

FINDING THE GUARDIANS OF ROYAL BLOOD: OBSERVATIONS ON THE SUPPLY OF EUNUCHS TO THE HAREM IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE CRIMEAN KHANATE THROUGH CASE STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS

Ayhan Ürkündağ¹, Alper Başer²

¹ *Ministry of National Education
Usak, Turkey
aurkundag@gmail.com*

² *Afyon Kocatepe University
Afyonkarahisar, Turkey
baseralperhidayet@gmail.com*

Abstract: *Research objectives:* The first aim of this study, which deals with the supply process of the eunuchs, who formed the backbone of the harem organization in the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate, is to determine how the career of the eunuchs began in the palace of the sultan or the khan.

Research materials: The main sources of data for this research are documents held within the Department of Ottoman Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Directorate of State. Upon these documents, Ottoman and Crimean chronicles of the period were examined and evaluated.

Research and novelty of the research: Both the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate established harem organizations and started employing eunuchs soon after the foundation of the state. These people, who were called eunuchs or castrates and had lost their masculinity due to natural or unnatural causes, were the backbone of the harem organization. It was found that the main method for supplying eunuchs to the harem was purchasing them from specialized merchants. Both states made efforts to identify children who had lost their masculinity due to natural causes and employ them in the harem. More over, in a very rare event in Ottoman history, Gazanfer and Cafer Aghas volunteered to be castrated out of a desire to be close to the Sultan during the reign of Selim II. The Ottoman administration paid special attention to social as well as physical characteristics of the eunuchs to be employed, and, for example, preferred that they learn Turkish in the Ottoman harem, under their own supervision. It was also observed that the Crimean Khanate attached great importance to the harem organization as in the Ottoman Empire. However, it has been revealed that the institutionalization in the harem organization was underdeveloped than in the Ottoman harem and that at least some of the eunuchs were part of the khan's entourage and moved away from the palace when the khan was dethroned. It's also been revealed that sometimes the information in the primary sources contradicts with the documents produced by the bureaucracy of the period. It's been determined that a special emphasis was placed on the shaping of the eunuchs with the Ottoman high culture, and those who somehow lost their manhood, even if they were Muslims, lost their individual identity and were transformed into an officer belonging to the state.

© Ürkündağ A., Başer A., 2023



Контент доступен под лицензией Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.
The content is available under the license Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.

Keywords: History, documents, Ottoman Empire, Crimean Khanate, Eunuch, Harem, Slavery

For citation: Ürkündağ A., Başer A. Finding the Guardians of Royal Blood: Observations on the Supply of eunuchs to the Harem in the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate through case studies and documents. *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie=Golden Horde Review*. 2023, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 902–917. DOI: 10.22378/2313-6197.2023-11-4.902-917

Introduction

In Turkish-Mongol states, the ruling dynasty was considered to be sacred. In semi-nomadic Turkish states on the steppes, this dynasty was the Ashina family, and in Mongol states, it was the family of Genghis Khan and his male lineage. In all the states that succeeded one another from Göktürks to the Ottoman Empire and from Genghis Khan's empire to the Crimean Khanate, shedding the blood of a member of these dynasties was considered to bring bad luck. Because of this belief, which arose from the notion that the dynasty had sacred origins, dynasty members both in the Ottoman Empire and in Mongol states were killed by triangulation [18, p. 71–79]. How, then, to protect this sacred blood that passes from father to son? Historically, the answer to this question was found in preventing all physical contact between mothers of future rulers and other men.

Informed by this thinking, rulers from ancient ages onwards have built quarters in their palaces where no men were allowed other than themselves. Called harem [24, p. 132] in Turkish-Islamic states, these places were designed to be secluded areas, while providing easy access to the ruler himself. In addition to the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians, who founded the first states in Mesopotamia, the Egyptian Empire and the early states established in Anatolia had harem-like institutions. The Persian Empire in modern-day Iran and the Chinese Empire in the Far East also had harem organizations in the palaces of their rulers [6, p. 1–185].

As structures called harem started to be built in the palaces of rulers, strong guards were needed to make sure that women living in these quarters were not disturbed by stranger men and kept secluded from others. This inevitably brings to mind the famous Latin saying “*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes* / “Who will guard the guards themselves?” Applied to this case, the problem is how to prevent the guards hired to protect women from having contact with the women they guard as males. The answer to this question was found in male servants called eunuchs [30, p. 1; 12, p. 4–7] who had lost their masculinity or whose sexuality was taken from them.

Throughout history and in diverse regions of the world, kings and emperors who ruled over societies with wildly different cultures and beliefs employed castrated male officials for their harems. The first examples of castrated males being used as servants were seen in Sumerian states founded in Mesopotamia. Eunuchs also served in the harem quarters of the palaces of Babylonians and Assyrians, who lived in the same region. Kings of the Hittite Empire, which was the first big state to be established in Anatolia, also employed castrated officials in their palaces [6, p. 195–304]. In the Far East, on the other hand, the Chinese Empire was the state that made the heaviest use of eunuchs. A large number of castrated officials served in the emperor's palace from ancient ages to the beginning of the 20th century. Use of eunuchs was a common practice in the palaces of Persian kings and in Indian lands as well. On the other hand, Greek states and the Roman Empire employed eunuchs too [7, p. 11–14, 19–21; 27, p. 185–189; 11, p. 11–33].

In the history of Islam, harem-like organizations did not exist during the reigns of Prophet Muhammad and the first four caliphs because rulers of the Islamic state at that time lived in humble dwellings. The first harem organization in the history of Islamic states was founded during the reign of the Umayyad dynasty, but the institutionalization and development of the harem took place under the Abbasid rule. Called *Harim Dar al-Khilafa*, the harem featured prominently in the political life of the Abbasid state [21, p. 97; 24, p. 132–133]. From the Abbasids onwards, the harem became one of the main institutions of the Islamic state.

The first Turkish-Mongol states, which had a semi-nomadic life style, naturally did not have an institutionalized harem organization. Harem organizations were first seen in Uyghurs, who transitioned to a sedentary way of life and started building palaces. As the Turks converted to Islam and sedentary living became the norm, harem as a part of the palace started to spread as well. Seljuk [24, p. 134; 34, p. 299], Mamluk [35, p. 101] and Safavid [8, p. 27–30] states all had elaborate harem organizations.

In this article, the examples cited from the documents and chronicles will rectify the deficiencies in the literature by embodying what happened in the procurement process of the eunuchs, the most important element of the harem organization in the Turkish-Islamic states. The information passed along from the documents and chronicles will contribute to the understanding of the supply process of the eunuchs in the Ottoman Empire as well as the Crimean Khanate and the palace organization of the Islamic states and the role of the eunuchs in different cultures. For instance, while the inaccuracy of the information in some sources, such as the search for ugliness in eunuchs is revealed [2, p. 25–26; 31, p. 30, 155]¹, the existence of a conscious policy for eunuchs to adopt Ottoman high culture is also perceived from the documents².

