Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies

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Contents

29. Māhperī Khātūn was also the wife of ʿAla al-Dīn Kai Qubad. An inscription on the sarcophagi in her tomb states, "This is the tomb of the lady . . . Safwat al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Māhperī Khātūn, mother of Sultan" (Ülkü Bates, "The Anatolian Mausoleums of the 12, 13, and 14th Centuries," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1970, 144–45).

30. Howard Crane suggests that she might have been the wife of Sultan ʿAla al-Dīn Kai Qubad. Crane, "Notes on Saldjuq Architectural Patronage," 53.

31. E. Yurdakal tries to link this Safwat al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn to a Mongol woman (1293–95) who was given control over Kirman and sections of Anatolia. Yurdukal, "Tokat Vilayetinde Bilinmeyen bir Selcuklu Hankahı," 69.

32. Rogers suggests that permission from the *qādī* (judge) gave inscriptions their force as semi-official documents ("Waqf and Patronage in Seljuk Anatolia," 71).

33. For more on Sufi lodges in Tokat, see Wolper, "Patronage and Practice in Late Seljuk and Early Beylik Society: Dervish Lodges in Sivas, Tokat, and Amasya."

34. In one of the earliest works on women as patrons in Turkey, Ülkü Bates studied buildings bearing women's names for information on their role in society. See "Women as Patrons of Architecture in Turkey," in *Women in the Muslim World,* ed. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 245–60.

35. Building inscriptions were a type of "public text." I use Bierman's definition here to imply that these texts by nature of their highly visible location and the force of authority behind them provided a suitable forum for reinforcing or altering messages about sovereign power. See Irene Bierman, "The Art of the Public Text: Medieval Islamic Rule," in *World Art: Themes of Unity in Diversity,* ed. Irving Lavin, 3 vols (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989): 2:283–90; and Bierman, *Writing Signs: The Fatimid Public Text* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1998), 1–27.

36. There is even some confusion whether or not Pervāne had two daughters that were associated with the order.

37. Aflākī-Yazıçı, 2:951–53.

38. A copy of this *waqfīya* is published in Savaş, "Tokat'ta Hoca Sünbül Zaviyesi," 206–9.

39. Holbrook, "Diverse Tastes," 108. Holbrook bases her conclusion about the large number of lodges built by Ulu Arif on information found in A. Gölpinarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik* (Istanbul: Inkilap ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1983), 330–440.

4

Gender and Sexual Propriety in Ottoman Royal Women's Patronage

Leslie Peirce

It is a commonplace that patronage is a political tool of monarchies. Royal patronage is not accessible to all members of a dynasty indiscriminately or equally, however. In the Islamic world, the patronage of women is almost everywhere apparent, and, like that of men, it can carry substantial political meaning. But how is a woman's gender a significant factor in determining what forms of patronage are accessible to her? If patronage is an index of one's status *within* hierarchies of power, what distinguishes one female patron from another? Ottoman royal patronage in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries was governed by a set of protocols in which gender and sexual identity figured centrally.

Royal patronage was linked to Ottoman dynastic politics generally, and in its gendered aspects to the politics of reproducing the dynasty, that is, to choices about the sexual alliances of male dynasts and the roles of their female partners in the reproduction of sovereignty. Access to power and its prerogatives was determined in large part by the life-cycle stage of the individual and his or her sexual and reproductive status. Monumental architecture—the most conspicuous and enduring form of patronage—offers a visual text from which to read these rules of royal patronage. But in a state that was governed by a single dynastic family for more than six centuries, rules were bound to change: what was effective at one point in time might not be so even fifty years later. This essay explores issues of gender, sexuality, and status by examining the endowments of two women: Hurrem, the favorite concubine and then wife of Süleyman the Magnificent,

who died in 1558, and Kösem, royal concubine and then queen mother to three seventeenth-century sultans, who died in 1651. The philanthropic activities of these two women permit us to observe the complex and shifting relationships among patronage, legitimate authority, and the climate of popular opinion.[1]

