



CALMUN'25
HISTORICAL CRISIS COMMITTEE (HCC)
STUDY GUIDE



Agenda Item: Women's Sultanate

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1. Letter from the Secretary General

Esteemed Participants,

As the Secretary-General of Cağaloğlu Model United Nations, it is my distinct honor to welcome you all to the 7th edition of CALMUN, which will take place on May 16th, 17th, and 18th, 2025. It is with great pleasure that we present the study guide for HCC: Women's Sultanate, which aims to equip you with the essential knowledge and context for the upcoming three days.

After months of preparation and dedicated effort, I am proud to say that we are now just one step away from CALMUN 2025. We hope that, by reading this guide, you will feel as ready and enthusiastic as we are.

Without a doubt, this conference would not be possible without the contributions of our remarkable academic team. I extend my gratitude to our Head of Academy, Özge Öztürk; our Co-Heads of Crisis, Meryem Sultan Çok and Akay Engin; our devoted and hardworking team members; and our motivated trainees. Their commitment and passion have brought this vision to life and elevated CALMUN's academic quality to its peak.

Furthermore, I would also like to extend my best wishes to all delegates participating in CALMUN 2025. Whether this is your first conference or you are a seasoned MUNer, I thank each of you for taking a step forward and joining us. We truly hope that CALMUN will be a special experience that you will remember warmly in the future. From my perspective, MUN is about motivation, enjoyment, meaningful discussion, and connection. I wish each delegate an inspiring, engaging, and memorable experience.

Warm regards,

Ceylin Gürsoy

Secretary-General

2. Glossary

- **Monarch:** The sovereign ruler of a state, holding supreme power over the empire or kingdom.
- **Blachernae Palace:** A palace in Istanbul that was built by the Byzantines. After the conquest of Istanbul, the palace was used by the Ottoman Empire as the household of the Ottoman Harem until a fire occurred and the palace was burned down. The palace is also referred to as the “Old Palace”.
- **Hasodahk:** Also known as “ikbal”, hasodahk is a title that refers to concubines who had caught the eye of the Sultan and were seen to be potential hasekis .
- **Imperial Court:** Also known as Divan-ı Humayun, was the highest assembly of the state organization from the 15th century to the 17th. The assembly was gathered to discuss state affairs, advise the Sultan, arrange foreign relations and handle crises. The members of the assembly consisted of the advisors of the Sultan and management officials of different branches.
- **Caliphate:** The area ruled by a caliph, who was the religious ruler of the Muslim population. The caliph was responsible for upholding the Islamic principles, proselytizing the non-Muslim population and uniting the followers of Islam. This title was held by the sultans of the Ottoman Empire from 1517 until its abolishment in 1924.
- **Serdar-ı Ekrem:** The military leader of the highest rank, appointed by the Sultan (often during times of war) to follow the orders of the Sultan, make strategic decisions during war and maintain order.
- **Janissary:** An elite infantry unit made up through the *devşirme* system, where non-Muslim male children of conquered lands were selected to join the Ottoman army. The Janissary is considered to be the first modern standing army of Europe and holds significant power to control the affairs of the state.
- **Sheik-ul-Islam:** A honorific title for knowledgeable and respected scholars of the Islamic religion. The Sheik-ul-Islam was responsible for overseeing the Sharia legislation, advising the Sultan, and the caliph, on religious matters and appointing judges.

3. Introduction to the Committee

Imagine yourself in the 16th century, the Renaissance has just begun and you are surrounded by endless news of discovery, art and literature. It is an era of riches, not only in the Ottoman Empire but in empires from all around the world: the Spanish ruling the Atlantic, the Mughals in India, and the Safavid Empire in Iran. There are countless kingdoms in the 16th century, and with it, countless monarchs and kingdoms.

Yet— it would be unfair to label this era solely as the age of kings, as it was equally affected by remarkable female rulers. Elizabeth I was the sole ruler of England from 1558 to 1603, leading the nation through a period of prosperity known as the Elizabethan Era. In Scotland, Mary, Queen of Scots, ascended to the throne in 1542 and proved herself remarkable amongst numerous challenges. Catherine de' Medici, serving as Queen Consort and later as regent of France, wielded considerable power over French politics during the reigns of her sons.

