottoman sultans had large wealth as being the imperial women and wives high ranking officials.

İbrahim I was another sultan who gave his daughters in marriages at their early childhood; in a way of *suri* marriage. He had eight daughters as *mevacib* (payments, salary) records show. They were Fatma, Gevherhan, Safiye, İsmihan, Ayşe, Hümaşah, Beyhan and Ümmügülsüm.<sup>262</sup> Sultan İbrahim gave three of his daughters at their very young ages in marriages to Ottoman statesmen.<sup>263</sup> It seems that; the daughters of İbrahim married at younger ages than the daughters of Ahmed I and Murad IV. Although the information about the husbands of İbrahim's daughters is not clear, it is almost certain that they married at an early age. The marriages of İbrahim I's daughters

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<sup>259</sup> Nuran Tezcan, "Seyahatname'deki Aşk Öyküsü: Bir Kaya Sultan Vardı," *kebikeç* 21 (2006): 13; Robert Dankoff, *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesmen Melek Ahmed Paşa* (1588-1662).

<sup>260</sup> Tezcan, "Seyahatname'deki Aşk Öyküsü: Bir Kaya Sultan Vardı," 14.

<sup>261</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname* Volume 1 Book 1, 317; Özer Küpeli, "IV. Murad'ın Torunu Fatma Hanım Sultan'ın Muhallefatı," *Cihannüma Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2 (Aralık 2016): 163.

<sup>262</sup> Çakır, "IV. Mehmed Ailesi ve Hanedan Politikası," 39.

<sup>263</sup> Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of Ottoman Empire*, (London: 1670), 40.

are explained by the economic situation of the empire in İbrahim's reign. He did attempt to benefit from the wealth of prospective sons-in-law.

İbrahim's mental health problems seemed to contribute to his decisions and attitudes toward people. He expected a lot of respect and service from his sisters, Ayşe, Fatam and Hanzade, and niece for his concubine Telli Hümaşah Hatun whom Sultan İbrahim married legally. Sultan İbrahim's inappropriate and disrespectful attitude towards his intimate female relatives was reflected in the account of Naima. Sultan İbrahim ordered them to respect Telli Hümaşah. The sisters of İbrahim I would stand while Telli Haseki was eating and they served to Telli Haseki. Kaya Sultan, Murad IV's daughter and nephew of İbrahim I, was pouring water from a pitcher for Telli Hümaşah to wash her hands. The situation that İbrahim I was using his female relatives as servants of his legal wife touched their honor and they rebelled against him. Sultan İbrahim exiled the sultans to Edirne. Telli Hümaşah Hatun became the sole ruler of the harem.<sup>264</sup>

As seen in Tables 2,3 and 4 Beyhan Sultan seemed as most married daughter of Sultan İbrahim. She was given in marriage to Hezarpare Ahmed Paşa in 1648 when she was two years around.<sup>265</sup> It is said that he gave a significant amount of money to Sultan İbrahim I and he was appointed as grand vizier.<sup>266</sup> However, Ahmed Paşa was executed in 1648, shortly after their marriage. The fact that Ahmed Pasha is remembered with this nickname is related to the way he died. His body was left lying in Atmeydanı district and people tore it into pieces in with the thought that human flesh was good for joint pain. That's why he was nicknamed *hezarpare*, meaning a thousand pieces.<sup>267</sup> The bad fortune of Ahmed Paşa arises as proof of how delicate the

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<sup>264</sup> Mustafa Naima Efendi, *Naima Tarihi* Volume 4, 1854; Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları*, 100.

<sup>265</sup> BOA, TS. MA. 7112/1; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani* Volume 1, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 9.

<sup>266</sup> It is said that Ahmed Paşa gave 300.000 kuruş to the sultan and he appointed to grand vizierate. On the other hand; it is not clear whether it was mehir for Beyhan Sultan or this amount of money was given to sultan directly. Abdülkadir Özcan, "Hezarpare Ahmed Paşa", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/hezarpare-ahmed-pasa> (04.05.2024).

<sup>267</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname* Volume 1 Book 1, 226; Naima Mustafa Efendi, *Naima Tarihi* Volume 4, 1866.

situation of the dynasty's sons-in-law. It is seen that, as mentioned above, the situation of statesmen as sons-in-law did not avoid executions and dismissals.

