

## **Topkapi Palace as a Moral and Political Institutional Structure in the Ottoman Palace Organization**

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### **Abstract**

*The Topkapi Palace is a building built after the conquest of Istanbul, where the Ottoman Empire was ruled and where the sultans and their families resided until the mid-19th century. The palace, which has been in service for a period of about 400 years in the Ottoman Empire's lifetime of six centuries, functions as a living space of Ottoman administration and politics and ethics with the practices, customs and traditions that took place during this period. Therefore, it is a very important reference for the Ottoman State. It must be said that this position is very different from a state or presidential residence existing in modern states. The rules, which have been strictly respected for centuries and the existence of a system that operates on a regular basis, place Topkapi Palace in a privileged position. It is possible to see this characteristic in the organizational structure of Topkapi Palace. Especially the Enderun and Harem constructions, which are located in the third yard within the palace, have very important functions in the Ottoman State regarding the distinction between public and private spaces. In the study, the place where Topkapi Palace has taken as a moral and political institutional structure in the Ottoman State shall be revealed in terms of the three main gates of the palace and the courts that these gates open to.*

**Keywords:** Topkapi Palace, Ottoman State, Enderun, Harem, Babüssade.

### **1. Introduction**

The Ottoman State was ruled from various palaces throughout history which were the sultans' residence and the center of state administration. These palaces were built in various periods of history in Bursa, Edirne and Istanbul, which were the capital of the state. It should be noted that the Topkapi Palace is in a special position among these palaces. The Topkapi Palace was built after the conquest of Istanbul, and it formed the Ottoman Empire's administrative center and the dynasty's living space until the administration of the state moved to Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul in 1853. Regarding the date of the construction of the Topkapi Palace, people that include historians who had personally been in and lived in the palace put forward different dates.

However, the date on Bab-i Hümayun, which is the entrance of Topkapi Palace, shows the year 1478 (Baykal, 1953:34). The palace was built during the reign of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (1451-1481), but later the sultans that came to power made additions to the palace such as ward, room, pavilion, mosque and library. In addition, fire and earthquakes that occurred occasionally caused the palace to change shape. The palace gained the outline of its present day plan in the 16th century (Şimşirgil and Sağlam, 2005:14). Although there have been some changes in the physical appearance of the palace over time, careful attention was paid to the preservation of a tradition that has lasted for many years, such as the training of civilian managers, the life of women, the ceremonies of the sultans ascending to the throne, and the reception of representatives of foreign countries. The place of the Topkapi Palace in the Ottoman State and the weight of its members in the protocol reveals the statue of this palace in the context of the dynasty. The Topkapi Palace has taken its place in history as the house of the Ottoman dynasty for almost four centuries. The palace is located on three main sections that are physically harmonious with each other. The layout plan, palace ceremonies and venues of the palace, which consisted of three sections, Birun, Enderun and Harem, are arranged according to this structure.

In this context, with its organizational structure, the Topkapı Palace reveals very important dynamics about the management, politics and society of the Ottoman Empire, instead of only showing magnificent designs and being a unique architectural structure. In the article, Topkapı Palace will be considered as a residential area where the public functions are fulfilled in the Ottoman State and the family life of the sultans took place. However, cases where the public space and the private space are intertwined will also be presented. In the study, Topkapı Palace will be examined in terms of the functions performed within the palace, differently from the works showing the physical appearance and architectural structure. In this context, the three gates of Topkapı Palace and the courtyards to which these gates open are the subject of research. These structures have a sanctity among the Ottoman dynasty, in the eyes of the people, that has been applied and settled in for centuries. In the Topkapı Palace there are three main gates, named Bab-i Hümâyûn, Babu's Selam and Babu's Saade, that open to three big courtyards.