In the Ottoman Empire, the narrative was no different. After his father died in 1520, Suleiman the Magnificent ascended to the throne. His ascension was not controversial, because he had no nephews, siblings or uncles that could dispute his claim. In numerous envoy's letters, Suleiman the Magnificent is reported as a "lecherous young emperor" in his early years of reign— up until Hurrem's arrival to the harem in 1520. Their love overcame all rules and boundaries, with Suleiman breaking several rules such as marrying a concubine of slave origin and fathering more than one male son. With their exponential love, came Hurrem's exponential power, allowing her to increase her influence through son-in-laws, plots and murder. Amongst all, she played an active role in state affairs, advised Suleiman on political matters, and became a figure of envy throughout the whole empire.

Hurrem's astonishing rise from slave to sultan started a trend that transformed the empire, being an inspiration to future Haseki Sultans, and Valide Sultans. Many wondered about her ways, with accusations of sorcery. Yet her rise was undeniable. Hurrem's legacy started an unexpected age of female influence in the Ottoman Empire, the *Woman's Sultanate*.

4. Historical Background

In the Ottoman Empire, women were considered “mahram,” a term derived from the same root as “haram,” which means something forbidden to touch or violate. The word “harem,” also from the same root, refers to a sacred and private space that is not accessible to everyone. In the Ottoman Empire, the harem was not only a secluded living space for women but also an institution of education.

Origin

The Ottoman Harem originates from the Byzantine Empire. However, the Byzantines' structure was not as large and composed as the Ottoman harem, and only hosted a small circle of the emperor's closest family members. The first Ottoman harem was formed after the empire established close relations with the Byzantines, and the structure of the institution was easily integrated and improved by the Ottoman Turks, as they had also witnessed similar institutions in Iran.

History

The harem in the Ottoman Empire was not only a specific site of residence for the sultan's family, it was an institution that had a broad social, cultural, and political function. The harem was the residence of the sultan's mother, his wives, concubines, and children, and thus played a very significant role in the administration of the Ottoman palace. Women in the harem were not only family members but also received education in various cultural fields, which gave them a certain status in society. The education provided in the harem included skills in arts, literature, and music, helping women improve their social standing and influence. The harem was typically overseen by the sultan's mother, the Valide Sultan and eunuchs, also known as *harem agha*, who established communication between the Valide Sultan and the emperor. The females of the harem were themselves part of a political power matrix: the sultan's wives and concubines could act as interceders in the affairs of the state. Most of the women in the harem consisted of concubines brought into the palace who might eventually become the mother of a future sultan; thus, the social stratification within the harem was important. The safety and order of the harem were also protected by the harem agha, who was one of the high-ranking officials in the palace. The harem was never merely a place in which the sultan's private life

unfolded but rather made up part and parcel of both the social and cultural, along with the political, basis for the Ottoman Empire.

Concubines

The non-muslim women entered the harem as concubines (the harem contained mostly non-muslim women because Muslim slavery was seen as a sin, haram). Concubines were classified into 4 groups: Acemiler, Cariyeler (concubines), Kalfalar and Ustalar.



Every girl who entered the harem started as an “acemi” and was trained in various fields by their “kalfa” and “usta”s. They were chosen and were assigned to different fields.

At the time a concubine's path in the harem could have taken three different ways:

First, they could become a member of the dynastic family as the mother of an Ottoman Prince. Secondly, they could obtain one of the administrative positions inside the harem or lastly, they could break free and enter the ruling class as the wife of a male member (Şehzades, Beys, Sadrazams, Serdar-ı Ekrems...) of the dynasty. A successful “career” as a concubine depended as much on character, intelligence and achievement as on the physical attractiveness of the women inside the harem.

