



Life after the Harem

This is the first study to explore the lives of female slaves of the Ottoman imperial court, including the period following their manumission and transfer from the imperial palace. Through an analysis of a wide range of hitherto unexplored primary sources, Betül İpşirli Argıt demonstrates that the manumission of female palace slaves and their departure from the palace did not mean the severing of their ties with the imperial court; rather, it signaled the beginning of a new kind of relationship that would continue until their death.

Demonstrating the diversity of experiences in non-dynastic female-agency in the early-modern Ottoman world, *Life after the Harem* shows how these evolving relationships had widespread implications for multiple parties, from the manumitted female palace slaves, to the imperial court, and broader urban society. In so doing, İpşirli Argıt offers not just a new way of understanding the internal politics and dynamics of the Ottoman imperial court, but also a new way of understanding the lives of the actors within it.

BETÜL İPŞİRLİ ARGIT (Ph.D. 2009, Boğaziçi University) is an associate professor of Ottoman history in the Department of Islamic History at Marmara University in Istanbul. She is the author of *Rabia Gülnuş Emeltullah Valide Sultan (1640–1715)* (2014) and *Hayatlarının Çeşitli Safhalarında Harem-i Hümayun Cariyeleri, 18. Yüzyıl* (2017).

Life after the Harem

Female Palace Slaves, Patronage,
and the Imperial Ottoman Court

BETÜL İPŞİRLİ ARGIT
Marmara University, Istanbul



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-48836-5 — Life after the Harem
Betül İpsirli Arğıt
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108488365

DOI: 10.1017/9781108770316

© Betül İpsirli Arğıt 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Arğıt, Betül İpsirli, author.

Title: Life after the harem : female palace slaves, patronage and the imperial Ottoman court / Betül İpsirli Arğıt.

Other titles: Hayatlarının çeşitli safhalarında harem-i hümayun cariyeleri 18. yüzyıl. English
Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020002837 (print) | LCCN 2020002838 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108488365 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108726252 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108770316 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Harems–Turkey–History–17th century. | Harems–Turkey–History–18th century. | Women slaves–Turkey–History–17th century. | Women slaves–Turkey–History–18th century. | Favorites, Royal–Turkey–History–17th century. | Favorites, Royal–Turkey–History–18th century. | Turkey–Kings and rulers–Relations with women–History–17th century. | Turkey–Kings and rulers–Relations with women–History–18th century.

Classification: LCC HQ1726.7 .A7413 2020 (print) | LCC HQ1726.7 (ebook) | DDC 306.3/6208209561–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020002837>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020002838>

ISBN 978-1-108-48836-5 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-48836-5 — Life after the Harem
Betül Ipsirli Argit
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

To my parents, Neriman and Mehmet İpşirli, for their
constant support and encouragement

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page viii
<i>List of Maps</i>	ix
<i>List of Graphs</i>	x
<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xii
<i>Note on Usage</i>	xiv
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xv
Introduction	1
1 The Imperial Harem and Its Residents	38
2 Departure from the Imperial Palace and Changing Relationships with the Imperial Court	78
3 Marriage Patterns	108
4 Residential Districts and Relations with Society	136
5 Material World: Fortunes and Possessions	162
6 Charitable Activities: Architectural Patronage and Endowments	199
Conclusion	226
<i>Appendix Residential Neighborhoods of Palace Women in intra muros Istanbul</i>	235
<i>Bibliography</i>	240
<i>Index</i>	271

Illustrations

1.1 “Chief administrative officer in Enderun-ı Hümayun (<i>Enderun-ı Hümayun’da kethüda kadın</i>)”	<i>page</i> 47
1.2 “An attendant of the Harem of the Grand Signior”	51
1.3 “Female Slave (<i>Cariye</i>)”	53
1.4 “Women dancing in the Harem”	75
5.1 An estate register	172

Maps

- 4.1 Distribution of residential districts for palace women in
intra muros Istanbul between 1685 and 1840 *page* 140

Graphs

3.1 Distribution of husbands' titles	<i>page</i> 112
4.1 Distribution of residential districts of palace women	139
5.1 Distribution of the wealth of palace women based on nominal value	164
5.2 Distribution of the wealth of palace women in grams of silver	165

Tables

1.1 Categorization of the Persian names carried by palace women	page 66
4.1 Neighborhoods in <i>intra muros</i> Istanbul where palace women frequently resided	141
4.2 Neighborhoods in Galata where palace women resided	143
4.3 Neighborhoods in Eyüb where palace women resided	145
4.4 Neighborhoods in Üsküdar where palace women resided	145

Acknowledgments

This book grew out of my doctoral dissertation, completed at Boğaziçi University in 2009. I expanded and revised the dissertation, originally entitled “Manumitted Female Slaves of the Ottoman Imperial Harem in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul,” for publication in Turkish.¹ I present here a further revised edition in English.