The Emergence of the Harem Organization and the First Eunuchs Employed in the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate

We know that harem organizations existed in Ottoman rulers' palaces from the earliest years onwards. Where there is a harem, there must be castrated servants as well. However, because of the lack of sources about the harem on the first centuries of the Ottoman Empire, we cannot say anything definitive about the foundation and development of the harem organization, nor about the eunuchs employed in the harem. The oldest record on the employment of eunuchs in the Ottoman Empire is found in a document bearing the name of Sultan Orkhan (reign 1324–1362), dated March 1324 [36, p. 281]. The document states that *Tavaşi Şerefeddin Mukbil*, a freed slave of the Sultan's, was appointed as the trustee of a foundation established in the town of Mekece. The word *tavaşi* preceding the name Şerefeddin shows that the person in question was a eunuch. Was Tavaşi Şerefeddin serving at the Sultan's harem, or was he a personal assistant of Orkhan I? We cannot say anything definitive about this issue. However, the mere mention of Tavaşi Şerefeddin's name in the document is sufficient proof for the presence of eunuchs in the Ottoman bureaucracy from the reign of Orkhan I onwards.

¹ For the statements that ugliness is sought in eunuchs see [2, p. 25–26; 31, p. 30, 155].

² The most basic data on this subject, as seen in the documents, is the order of the Ottoman administration that the eunuchs to be sent to the palace should not speak Turkish. The most important example of the eunuchs' defense by adopting the classical Ottoman culture was the opposition of Agha of Darüssaade (Agha Of the Abode of Felicity) el-Hajj Beshir's opposition to Nadir Shah's proposal on making Jafarism the fifth Islamic sect in the Ottoman Empire. The demand that eunuchs to be sent to the palace should not speak Turkish lasted until the latest years of the empire. For the life of Hacı Beshir Agha, see [32; 13].

According to one view, Orkhan I was the first to have a separate harem organization and employ eunuchs in the harem quarters of the Ottoman palace [22, p. 48], but it has also been argued that employing eunuchs in the harem became common practice during the reign of Mehmed I (from 1413 to 1421), or in another account, during the reign of Murad II (from 1421 to 1451). White eunuchs, called *Akağalar*, served in different departments of the Sultan's palace, including the harem [30, p. 1]. Black eunuchs employed in the palace, called *Karaağalar*, were likely fewer in number in this period compared to *Akağalar*. This is because until the conquest of Egypt by Selim I (reign 1512–1520), it was easier to resource white eunuchs in the lands ruled by the Ottomans. When Egypt became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1517, it became easier to access black eunuchs. As a result, a larger number of black eunuchs started to be employed in the harem organization. Another reason might be that from the end of the 16th century onwards, the Ottomans' advance into Europe has slowed down, and consequently, they were not able to take as many prisoners in wars and raids.

During the reign of Suleiman the Law-giver (from 1520 to 1566), the harem has gained further influence over Ottoman state bureaucracy and politics thanks to the famous Hürrem Sultan originating from the present-day Ukrainian territory. Throughout the reign of the successors of Suleiman II, the power of the harem extended beyond the walls of the palace, and it became one of the main factors in the politics of the state. Naturally, this has also strengthened the position of eunuchs serving in the harem. In particular, when Habeshi Mehmed Agha [15], one of the *Karaağalar*, was appointed the Chief Harem Eunuch [3, p. 1–3] in 1574, black eunuchs started to acquire more power. Moreover, when Murad III (reign 1574–1595) appointed Habeshi Mehmed Agha, the Chief Harem Eunuch, as the minister responsible for Mecca and Medina foundations in 1586 [10, p. 233–238], chief harem eunuchs gained the power to control one of the most important sources of revenue in the country. This has continued until the introduction of the Ministry of Imperial Foundations [25, p. 521–523] in 1826, during the reign of Mahmud II (from 1808 to 1839). From the beginning of the 17th century onwards, the number of white eunuchs in the Ottoman harem declined, whereas the number of black eunuchs has markedly increased. In the 18th century, all eunuchs who served in the harem organization were *Karaağalar*, a fact that did not change until the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

When it comes to the Crimean Khanate, on the other hand, there have been only a limited number of studies on the presence of a harem organization in the khanate. The destruction of the khanate's archives in the Russo-Turkish War of 1736–1739, limited the number of studies on the administrative structure of the khanate in general and on the harem in particular. The Crimean Khanate, which rose during the disintegration of the Golden Horde, has become a subordinate political entity of the Ottoman Empire soon after being established.

The state culture and management approach inherited from the Golden Horde started to be a gradually replaced by Ottoman influence. It has been argued that the practice of having a harem in the palace organization and employing eunuchs in the harem had their roots in the Golden Horde state [19, p. 23–24].

Crimean khans built palaces in different places such as Kırkyer, Salacık and Ulaklı but the main palace that has come to symbolize the khanate over time and become an important physical heritage was the Hansaray in Bakhchisaray. Initial construction of the Hansaray began during the reign of Mengli I Giray (1466–1515), and it became the permanent residence of the khans during the reign of Sahip I Giray (1532–1551). We also know for certain that during the reign of Sahib I Giray, the palace had harem quar-

ters, called *Kızlar Sarayı* (Girls' Palace). Hansaray had special quarters reserved as residence for harem eunuchs [14, p. 59–63].

Diplomatic correspondence between the Crimean Khanate and the Grand Duchy of Moscow shows that four eunuchs served in Hansaray in 1630 s. Moreover, Kalgay and Nureddin, the second and the third most powerful positions in the khanate, also had one eunuch each in their palaces. According to Mustafa, a Crimean ambassador in Sweden in 1669, there were 12 eunuchs serving in Hansaray, and it was rare for the Ottomans to gift a eunuch the khanate. The famous Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, who might have personally met Mustafa Agha, also witnessed the presence of black eunuchs in Hansaray. French consul Claude Charles Peyssonnel, who stayed in Crimea between 1754–1758, reported that there were six eunuchs in the palace, with two designated as chief eunuchs (*Kızlar Ağası*)³. Moreover, from the Crimean sicils (juridical records), we know that there was a chief eunuch called Ramazan during the reign of İslam III Giray (1644–1654) [29, p. 96]. Sicil records also show that a Reyhan Agha who passed away before February 1676 was a eunuch who served in Hansaray⁴.

I. Eunuchs Who Lost Their Masculinity Due to Natural Reasons

There were two main processes used for supplying eunuchs to the harem in the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate. The first was to identify boys who had lost their masculine organs due to various illnesses and employ in the service of the harem. This was very rare, and is difficult to document. However, we do have two examples, one from the Ottoman Empire and the other from the Crimean Khanate. The first example is from the year 1588. The Imperial Harem has learned that Hasan, son of Derviş, born in the Filye neighborhood of Karahisar-ı Şarki, was a eunuch at birth. We do not know who informed the capital that the boy could be employed in the palace. It is likely that the kadi of the town reported the case to Istanbul. The central government ordered the kadi that the boy be immediately sent to Istanbul, and any objections from the relatives of the boy or local officials be disregarded⁵. Unfortunately, we were not able to find any information on whether Hasan, son of Derviş, has actually arrived in Istanbul or served in the palace. This notable rescript about Hasan, son of Derviş, shows that the Ottoman central government was capable of ordering the boy to Istanbul, by force if necessary, even though he was not a slave.