The Beginning of the Woman’s Sultanate

After the conquest of Edirne, Murad I (d. 1389) built a palace in the region called Kavak Meydanı. Murad I, Bayezıd I (d. 1403) and Murad II (d. 1451) used this palace in Edirne as their state palace. Bertrandon de la Broquière (d. 1459), who arrived in Edirne in 1433 during Murad II's reign, states that there were nearly three hundred women in the Edirne Palace.

Following the conquest of Istanbul, Sultan Mehmet II had the Topkapı Palace built, and the state palace was moved to Topkapı. Subsequently, the Ottoman Harem was moved to the Blachernae Palace. The Ottoman Harem of the time continued its existence for the following century in the Blachernae Palace until a tragic fire occurred in the palace in the 1550s. The palace was torn down and evacuated after the incident. With all its members, the Ottoman Harem was transferred to the Topkapı Palace. This incident which may be identified as a tragic burndown- was the event that stated the female influence in the Ottoman Empire. The Harem, which entered the Topkapı Palace, thus gained political power due to its proximity to the Sultan's court.

Involvement of Women

After the transfer of the harem, women gained more power both in the Ottoman Empire's internal and foreign affairs. The concubines who were married to Serdar-ı Ekrem had access to all kinds of matters that involved the Ottoman army, while the concubines who were married to the Sadrazam of the time could influence politics without any obstacles. The concubines who were married to Şehzades were the potential Hasekis and had access to both politics and militaria based on the authority of their Şehzades.

Nonetheless, women didn't necessarily need a "representative" to get involved in internal or foreign affairs. Throughout history there have been women known who had engaged in politics, acted as sultans with their entourages, conducted diplomatic correspondence, and supported their rulers by making frequent visits to different parts of the Ottoman Empire. Some of these women are: Murat I's daughter Nefise Sultan, Bayezit II's sister, Hürrem Sultan and her daughter Mihrimah. Murat I's daughter Nefise Sultan acted as an intermediary between the Osmanli and Karaman armies. Bayezit II's sister was part of the delegation sent to the Mamluk Sultan Kansu. Hürrem Sultan and her daughter Mihrimah exchanged letters with the King of Poland. Later on in history, the upcoming women of the harem gained even more power in state affairs, leading to the rise of the Women's Sultanate.

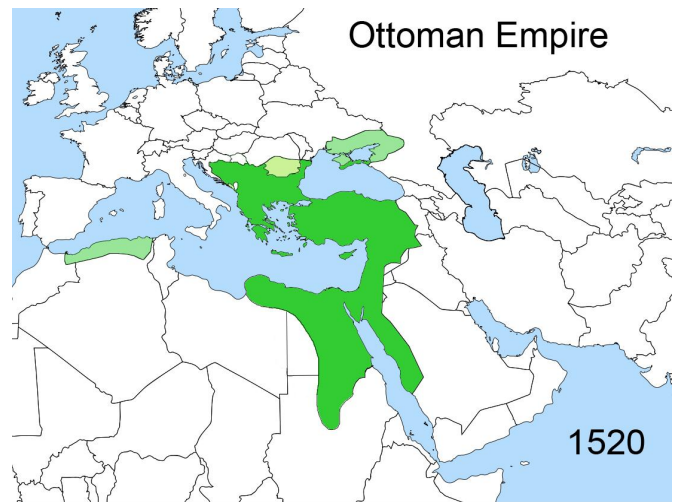
Harem During the Years 1510-1530

Name	Year Entered the Harem	Peak Period in the Harem	Rank	Children of Sultan Suleiman
Mahidevran Sultan	Around 1510	1520s (As the mother of Şehzade Mustafa)	Haseki Sultan (First consort)	Şehzade Mustafa 1516, (Son, from Mahidevran Sultan)
Gülfem Sultan	1510s (Approximately)	1520s (As Haseki Sultan)	Haseki Sultan	Şehzade Murad 1521 (Son, from Gülfem Sultan)
Hürrem Sultan	Around 1520	1530s and onwards (As a wife, Valide Sultan)	Haseki Sultan (Peaked as the wife)	Şehzade Mehmed 1521, Şehzade Abdullah, Şehzade Selim (Selim II), Mihrimah Sultan, Şah Sultan (Children)