Another daughter of İbrahim, Gevherhan Sultan married Cafer Paşa in 1646.<sup>268</sup> She had five husbands but she was not involved in sexual intercourse with her husbands and remained a virgin. Her last husband was İsmail Pasha who died during the passage of River Raab, and her husband was Gürcü Mehmed Paşa when Rycaut reported on the Ottoman Empire. In addition to this point, Rycaut describes the wealth of Gürcü Mehmed Paşa as enough to maintain court.<sup>269</sup> This anecdote of Rycaut might be an explanation of Sultan İbrahim's intention of arranging marriages for his daughters at their child ages. He seemed to design his daughters' marriages with the awareness of using them as a tool for political alliances and interests.

Fatma Sultan married Yusuf Paşa when she was 2 years old. Yusuf Paşa also known as Joseph Markovitch. He was *musahib*, a companion, of the sultan and was very close to him. After the death of Yusuf Pasha, it is mentioned in Naima that she married Musahip Fazlı Paşa.<sup>270</sup> Yusuf Paşa was executed by Sultan İbrahim I, however İbrahim I regretted his decision on the death of Yusuf Paşa.<sup>271</sup>

It seems that Ottoman sultans attempted to guarantee something through this marriage way. The political aspect of the marriage policy towards Ottoman princesses did not appear as the only reason and aspect of this kind of marriage. On the other hand, the political motivation behind the marriage policy for Ottoman princesses with devshirme origin statesmen at their child ages appears more prominent. Ottoman sultans tried to achieve something through the nominated statesmen as husbands of their underage daughters.

Motivations behind the marriages of Ottoman princesses at child age seem as the most important matter rather than mentioning and discussing the husbands and marriage ages of Ottoman princesses, and how many times they have married. Marriages at child age indicate a deviation in the marriage policy adopted for daughters which was continued from the mid-fifteenth century; marriages with devshirme

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<sup>268</sup> BOA, TS. MA. 7855/1.

<sup>269</sup> Rycaut, *The Present State of Ottoman Empire*, 40.

<sup>270</sup> BOA, TS. MA. 10055/1; Mustafa Naima Efendi, *Naima Tarihi* Volume 4, 1661-1662, 1685, 1723.

<sup>271</sup> *ibid*, 1719.

statesmen. Necdet Sakaoğlu says that the main reason why Ottoman princesses were married to statesmen in a way of *suri* marriages was to get money. He claims that the sultans who gave their daughters in marriage at their ages before puberty aimed to seize the property and money of wealthy statesmen through the creation of family ties.<sup>272</sup> Naima evaluates marriages at child ages as weird attitudes of Ottoman sultans which might be because of the age gap between Ottoman princesses and their husbands. He implies the situation of sultans looking after their interests.<sup>273</sup>

### **3.9 Wedding Processes and Ceremonies of Ottoman Princesses between mid-Fifteenth and mid-Seventeenth Centuries**

In this section of the present chapter, there will be a discussion on the marriage process and wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses. First of all, the importance of wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses lies in the disappearance of wedding ceremonies which were organized for male members of the Ottoman dynasty; sultans and princes through the abandonment of legal marriages. Instead, Ottoman sultans and their sons chose to have temporary sexual intercourse with concubines which arose as major partner preferences, relationship ways, or marriage policy in the time after the mid-fifteenth century. The lack of wedding ceremonies for the male members of the dynasty also meant a ceremonial gap; a lack of imperial ceremony, filled by the wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses.<sup>274</sup> This circumstance made female members of the dynasty as the only members who had wedding ceremonies arranged. The demonstration of prestige, power, and sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire had existed also through the wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses and imperial festivals. On the other hand, the wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses were often combined with other celebrations, such as the circumcision of the princes. For instance, the marriage of Mihrimah with Rüstem was celebrated together with the circumcisions of her brothers Bayezid and Cihangir in 1539, and İsmihan, Şah, and Gevherhan, three daughters of Selim II married in 1562 with joint wedding ceremony.

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<sup>272</sup> Sakaoğlu, *Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanları*, 336-337.

<sup>273</sup> Mustafa Naima Efendi, *Naima Tarihi* Volume 4, 1806-1807.

<sup>274</sup> Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 68.

The ceremonies did bring the public, imperial family, and ruling elite together. Moreover, it demonstrated the political and cultural things and identities of communities.<sup>275</sup> Wedding ceremonies and other kinds of ceremonies arose as a way of meeting point for people from different backgrounds. High-ranking officials met with the sultan in the festivals which was a way of demonstrating solidarity and confirmation of their loyalty.<sup>276</sup> However; Ottoman chronicle writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not give detailed accounts of the marriages of Ottoman princesses, they tended to ignore and did not record the details of the wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses.<sup>277</sup> Therefore; it is hard to present a detailed account of the wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses. On the other hand, there were common practices with other ceremonies like arranging banquets and giving gifts to the people.