Why invoke popular opinion? Because the Ottomans governed within a broad consensus on legitimacy and the rights and duties of the ruler. Royal power was restrained by institutional checks (such as the Janissaries, the famed royal infantry) but also by the force of popular opinion. As the dynasty made rules, so the public—elite and masses alike—monitored those rules. Architectural patronage figured in this process as a public index of power. While visual access to the sovereign *person* was for the most part denied, acts of patronage acquainted subjects with their sovereign family. The visible product of the act of patronage—a public monument or a charitable donation—allowed subjects of the empire to gauge the level of influence of the royal patron. Conversely, imperial family politics and personalities were intimately connected to popular reception of the dynasty's philanthropic projects.

Public opinion formed the limits of the possible in all aspects of governance, not least its acts of patronage. While discussed here as an element in political dynamics, these projects were publicly presented, and no doubt sincerely conceived, as pious acts (*hayrât*). Such acts earned God's heavenly reward for their royal patrons while simultaneously enabling subjects to lead religiously and socially enhanced lives. But when the balance between the pious and political objectives of such projects seemed threatened in favor of the latter, the public did not hesitate to express its objection.

A brief look at the checkered building career of Safiye, the third of five influential royal women of this period, demonstrates both the impact of public opinion and the centrality of patronage in an individual's personal political agenda.[2] As queen mother to her son Mehmed III, the unpopular Safiye so exceeded what were perceived as the bounds of her authority that in 1600 the royal troops threatened to drive her from the capital of Istanbul. Commenting on her precarious position, the Venetian ambassador to the Ottoman court reported: "They attribute many disorders to her, in particular the consumption of money for a most superb mosque she is having built; but she has halted its construction."[3] This was only a temporary setback in the queen mother's plans, however; several months later, a member of the English embassy noted that "the Great sultanaes church goeth up apace, and she rayneth as before."[4] Reigning and building, it seems, went hand in hand. Ultimately, Safiye's project was to remain uncompleted, as royal protocol forced her into retirement three years later at the premature death of her son.

What were the rules governing the practice of royal patronage? Gender, age, sexual status, and life-cycle expectations determined access to political power and thus to public patronage. Among the dynasty's males, only the sultan, as head of state, enjoyed the right to full public expression of royal authority, including monumental building. In the very first Ottoman generations, early histories of the Ottomans tell us, the sultan's sons governed alongside their father and, like him, undertook architectural endowments. However, the princely right to imperial patronage was soon revoked as a sign of the growing centralization of power in the person of the reigning sovereign and the political subordination of his sons. But if the sultan was the sole *male* dynastic patron, the privilege of patronage was shared by numerous females of the dynasty, slave concubines of the sultan as well as princesses of the blood. Here again, protocol operated to create a hierarchy of female patronage that was linked to the dynasty's politics of reproduction—that is, to its policies regarding marriage, concubinage, production of offspring, and the roles of royal mothers and fathers in the education and training of their children.

One group of women is conspicuous through the absence of public building in their careers: the foreign princesses who, until the mid-fifteenth century, were joined to the Ottoman dynasty through formal marriage. It may seem odd that slave concubines were privileged in this regard over women of royal blood, but the key here was motherhood. Except in the very first generations, the Ottoman dynasty did not reproduce through formal diplomatic marriages but rather by means of slave concubinage. The absence of public building by royal *wives* is a compelling statement about their second-class status, and a compelling statement about the prerogatives of political motherhood. Royal motherhood was simply assumed to embody the political knowledge necessary to training future rulers and their sisters. Through a kind of reverse lineage linking these slave consorts to the dynasty as royal mothers, their status was publicly symbolized by the privilege of building. The monuments of the dynasty's concubines were modest at first, but by the late fifteenth century royal mothers were undertaking the endowment of significant urban complexes.

It was a requirement that the imperial patron of public projects be an elder. No matter what his age, the sultan was by definition the male elder

of the dynasty. Female seniority was established less by advanced age (one could be an "elder" as early as one's mid-thirties) than by postsexual status. Women who built were women no longer perceived to be sexually active, whether through abstinence, widowhood, or postmenopausal incapacity. In other words, the female patron's identity was independent of a marital or sexual linkage with a male. This is one manifestation of the broad social pressure to seclude women in the child-bearing cycle of their life. Norms of sexual propriety, subscribed to by the dynasty and its subjects alike, granted public stature and influence only to the female elder.