Here is a chart to further understand the situation: Unlike the other Sultans, Suleiman the Magnificent treated the harem and women differently. Mahidevran Sultan and Gülfem Sultan were brought to the harem of Suleiman the Magnificent approximately with a maximum of a year gap. Mahidevran Sultan quickly became *hasodahk* who had attracted the attention of Suleiman the Magnificent from the time she entered the harem. She conceived her first child Şehzade Mustafa in 1516 only within a year of her arrival. After the birth of a healthy male baby, she was titled Haseki Sultan. Gülfem Sultan was also a *hasodahk*, however, Mahidevran Sultan was more prominent. Gülfem Sultan was liked by Suleiman the Magnificent and had an important place inside the harem. She received her first healthy baby in 1521 -the birth of Şehzade Murad- the same year Hürrem Sultan received her first son Şehzade Mehmed. Both were potential Valide Sultans and thus were respected and listened to. Mahidevran Sultan and Gülfem Sultan were prominent members of the harem and palace between 1515-1525. Hürrem Sultan entered the Harem in 1520 during the height of Mahidevran Sultan's influence. She quickly got the attention of Suleiman and rose in status within the harem.. Many historians believe that Hürrem Sultan wasn't conventionally beautiful, but had a petite frame and looked endearing rather than charming. It is said that Hürrem attracted the attention of the sultan not only with her appearance but also her intelligence, wit and abilities in various fields. Despite all the odds, from the moment she entered the harem until she eventually married Suleiman, Hurrem's influence steadily grew, and the harem became witness to various schemes, envy and chaos.

5. The Ottoman Empire's State of Affairs

Sultan Suleiman's reign is often regarded as the golden age of the Ottoman Empire due to its vast borders and immense wealth. However, much of his success can be attributed to his father and predecessor, Selim I. During his reign, Selim doubled the size of the empire, most notably through his year-long campaign against the Mamluks (1516-1517), which brought most of the Islamic Middle East region under Ottoman control.



These conquests proved to be highly beneficial for the empire. Under effective administration, they generated substantial revenues, resolving financial issues dating back to the 15th century and raising the Ottoman Empire's political power in the 16th century. The conquest of Islam's holy sites made the Sultan the most prominent Islamic ruler, although the formal claim to the title of "caliphate" was adopted much later in the late 18th century. The Ottomans also gained direct access to the rich and profound traditions of the fallen dynasties, Abbasids and Seljuks. Muslim scholars, artisans, and administrators from the Arab world integrated into Ottoman society and transformed the Ottoman Empire into a more traditional Islamic state. Furthermore, the Ottomans gained control over the Middle Eastern segment of the trade routes between Europe and East Asia, replacing the Mamluks.

Thanks to Selim I's achievements, Suleiman ascended to the throne with unparalleled authority, free from opposition and with control over both the devşirme class and the remaining Turkish nobility.

Suleiman had great ambitions to expand to Europe. The weak southeastern European enemies of Suleiman's predecessors had been replaced by the powerful Habsburg dynasty, situated in Hungary. Their claim was supported by the pope throughout Europe against Islam. During his campaigns against the Habsburgs, the Sultan was often in alliance with the French due to their common interests. On the east, the Ottoman Empire was still occupied by the Safavids in Iran, with continuous back and forths of conquest.

Ottoman Society and Administration

The Ottoman ruling class was organized into four main institutions. The palace institution (Mülkiye), led by the sultan, was the leading class and led the politics of the empire. The military institution (Askeriye) was responsible for expanding and defending the empire while maintaining internal order. The administrative institution (Kalemiye) managed taxes and finances. Finally, the religious institution (İlmiye), led by the *Sheik Ul Islam*, oversaw Islamic law, education, and religious affairs.