The other example regarding the employment in the harem of boys who lost their masculinity at birth or at an early age comes from the Crimean Khanate. Staatsbibliothek in Berlin has a manuscript of *Tarih-i Said Giray*, written by Said Giray Sultan, one of the members of the Giray family, the ruling dynasty of the Crimean Khanate, which provides an account of the life of Derviş Agha, who was the chief eunuch at, Hansaray, up until his employment in the harem. Derviş Agha himself was

³ [37, p. 266–267; 19, p. 28–29]. An edict sent to Mikhail Fedorovich during the reign of Canibek Giray, dated 1634, mentions eunuchs, and an edict issued one year later, during the reign of İneyet Giray, states that there were four eunuchs who served in the harem, a figure repeated in 1636. These edicts also contain information confirming that Kalgay had his own eunuch [17, No. 24/p.174, No: 30/p.195; No:31/p.203, No. 35/p.216; No:40/ p. 248 For Kalgay's eunuch, see [17 No.40/p.255].

⁴ Otdel Rukopisey Rossiyskoy Natsional'noy Biblioteki, Fond 917, No 21, folia 70a, Saint Petersburg.

⁵ Cumhurbaşkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (Presidential Ottoman Archives, henceforth COA) Bab-ı Asaî Divan-ı Hümayun Sicilleri Mühimme Defteri (The Sublime Porte and Imperial Council Sicils and Muhimme Registers, henceforth ADVNSMHHM.d). no: 62, page no:189 rescript no: 427.

the one who told the story of his life to the author of the chronicle from his childhood until his employment in the harem⁶.

Derviş Agha was born in the city of Solhat, also known as the Staryi Krym. Born as a regular boy, Derviş Agha had normal development of his male organs until the age of five. When he reached the age of twelve, he was supposed to be circumcised like all Muslim boys. In the circumcision ceremony, which involved a number of other boys as well, the surgeon to perform the circumcision noticed that Derviş Agha did not have his male organ, and notified his family of the child's special condition. When Saadet III Giray (reign 1717–1724) heard of the event, he employed Derviş Agha in the harem of Hansaray. After the deposition of Saadet III Giray, Derviş Agha went to Rumelia with him. Upon the death of the deposed Khan, Derviş Agha entered into the service of Salih Giray, and upon his death as well, he served Halim Giray (reign 1756–1758). During the reign of Halim Giray, he returned to Bakhchisaray and became the chief eunuch of Hansaray. Having performed the hajj in these years and learned perfect Arabic during his pilgrimage, Derviş Agha continued to serve as eunuch in the harem after his return [28, folio 95a]. Given the information in this biography, Derviş Agha's service in the harem of Hansaray may have started when Saadet III Giray's reign began, which is to say in 1717 at the earliest or in 1724 at the latest, which indicates that he may have been born in 1705 at the earliest. Another point is that the people he served after Saadet III Giray's death were the sons of the deposed khan. Given that Halim Giray's reign started in 1756, Derviş Agha served in the harem of the same family for about forty years⁷. His departure from the harem together with the deposed khan shows that the harem organization in Crimea was not institutionalized, unlike the harem of the Topkapı Palace. In other words, Derviş Agha was not a permanent eunuch of the harem of Hansaray, but a member of Saadet III Giray's household.

⁶ For a transcription of the chapter that narrates the story of Derviş Agha's life, see [28, folio.95 A] "*Ağa-yı dariûs-saade Derviş Ağa mezbûr Eski Kırım'da mâderinden hadım tevellüd idüb peder ve mâderi dahi hâline vâkıf olmayub zirâ âlet-i recüliyyetden beş yaşında uşak olana kadar alâmeti olub hatta bu fakire kendü nakl eylemişdir ki on iki yaşına geldiğimde peder mâderim beni oğlancıklar ile sünnet etmeğe verdikde sünnetci takye kaparım zu'muyla zîr-i pirâheneme girüb bevsede el urub eline bir şey girmeyince ferâgat eyledikde peder mâderimin ol zaman ma'lûmları oldu. Hâsılı ol vakt pederimiz Saadet Giray Hân merhûmun vakti olub hân-ı merhûma işitirdiklerinde andırub harem ağası idüb ba'del-azl Rumiline bile gelüb hân-ı merhûmdan sonra Salih Giray Ağaçeye intisâb onlar da merhûm oldukdan sonra veliyy-ün-niamın harem ağalığı ile kâm-yâb olub (ba'de veliyy-ün-niam hânlık ile Kırımı teşriflerinde harc-râh virüb hacca irsâl idüb ol yolda lisân-ı arabî dahi vâfir tahsil idüb sağ salımm rücu'ı Derviş ağalık lafzına el-hacı kelimesin ilâveyle kesb-i şeref eylemişdir sah) hâla vakt-i tahrirde taht-gâh-ı havâkîn olan Bağçesarayda veliyy-ün-niamın Harem Ağalığında hizmetde der-kâdır hakka ki mezbûr âcûbe-i asr ve nâdire-i dehrdir. Zirâ gerçe ki (cüceler besyârdır. Lakin böyle maderinden bî âlet ve bî hayâ tevellüd iden nâdirdir ve cücelerin de ekseri sah) (maderinden hadım idenler bisyârdır lakin kimin çenesi sagır olsa başı kendiden nişâne ve dest ü pâları kasır olsa da parmakları hıyar berzen gibi şâhdanedir. Amma ki ağa-yı mesfûr münâsib âzaya mâlikse tâ be-kadem dîmbesinden mâ-adâ bir uymaz yeri yokdur. Ol yeri hayli büyücek düşmüşdür. Hakk bu ki âkil ve okur ve yazar husûsân tuhfetün-şâhâni kesret isti'mâl itdiğinden bir fakihin yanında ağzın açmağa (canı yokdur) ne canı var. Bundan ziyâde tavsife kalem düzebâne ruhsat verilmedi". We would like to take this opportunity to thank İsmail Bülbül, who let the authors see his unpublished work on *Tarih-i Said Giray Han*. Also, see the valuable work of Barbara Kelnner-Heinkele on *Tarih-i Said Giray Han*, and the part about Derviş Agha [16, p. 62, 101].*

⁷ For more information about the reigns of Saadet Giray III and Halim Giray [20, p. 83–85; 95–96].

Sample Document on the Supply of Natural Eunuchs* 1 Transliteration

Ömer Efendiye teslim olundu.

Fī 2 R (Rebiülaher) sene (9)96

Bā müsvedde-i Ömer Vav

Ḳaraḥiṣār-ı Şarki Ḳazısına hüküm ki,

Nefs-i Ḳaraḥiṣār'da Filye mahallesinde Ḥasan bin Derviş nām emred oğlan māder-zad Ṭavāṣī olub Südde-i Saadet'te istihdām olunmaya ḳābildir deyü i'lām olunmağın buyurdu ki: Vuṣūl buldukda mezbûru, müṣārünileyhe ḳoşub ber-vech-i isticāl Südde-i Saadetime gönderesin mezbûrun bu cānibe gelmesine akrabāsından ve gayrıdan kimesne māni olursa aṣla te'allül ü nizā itdirmeyüb emrüm üzere ber-vech-i isticāl işāl idesün deyü emr-i şerīf yazılmışdır.