Among royal women, political motherhood, as we have seen, was an essential criterion for status. That concubine mothers were often "elders" by their mid-thirties was a result of the dynasty's management of reproduction, which arbitrarily ended the sexual phase of a concubine's career once she had borne a son.[5] With the birth of a son, which might occur when a concubine was around the age of seventeen, she ceased to be the sexual partner of the sultan. Henceforth her identity was that of mother to the prince, and her duty was his political training. When the prince reached the age of sixteen or seventeen, he was considered to have attained the threshold of legal and political maturity, a crucial passage in his life, which was acknowledged by his appointment to the governorship of a provincial capital. As the prince thus began the public phase of his career, so did his mother. According to Ottoman tradition of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, a royal mother accompanied her son to his post and acted as head of his domestic household. As the elder member of this satellite royal establishment, she, not her son, enjoyed the privilege—indeed, the duty—of adorning the provincial capital.

This leads us to the final principle governing royal patronage until the reign of Süleyman (1520–66): the clear separation of the architectural theater of the sultan from that of his concubines. The endowments of royal concubine mothers were confined to provincial cities, while the sultan alone was responsible for the most splendid projects in the capital of Istanbul. Confinement to a provincial theater did not however mean that a royal mother's endowments were unimposing. In the city of Manisa, one of the main provincial capitals to which princes were sent, the principle religious monuments were the mosques of two royal mothers. Only at the end of the sixteenth century did the city acquire a sultanic endowment, when Süleyman's grandson, Murad III, chose to build his imperial complex in the city of his princely governorate rather than in the seat of his sultanate. In a late sixteenth-century view of Manisa (fig. 4.1), the mosque of Hüsnüshah