This work owes much to the generous help and support of many individuals and institutions. It is a pleasure to thank many people who have helped in the long and arduous process of completing this book. First, I would like to express special gratitude to my dissertation advisor Edhem Eldem, who provided scholarly insight and constructive criticism at every stage of the process. My very special thanks go to Derin Terzioğlu, who provided an invaluable contribution with her criticism and advice. Invaluable, too, were the constructive criticisms of Işık Tamdoğan, Tülay Artan, Cem Behar, and Ahmet Ersoy, all of whom read and commented on all or parts of my dissertation.

I am indebted to Ahmet Özel, Ali Akyıldız, Arzu Terzi, my dear friend Ayşe Tek Başaran, Caroline Finkel, Çağatay Anadol, Erol Özvar, Feridun Emecen, Gülay Yılmaz, Günhan Börekçi, Hülya Canbakal, İsmail Erünsal, İrvin Cemil Schick, Jane Hathaway, Kemal Beydilli, Kenan Yıldız, Mehmet Genç, Mehmet İpşirli, Mustafa Uzun, Nalan Turna, Ömerül Faruk Bölükbaşı, Semavi Eyice, Suraiya Faroqhi, Yunus Uğur, and Zeynep Yelçe; each shared their valuable ideas and provided assistance during the process of transforming my dissertation into a book. I have benefited from their contribution in numerous ways. I would especially like to thank Hakan Erdem for his encouragement and endless assistance every step of the way. I owe special thanks to my friend Nukhet Varlık who always found time to answer my endless questions during last twenty years. Without her

¹ Betül İpşirli Argit, *Hayatlarının çeşitli Safhalarında Harem-i Hümayun Cariyeleri, 18. Yüzyıl* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2017).

Acknowledgments

xiii

erudite comments and constructive suggestions, the quality of the work would have been much inferior. I am grateful to Lori Jones who read the entire book manuscript and offered chapter-by-chapter comments. At Cambridge University Press, I would like to thank Maria Marsh for her encouragement and support to expedite the production process of the book. The two anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press provided astute and constructive critiques. Needless to say, responsibility for any errors or omissions is entirely mine.

The staff at Cambridge University Press deserve special thanks for their patience and diligence in seeing this project through to completion. These individuals include Daniel Brown, Atifa Jiwa, and Thomas Haynes, as well as project manager Orvil Matthews, copyeditor Alex Kats, and others involved in this book's production.

I would also like to thank the director and staff of the Presidency of State Archives (BOA) in Istanbul, the Topkapı Palace Museum Archive, the Archive of General Directorate of Endowments in Ankara (*Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi*), the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Atatürk Library, and the Center for Islamic Studies (İSAM) for their generous assistance as I conducted my research.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family, whose constant support made this endeavor possible. The presence of my brother, Mahmut İpşirli, and my beloved children, Taha and Yümna, has always given me strength. Tarık Argit, my husband, has always been the great source of support through this journey. I cannot thank him enough for everything he did and continues to do for me. Above all, I extend my special gratitude to my parents, Neriman and Mehmet İpşirli, for their counsel, constant encouragement, and boundless capacity for giving in every possible way. To dedicate this book to them is the least I can do for thanking them.

Note on Usage

Modern Turkish usage has been followed here for Ottoman Turkish terms and names. Exceptions are made for words in the text that have been absorbed into English. Thus, when the choice has been mine to make (as opposed to bibliographical citations, quotations, and the like), *pasha* is written rather than *paşa*, *agha* rather than *ağa*, and so on. Otherwise, the spelling of Turkish words generally conforms to that employed in the *Redhouse Yeni Türkçe-İngilizce Sözlük/ New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary* (1968; repr., Istanbul, 1979). I have reduced the number of diacritical marks in the interest of readability. For Arabic and Persian names and terms that are not a part of quoted material or bibliographical citations, a simplified system of romanization has been used.

All dates are given according to Common Era. Documents from the Ottoman archive are cited in the original Hijri date, followed by the Gregorian calendar.

Abbreviations

BOA	Republic of Turkey Presidency of State Archives – Ottoman Archives (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı – Osmanlı Arşivi)
DİA	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi</i> (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi)
EI ²	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , 2nd edition (Leiden: Brill, 1954–2005)
IA	<i>İslam Ansiklopedisi</i> (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi).
TsMA	Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi (Topkapı Palace Museum Archive)
VGM	Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi (The Archive of General Directorate of Endowments in Ankara)