(Document on Hasan bin Derviş, dated March 1, 1588) Translation

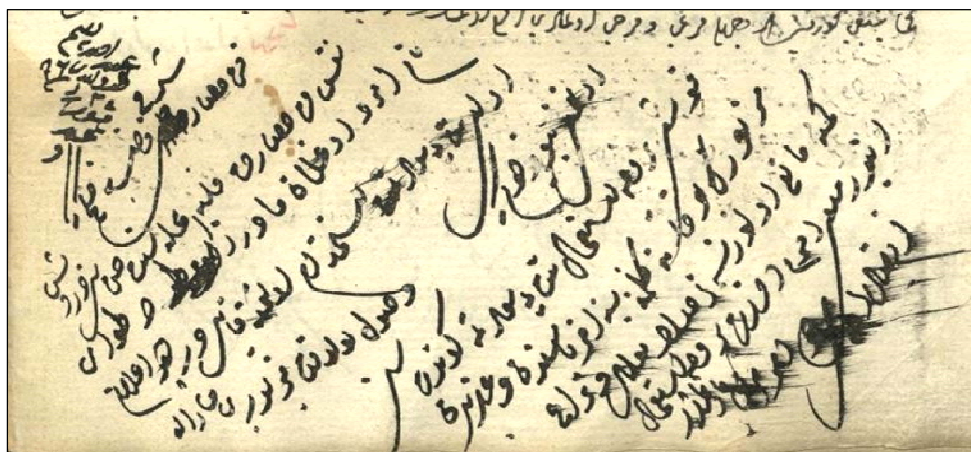
Consigned to Ömer Efendi.

2 R (Rabi al-Thani) year (9)96 (1 March 1588)

Draft written down by Ömer the Vav

Qadi of Şebinkarahisar is hereby ordered:

Having learned that Hasan, son of Derviş, in Filye neighborhood within the borders of Şebinkarahisar, was born a eunuch and is suitable for employment at my harem, I order you to send the person in question to my palace without any delay, upon the receipt of this order. If a relative of the aforementioned person or someone else tries to prevent him from being sent to the palace, do not let them, and make haste to send him over without allowing any trouble to be made or excuses raised, as per my order⁸.



II. Employment of Castrated Eunuchs in the Imperial Harem

By far the most common method for supplying eunuchs to rulers palaces, on the other hand, was finding and purchasing eunuchs whose masculinity was destroyed by experts. Castration was banned within the borders of the Ottoman Empire [33, p. 3]. However, we cannot argue that this ban was always enforced. Slaves brought to slave markets in Egypt were castrated either in camping grounds on the way [27, p. 191] or in Egypt [30, p. 2]. Castration was performed either by Coptic monks or Jewish surgeons. Those who survived the surgery were sold on slave markets and started to serve

* In this article the transliteration of the following Ottoman Turkish texts are based on a modified form of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

⁸ COA, ADVNSMHM.d no: 62, page no:189 rescript no: 427.

in the harems of imperial elites, not least in the harem of the sultan himself. People forced to undergo this surgery were usually young. This was because castrating prepubescent boys was easier, and their scars healed faster. Nevertheless, castration operations did not have a high rate of success.

Castration could be performed in a number of ways. Some of the methods used were called crushing, twisting, partial shaving, and complete shaving. Crushing and twisting were methods usually reserved for animals. For the crushing operation, testicles were laid on a warm surface to soften them. Once the testicles were softened, pressure was applied by hand, in a gradual manner, until the testicles were deformed [5, p. 186]. The twisting operation was performed using specialized equipment. Partial shaving and complete shaving operations, on the other hand, were far more common. In partial shaving, the testicles were removed but the penis was left. This meant that the castrated person could still urinate with comfort. In complete shaving, on the other hand, both the testicles and the penis were entirely removed. A wooden or metal pipe was then attached so that the castrate could urinate [1, p. 35].

As mentioned above, eunuchs employed in the harem in the first centuries of the Ottoman Empire were mostly white. These white eunuchs were supplied from among war prisoners or purchased from slave markets. As the supply of white eunuchs dwindled and their costs increased, black eunuchs started to be brought via Egypt [12, p. 27]. The task of supplying eunuchs to the Ottoman harem was usually given to governors of Egypt. This can be observed from Ottoman archive documents. An order sent to the Beylerbeyi of Egypt in 1574 requests twelve eunuchs for the harem⁹. When many of the eunuchs who served in the harem died because of the plague that broke out in Istanbul in 1722, the sultan sent an order to the governor of Egypt, asking him to find 30 or 40 eunuchs and send them to the capital immediately¹⁰. A couple of years later, in another order sent to the governor of Egypt in 1726, the sultan asked the governor to find about 20 eunuchs for his harem, children and adults, and send them to Istanbul at once¹¹. In another order sent in 1737, the governor of Egypt is again asked to provide 25 eunuchs to be employed in the harem¹². Another order sent to the governor of Egypt a few weeks later commands, using a harsher tone this time, that all eunuchs found in Egypt be sent to Istanbul without any delay¹³. In 1747, Raghib Mehmed Pasha, the Governor of Egypt at the time, was asked to provide 20 eunuchs for the sultan's harem¹⁴. Another order from 1789, similarly to previous orders, asks the governor of Egypt to send eunuchs for the harem¹⁵. From time to time, Ottoman sultans tasked people other than governors of Egypt with supplying the eunuchs needed for their harems. An imperial edict attributed to Abdul Hamid I (reign 1774–1789), noting

⁹ COA, A.DVNSMHM.d no: 26, page no: 226 rescript no: 645, 11 Jumada al-Thani 982/29 September 1574.

¹⁰ COA, Bab-ı Asafi Divan-ı Hümayun Sicilleri Mısır Mühimme Defteri (The Sublime Porte and Imperial Council Sicils and Muhimme Registets on Egypt, henceforth ADVNSMHM.d). A.DVNS.MSR.MHM.d, no: 3, page no: 98, rescript no:273, Early Jumada al-Awwal 1134/ 17–26 February 1722.

¹¹ COA, A.DVNS.MSR.MHM.d, no: 3, page no: 283, rescript no:699, Early Jumada al-Awwal 1139/ 27 October – 5 November 1726.

¹² COA, A.DVNSMHM.d no: 144, page no: 221, rescript no: 706, mid-Rajab 1150/ 4–13 November 1737.

¹³ COA, A.DVNS.MSR.MHM.d, no: 5, page no: 139, rescript no:391, Late Ramadan 1150/12–21 January 1737.

¹⁴ COA, A.DVNS.MSR.MHM.d, no: 6, page no: 158, rescript no:371, Late Rabi' al-Awwal 1160/2–11 April 1747.

¹⁵ Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi (Archive of Topkapı Palace henceafter TSMA).e, document no: 805/73, Date 10 Rajab 1203/ 6 April 1789.

the decline in the number of eunuchs employed in the harem, asks the Grand Admiral of the Navy to find eunuchs from Egypt and bring them to Istanbul. Following the order, the Grand Admiral found 18 eunuchs and sent them to the capital by sea¹⁶.

To find the eunuchs needed for their harems, Ottoman sultans have also worked with slave traders and citizens who had eunuchs, in addition to requesting them from officials. According to a document kept in the archives of Topkapı Palace Museum¹⁷, an official named Sadık negotiated with the owners of two black eunuchs, one a child and the other an adult, following orders. He remarked that the eunuchs were not fit to be employed in the service of the sultan, but he still made an attempt to purchase them. When the owner of the older eunuch demanded 2000 kuruş, Sadık countered with an offer of 1500, which was declined by the slave trader. He was of the opinion that the older eunuch could be purchased by paying a couple hundred additional kuruş to the slave trader. The woman who owned the younger eunuch, on the other hand, asked for 3000 kuruş. She claimed to have paid 2500 kuruş for the young eunuch, whom she had purchased when performing the hajj. Sadık, tasked with the purchase, found the younger eunuch to be a bit expensive even though he had a cute appearance, and recommended purchasing the older eunuch.