The marriage process of an Ottoman princess, i.e. the time before the marriage and the wedding ceremony, started with the choice of the son-in-law and continued with the information of the son-in-law candidate. As discussed above, the involvement of the Ottoman princesses and their mothers in the decision of the son-in-law was not a common thing for the sixteenth century. Moreover, it is true to say that Ottoman princesses could not be involved in the process of choosing husbands for them, even for their first marriages. The decision-making process was between the Sultan and the Grand Vizier, but the final decision seemed to belong to the Sultan. The Grand Viziers appeared as the person to whom the Sultan would turn for advice on potential sons-in-law.<sup>278</sup> The sultan listened to the opinions of the grand vizier about the prospective son-in-law. The son-in-law candidate statesmen were informed through the edict which was sent from the sultan.

It did not matter whether the chosen statesman was married or not which shows how the Ottoman sultan did not consider the wives, children, and family lives of the

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<sup>275</sup> Kaya Şahin, "Staging an Empire: An Ottoman Circumcision Ceremony as Cultural Performance," *American Historical Review* (April 2018): 463-464.

<sup>276</sup> Zeynep Yelçe, "Evaluating Three Imperial Festivals: 1524, 1530 and 1539," 74.

<sup>277</sup> *ibid*, 85, 87.

<sup>278</sup> Ahmet Önal, "Payitaht İstanbul'da Osmanlı Merasimleri," *Antik Çağ'dan XXI. Yüzyıla Büyük İstanbul Tarihi*, 443 <https://istanbultarihi.ist/91-payitaht-istanbulda-osmanli-merasimleri> (10.05.2024).

chosen statesman as son-in-law. In this regard son-in-law candidate had to divorce his wife if he was married. The statesmen who were outside of Istanbul were called to Istanbul and made sons-in-law with the position of vizier or another duty. As mentioned in the previous part of this chapter; as a well-known example, İsmihan Sultan's husbands; Sokollu Mehmed Paşa and Kalaylıkoz Ali Paşa divorced their wives to marry her. There were many examples of it. It is true to claim that there was a common situation in marriage policy toward Ottoman princesses, divorce of chosen son-in-law statesmen in the situation of being already married. However; some of them rejected marrying with an Ottoman princess.

After informing the son-in-law candidate, the preparation of marriages and wedding ceremonies began. The Ottoman Sultan undertook the responsibility of the preparations and was the main person in charge of the marriage preparations. He even undertook to build or rent residences for couples.<sup>279</sup> The statesman who was to be married the daughter of the Ottoman sultan was responsible for *mehir*, jewelry and accessories for the bride, and gifts for the queen mother and harem inhabitants. These responsibilities of a sons-in-law required good income, however; in the situation of not good economic condition, financial aid could be given from the treasury to the sons-in-law.<sup>280</sup>

It was a common way to organize wedding ceremonies with other ceremonies like circumcision ceremonies of princes or organizing one wedding ceremony for more than one princess at the same time. The wedding ceremony of Mihrimah Sultan and Rüstem Paşa which was the most well-known one, was held in 1539 with the circumcision of Mihrimah's two brothers; Bayezid and Cihangir. The location of this ceremony was Hippodrome, At Meydanı, as the main location of most of the imperial ceremonies. The marriage of Mihrimah Sultan, as an only daughter of Süleyman I, and the main companion of Hürrem, attracted the attention of all participators. Unfortunately, the details of the wedding ceremony of Mihrimah and Rüstem were not recorded by history writers as the circumcision of two princes as a part of the imperial ceremony of 1539. It is not possible to present certain information regarding this matter.

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<sup>279</sup> *ibid*, 443.

<sup>280</sup> *ibid*, 443.

Süleyman I organized a common wedding ceremony for three daughters of Selim II, İsmihan, Gevherhan, and Şah, in 1562. Two important history writers and people who served in important ranks of the bureaucracy and potential first-eye witnesses, Lütfi Paşa and Celalzade Mustafa do not include the wedding ceremonies that were organized in the reign of Süleyman I.<sup>281</sup> Mustafa Ali skips to give information on wedding ceremony of Rüstem Paşa and Mihrimah sultan. He only talks about the circumcision ceremony of Bayezid and Cihangir. Peçevi also follows the same pattern of not providing a detailed account of the wedding ceremony of Mihrimah and Rüstem.<sup>282</sup> It might be because of the tendency to keep away from talking and writing the imperial women and perceiving marriage as a personal and private matter.<sup>283</sup> It is not possible to present detailed accounts of the wedding ceremonies of Ottoman princesses, and their wedding ceremonies remained a private issue. However, it seems that their marriages were celebrated with large and glorious organizations.<sup>284</sup>

There was another continuing practice in the Ottoman dynasty of giving gifts to people who served the Ottoman dynasty, such as ulama, viziers, gatekeepers and other officials, as well as to sultans' concubines, as part of special occasions such as wedding ceremonies.