## ***2. Babihümayun and the First Courtyard***

The the door that opens to the first courtyard of the palace is the dynasty door, which is also called Babihümayın. When you enter from Babihimayun, you will find the offices of Birun officials in the first courtyard. Birun is the part of the organization that work on the external services of the Topkapı Palace, and who are not supposed to be devshirmeh, who do not need to stay in the palace, and who can have homes outside the palace. In the Birun organization, the teachers of the sultan, the imams of the kings (prayers to the sultans), the chief physician (supervisor of palace doctors and surgeons and ophthalmologists), the ophthalmologists, the surgeon (responsible for the sunnets of the princes and the examination of the eunuchs taken to the harem) and chief astrologist (the person who is responsible for astrology and astronomy) constitute the officers within the ulema class; and şehremini (person who is engaged in building and repair works of the palace and certain needs of the palace), matbah-ı amire emini (the official in charge of the palace kitchen), darphâne emini (the official in charge of printing the money in the Ottoman State), Barley emini (person in charge of the food requirements of the animals within the palace) constitute the trustees in the palace service (Göde, 1989: 438-439). Since the services of the officers in the Birun organization of the Topkapı Palace were various, the officers of each one were classified separately. The Birun class was not obliged to stay in the palace and subjected strict discipline like the members of the Enderun living in the third courtyard. The officers went to their houses in the evening after finishing their work during the day (Uzunçarşılı, 1984: 358). Ömer Lütfi Barkan, a Turkish historian, has shown that the total number of servants in Birun was 24,146 based on a budget of 1527-1528 (Ortaylı, 2008: 207). This number shows that in the Ottoman Empire, the number of people who fulfill the public functions regarding the external services of the palace is considerably high in the 16th century. This can be attributed not only to the surplus of the palace's external services, but also to the fact that the officers forming the Birun organization are not obliged to come from the devshirmeh recruitment system but from the people of the Ottoman state.

In addition, the first courtyard is a place where people and soldiers can get in and out. Therefore, it is a place which shows that the sultan does not want to separate his own living space from the city by keeping it open to palace officials and the public (Ertuğ, 2003: 256; Tavernier, 2007: 49). Through the Babihümayun, the gate of the palace that opened to the city, opening with the morning ezan and being closed after the night prayer, those who had business in the Divan (government in the Ottoman Empire), shopkeepers and merchants related to the daily life of the palace, and those who came to see their relatives in Enderun, in the third courtyard, could pass freely (Koçu, 2015: 24). This feature of the Babihümayün, entrance of Topkapı Palace, to be open to everyone without discriminating status or degree, is also related to the position of the palace officials who are present at the first courtyard. Because the traditions, rules and practices of the Ottoman Empire, which show the status of the dynasty and which have been repeated for centuries, have been carried out in the second and third courts. The officers who make up the Birun class are responsible for the palace's external services, and while they can cross the second courtyard, they can not pass from the third gate.

## ***3. Babüselam and the Second Courtyard***

When you enter the middle door that is called Babüselam, you reach the second courtyard. In order to see the function and significance of the second courtyard in the Topkapı Palace, it is necessary to know Babüssaade which is located at the end of this courtyard and which makes the passage to the third courtyard, as well as knowing Bâbü's Selâm, which enables passage to the second courtyard. Starting from the Babüselam which forms the middle gate, sultan's quarters within the palace begins.