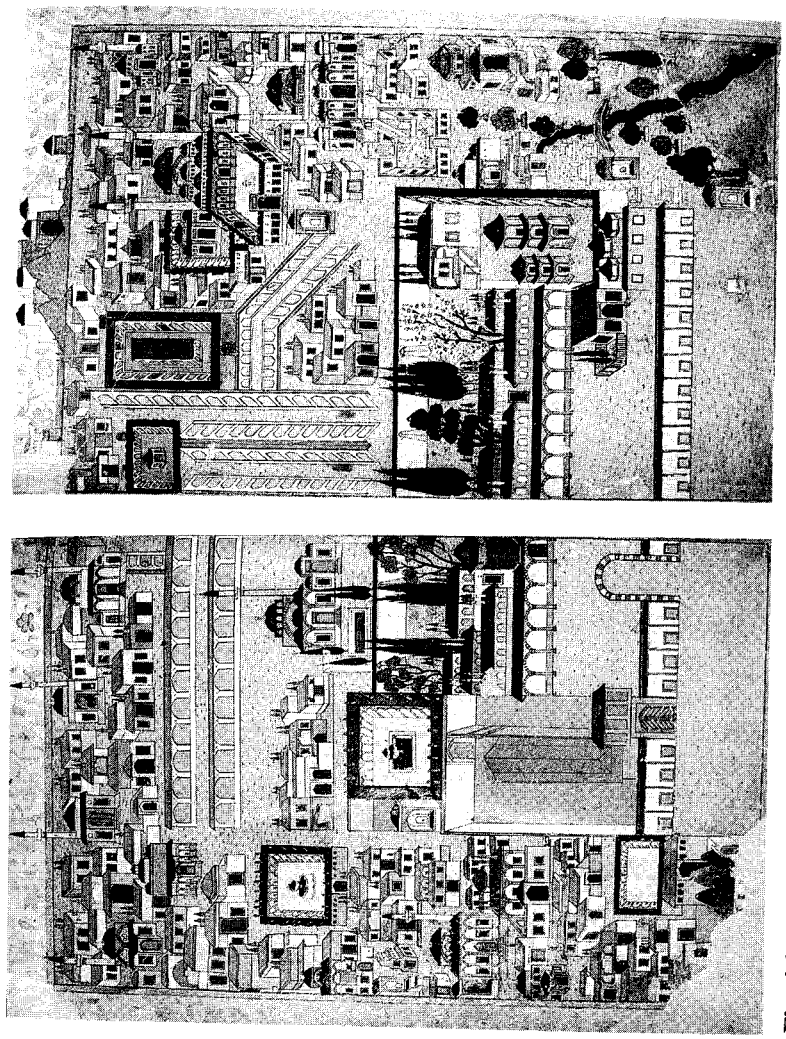

Fig. 4.1. A view of Manisa in the sixteenth century, showing the palace in the foreground and the Mosque of Murad III and Hafsa's Sultaniye complex in the upper right (Talikzade, *Şahname-i Al-i Osman*, f. 10b–11a. Courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul)

lies just above the princely palace, situated in the lower center, while the mosque of Süleyman's mother Hafsa, with its two minarets and outdoor prayer courtyard, lies slightly below the larger mosque of Murad III in the upper right. Known as "Sultaniye" ("the Imperial"), Hafsa's mosque complex included a religious college, a dervish hostel, a primary school, and a soup kitchen (Süleyman later added a hospital and a public bath to his mother's endowment). A successful example of the Ottoman deployment of mosque complexes as a strategy in urban development, the Sultaniye became the nucleus of a thriving new neighborhood, setting the stage for the subsequent endowment of its patroness's great-grandson.[6]

The reign of Süleyman introduced major innovations in dynastic politics, which not surprisingly were reflected in the practice of royal patronage. Outstanding was the sultan's devotion to a single concubine, Hurrem.[7] A major tradition was broken by Hurrem when she became Süleyman's only sexual and reproductive partner; their union produced five sons and one daughter. Other innovations included the sultan's formal marriage to her, and her continuing residence in the royal palace: she did not accompany any of her sons to their provincial governorates. But while these innovations gave Hurrem a unique monopoly within the imperial harem, at the same time they made it difficult for her to establish her political maturity. Unlike her predecessors, female elders whose careers were played out in the provinces, separate from and relatively independent of the sultan, Hurrem was unable to make the transition from a zone marked by sexuality and reproduction to the public zone of political leadership. Significantly, she continued to be known popularly as *Haseki,* the sultan's favorite. Her inability to escape this sexualized status is suggested by a comment made around 1540 by Luigi Bassano, a Venetian page in the palace: "All Süleyman's subjects say that she has bewitched him; therefore they call her '*ziadi*', which means witch. For this reason the Janissaries and the entire court hate her and her children likewise, but because the sultan loves her, no one dares to speak. I have always heard every one speak ill of her and of her children."[8]

Not unexpectedly, the radical architectural profile of this extraordinary woman broke with earlier tradition. What was unusual was the location and the number of works undertaken by Hurrem herself and by Süleyman in her name. Unlike her concubine predecessors, whose works were confined mainly to Anatolian provincial capitals, architectural endowments in Hurrem's name existed in all the principal cities of the empire: Istanbul, the secondary capital of Edirne, the holy cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, and other major cities as well. For the first time in the history of the Ottoman dynasty, the building career of a royal concubine encompassed the whole empire.

Hurrem's special status was first announced in the capital of Istanbul, where the first royal mosque complex associated with Süleyman's reign was built in Hurrem's name. Later came the magnificent bath, with separate sections for women and men, constructed to serve the staff and congregation of the great church-turned-mosque of Hagia Sophia (Aya Sofya) and located in the symbolically charged ceremonial center of the city. In the Arab lands recently conquered by Süleyman's father, where the sacred cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem were located, Hurrem's patronage carried the new overlord's message of beneficence and piety. In Jerusalem, for example, was located the large public foundation that was the special object of Hurrem's endeavors in her later years.