This practice was seen in the marriage of Beyhan Sultan, who was the daughter of Ibrahim I, and Grand Vizier Ahmed Pasha, known as Hezarpare Ahmed Pasha, by giving fancy dresses and caftans as gifts to the officials.<sup>285</sup> The gifts given by the Ottoman sultans in honour of the imperial ceremonies were presented as a way of demonstrating imperial power and prestige, as was the reason for organising the ceremonies.

Dowry was a tradition in the Turkic and Islamic cultures which meant giving items as gifts to the brides. Ottoman Empire recorded what was given to the daughters

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<sup>281</sup> Zeynep Yelçe, "Evaluating Three Imperial Festivals: 1524, 1530 and 1539," 87.

<sup>282</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Künhü'l Ahbar*, 312a 619; Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi* Volume 1, 158-159.

<sup>283</sup> Peirce, *Empress of the East*, 231.

<sup>284</sup> Artan, "Royal Weddings and Grand Vizierate," 343.

<sup>285</sup> BOA, TS. MA. e. 7112/1.

of Ottoman sultans as dowry; *çeyiz* or *cihaz*. The practice of giving lands as dowry to brides was not adopted by the Ottoman dynasty. Ottoman dynasty did not give lands as dowry to Ottoman princesses, despite the taking lands thanks to the marriages of Ottoman sultans or their sons with female members of both Muslim and non-Muslim neighboring dynasties. The Ottoman dynasty enlarged its boundaries through the lands that were taken as dowry for their wives.

The dowry of Ottoman princesses mostly consisted of textile items, such as pillows and fabric dresses. The dowry included items that the bride would use after marriage in her home. It included textile products such as bedding sheets, towels, loincloths, fabrics, kitchen utensils, and dowry chests. In addition to these items, personal belongings such as wedding dresses, and jewelry also were part of the dowry.<sup>286</sup> The dowries of Ottoman princesses included types of accessories; like belts, bride crowns, garments, and jewelry.

It seems that giving money to the daughters of Ottoman sultans arose as part of the dowry, as seen for dowries of the daughters of Selim II who were married during the reign of Süleyman I in 1562, got 6000 *filori*. In this record, it is possible to obtain detailed information on what kinds of stuff were given to the daughter of Selim II as dowry which gives an idea concerning the dowries of the daughters of Ottoman sultans. The major materials for the daughters of Selim II were fabrics in taffeta and velvet. The dowry of Selim's three daughters includes household items such as pillows, quilts, towels, candlesticks, basins, mugs, trays, jugs, cheesecloths, pans, pots, and cauldrons, and it is stated how much these items cost. Additionally, how much money was given to the brides and grooms was recorded. It was given 15.000 *filori* to two of the three sons-in-law, Mehmed Paşa and Hasan Ağa, and 10.000 *filori* to Piyale Paşa.<sup>287</sup>

*Mehir* is one of the major legal obligations of a Muslim man to his wife. Moreover, *mehir* meant a legal guarantee for Muslim women, especially for the time after the end of marriages. Ottoman sultans gave large amounts of *mehir* for their legal

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<sup>286</sup> BOA, TS. MA. e. 3174/1; BOA, TS. MA. e. 3173/1.

<sup>287</sup> BOA, TS. MA.d. 7859.

wives as a way of demonstrating the prestige, wealth, and power of the Ottoman dynasty, and sultans. Rüstem Paşa guaranteed to give 100.000 altın sultani as *mehir* to Mihrimah Sultan.<sup>288</sup> Ayşe Sultan, the daughter of Murad III, married Bosnalı İbrahim Paşa with 300.000 sikke *mehir*. The marriage of İbrahim Paşa and Ayşe Sultan is seen in the reports of Venetian ambassadors Giovanni Moro and Lorenzo Bernardo.<sup>289</sup> The power of İbrahim Paşa came from his wife Ayşe Sultan who was the daughter of Murad III. He was doing his duty to repay his debt of gratitude to that master by remaining loyal to him. İbrahim Paşa had good relations with Queen Mother Safiye Sultan during the reign of Mehmed III. He also avoided creating negative feelings in the eyes of the queen mother.<sup>290</sup>