Beyond the ruling class, the *millet system* allowed religious communities—Muslims, Christians, and Jews—to govern themselves under their own legal and social structures. Each millet had a religious leader responsible for tax collection and maintaining order. While this system helped manage the empire's diverse population, religious tensions were still an issue, particularly with anti-Jewish violence from Greek and Armenian subjects, despite the sultan's efforts to protect Jewish communities. In addition to the separate religious groups, there were also guilds established for certain political views, genders or social classes. The guilds helped to unite people of the same careers and set a framework for economic activity. Due to their control of economic principles, guilds became a respectable and powerful organization and often assisted the sultan in imposing control and order in the market.

The legal framework was also established in consideration of these different millet systems, and combined Sharia (Islamic law) and Kanun (civil law). Sharia governed personal and religious matters and the sultan issued Kanun laws to regulate state affairs. Muslim judges of the Ottoman Empire recognized the right of the sultan to regulate civil laws as long as he did not conflict with the Sharia in principle. The Sharia, therefore, provided the principles of public law. In the same way, the members of the Christian and Jewish societies were subject to their own religious codes but had the freedom to choose whether they wished to be judged on state principles or their own.

Due to its vast size, the Ottoman Empire functioned through a decentralized system, with hierarchical authority to local rulers, religious communities, and economic guilds. This structure helped establish stability and order in the empire for centuries.

6. Ottoman State Organisation

It was also during this time that the Ottoman Empire's governmental structure which had been slowly developing and constantly changing had finally started to settle, with clear hierarchical ranks and departments.

Key Members of the Divan-i Humayun (Imperial Court)

Position	Mission	Appointed Official 1520
Sultan	Supreme ruler of the Ottoman Empire; military and political leader.	Suleiman the Magnificent
Grand Vizier	Chief advisor to the Sultan; head of the imperial administration and military.	İbrahim Pasha (1523-1536)
Viziers and Kubbealtı Viziers	Senior officials who advised the Sultan and executed his policies; Kubbealtı was the highest council of viziers.	Various viziers; notable ones include Pargalı İbrahim Pasha.
Kazasker	Military judge responsible for judicial matters in the army and overseeing legal cases.	Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha
Nişancı	Keeper of the imperial seal; responsible for drafting imperial decrees (ferman) and documents.	Rüstem Pasha (later in the 1530s)
Defterdar	Treasurer; responsible for the empire's finances and revenue collection.	Hasan Pasha
Şeyhülislam	Religious leader and chief Islamic scholar; advisor on religious matters.	Ebussuud Efendi
Beylerbeyi of Rumelia	Provincial governor of the Rumelia region; military and administrative authority in the Balkans.	Lütfi Pasha
Agha of the Janissary	Commander of the elite Janissary Corps; responsible for their training, discipline, and deployment.	Mehmet Ağa (during Suleiman's reign)