For this reason, in the Ottoman State there are strict and important rules for approaching this door with the necessary respect and understanding (Penzer, 2000:111). In this context, it is possible to say that the moral, political and administrative traditions of the Ottoman State started from Babüsselam that formed the middle gate in the main organization of Topkapı Palace. The importance of the second courtyard and Babüssaade, which enables passage from the second courtyard to the third courtyard, lies in the fact that the public function that it possesses carries a much different meaning than others. For example, from Beyazid the 2nd in 1481 to Sultan Vahdeddin on July 4, 1918, enthronement ceremonies, the ceremonies of accession to the throne of the Ottoman State were held here. The enthronement ceremonies made in the second courtyard (right before Babüssaade, the third gate) constituted the most important and magnificent ceremonies held in front of Babüssaade (Ortaylı, 2008: 71). The exceptions to this were Ahmed the 2nd, Mustafa the 2nd, and Ahmed the 3rd who ascended to the throne in Edirne Palace, and Murad the 5th and Mehmed Reşad the 5th who performed their enthronement ceremonies at the Ministry of War (Sakaoğlu, 2002:139). The fact that the throne ceremonies of twenty-four sultans after the sultanage of Mehmed the Conqueror (1451-1481) took place at the second courtyard and in front of Bâbü's Saade, enabling passage to the third courtyard, shows a long tradition of politics and management. This tradition of the Sultans symbolizing the dynasty being continued in the Topkapı Palace shows the ethical and political traditional texture of the palace and reveals the fact that the original palace settlement started from the second courtyard.

The second courtyard, also known as the Alay Square as bayram and ulufe parades were made here, is a place where the Divan-i Hümâyûn gathered and negotiated the state affairs. Divan-ı Hümâyûn constitutes the most important building in the second courtyard. The offices of sadaret (Prime Minister's building), Divan-ı Hümâyûn (Council of Ministers) and viziers (ministers) in the Ottoman Empire have been in the second courtyard of Topkapı Palace for centuries. Divan-ı Hümâyûn also served as Supreme Court and Council of State. Therefore, the second courtyard of the Topkapı Palace was filled with central organization buildings of the state (Akgündüz, 2006:222). The fact that Divan-ı Hümâyûn, which played a key role in fulfilling the function of government and policy making in the Ottoman political system, is located in the second courtyard is also important in showing the public function fulfilled here.

However, for centuries, the sultans had accepted the congratulations of the feast in front of Babüssaade, that bound the second courtyard to the third courtyard. In addition, in front of Babüssaade, the "Sancak-i Sharif" that represented the Ottoman State during wars was given to the person appointed as the Sultan's chief of staff by the Sultan himself. The people also attached a kind of sanctity to Babüssaade, the gate to the sultan's privacy. Because, in the Ottoman history, the waves of revolution often stopped in front of Babüssaade, after passing the first and second courtyard. The military revolution where Sultan Osman the 2nd (1618-1622) was removed from the throne, and Alemdar Mustafa Pasha's government coup and attack on the palace to reinstate Selim the 3rd (1789-1807) to the throne are the exceptions to this matter (Koçu, 2014:71-72). As a result, the practices that existed regarding the Ottoman rule and tradition, and towards Babüsselam, the second courtyard passage, ensured the necessary respect to be shown. The fact that no one except the Sultan passed through the Babüsselam on horse is one of the most significant indicators of this. The aristocrats who had performed their duties in the the Birun (first courtyard) with absolute power and authority, stepped down from the animal in the middle gate and could not use their powers and authority when they entered the inner section through the door. The respect shown to this door stems from the fact that Babüsselam is regarded as the place where the Sultan's Council started in the court ceremonies with this usage (Seçkin, 1998:103; Eldem and Akozan, 1982:15). In this context, it is necessary to say that in the Ottoman Empire, the people are aware of the place and the importance of this structure, especially after the second palace, with respect to the Ottoman Dynasty.

#### ***4. Babüssaade ve the Third Courtyard***

Babüssaade constitutes the third gate, which symbolizes the dynasty, and which is the beginning of the personal domiciles of Ottoman sultans. This door and the third courtyard behind this door is very important in that it shows the political, moral and social institutionalization of the Ottoman State in Topkapı Palace. From the Babüssaade door, the private residence of the monarch starts and no public official (including the vizier) can enter (Ortaylı, 2010:203). Babüssaade, the third largest gate in the Topkapı Palace, symbolizes the dynasty through the courtyard it opens to. The third courtyard entered from Babüssaade, constitutes the most important part of the palace by opening to Enderun and Harem, and containing the structure so-called the offering room.