Naima mentions *mehir* of Ayşe Sultan's second marriage, which was with Yemişçi Hasan Paşa, as 4000 altın.<sup>291</sup> It is seen through the account of Naima, Ayşe Sultan got 400.000 *sikke mehir* from her third husband, Güzelce Mahmud Paşa in 1604.<sup>292</sup> Another daughter of Murad III, Fatma Sultan, married Grand Admiral Halil Paşa who could sustain his status thanks to his wife and mother-in-law, in the end of 1594, and Fatma took 300.000 *sikke mehir*.<sup>293</sup> In addition to this issue wedding ceremonies of the daughters of Murad III for their first marriages were not as showy as the circumcision celebrations of their brother Mehmed, Mehmed III, in 1582. Naima

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<sup>288</sup> Istanbul Şerhiye Sicilleri, Evkaf-ı Hümayun Müfettişliği 2, s. 89 quoted in Mehmet Akif Aydın, "Osmanlı Hukukunda Nikah Akitleri," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 3: (1982), 5.

<sup>289</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* Volume 1, 168-169; Afyoncu and Önal, *Venedik Elçilerini Raporlarına Göre Osmanlı'nın İhtişamlı Yılları*, 56, 58, 105; BOA. TS. MA. d. 01678.0008

<sup>290</sup> *ibid*, 266, 275.

<sup>291</sup> Mustafa Naima Efendi, *Naima Tarihi* Volume 1, ed. Zuhuri Danışman (Istanbul: Zuhuri Danışman Yayınevi, 1967), 304. It seems that Naima was wrong about the *mehir* of Ayşe Sultan's marriage with Yemişçi Hasan Paşa, because given *mehir* amount by Naima is highly less than the average of *mehir* amount that given before.

<sup>292</sup> *ibid*, 422.

<sup>293</sup> Venetian bailo Leonardo Dona talks about this detail. See Afyoncu and Önal, *Venedik Elçilerini Raporlarına Göre Osmanlı'nın İhtişamlı Yılları*, 277; Mustafa Naima Efendi, *Naima Tarihi* Volume 1, 96-97; Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* Volume 1, 340-341.

accounts that a gathering was organized for women in the Old Palace for Fatma Sultan's marriage.<sup>294</sup>

In the chronicles of Naima and other Ottoman chronicles, the *mehir* amounts given for Ottoman princesses are generally higher than 100.000.<sup>295</sup> It seems that the amount of *mehir* for the daughters of Ottoman daughters increased through time, despite the lack of information concerning the *mehir* of all the Ottoman princesses. In addition to the point of demonstrating prestige and power through one of the legal obligations of marriage; *mehir*, being legal assurance arose as another crucial aspect of it. The *mehir*, usually *mihri müeccel* which was given later, arises as a legal financial assurance of women for the time after marriage. Despite the good economic situation of Ottoman princesses and the state of being members of the imperial family, the amount of *mehir* increased as parallel to their status. Moreover, it seems that how many times Ottoman princesses married did not matter.

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<sup>294</sup> Özge Nur Yıldırım, "The Twin Books for Two Ottoman Princesses: An Examination on the Matali'üs-saade Manuscripts 1582" (Master Thesis, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 2021), 83; Mustafa Naima Efendi, *Naima Tarihi* Volume 1, 97.

<sup>295</sup> In addition to accounts of Naima, Selaniki talks about amounts of given *mehir* to Ottoman princesses. Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* Volume 1, 168-169, 340-341.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis examines the marriages of Ottoman princesses who lived between the mid-fifteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, and the daughters of Ottoman sultans between Mehmed II and Sultan İbrahim, in the context of dynastic marriages. In the light of all the information obtained, it is true to say that there was a marriage policy towards the daughters of Ottoman sultans instead of a single and uniform marriage policy. Moreover, the information obtained proves that the Ottoman dynasty, despite the changes over the centuries, had a principled approach to the marriages of female members of the imperial family. There was one particular way that was repeated for their marriages within the mid-fifteenth century; marriages with statesmen of slave origin who were the backbone of the Ottoman bureaucracy. The aim of this study was to examine the marriages between the daughters of Ottoman sultans and statesmen of slave origin.

The marriages of the Ottoman sultans, from Osman I to Sultan İbrahim, are examined in the second chapter of this thesis because Sultan İbrahim was the last sultan who preferred to marry legally until Sultan Abdülmecid in the mid-19th century. The existence of the Ottoman dynasty as the only ruling dynasty, the preferences of the consorts and the relationships of the Ottoman sultans need to be examined. All this changed over time as the dynasty changed. On the contrary, some of the Ottoman sultans broke the established relationship patterns and consort preferences.