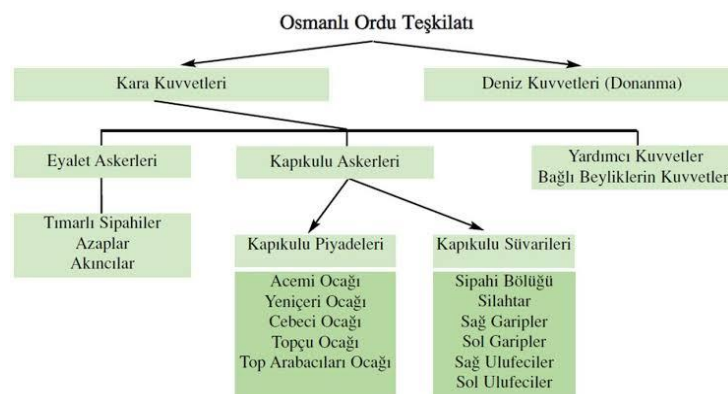
Military Organisation



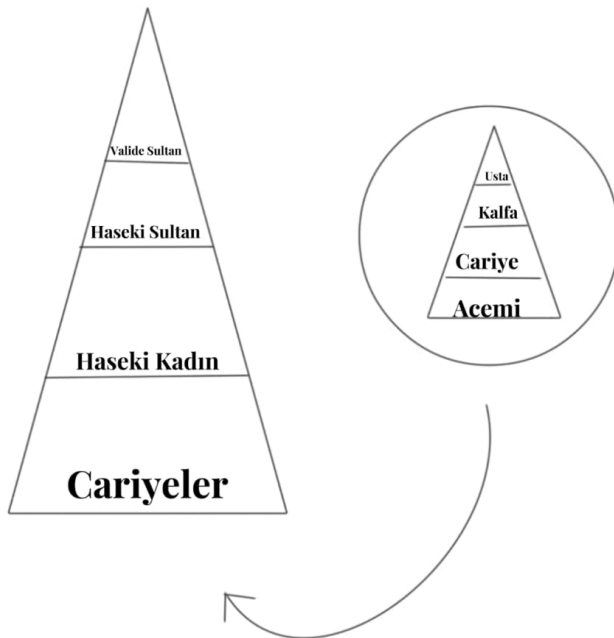
The Ottoman Military was disciplined under the command of Suleiman the Magnificent on account of his military strategies, technological innovations and administrative reforms. Conquests over the three continents were made, and the Ottoman Empire expanded its territory, becoming the greatest empire in the 16th century.

The military was divided into two major parts: Kara Kuvvetleri (land forces) and Donanma (naval forces). Land forces included mainly two main varieties of soldiers: Süvariler (mounted soldiers) and Piyadeler (foot combatants). The naval forces were established much later than the land forces, and the most commendable leader, *Kaptan-ı derya*, was Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha, who began his leadership in 1518.

Janissaries, the first modern standing army of Europe, was the greatest unit of the Kapıkulu, soldiers who served directly under the emperor. Janissaries had potent power over the authorities and in some cases even over the emperors. The rebellions made by the soldiers had the prospect of resulting in the deposition of sultans and grand viziers. 1446 Buçuktepe Revolt is the first known janissary rebellion. Since then, janissaries have been involved in rebellions and uprisings for various reasons.



Harem Members and Harem Ranking



Valide Sultan: The title used for the birth mother of the ruling sultan, given after their son ascended the throne.

Haseki Sultan: A title used for addressing a concubine who has given birth to a male child from the ruling sultan. These women also hold the power to become future Valide Sultans.

Haseki Kadın: A title used for addressing a concubine who has given birth to a female child from the ruling sultan. These women were respected for carrying and receiving the child/children of the sultan.

Hanım Sultan: The title used to address the daughter/s of the ruling sultan.

Cariye(concubines): A word used for addressing the concubines

- Usta:** the highest status a concubine can reach within the harem. Concubines who serve the sultan personally.
- Kalfa:** concubines who serve inside the palace and the mansion. Based on their intelligence and looks they may serve in the chambers of 'Kadın Efendis', Valide Sultan, şehzades' or ikbals'.
- Cariye(concubine):** girls selected from the acemis' that are seen to be charming, and attractive and are raised to be concubines for the sultan.
- Acemi:** girls who had recently entered the harem. They receive mandatory training from their cariyeler, kalfa and ustas'

Female Servants: women serving in the palace, typically foreigners as the slavery of Muslims was forbidden.

Kira Kadın: The title used for Jewish women who enabled women in the Ottoman Harem to connect and communicate with the outside world.

Agah of the Harem: men who are assigned to preserve the women in the Harem.

- a. **Ak Hadımlar/White Eunuchs:** eunuchs selected from among castrated captives consisting of Georgian, Armenian, Circassian, Hungarians and Slavs.
- b. **Siyah Hadımlar/Black Eunuchs:** eunuchs selected among the black castrated children from Egypt, Abyssinia and Central Africa. They were educated and after completing their education, they were taken into service within the harem.

Agah of the Girls/ Chief Musahib: The most senior of the Agah of the Harems, also the head of the domestic and harem population and second in status to the Grand Vizier and Sheikh Ul Islam. The Agah of the Girls' responsibilities were securing the harem, providing new concubines for the harem, and establishing communication between the Sultan and the harem for matters of promotion or punishment among concubines.