The offering room is the hall where the sultan accepted people like vizier, shayk al-islam (the highest authority in religious matters), kazasker (judges that dealt with military cases), defterdar (minister of treasury), the state dignitaries appointed to a certain matter, beylerbeyi (the ruler of a province) and the masters of legions (the prominent officers of the army) during the offering fays, acceptance of ambassador and the change of Grand Vizier (Uzunçarşılı, 1984:31). While the offering room is similar to the other villas of the palace in symbolizing the singularity of the dynasty and the ruler, the main feature that separates it from the others lies in it being an official space. The Sultans before the Tanzimat have always accepted the members of the Divan (now called the Council of Ministers), the ulema (religious scholars) they wanted to talk important issues about, the ambassadors who came to Istanbul here (Sakaoglu, 2002:148). According to rumor, the waters of the fountains inside and outside the Offering room were opened and drained, preventing the speech inside from being heard from the outside. In addition, service workers were selected from deaf persons (Özsoy and Yazıcı, 2007: 59). In this context, the public function fulfilled by the Offering room, and the and the sensitivity demonstrated towards its secrecy, explains why this structure is located in the third courtyard. The offering room constitutes an important part of the institutionalization of the Ottoman administration and the tradition of politics in the Topkapı Palace.

#### **4.1 Enderun**

Enderun Mektebi was founded in the first half of the 15th century and completed its organization in the second half. This institution has taken its place on the historical scene, with its place in the Topkapı Palace, which has been the residence of the Ottoman dynasty for almost four centuries. Enderun Mektebi can be defined as the administrator school of the Ottoman State. The military and civilian bureaucratic sector of the governing class was educated by the Enderun School which was based on a special education system. Christian children and young people, selected according to the law of reclamation, which created the conditions of certain criteria, constituted the student resource of this school. Administrators such as seraskiers, kadi-ul askers, flag officers, governors, chief admiral, ambassadors, grand viziers (prime minister) prepared themselves for the administration of the state through the multidimensional and disciplined education provided by the Enderûn-ı Hümâyûn (Kurban, 2016: 84). The provisions that constitute the basis of selection by the devshirmeh law (reclamation law) can be listed as follows (Koçu, 2015:32-33).

1. *The youngest boy to be accepted as devshirmeh shall be 8, and the oldest 18.*
2. *Maximum age can be up to 20 if the boy has the required qualifications.*
3. *It is essential for children between these ages to have a proper body structure and full health, with their facial expressions and pleasures.*
4. *Reclamation is not performed with a time period, but according to the needs of the Novice Boys Camp feeding the Janissary Camp and the Janissary Master who is the greatest commander of the Janissary Troops notifying this need.*
5. *Reclamation is carried out according to the needs, and either in a limited area to be determined or all around the country.*
6. *In a reclamation period, one child is taken from forty houses in the neighborhoods among the villages or districts.*
7. *The boy to be reclaimed in accordance with the laws shall be one of at least two brothers.*
8. *Only single son of a family cannot be reclaimed even if the child fulfills the conditions in the law to be reclaimed.*
9. *A boy cannot be reclaimed if the boy is married and under the age of 18, even if the child fulfills the conditions in the law to be reclaimed.*
10. *Finally, the boys who have been reclaimed are subjected to a further screening, the most elite of the boys are left to the service of the sultan as the inner ones (the Enderun boy), and the rest become the novice boy.*

In Enderun Mektebi, a palace academy which is an institute that trains diplomats, administrators, artists and athletes, has raised sixty grand viziers, more than one hundred viziers, three sheikhulislams, twenty three chief admirals, many administrators, cultural people and artists such as architects, calligraphers, poets, writers, composers, jewelers (Sakaoglu, 2002: 164). Enderûn-ı Hümâyûn had a different education system from other educational institutions in the Ottoman Empire. This difference is made possible by the devshirmeh system (reclamation), which is practiced almost excellently, for nearly two centuries, and by preliminary training given to the reclaimed boys by the palace schools.