Two of Hurrem's major projects, the early Istanbul complex and the later Jerusalem complex, demonstrate the range of images she projected through her patronage. The Istanbul complex, begun in 1537, was the first of Hurrem's public philanthropic acts, and may have figured in the problematic reputation she suffered. There is some disagreement over whether Hurrem or Süleyman endowed the mosque itself, but in any event the complex's religious college and primary school were commissioned by Hurrem the year following the mosque's completion.[9] The soup kitchen and the hospital (the latter still functioning today) came later, the former built by Süleyman and the latter by Hurrem. The mosque itself was modest (with only a single minaret, it did not claim the imperial status signified by the presence of two or more minarets); it was the complex's location in the capital as well as its eventual size that was noteworthy.

The date when the mosque was begun is surely significant. In 1537, Hurrem's eldest son was sixteen, the threshold of a prince's political adulthood. So, in a sense, the rule that a public profile might be enjoyed only by a female *elder*—that is, the mother of a politically mature son—was not broken, and it is likely that Hurrem intended to convey a change in her status with this public charitable act. The years around 1537 marked a life-cycle turning point not only in Hurrem's career but also in that of Süleyman. With the birth of their last child in 1531, the royal couple—for so had Süleyman fashioned their image by marrying his concubine—had moved beyond the reproductive phase of their reign. The sultan turned forty, the traditional beginning of male elderhood, during the celebrated two-year military campaign of 1534–36 which captured the city of Baghdad, historic

seat of the Sunni caliphate, from the Ottomans' greatest Muslim opponent. Upon his return, Süleyman initiated an important series of policy changes that gave increased emphasis to the legal and religious aspects of Islamic monarchy and less to the glories of military conquest.[10] This period has been described as a time of widespread discontent among the empire's subjects, and the shifts in policy may have been both symptom and cause of tensions.[11]

Hurrem's unpopularity may therefore have stemmed from general dissatisfaction as well as from more focused public resistance to changes in the dynasty's politics of reproduction made manifest in the building of her complex. Despite the image of female maturity that Hurrem may have wished to project with her Istanbul endowment, she continued in people's minds to be thought of as the sultan's favorite (it is about this time that Bassano reported people calling her a witch). It is not surprising that the mosque became known as "Haseki," as did the district that grew up surrounding it. In fact, it is possible that the planning for the Haseki mosque was undertaken in an effort to mitigate Hurrem's problematic status. The mosque was located in a relatively undeveloped part of the city, near an area known as the "Women's Bazaar" (at the end of the century, the secretary to the English embassy described it as "the markett place of women, for thither they come to sell their wourks and wares"[12]). The historian Peçevi commented that this association of the complex with women was a manifestation of the sultan's "utmost sensitivity."[13] In his *Book of Travels,* the seventeenth-century writer Evliya Çelebi emphasized the association of women with structures in the area: in a humorous passage where he matched different classes of the city's population with appropriate public baths, women were assigned to a bath near the Haseki complex.[14] What I am suggesting here is that Hurrem's endowment may have been deliberately presented as an act of concern for women in order to disarm public rumblings over this unprecedented act by a royal consort. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the simple mosque built by Gülfem, another prominent member of Süleyman's harem (probably its senior administrative officer) was, according to local legend, intended for the use of women and opened to men only in recent times.[15]

Hurrem's Jerusalem complex, in contrast, appears to have been an untroubled act of patronage. The fact that it was located away from the capital and undertaken later in Hurrem's life, when her sons were governing in the provinces and her maturity beyond doubt, probably affected its reception. This well-endowed establishment, completed in the early 1550s,

contained a mosque, a fifty-five-room dwelling for religious pilgrims, an inn and stable for travelers, and an area devoted to numerous charitable services for the poor including a soup kitchen and public toilets. The ceremonial importance attached to Hurrem's public works is highlighted by the magnificence of the property deeds granting her income sources to provide for the complex's upkeep. Witnessed by the highest officers of the empire, the deeds are superb specimens of the chancery art of the Ottomans, with their exquisite calligraphy and illumination. A deed from the year 1552 provided revenues from villages in the province of Trablus.