Mehmed II's reign seems to have marked a change in the ongoing marriage policy towards the daughters of the Ottoman sultans. The change was from arranging inter-dynastic marriages with neighbouring Muslim dynasties, which were Anatolian principalities, to giving Ottoman princesses to *kul* statesmen. It seems that the first

marriage with statesmen was arranged for the daughters of Murad II. On the other hand, this does not mean that a marriage policy was adopted. Most of the daughters of Bayezid II married statesmen, and this seemed to be the only way for the daughters of Bayezid II to marry. The new ruling elite existed during the reign of Mehmed II with his preference, and they would be suitable husbands for the daughters of Ottoman princesses at that time. It seems that the Ottoman dynasty preferred to stay away from inter-dynastic marriages with neighbouring dynasties or the Turkish elite to avoid possible intervention. Moreover, the changing status and strengthening of the Ottoman dynasty led to the end of marriages with Turkish elites and neighbouring dynasties. The end of inter-dynastic marriages for Ottoman sultans and princes paralleled the end of inter-dynastic marriages for the daughters of Ottoman sultans. On the other hand, it is true to claim that there was no principled approach and policy that lasted long towards the marriages and relationships of Ottoman sultans and princes.

The practice of choosing slave-origin statesmen as husbands for Ottoman princesses rather than Turkish notables and members of other dynasties continued for a long time, which proves that there were principles and policies for marrying daughters of Ottoman princesses. It seems that the changing status of the Ottoman dynasty over the centuries brought about changes in marriage or relationship patterns. The necessity and the need to establish alliances through inter-dynastic marriages for both Ottoman sultans, their sons and daughters disappeared due to the increasing power and status of the Ottoman dynasty.

Until the mid-fifteenth century, inter-dynastic marriages with neighbouring dynasties, the Anatolian principalities, emerged as a way of marriage that served the interests of both sides. Inter-dynastic marriages were used as an instrument of peace and alliance. It seems that this type of marriage can be seen as a normal result of the circumstances of the time. Despite the fact that slave-origin statesmen were not the only group that could be of value to the daughters of Ottoman sultans, considering the existence of other Muslim dynasties such as the Mughals, Mamluks or Safevids, the Ottoman dynasty chose *kul* statesmen as husbands for Ottoman princesses. The main reason behind this practice might be the fact that Ottoman sultans tried to avoid involvement and intervention of other dynasties in political affairs.

It is true to say that both sides of this marriage looked after their interests, whatever the century is. *Kul* statesmen emerged as suitable sons-in-law because they were loyal to the dynasty. The Ottoman dynasty took advantage of the loyalty of statesmen. The Ottoman sultans would marry promising statesmen whom they liked and thought could be successful. It seems that the fact that statesmen were suitable servants, who knew the functioning of the state and its traditions, and who worked for the empire and the sultan, played a role in the selection of sons-in-law among statesmen. Statesmen of slave origin became loyal to the Ottoman sultans and the Ottoman dynasty through marriage. *Kul* statesmen were promoted to higher ranks after the time they were chosen as husbands of Ottoman princesses.

The general tendency of the Ottoman sultans was to give the vizierate to the sons-in-law of slave statesmen. Was it more common for sons-in-law to be chosen from among high-ranking people, or was it more common for them to reach higher ranks after marriage? More specifically, was it more common for grand viziers to be chosen as sons-in-law, or was it more common for sons-in-law to be grand viziers? What were the career paths of statesmen after they were chosen as sons-in-law? Was there a career path such as promotion to Grand Vizier after becoming son-in-law? These main questions were to understand the benefits of being a son-in-law and the careers of sons-in-law after marriage. In short, it seems that it was not common to take Grand Viziers as sons-in-law. It was more common to choose the grand viziers from among the sons-in-law. This became common during the reign of Süleyman I.

While son-in-law statesmen carried out their duties with caution and fear of dismissal and execution, their situation was more delicate than others. They had to be more careful than others because of their family ties to the imperial family. Intimate relations with members of the Ottoman dynasty put son-in-law statesmen in a more sensitive situation. It was possible for problems between couples to be reported to the Ottoman sultans. Divorces and marital problems sometimes led to the dismissal of sons-in-law. The dismissal of son-in-law statesmen damaged the relationship between husbands and wives and the relationship between Ottoman princesses and Ottoman sultans.