Ottoman sultans wanted the eunuchs to be employed in their harems to have certain qualities. Archive records from different periods provide clues as to the qualities sought in eunuchs. The twelve eunuchs requested from Egypt in 1574 were to be from the region of Habesh and not speak any Turkish¹⁸. The orders from 1722 and 1737, on the other hand, describe the qualities of the eunuchs to be purchased for the imperial harem as follows: *hidmete yarâr reşîk'u'l-kadd hüsn'ül-vücuḥ makbûlü'l-kâmet ve matbû'u'l-lehce mergûb'ul-leh ve memdûhu'l-haslet*¹⁹. In other words, they were to be tall, well-built, have nice bodies, and be well-spoken and well-mannered people. Obviously, the sultan wanted the eunuchs to be employed in his palace to be trained under the strict discipline of the imperial harem. Two different orders from a much later time, also sent to the governor of Egypt and found in muhimme registers, provides clues as to the physical and character traits sought in eunuchs to be employed in the imperial harem of the Ottoman palace.

Sample Document 2 Text

“Nu'mân Çavuşa

Mısır beglerbegisine hüküm ki:

Atebe-i ulyâmda hizmet için Tavâşî lazım olmağın on iki nefer Habeşî ve Nubîyalı Tavâşî gönderilmek emr idüb buyurdum ki vuşûl buldukda emrim mücebince on iki nefer Habeşî Tavâşî tedârik idüb irsâl eylesesin. Amma gönderilen Tavâşî acemî olup Türkçe bilir olmaya.

Translation

To Numan Çavuş

Beylerbeyi (governor general of the eyalet) of Egypt is hereby ordered:

Given that eunuchs are needed to serve at my palace, I have ordered that twelve eunuchs from Habesh and Nubia be sent. Upon the receipt of my order, find 12

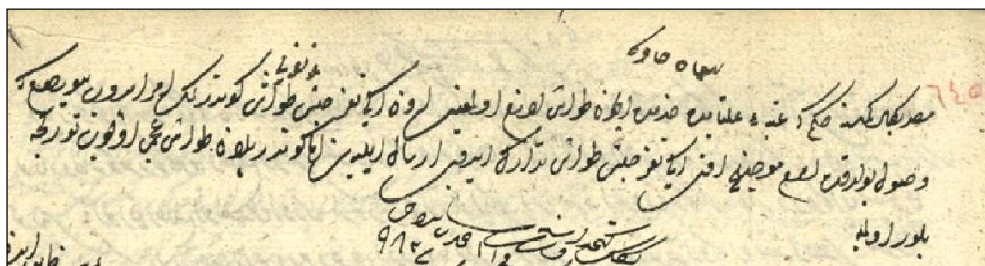
¹⁶ COA, HAT, no: 19/862.

¹⁷ TSMA.e, document no: 154/26-4.

¹⁸ COA, A.DVNSMHM.d no: 26, page no: 226, rescript no: 645, 11 Jumada al-Thani 982/28 September 1574.

¹⁹ COA, A.DVNS.MSR.MHM.d, no: 3, page no: 98, rescript no:273, Early Jumada al-Awwal 1134/ 17–26 February 1722; COA, A.DVNSMHM.d no: 144, page no: 221, rescript no: 706, mid-Rajab 1150/ 4–13 November 1737.

eunuchs from Habesh and send them over. However, the eunuchs to be sent should be novices and not speak Turkish”²⁰.



Sample Document 3 Text

“Mısır Vālīsine hüküm ki:

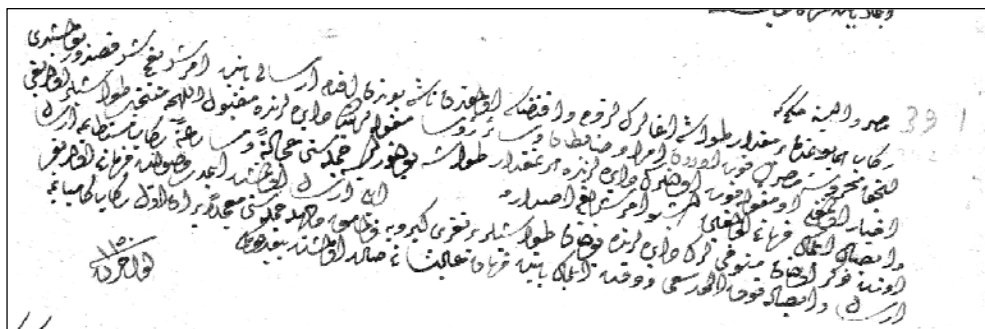
Rikāb-ı hümayūnumda bir miqdār Ṭavāṣī ağaların lüzūm ve iktizāsı olmakdan nāṣī bundan aḳdem irsālī bābında emr-i şerīfīm şeref-şudūr bulunmuşdu ancak mahrūse-i Mısır’da fevt olan ümerā ve zābitān ve sair rū’esā maḳūlelerinin dāirelerinde maḳbūlū’l-lehçe mūntahab Ṭavāṣīler olduḡu ihbār olunmaḡla ve o maḳūle fevt olanların dāirelerinde her ne miqdār Ṭavāṣī bulunur ise cūmlesini acāleten ve mūsāra’aten rikāb-ı müsteṭābıma irsāl ve işāl eylemen fermānım olmaḡın işbu emr-i şerīfīm işdār ve ile irsāl olmuşdur. İmdi vuşūlünde fermānım olduḡu üzere zikr olunan müteveffāların dāirelerinde bulunan Ṭavāṣīler bir neferi giriye kalmamak vechiyle cūmlesini muaccelen bir an evvel rikāb-ı kām-yābıma irsāl ve işāle fevka’l-hadd sa’y-ı diḡḡat eylemen bābında fermān-ı ālī-şānım şādır olmuşdur buyuruldu gibi. Evāḡır-ı N (Ramazān) sene 1150

Translation

“The governor of Egypt is hereby ordered:

A previous order was issued for some eunuchs to be sent over because eunuchs were needed at my palace. Now, having learned that some of the rulers, officers, and leaders who have recently died in Egypt had decent eunuchs in their households, I hereby order you to gather and send all of them quickly here. Now, upon the receipt of this order, do your utmost to make sure that each and every eunuch who served in the households of the aforementioned deceased are sent to my palace.

Late Ramadan, 1150 (January 1738)”²¹.



²⁰ COA, A.DVNSMHM.d no: 26, page no: 226, rescript no: 645, 11 Jumada al-Thani 982/28 September 1574.

²¹ COA, A.DVNS.MSR.MHM.d, no: 5, page no: 139, rescript no:391, Late Ramadan 1150/12–21 January 1737.