With the discretion of the Janissary Master in accordance with the principles of the Reclamation Act, the young people who were set aside for the Enderun had to take preparatory training first. Those who completed the training given in the palaces known as preparation palaces were sent to the Enderun or to the sipahi groups at certain times. Regarding their date of establishment, palace schools can be listed as follows

- . Edirne Palace
- . Galata Palace
- . İbrahim Pasha Palace
- . İskender Çelebi Palace

At the Enderun Mektebi, the candidates for the military and civilian administrations performed various services for the works of the palace from one side, while they were preparing for the administration. The palace school was separated into different classes in terms of the services to be performed and the education provided. With the training provided, a structure was built that accommodated more than one educational institution teaching in different fields (Kurban, 2016: 72). Students who were qualified in the preparatory palaces or in the Enderûn-ı Hümâyûn, who proved their aptitude, were brought to important duties in the military and civil bureaucracy with the practice called emanation. The feature that draws attention at this point is that these people are awarded with emanation, without waiting for the average training period to be completed. However, those who failed to demonstrate the necessary qualities for administration continued to be a part of the system by being sent to the Sipahi divisions of the Kapikulu House. Thus, the Ottoman State benefited from everybody who were a part of Enderun. Until the middle of the 17th century, this practice that was systematically operated, prevented the presence of more trained personnel than needed, and measures were taken in the process of the emptying of administrative positions and the expansion of the organization.

Enderun Mektebi has a distinct place in the history of Turkish education with its role in historical periods. In addition to theoretical knowledge, the reinforcement of the students' learning through observation and practice is a form of teaching that is felt to be lacking today within the historical context of the palace school. In addition to the importance given to training the body, the cultural subjects given in relation to arts education have enabled the administrators to become powerful persons with strong intellectual aspects. Abdüllatif Efendi, in his work named *Âyîne-i Derûn*, reveals the importance that the sultan gave to the Enderun School. Over time, the buildings were expanded in the direction of demands from the teachers or school management, and students and teachers started to live in separate buildings. In the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566), the employment of several thousands of people to perform the services of the Enderûn-ı Hümâyûn and the rest of the interior palace shows the importance given by the Ottoman Empire to the organization of the palace (Enderunlu Abdüllatif, 2013). Another point that may be mentioned about the importance of Enderun in relation to the employees employed is related to the position they have in the eyes of the society. This is because the Enderuns were called "Saraylı" (from the palace) at the same time, but no other palace member outside this organization was called "Enderunlu" (from Enderun) (Baykal, 1953). Therefore being an Enderun was a distinct reflection of status among the Ottoman social structure.

The value of the Enderun Mektebi in the eyes of the Ottoman Empire shows its place in the Topkapı Palace. Even grand viziers were not allowed to enter the Enderun court, which was in a way, the house of the sultan. Babüssaade constitutes the most protected gate of the palace (Ortaylı, 2008). Babüssaade or the Gate master, the most influential master of the palace until the end of the 16th century, was one of the factors that revealed the importance of Enderun in relation to the dynasty. The gate master is the guardian and keeper of all the palace apartments, including the Harem-ı Hümâyûn. The head of the black master who is obliged to protect the Harem section of the palace, and the white master, who does the work of performing all the treatments of the inner boys of Enderun, their entrance to and exit of the palace, is also the Gate master. Both the white masters and the black masters constitute classes that were castrated from birth or later if necessary (Baykal, 1953). Since the units directly related to Enderun, its organizations, and the life of the the sultan were gathered in the third courtyard which was entered from Babüssaade, this place is called Harem-ı Hümayun, which means the private quarters of the sultan (Sakaoğlu, 2002:137). Therefore, this school of management, placed in the third courtyard where the lives of Ottoman sultans took place, shows the political institutional existence of Topkapı Palace at the same time.