There were cases where the husbands of Ottoman princesses played the role of companions of Ottoman sultans. Similarly, the sons-in-law of Ottoman sultans were

the companions of their favourite concubines or queen mothers. Some of the Ottoman princesses got a chance to be influential thanks to their husbands, and in some cases, their mothers. They could get a chance to be influential thanks to their husbands because of their power, prestige and positions. Their most common forms of companionship were patronage of architecture and endowments. The policy of marrying statesmen of slave origin, as members of the Ottoman ruling class, could create a chance for the daughters of Ottoman sultans to become more influential and wealthy.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: TABLES

Table 1. Consorts of the Ottoman Sultans

Sultan	Partner	Status	Origin	Date of Marriage or Date of Entering Harem of Sultan
Osman I	Rabia or Bala	Wife	Daughter of Sheik Edebali	Unknown
	Mal or Malhun	Wife	Daughter of Ömer Beg	Unknown
Orhan I	Nilüfer	Wife	Daughter of Governor of Yarıhisar	1299-1300
	Theodora	Wife	Daughter of John VI Kantakouzenos (Byzantine Emperor)	1346
	Asporça	Wife	Unknown	Early years of 1300s
	Eftendize or Eftandise	Wife	Daughter of Mahmud Alp	Unknown
Murad I	Gülçiçek	Wife	Unknown	Unknown
	Mara or Tamara	Wife	Daughter of Bulgarian King Ivan Sasmanos	1366 or 1370 or 1366
	Unnamed	Wife	Daughter of Tekvur-ı Konstantiniyye	Unknown
	Unnamed	Wife	Daughter of Süleyman II (Beylik of Candar)	1385?
Bayezid I	Devlet/Devletşah or Sultan	Wife	Daughter of Süleyman (Beylik of Germiyan)	1381
	Mileva Olivera or Despina	Wife	Daughter of Lazar I (Serbian King)	1390
	Hafsa	Wife	Daughter of Aydınoğlu İsa	1390
Mehmed I	Emine	Wife	Daughter of Nasireddin (Beylik of Dulkadir)	1401 or 1403
	Kumru	Concubine (later status is unknown)	Unknown	Unknown
	Şehzade	Wife	Daughter of Dividdar Ahmed	Unknown
Murad II	Hatice or Halime	Wife	Daughter of Ibrahim II (Beylik of Candar)	1425
	Mara	Wife	Daughter of Serbian King George Brankovich	1435
	Hüma	Concubine (later status is unknown)	Unknown	Unknown
	Sitti Mükrimme	Wife	Daughter of Süleyman (Beylik of Dulkadir)	1449 or 1450
Mehmed II	Gülbahar	Concubine	Unknown	1445-1446?
	Çiçek	Concubine	Unknown	1457-1458?
	Gülşah	Concubine	Unknown	1449?
	Anna Komnenos	Concubine-Manumitted	Daughter of David Komnenos (Empire of Trebizond)	1461
Bayezid II	Gülbahar or Ayşe Gülbahar	Concubine	Unknown	1463?
	Hüsnüşah	Concubine	Unknown	Unknown
	Bülbül	Concubine	Unknown	Unknown
	Gülruh	Concubine	Unknown	Unknown
Selim I	Hafsa	Concubine	Unknown	During the principedom
Süleyman I	Hürrem	Concubine-Manumitted-Wife	Slav?	1520?-Entering harem, 1534-Marriage
	Mahidevran	Concubine	Crimean?	During the principedom
	Gülfem	Concubine	Unknown	Unknown
Selim II	Nurbanu	Concubine-Wife	Venetian?	1542-During the principedom in Manisa, 1571-Marriage
Murad III	Safiye	Concubine	Venetian?	1563-During the principedom in Manisa
Mehmed III	Handan	Concubine	Unknown	During the principedom in Saruhan
Ahmed I	Köseme	Concubine	Greek	1609-1610?
	Mahiruze	Concubine	Greek?	Unknown
Osman II	Akile	Wife	Daughter of Chief Mufti Esad	1622
Murad IV	Ayşe	Concubine	Unknown	Unknown
İbrahim I	Hatice Turhan	Concubine	Slav?	1640?
	Dilâşub	Concubine	Unknown	Unknown
	Telli Hümaşah	Concubine-Manumitted-Wife	Unknown	1647?