Sample Document 4 Text

Mışır Vālisi Vezīr Rağīb Mehmed Paşa'ya hüküm ki,

Harem-i hümayūn işmet-i maḵrūn-u mülūkānemde istihdām ve i'māl için bir mikdār Ṭavāşinin lüzūm ve iktizāsı olmakdan nāşī on beş yaşından yirmişer yaşına varıncaya dek bu sin ve simatda bālā-ḳadd yirmi nefer Ṭavāşī ḳāmet ve inzāmları mevzūn simā ve lehçeleri matbū' sıhhat vech melāhat-siret ve tabi' havşaları olmak vechiyle kemāl-i taharrī ve diḳḳat olunarak intihāb ve ihtiyār olunub lāzım gelen bahāları sadr'āzam ta'yīn ve tahsis kılınān cāizesine maḥsūb olmak şartıyla acāleten ve sur'aten rikāb-ı müstetāb-ı hüsrevāneme tesyīr ve irsāl olunmak fermānım olmağın iş bu emr-i şerīfim işdār ve ile irsāl olunmuştur. İmdī vuşūlünde sen ki vezīr-i müşārūn-ileyhsin bu bābda fuzūlī teḥīr ve tevakkuf itmeyüb dāire-i hümayūn ve işmet-i meşhūnumda istihdāma sezā ve her birinin ḳāmet ve endāmları gāyet mevzūn ve bālā ve simā ve lehçeleri maḳlū' ve hoş edā ve melāhat-tab' ve siret ve şihhat-vech ve talakat-ı havşaları olmak sin ü salları on beşden yirmi yaşına varıncaya dek yirmi nefer Ṭavāşīyi nihāyet-i bāsiret ve taharrī birle intihāb ve ihtiyār eyledikten sonra sadr'āzam tarafına ta'yīn ve tahşiş kılınān cāizeden iktizā iden bahāların virüb gāyet acele ve şitāb ve kemāl-i sa'y ve ikbāb ile bir an akdem ve bir kadem mukaddem acāleten ve müsāra'aten rikāb-ı kām-yāb-ı hümayūnuma irsāl ve işāle bezl-i makderet ve mikdār zerre ihmāl ve tesvi'adan ziyāde(?) ve verdiğin bahālarını mikdār ve kemiyet ile i'lām-ı işāret eylesesin Ṭavāşī-i mezkūr dāire-i hümayūn hizmeti için matlub olmağın muaccelen vurūdu ve her birinin ber-vech-i muharrer şabāhat-ı vech-i ḳāmet ve endāmlarının mevzuniyeti ne rütbede ihtimām ve diḳḳat olunmak icāb itdüğü beyāndan müstağni olmağın ana göre ziyāde teyakkuz ve intihāb üzere intihāb ve ihtiyār ve serian ve acilen sevk ve irsāl sa'y-i bi-şumār eylemen bābında emr-i fermān alı-şānım yazılmışdır. Fi Evāhir-i RA (Rebiül-evvel) sene 1160.

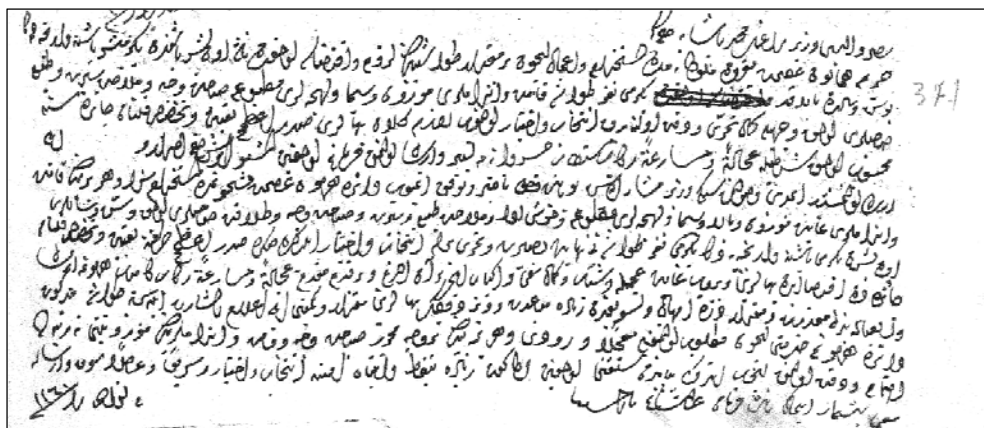
Translation

Raghib Mehmed Pasha, the Governor of Egypt, is hereby ordered:

Given the need for some eunuchs to be employed in the harem quarters of my grand palace, twenty eunuchs ages 15 to 20, who are tall, well-proportioned, and healthy, and have nice features and good manners be selected with utmost care and after close examination, and immediately sent over, with payment to be made on the basis of the Grand Vizier's appraisals. Now, upon the receipt of this order -being a vizier and an agent of the Sultan- carefully select, without any delay, eunuchs ages 15 to 20, who are well-proportioned with nice features, good-looking, well mannered, and healthy, pay their owners the amounts to be determined by the Grand Vizier, record the payments made, and make haste to send them over to my palace. Given that these eunuchs are requested for employment at the Sultan's palace, take utmost care to make sure that they are well-proportioned and have nice facial and bodily features as explained, and send them over in a speedy manner.

Late Rabi' al-Thani 1160 (April 1747)²².

²² COA, A.DVNS.MSR.MHM.d, no: 6, page no: 158, rescript no: 371. This document was previously used in a Ph.D. thesis by Ayhan Ürkündağ, and it was reviewed and re-transcribed for the present article [32, p. 5-6, footnote 32].



III. An Exceptional Case: Voluntary Service As a Eunuch

As noted above, most of the eunuchs who served in the harems of the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate were slaves who were forced to be castrated and sold by slave traders who made a profit out of this. Voluntary service as a eunuch, on the other hand, was a very rare event, and we were able to find only one example. This rare example involved Gazanfer Agha, who had great influence over state affairs during the reigns of three sultans in late 16th and early 17th centuries. The famous Ottoman historian Hammer had argued that Gazanfer Agha was of Hungarian origin, but recent research conducted by the Italian historian Maria Pia Pedani in Venetian archives showed that he was of Italian origin. In 1559, a Venetian woman traveling with her two daughters and two sons, on her way to visit her husband working as a clerk in Budva, was captured when their ship was attacked by pirates. The woman and her two daughters were released in return for a ransom payment, but the pirates sold the two boys to Prince Selim's (reign 1566–1574) palace in the city of Kütahya. The two brothers, who converted to Islam, took the names Gazanfer and Cafer, and entered into the service of Selim II [23, p. 64].

Gazanfer and Cafer soon distinguished themselves among their peers in the service of the Prince, and got into his inner circle. When he was about to depart for Istanbul from Kütahya, to be crowned upon the death of his father Suleiman the Magnificent in 1566, Selim II, the new sultan, asked the brothers to accompany him to Istanbul and never leave his side. The two brothers were happy to accept the offer, but they had an important decision to make: would they agree to be castrated? Being so close to the Sultan and a part of his personal life came with the condition that they agree to being castrated. Given how unlikely it was for adult men to survive a castration operation, this decision was a very important one indeed. In the end, the two brothers voluntarily made this decision, which meant risking their lives and changed their lives completely, and agreed to be castrated. Following their decision, the two brothers underwent castration operations performed by the head surgeon [9, p. 948–949]. The brothers survived the operations²³, went on to attend the Enderun and served Ottoman sultans for many

²³ Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî had written that Cafer did not survive the castration operation, but new information found out in recent years make it clear that he did survive the operation and served in the harem for many years. We also know that he served as the Head of the Privy Chamber, and when their mother came to Istanbul upon Gazanfer's invitation, Cafer and his mother visited the Venetian ambassador in Istanbul together. Cafer passed away in late 1582. [23, p. 65–66].

years to come. Moreover, one of the brothers, Gazanfer, climbed the ladder of success very quickly, and in addition to being the Chief Harem Eunuch²⁴, he served as the Head of the Privy Chamber (Hasodabaşı)²⁵ for many years [9, p. 948–949].