Musahip: A person who guards the room of the Sultan and announces Sultans' orders to the harem. There were approximately 7-10 companions.

7. In Committee Procedure

This committee will follow standard crisis procedure, allowing participants to explore the rich history of our culture and lands while learning about the people who shaped our past. Delegates will have the exciting opportunity to travel back in time and reimagine an unforgettable tale of the Ottoman Empire.

Each character in this committee has a vital role in changing the course of history. Delegates will step into the shoes of historical figures of 1520, making decisions based on the realities of the past. This experience will help them think creatively and adopt new perspectives. In addition, it will provide a chance for delegates to learn more about the social status of women during the Ottoman Empire and gain insight into society, culture and politics.

Most importantly, this committee will be a fun and engaging experience. Through creative scenarios and decision-making, delegates will shape alternative historical outcomes, and directives and explore the many possible paths history could have taken. Whether it be forming alliances, managing conflicts, or introducing new inventions, delegates will lead the sails of history.

8. Cabinet Members



Ayşe Hafsa Sultan

She is the first Valide Sultan of the Ottoman Empire; a concubine of Selim I, the mother of Suleiman the Magnificent, Hatice Sultan and Fatma Sultan. At the age of 14, Hafsa was brought from Kerch to Trabzon as a bride and was wedded to (at the time a Şehzade) Selim. During the sanjak principalities of her son, Şehzade Suleiman, she stayed at Kefe and Manisa.

After the death of Selim I, Suleiman ascended the throne. Ayşe Hafsa Sultan was brought to Istanbul and was titled Valide Sultan. She was one of the most influential women in the Ottoman Empire. She had a strong influence over Suleiman and dominance in the state matters. She never abused the power of her authority. Until her death, she obstructed Hürrem Sultan's advances and kept the balance in the harem.



Agah Bey

Agah Bey was a black Sudanese eunuch. He is the Chief Musahib (Agha of the Girls) of the Imperial Harem and is responsible for the communication between the Sultan and Valide Sultan. He was also responsible for recruiting new concubines to the harem and organizing marriages, circumcision weddings and birth ceremonies in the harem.



Hatice Sultan:

Hatice Sultan is the daughter of Ayşe Hafsa Sultan and Selim I, also the sister of Suleiman the Magnificent. She is believed to have been born before 1494. In 1509, she married Damat İskender Pasha; an Ottoman governor and later admiral. She gave birth to 5 five children: Sultanzade Mehmed Bey, Sultanzade Suleiman Bey, Sultanzade Ali Bey, Sultanzade Osman Bey and Nefise Hanımsultan. Her husband, Damat Iskender Pasha was later executed in 1515.



Fülane Sultan

Fülane means young lady and is used when someone's name is not known. Fülane Sultans' birth name is lost to Ottoman history; a few sources claim her name was Mükerrerem. She was born in 1496. Fülane Sultan was a Christian from Smyrna and came to the harem around 1510 when Suleiman was still a Sanjak Bey. She gave birth to her first daughter Fatma Nur Sultan in 1512 and was titled Haseki Kadın. She is said to be the sultan's favorite until the Mahidevran Sultan entered the harem.



Mahidevran Sultan

Mahidevran was born in 1500. She is said to be either of Circassian origin or Albanian. She is referred to as the “first wife” of Suleiman the Magnificent. She entered the harem in 1514 at the age of 14. Mahidevran swiftly captured the interest of Suleiman and gave birth to Şehzade Mustafa the eldest son of Suleiman. The first male heir of the Suleimans' harem, Mahidevran Sultan was titled Haseki Sultan and was considered a potential upcoming Valide Sultan. From the birth of her son to the time Hürrem started to show control over Suleiman she had the most authority among the concubines in the harem. She was regarded as the second prominent woman in the harem, the first being Ayşe Hafsa Sultan. She didn't have good relations with Hürrem, however was liked by the Valide Sultan.