## 4.2 Harem

The special position of the Babüssaade and the third courtyard in the palace organization is due to the fact that the Harem, which constitutes the private life of the dynasty, is also in this courtyard. By the expression of Uzunçarşılı, the Enderun section of the palace other than the female quarters was also called Harem-i Hümayûn. Harem, meaning a place that cannot be entered, is the quarters that the women lived in the palace. (Uzunçarşılı, 1984). Harem, located behind the Babüssaade door in Topkapı Palace is an important part of moral and political institutionalization just like Enderun Mektebi. Penzer mentions that Harem needs to be seen as a small kingdom with its own rules. Because the Harem is a hierarchical organization with its organization, employees, general attitudes and traditions. In this context, it is necessary to look at this organization independently of the viewpoint of the Harem, which regards it as the institution where the lives of the women who met the sexual desires of the Ottoman sultans passed (Penzer, 2000: 213). So much so that the life that exists behind the Babüssaade, which can be described as the house of the sultan and the place of the dynasty, is in complete confidentiality. However, the Harem, which means "the forbidden place", constitutes a stricter application of this secrecy.

The circles of Harem is a complex that includes the circles of castrated monks (slaves whose sexual functions have been removed, who are responsible for the Harem), concubines, women, the queen mother, the ruler, and the princes. The harem can also be described as a closed environment where the Ottoman sultan lived together with his mother, wife and children (Sakaoğlu, 2002: 273-275). In this context, it is possible to talk about an organization and function according to the people who reside in Harem-i Humayun. Because Harem can be described as a place of residence for the family of the Ottoman Dynasty, and as an educational institution for the servants of the sultan family. Because the women in the Harem were to be trained not only to provide concubines suitable to the sultan and maidens to the sultan's mother and other prominent women of the harem, but also to provide suitable matches for men near the top of the military/administrative hierarchy.

In this context, it can be said that the Harem has a public function that is providing partners to the people trained in the Ottoman school of government, Enderun Mektebi (Pierce, 2002: 185-186). It consisted of beautiful women selected from various races, people bought for the palace by means of Istanbul customs officers, or those whom the sultans, the state dignitaries and the governors introduced. The concubines accepted to the palace were taught the religion of Islam and its customs, and they were thought how to read and write. Beside this, according to their aptitude and ability, music, sketch, sewing, embroidery and games were also taught. This first phase of the concubines were called the novice phase. Afterwards they would climb five ranks as novices, concubines, shagird, master, and matron (Uzunçarşılı, 1984: 147).

According to their intelligence, morality and beauty, the concubines accepted to the Harem were first taken into the position of concubine, journeyman, and masters, which were at the servant status. Afterwards, in the event that they were chosen by the sultan, concubines could become women who lived a husband-wife life with the sultan, had the opportunity to marry men from the administrator class, and could reach the mother sultan status. At this point, it is possible to distinguish the concubines in the Harem into two groups. The first group is the group of concubines that answered to the needs of the Ottoman Dynasty, with their numbers reaching as high as 500. Women in this group not only served the sultans, but they were also forbidden from having a husband-wife life with the sultan. The second group were the women masters, who constituted the candidate wives for the men being raised in the Enderun School (Akgündüz, 2006: 285).

In the organization of the Harem-i Hümayûn and the fulfillment of the function it fulfills for the Ottoman State, the valide sultans (the mothers of the Ottoman sultans) play a key role. Valide Sultans found themselves at the highest office of the Harem and led the women in the harem with the organization they had (Akgündüz, 2006: 302). The power of the sultans' mothers in the eyes of the dynasty is not limited only to the Harem. Valide Sultans used a political force to ensure the survival of the prince in the battle to the throne and to educate the prince, to guide the prince, and to govern the state in cases where the prince was a child (Peirce, 2002: 306-353). Valide Sultans obtained status and authority during the period by taking place in the organization of the Harem, a political and moral institution. It is possible to state the valide sultans who played a role in the state administration in the Ottoman Empire, between the 16th and 18th centuries as follows (İnalçık, 2016: 104).