Gazanfer Agha later became one of the most important figures in the Ottoman capital and brought first his mother and then his sister and other relatives to Istanbul. His efforts to persuade his mother to convert to Islam were unsuccessful, but his sister did convert. Gazanfer Agha married her sister to a cavalryman (*sipahi*), and through his sister, tried to establish closer ties with the influential women of the harem. Gazanfer Agha, the voluntary eunuch, became an important figure in the Ottoman palace toward the end of the 16th century, with a say on many issues not least on Ottoman-Venetian relations.

REFERENCES

1. Akdemir Hikmet. “Kur’an ve Sünnetin Kölelerin Hadım Edilmesine Yaklaşımı [Castration of Slaves According to Quran and Sunnah]”, *Harran Ü. İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, year:14, Iss. 21, January-June (Şanlıurfa 2009), p. 29–39.
2. Albertus Bobovius ya da Santuri Ali Ufki Bey’in Anıları Topkapı Sarayı’nda Yaşam, ed. and noted by: Stephanos Yerasimos ve Anne Berthier, translator: Ali Berktaş, İstanbul 2009.
3. Altındağ Ülkü. “Dârüssaâde [The Imperial Harem]”, *TDVİA*, V. 9 İstanbul 1994, pp. 1–3.
4. Altındağ Ülkü. “Has Oda Teşkilatı [Organization of the Privy Chamber]”, *Türk Etnografya Dergisi*, Iss. 14. Ankara, 1974, pp. 97–113.
5. Altıntaş Ayten. “Osmanlı Tıbbında Kastrasyonlar [Castrations in Ottoman Medicine]”, *Türk Üroloji Dergisi*, V. 9, Iss. 3, 1983, pp. 183–188.
6. Çelik Hüsrem. Eski Mezopotamya ve Anadolu Toplumlarında Harem ve Hadımlık Müessesesi [The Institution of Eunuchs in Ancient Mesopotamian and Anatolian Societies], (unpublished Ph.D. thesis), Pamukkale University, Graduate School of Social Sciences. Denizli, 2021.
7. de Marliave Olivier. Hadımların Dünyası – Çağlar Boyunca Hadımlık [The World of the Eunuchs – Eunuchs Throughout the Ages], Doğan Kitap. İstanbul, 2015.
8. Erdoğan Eralp. “Safevi Devleti’nde Harem [Harem in the Safavid State]”, *Türk Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Year/Vol. 2, Issue/No. 1 Spring (2017), pp. 25–47.
9. Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî. *Kühûl’l-Ahbâr*, Edited by: Ali Çavuşoğlu, TTK Yayınları. Ankara, 2019.
10. Güler Mustafa. Osmanlı Devletinde Haremeyn Vakıfları (16–17. Yüzyıllar [Mecca and Medina Foundations in the Ottoman Empire]), Tarih Ve Tabiat Vakfı Yayınları. İstanbul, 2009.
11. Görez Feyza. Çin Tarihinde Hadım Olgusu ve Hadımların Hanedanlık Yönetim Sistemindeki Etkileri [The Phenomenon of Eunuchs in Chinese History and the Influence of Eunuchs on Dynasty Rule], (unpublished Ph.D. thesis) Ankara University, Graduate School of Social Sciences. Ankara, 2017.
12. Hathaway Jane. *The Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Harem From African Slave to Power-Broker*, Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 2018.

²⁴ Chief Harem Eunuchs (Babüsaade Ağaları) were the highest-ranking officials in the Enderun section of the Topkapı Palace. They were selected from among white eunuchs, or *akağalar*. [26, p. 142].

²⁵ Heads of the Privy Chamber with the sultan day and night, and served him at all times. In the Ottoman world, where one’s position within the state hierarchy was determined by proximity to the sultan, the Privy Chamber in Enderun was one of the most important centers of power. For more information, [4, p. 97–113].

13. Hathaway, Jane. Beshir Agha Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Imperial Harem, Oxford, 2005.
14. Kançal-Ferrari Nicole. Kırım'da Kalan Miras Hansaray [Hansaray, Heritage Left in Crimea]. İstanbul, 2005.
15. Karakoç Yıldız. Palace Politics and The Rise of the Chief Black Eunuch in the Ottoman Empire, (unpublished master's thesis), Boğaziçi University. İstanbul, 2005.
16. Kelnner-Heinkele Barbara. Aus den Aufzeichnungen des Said Giray Sultan, Eine Zeitgenössische Quelle zur Gesschichte des Chanats der Krim um die Mitte des Jahrhunderts. Freiburg, 1975.
17. Kırım Yurtına ve Ol Taraflarga Dair Bolgan Yarlıglar ve Hatlar [Edicts and Letters in Crimean Tatar 1520–1742], V. I. (Edited by: Vladimir Vladimiroviç Velyaminov-Hüseyin Feyzhanov, Turkish edition by: Faysal Okan Atasoy. Ankara, 2017.
18. Köprülü Fuad. “Türk ve Moğol Sülalelerinde Hanedan Azasının İdamında Kan Dökme Memnuiyeti” [Prohibition of Shedding Blood in Executions of Members of Ottoman and Mongol Dynasties], *İslâm ve Türk Hukuk Tarihi Araştırmaları ve Vakıf Müessesesi*. İstanbul, 1983, pp. 71–79.
19. Kravets Maryna. “Blacks Beyond The Black Sea: Eunuchs in the Crimean Khanate”, in *Slavery, Islam and Diaspora*, edited by Behnaz A. Mirzai, Ismael Musah Montana, and Paul E. Lovejoy, Trenton, NJ (2009), pp. 21–36
20. Halim Giray. *Gülbün-ü Hânân (Kırım Hanları Tarihi) Değerlendirme-Metin-Tıpkıbasım [History of Crimean Khans – Critique-Text-Facsimile]* Ed. Alper Başer-Alper Günaydın. İstanbul, 2013.
21. Özdemir Mehmet Nadir. İslâm'ın İlk Döneminde Kölelik (Abbasilerin İlk Yüzyılı) [Slavery in the Early Ages of Islam (The First Century of Abbasid Rule), Gökkuşbu Yayınları. İstanbul, 2006.
22. Peirce Leslie P. Harem i Hümayun Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Hükümlanlık ve Kadınlar [The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire], translated by: Halil Berktaş, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları. İstanbul, 2012.
23. Ocakacan Levent Kaya. Geç 16. ve Erken 17. yy'da Osmanlı Devleti'ndeki Patronaj İlişkilerinin Gazanfer Ağa Örneği Üzerinden Venedik Belgelerine Göre İncelenmesi [Analyzing the Ottoman Patronage Networks in Venetian Documents at Late 16th and Early 17th Centuries in the Case of Gazanfer Agha], (unpublished Ph.D. thesis), Marmara University, Graduate School of Social Sciences. İstanbul, 2016.
24. Özyaydın Abdülkerim, Bozkurt Nebi. “Harem”, *TDVİA*, V. 16. Ankara, 1999, pp. 132–135.
25. Öztürk Nazif. “Evkâf-ı Hümayun Nezâreti [The Ministry of Imperial Foundations]”, *TDVİA*, V. 11. İstanbul, 1995, pp. 521–524.
26. Pakalın Mehmet Zeki. Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Sözlüğü [Dictionary of Ottoman Historical Terms and Phrases] V. I, MEB Yayınları. İstanbul, 1983.
27. Penzer Norman Mosley. *Harem*, Alfa Yayınları. İstanbul, 2015.
28. Said Giray Sultan. *Tarih-i Said Giray Han*, Staatsbibliothek Berlin, no. HS. or.923.
29. Sarı Sema Aktaş. 3A-3B Numaralı, 1648–1679 Tarihli Kırım Kadiasker Defterlerine Göre Kırım'da Sosyal Ve Ekonomik Hayat [Social and Economic Life in Crimea According to Crimean Kadiasker Books No. 3A-3B, Dated 1648–1679]. (unpublished master's thesis), Sakarya University, Graduate School of Social Sciences. Sakarya, 2016.
30. Taneri Aydın. “Hadım [Eunuch]”, *TDVİA*, V. 15. Ankara, 1997, pp. 1–3
31. Tavernier Jean-Baptiste. 17. Yüzyılda Topkapı Sarayı. Çev. Teoman Tunçdoğan. İstanbul, 2014.
32. Ürkündağ Ayhan. *Darüssaade Ağası Hacı Beşir Ağa ve Hayratı [Chief Harem Eunuch Hacı Beşir Ağa and His Life]*, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis), Afyon Kocatepe University, Graduate School of Social Sciences. Afyonkarahisar, 2017.
33. Yaran Rahmi. “Hadım (Fıkıh) [Castration (Islamic Law)]”, *TDVİA*, V. 15. Ankara, 1997, p. 3.