Gülfem Sultan

Gülfem Sultan is the second wife of Suleiman the Magnificent and the mother of Şehzade Murad. There isn't any information on her origin and birth but she is believed to have been born around the 1500s. She entered the harem in 1515 and delivered Şehzade Murad in 1521. She was liked by Suleiman the Magnificent however wasn't as influential as Mahidevran Sultan. She is said to have a poised character and got along well with the other members of the harem.



Hürrem Sultan

Hürrem Sultan is the third wife of Suleiman the Magnificent. She is believed to be born in 1505 and is a Slavic woman originating from Ukraine. She was brought to the harem in 1520 and conceived her first son Şehzade Mehmed within a year (1521), the same year Gülfem Sultan conceived Şehzade Murad. She is one of the most impactful women in Ottoman History and was enthralled by Suleiman. Hürrem is a well-known Sultan for her intrigues, intelligence, courage and passion. At the time of her arrival at the harem,

Mahidevran had the most authority among the concubines in the harem. Hürrem was the start of a pivotal change. She wasn't liked by Ayşe Hafsa Sultan however managed to ascend in the harem. Hürrem Sultans' brightest time in the harem was after the death of Ayşe Hafsa Sultan.



Dafne Hatun

Dafne Hatun is the Başusta Concubine serving for the Imperial Harem. (Başusta is the title that refers to the head of all the usta concubines.) In essence, Dafne Hatun is the woman responsible for all the servant concubines serving in the harem. She is said to be disciplined, diligent, determined and dependable thus had good relations with all the women in the Imperial Harem she worked under.



Fatma Hatun

Fatma Hatun or with her birth name Strongilah, was the daughter of the Karaite Jew Elijah Gibor from Crimea. She is the first Kira (also called Kyra, or Kyra Jewess) documented in the Imperial Harem. As a Kira, she acted as a go-between and provided luxury items, medicine and letters. With the impact of her services, she became the favored kira of Hafsa Sultan and possibly the kira of Hürrem Sultan after the death of Hafsa Sultan.



Meryem Sultan

Meryem Sultan is a French woman brought to the Imperial Harem as a gift -this gesture may be a reference to the Franco-Ottoman alliance that occurred in 1536- from the Kingdom of France in 1518. Her birth name is said to be Anais Celine. She had no intentions of execution or dominance in the Imperial Harem however is known for having good relations with Hürrem Sultan. (Meryem Sultan is a fictional character who doesn't exist in Ottoman History.)



Mira Hatun

Mira Hatun is a woman in the Imperial Harem. She is a Circassian who is also fluent in Arabic. There isn't any dependable information on her entrance into the harem but she was approximately 19 years of age at the time Hürrem entered the harem. There are known to be some legends saying that she wasn't an ordinary Hatun in the harem but was a sorcerer who messed with many şehzades faiths along with many other women's faiths inside the Imperial Harem. She is known for her deep interest in herbs and alternative medicine. (Mira Hatun is a fictional character who doesn't exist in Ottoman History.)



Başak Hatun

Başak Hatun is a Persian woman in her early 20's. She is considered one of the most intelligent as well as educated women in the Imperial Harem. She speaks 12 languages and is fluent in 8 of them. Başak Hatun has been a part of the harem since she was 10 and received her education in the harem. There have been rumors of her saying she isn't on good terms with Ayşe Hafsa Sultan, however, there isn't any certainty as Başak Hatun stays in her chamber most of the time. (Başak Hatun is a fictional character who doesn't exist in Ottoman History.)

9. Resources and Links for Further Information

[HAREM Ansiklopediler - Tübitak - Ansiklopedi](#)

[OSMANLI DEVLETİ'NDE HAREM KURUMU - DergiPark](#)

[Eski Doğu Topluluklarında Harem ve Hadımlık Müessesesinin Ortaya ...](#)

[Osmanlı'da Harem Hayatı Ve Gerçekleri](#)

[Osmanlı Devleti'nde siyasal iktidar unsuru olarak harem](#)

[Roxelana in European Culture and Literature](#)

[A Royal Hanım Sultan: Hurrem](#)

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