## Vâlîde Sultans (1520-1720)

Vâlîde	Sultan
Hafsa Hatun	Kanunî Süleyman
Hürrem	Selim the 2nd
Nûrbânû	Murad the 3rd
Safiye	Mehmed the 3rd
Handân	Ahmed the 1st
Hadîce	Mustafa the 1st
Hadîce Mâhirûze	Osman the 2nd
Mâhpeyker Kösem	Murad the 4th
Mâhpeyker Kösem	İbrahim the 1st
Hadîce Turhan	Mehmed the 4th
Sâlihe Dilâşûb	Süleyman the 2nd

At this point Harem is similar to Enderun School in terms of the function that it fulfills. The fact that concubines are separated from each other by two groups and they perform different services is reminiscent of those raised by Enderun Mektebi, who are both working in the palace business and learning their profession, and preparing for administration with the education they receive.

This public function, which the Harem performs, is another application of the Ottoman servant system (reclamation system). Because Ottoman pashas were forbidden to marry women from local families. The purpose here is to support the patrimonial system that protects the absolute authority of the sultan (İnalçık, 2016: 104). In this context, Enderun Mektebi and Harem-i Humayun, located in the third courtyard of Topkapı Palace, should be evaluated in a holistic approach regarding their function. These structures are in a privileged position in the palace as institutional tools of the administrative and politic tradition of the Ottomans. The expressions used by the Ottomans in expressing themselves (in/inward or Enderun, versus its opposite out/outward or Birun) seem much more explanatory than western public and private abstractions. The Harem and Enderun unite to put the sultan and the place where he lived at the top of social, moral and political order as "hass", meaning everything that pertains to the palace or dynasty (Turan, 1999). Hence, it can be said that both the Enderun and the Harem, in fact, constitutes both the public and private area of the dynasty by being located in the third courtyard which constitutes the living quarters of the Ottoman dynasty.

### 5. Result

Topkapı Palace is one of the most important buildings that the Ottoman State used as the administrative center for nearly 400 years, showing the power of the dynasty, its tradition of administration and politics and the moral structure. The palace had very special meanings both for the Ottoman family and for the administration and for the people until the center of administration was moved to the Dolmabahçe Palace which was built by Sultan Abdülmecid (1839-1861) in the mid 19th century. While Dolmabahçe Palace also had a similar organization like Topkapı Palace, Topkapı Palace witnessed to the administration of dozens of Sultans and rise, stagnation and decline of the Ottoman State. Babihimayun, Babüselam and Babüssaade, which constitute the three great gates of the palace, have become symbols of traditions, customs and rules that were applied for centuries in the courtyards they have opened to. These gates have shown where power and status begins and ends both for the people who are in the administrative positions of the Ottoman Empire, and for the public as well. In this respect, they have become the symbol of a moral and political institutionalization, together with constituting important architectural works as physical constructions.

The third courtyard in which the public and private spaces are intertwined and where Enderun and Harem, constituting the life of the Ottoman family and the tradition of the administration and politics, are located, is the greatest place to see the moral and political institutionalization in Topkapı Palace. Enderun is a word of Persian origin, and means in, inward. Harem is a word of Arabic origin, and means forbidden, sacred. Harem and Enderun are located in the third courtyard of Topkapı Palace in accordance with their etymological roots, and special attention is given to these structures in terms of secrecy and organization. Harem symbolizes the private life of the dynasty by constituting the privacy of the Ottoman sultan. On the other hand, it undertakes a political mission to create the family of the sultan and of the administrators who were raised in Enderun.

Hence, with the public functions they assume, the Enderun and the Harem enable the public and private space in the palace to be intertwined and represent a broader sense of meaning.

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