34. Yazıcı Nesimi. İlk Türk-İslâm Devletleri Tarihi [History of the First Turkish-Islamic States], Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları. İstanbul, 2014.

35. Yiğit Fatma Akkuş. “Memlûk Devleti’nde Hareme Dair Bazı Tespitler” [Some Observations Regarding the Harem in the Mamluk State], *XVII. Türk Tarih Kongresi (September 15–17, 2014) Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler, V. 3 (Selçuklu Devleti Ve Beylikler Dönemi Tarihi)*, TTK Yayınları. Ankara, 2018, pp. 101–110.

36. Uzunçarşılı İsmail Hakkı. “Gazi Orhan Bey Vakfiyesi 724 Rebiülevvel–1324 Mart [Ghazi Orhan Bey’s Charter Rabi al-Awwal 724/March 1324]”. *Belleten*, V. V/19 (1941), p. 277–288.

37. Peyssonnel Claude-Charles. *Traité sur le commerce de la Mer Noire*. Vol. 2. Paris, 1787.

About the authors: Ayhan Ürkündağ – Ph.D., History teacher, Ministry of National Education (Usak, Turkey); ORCID: 0000-0001-7101-8142. E-mail: aurkundag@gmail.com

Alper Başer – Ph.D., Historical Faculty, Afyon Kocatepe University (Ahmet Necdet Sezer Kampüsü Merkez, Gazlıgöl Yolu, 03200, Afyonkarahisar Merkez/Afyonkarahisar, Turkey); ORCID: 0000-0002-1700-7474. E-mail: baseralperhidayet@gmail.com

Received August 26, 2023

Accepted for publication November 25, 2023

Published December 29, 2023

В ПОИСКАХ ХРАНИТЕЛЕЙ КОРОЛЕВСКОЙ КРОВИ: НАБЛЮДЕНИЯ ПО ПОСТАВКЕ ЕВНУХОВ В ГАРЕМ В ОСМАНСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ И КРЫМСКОМ ХАНСТВЕ НА ОСНОВЕ МАТЕРИАЛОВ И ДОКУМЕНТОВ

Айхан Юркундаг¹, Альпер Башер²

¹ *Министерство национального образования
Ушак, Турция
aurkundag@gmail.com*

² *Университет Афьон Коджатепе
Афьонкарахисар, Турция
baseralperhidayet@gmail.com*

Целью данного исследования, посвященного процессу снабжения евнухами, составлявшими часть структуры гарема в Османской империи и Крымском ханстве, является определение того, как осуществлялась поставка евнухов во дворец султана или хана.

Материалы исследования. Основным источником этого исследования являются документы, хранящиеся в Департаменте Османских архивов Государственного директората при Президенте Турецкой Республики. На основе этих документов были изучены и проанализированы османские и крымские хроники исследуемого периода.

Результаты и научная новизна. И Османская империя, и Крымское ханство вскоре после основания своих государств создали структуру гарема и начали использовать евнухов. Евнухи, или как их еще называли – кастраты, составляли костяк структуры гарема. Выяснилось, что основным способом снабжения гарема евнухами была их покупка у специализированных торговцев. Оба государства прилагали уси-

лия по выявлению детей, потерявших мужественность по естественным причинам, и трудоустройству их в гареме. В истории Османской империи отмечается редкий случай добровольной кастрации Газанфера и Кафер Агаса, которые таким образом хотели приблизиться к султану Селиму II. Османская администрация уделяла особое внимание социальным, а также физическим характеристикам нанимаемых евнухов и, например, предпочитала, чтобы они изучали турецкий язык в османском гареме. Было также замечено, что Крымское ханство придавало большое значение организации гарема, как и в Османской империи. Однако выяснилось, что институционализация в организации гарема была слабее, чем у османов, и, что по крайней мере некоторые из евнухов, приближенных к хану, покинули дворец после свержения хана. Выяснилось также, что иногда информация в первоисточниках противоречит документам, подготовленным бюрократическими органами того периода. Установлено, что в рамках высокой османской культуры особое внимание уделялось формированию евнухов, а те, кто каким-либо образом утратил мужественность, даже если они были мусульманами, теряли свою индивидуальную идентичность и превращались в офицеров, принадлежащих государству.

Ключевые слова: история, документы, Османская империя, Крымское ханство, евнух, гарем, рабство

Для цитирования: Ürkündağ A., Başer A. Finding the Guardians of Toyal Blood: Observations on the Supply of eunuchs to the Harem in the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate through case studies and documents // Золотоордынское обозрение. 2023. Т. 11, № 4. С. 902–917. DOI: 10.22378/2313-6197.2023-11-4.902-917 EDN: WSMNIZ

Сведения об авторах: Айхан Юркундаг – Ph.D., преподаватель истории, Министерство национального образования (Ушак, Турция); ORCID: 0000-0001-7101-8142. E-mail: aurkundag@gmail.com

Альпер Башер – Ph.D., исторический факультет, Университет Афьон Коджатеппе (Афьонкарахисар, Турция); ORCID: 0000-0002-1700-7474. E-mail: baseralperhidayet@gmail.com

Поступила 26.08.2023

Принята к публикации 25.11.2023

Опубликована 29.12.2023