Table 2, Career Path of the Some of the Sons-in-Law

NAME OF SON-IN-LAW	NAME OF WIFE	DUTY BEFORE MARRIAGE	DUTIES AFTER MARRIAGE
Horukzade Ahmed Paşa (d. 1517)	Hamdi Hatun	Governor of Anatolia	Governor of Anatolia—Melive/Sancakbeyi of Gallipoli—Grand Admiral—Governor of Anatolia—Visitor—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Grand Visitor—Melive/Sancakbeyi of Gallipoli—Grand Admiral—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Guardian of Bursa—Commander-in-Chief
Lâli Paşa (d. 1563)	Sâh Sultan	Melive/Sancakbeyi	Melive/Sancakbeyi—Governor of Karazag—Governor of Anatolia—Governor of Rumelia—Third Visitor—Second Visitor—Grand Visitor
Rüstem Paşa (d. 1581)	Mihribân Sultan	Governor of Diyarbakır	Fourth Visitor—Governor of Anatolia—Third Visitor—Second Visitor—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Grand Visitor
Piyale Paşa (d. 1578)	Gevherhan Sultan	Grand Admiral and Melive/Sancakbeyi of Gallipoli	Grand Admiral and Grand Visitor
Sakallı Mehmed Paşa (d. 1579)	İsmihan Sultan	Second Visitor	Second Visitor—Grand Visitor
Kâleliâze Ali Paşa (d. 1587)	İsmihan Sultan	Governor of Budin	Governor of Budin
İbrahim Paşa (d. 1601)	Ayye Sultan	Governor of Egypt	Third Visitor—Grand Admiral—Deme Visitor—Dismissal—Third Visitor—Second Visitor—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Grand Visitor
Kanîşli Siyavuş Paşa (d. 1602)	Fatma Sultan	Governor of Rumelia	Visitor—Soldier Kaymakam—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Second Visitor—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Retired and exiled from Istanbul—Return to Istanbul
Yunusî Hasan Paşa (d. 1605)	Ayye Sultan	Grand Visitor	Grand Visitor—Dismissal
Hâli Paşa (d. 1606)	Fatma Sultan	Governor of Anatolia	Grand Admiral
Çerâh Mehmed Paşa (d. 1606)	Gevherhan Sultan	Head of Janissaries	Governor of Rumelia—Fourth Visitor—Third Visitor—Fourth Visitor—Third Visitor—Second Visitor—Grand Visitor
Nuâsh Paşa (d. 1610)	Ayye Sultan	Grand Visitor	Grand Visitor
Öküzî Kara Mehmed Paşa (d. 1621)	Gevherhan Sultan	Governor of Egypt	Grand Admiral—Second Visitor—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Kaymakam—Grand Visitor—Dismissal—Governor of Halap
Kara Davud Paşa (d. 1625)	Unknown Daughter of Mehmed III	Uncertain	Governor of Rumelia—Visitor—Guardian of Kastamonu—Visitor—Governor of Rumel—Guardian of Sofya—Deme Visitor—Guardian of Lemnâ—Fourth Visitor—Third Visitor—Second Visitor—Governor of Rumelia—Grand Admiral—Dismissal—Governor of Rumelia—Grand Visitor—Dismissal
Topal Recâb Paşa (d. 1625)	Gevherhan Sultan	Sixth Visitor	Sixth Visitor—Fifth Visitor—Grand Admiral—Second Visitor—Grand Visitor—Executed
Çatalak Hasan Paşa (d. 1631)	Fatma Sultan	Grand Admiral	Grand Admiral—Dismissal—Governor of Budin
Hâfi Ahmed Paşa (d. 1632)	Ayye Sultan	Dismissed from Grand Visitor	Second Visitor—Third Visitor—Grand Visitor
Hzarpare Ahmed Paşa (d. 1640)	Beyhan Sultan	Grand Visitor	Grand Visitor—Dismissal
Melik Ahmed Paşa (d. 1662)	1. Kaya İsmihan Sultan 2. Fatma Sultan	1. Governor of Erzurum 2. Governor of Rumelia	1. Deme Visitor—Governor of Anatolia—Governor of Diyarbakır—Governor of Anatolia—Dismissal—Fourth Visitor—Governor of Baghdad—Grand Visitor—Resignation—Governor of Çiri—Governor of Rumelia—Second Visitor—Governor of Van—Deme Visitor—Governor of Çiri 2. Governor of Rumelia—Second Visitor
Melik İbrahim Paşa (d. 1685)	Rukiye Sultan	Governor of Egypt	Governor of Egypt—Dismissal—Imprisoned—Governor of Diyarbakır—Deme Visitor—Governor of Sam—Dismissal—Fined—Governor of Kandilye—Governor of Erzurum—Governor of Diyarbakır—Governor of Budin—Executed