The complex's site was already associated with pious acts by women: it was reputed to be the location of a pilgrim's hospice built by Helena, the mother of the Byzantine emperor Constantine and legendary discoveror of Christian holy sites in the city, followed in Mamluk times by the residence of a wealthy religious pilgrim to the city.[16] The implicit reference to pious female predecessors confirmed the legitimacy of Hurrem's enterprise. This historical appeal was no doubt linked to Süleyman's program to establish himself, the first Ottoman overlord of the holy cities of Islam, as worthy successor to earlier caliphs, sultans, and even Byzantine emperors (to whose "Roman" sovereignty the Ottoman sultans of "Rum" claimed successorship through their conquest of Constantinople). In the Ottoman appropriation of previously sanctified or imperialized space, the women of Süleyman's family figured centrally, foremost among them Hurrem. Inscription into a tradition of pious benefactresses in an ancient sacred environment was for Hurrem certainly a safer means of self-representation than the novel act of patronage by a sultan's favorite.

The subsequent history of royal female patronage owed much to Hurrem, to both the positive and negative aspects of her ambivalent legacy. On the one hand, her career offered a powerful precedent for conspicuous imperial patronage by women. On the other, it taught the lesson that political motherhood—a public role—should not be confused with conjugal status—a private role. Henceforth, a concubine, even the favorite, might wield a good deal of influence, but it was not demonstrated beyond the borders of the household. To do so, as Hurrem's experience showed, was understood by the public as a violation of social and sexual propriety.

Royal concubines continued to undertake charitable works, but like their persons, their efforts were not publicly manifest. Instead of building, they established endowments for such "invisible" pious works as recitation of the Qur'an in a major mosque or the provision of relief for the poor. Moreover, such charities were usually dissociated from their patron through

their enactment in distant places, in particular the sacred cities. At issue here is a paradoxical clash of female piety and pollution, that is, the problematic relationship of the patron herself to the space whose function and status are constituted by her act of patronage. What happens, in other words, when the person of the patron can defile the space—the sanctuary of a mosque, the male society of the religious college or the dervish lodge—that she has brought into existence through her pious act?[17] A contemporary reading of religious law by the official Ottoman authority, the *mufti* Ebu Su'ud, ruled that a group of women desiring to attend the Friday congregational prayer might be prevented from doing so if there were young women among them (implying that the *mufti* sanctioned the participation of older women in the communal mosque prayer).[18] The rules of seclusion were most stringently enforced for the married child-bearing woman for two related reasons: unlike the virgin, the married woman was considered to have an awakened sexual apppetite, and as a result, her reproductive capacity was a potential threat to the integrity of her husband's bloodline. In the matter of female patronage of religious structures, Süleyman's family appears to have tried different solutions to this dilemma: his mother and his only daughter Mihrimah safely endowed mosques as female elders, while the mosques of women associated with his harem (Hurrem and Gülfem) were justified, legend suggests, as endowments for the use of women.

The difficulties experienced by Hurrem, and thus by Süleyman as well, led to the abandonment of the second option. The female patron of public endowments was henceforth always a postsexual elder. Beginning with Nurbanu, the concubine favorite of Hurrem's son and Süleyman's successor, Selim II, the privilege of public building was reserved for the royal female as mother of the sovereign, in which capacity she now acquired an official title, *valide sultan* ("queen mother"). The endowment of imperial complexes in the capital in fact now became the prerogative of queen mothers rather than sultans. With one major exception (Ahmed I), sultans—if they built at all—established their endowments in lesser cities of the empire. This privilege of adorning the capital paralleled the gradual institutionalization of the queen mother's political influence into what by the seventeenth century had become the formal *office* of *valide sultan*.

This essay might have concluded with an account of Nurbanu, whose career was instrumental in transforming the paradigm of royal female patronage from favorite to queen mother. As the first of the powerful queen mothers, Nurbanu's considerable authority was noted in ambassadorial circles. Her large and splendid mosque complex, which Evliya Çelebi described as "a mountain of light," was constructed in the Üsküdar district of Istanbul between 1570 and 1582 (Nurbanu's son, Murad III, built his own mosque in the provincial capital of Manisa, as we have seen). However, paradigms are rarely stationary or absolute. The career of our second patron, Kösem, demonstrates that protocols of patronage, like any rules for managing power, contain inherent tensions and are subject to the vagaries of politics.

Kösem's long career passed through the two stages of favorite and queen mother.[19] Her influence was first manifest as favorite to the sultan Ahmed I (who ruled from 1603 to his death in 1617), and then as *valide sultan* to two sultan sons and a grandson who ascended the throne at the age of seven. A dominant political figure during the first half of the seventeenth century, Kösem's increasing control of power was terminated by her murder in 1651 by the rival faction of her daughter-in-law Turhan, mother of the child-sultan.

Kösem's influence as favorite was noted by the Venetian ambassador, who reported that "she can do what she wishes with the King and possesses his heart absolutely, nor is anything ever denied to her."[20] Like Hurrem, Kösem was the only other royal concubine for whom the rule of a single son was broken: she and the sultan were the parents of three, perhaps four sons, and three or four daughters. But unlike Hurrem, Kösem did not suffer ill repute for her "possession of the sultan's heart," for the rules of propriety were observed. As concubine, Kösem undertook "invisible" charities: the annual distribution of shirts, woolen cloaks, shoes, and turban materials to poor pilgrims and to the poor of the sacred cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem; recitation of the Qur'an in the sanctuaries of these cities; and the supply of water to pilgrims making their way to Mecca and Medina (for this purpose Kösem's endowment funded thirty camels, six drovers, and six water carriers).[21] Moreover, Kösem appears to have learned from her predecessors the valuable lesson of managing her power without flaunting it: another Venetian ambassador noted that "she restrains herself with great wisdom from speaking too frequently of serious matters and affairs of state."[22]

One might have expected that as queen mother, Kösem would undertake an architectural project commensurate with her power and reputation. She did not, however, although she spent enormous sums of money on philanthropic endeavors. And here we encounter the political vagaries and tensions suggested above. The most obvious tension was the delicate balance of power between sultan and queen mother. By Kösem's time, the

experience of several influential royal women had rendered their public influence a continual focus of popular scrutiny. Indeed, as the *valide sultan*'s authority became routinized into an *office,* criticism of individual queen mothers became less personal and therefore culturally and politically more feasible. During the reign of Ahmed I, whose consort Kösem was, royal women had almost no public profile as a result of Ahmed's determination to avoid the appearance of being dominated by a woman as his father had been dominated by his own mother, the notorious Safiye. Reviving the practice of his forebears, neglected for four generations, Ahmed chose to build his own mosque (the "Blue Mosque") not in a distant province but in the capital. Located in the imperial center of the city, on the ancient Byzantine hippodrome, the sultan's monument asserted itself as peer to the venerable Hagia Sophia.

During the reign of her first sultan son, Murad IV, Kösem may have held back from an architectural project of imperial scope because of Murad's dynamism: he was a military hero and aggressive ruler. Furthermore, Murad himself was rumored to be planning a large project in the "new traditionalism" of his father Ahmed.[23] But Murad's early death in 1640 at the age of twenty-nine put an end to any such plans. It was at this point that Kösem did build: her own mosque was undertaken in 1640, shortly after Murad's brother, her emotionally unstable son Ibrahim, inherited the throne. It might have been expected that this weak son would provide his mother with the opportunity for a large project, but once again this did not happen. Kösem's complex, which consisted of a mosque, a primary school, a school for the study of Prophetic tradition, two fountains, and a public bath, was of modest scale and materials and located in an out-of-the-way neighborhood in Üsküdar. I would suggest that the reason for its modesty was the precarious state of the dynasty at this moment in its history: in 1640, Kösem shared with others the fear that the collapse of the Ottoman dynasty was imminent, and this may well have led her to the hasty endowment of a mosque complex before the demise of her career, indeed of the empire. Because of Ibrahim's disabilities, he had not been expected to become sultan, but as a result of the vagaries of dynastic reproduction, he was the sole surviving male of the Ottoman royal house at his brother Murad's early death. This grave danger was compounded by Ibrahim's sexual aversion to women at the beginning of his reign. Ambassadorial reports from 1640 and 1641 discuss the probable collapse of the dynasty and speculate as to the ensuing political dénouement.[24] Kösem's effort at architectural patronage may reveal genuine pious intent as well as, perhaps, a wish to memorialize

the sultanic generation of her own sons, during whose reigns no other royal mosques were endowed.

Kösem's failure to endow a substantial religious project *later* in her career had to do, in part at least, with the challenge to her status from others. The increasingly eccentric Ibrahim tried to exile his mother, and while he was unsuccessful in this, he was able to limit her public prerogatives. When Ibrahim was eventually overthrown in 1648 and replaced by his seven-year-old son (a political manuever in which Kösem played a central role), she did not count on the ambition and authority of the child's young mother, Turhan, whom she herself had groomed for the responsibility of political motherhood. After three years of waiting in the shadow of the venerable *valide sultan,* Turhan appears to have sanctioned Kösem's murder, a move that provoked divided response in both governing circles and the urban populace. Once her own career as queen mother was consolidated, Turhan would restore the *valide sultan*'s prerogative of endowing an imperial complex in the capital (see chapter 5 in this volume by Thys-Şenocak).

If Kösem did not follow the paradigm of endowing a major religious monument, she nonetheless amply fulfilled the role of patron expected of royal female elders. Kösem's most prominent building project was a large khan, or business complex, in the commercial center of Istanbul, close to the Grand Bazaar. Appropriately, this endowment, the grandest of such structures in the capital and still functioning today, became known as the Valide Khan, or Khan of the Queen Mother. At Kösem's death, her own treasury, consisting of twenty chests of gold, was found secured in her khan.[25] Significantly, it was at the city's nexus of money and politics, not at the ceremonial nexus of religion and politics, that this veteran political strategist's major act of architectural patronage was located.

While Kösem may not be remembered for the number of charitable structures she endowed, her philanthropic career is notable for the number of charitable acts she undertook. For example, she regularly made provision for dowries to poor girls, and during the three holy months of the calendar she would furnish stipends to two hundred descendents of the Prophet. Once a year Kösem would leave the palace incognito and personally arrange for the release of imprisoned debtors and other criminals (except murderers) through payment of their debts or recompense for their crimes. She was famous for her largesse toward her own slaves, whom she freed after half the usual term of service.[26]

As actions rather than architecture, these charities may have been "invisible," but they were hardly private. Kösem's stature and influence—

or notoriety in the eyes of some—made these donations controversial, since acts of largesse could be an effective means of cultivating partisan support. One contemporary historian lamented the fate of peasants who worked Kösem's landed holdings and suffered extortionate taxes that provided the revenue for her charities. Another countered that had her substantial revenues gone straight into the general treasury, they might have been squandered rather than spent for the benefit of the populace, as they were through her philanthropic efforts.

Kösem's legacy as a patron, like Hurrem's, was ambivalent. While she avoided Hurrem's dilemma by undertaking the endowment of public establishments only as an elder, she encountered an obstacle that Hurrem did not: resistance among members of the dynasty itself to her high profile. But Kösem's failure to endow a religious complex may not have been due solely to inability, for it is possible that she consciously decided to avoid such a project. She may have recognized that to survive as a political actor in the circumstances of her times and to achieve the goals she desired for the empire and for herself, she would be forced to engage in a good deal of factional maneuvering. In other words, her political profile might have been so public that any major act of patronage would have seemed an abuse of her access to extraordinary resources. There was the example of Safiye to warn her that undertaking a mosque complex on an imperial scale might move the debate about the uses of her wealth from the pages of historians into the streets of the capital.

I have argued here that Ottoman royal women's choices regarding patronage were embedded in protocols of sovereignty, in which gender was deployed as one of a number of strategies to project royal legitimacy. Yet such protocols were successful only insofar as they met with popular approval, hence the need to conform to broadly shared notions of gendered space and sexual propriety. But within these protocols, gender was not a sole determinant, nor was it static over time. We have observed a significant overlap in the rules for female and male patronage, and in addition significant differences among forms of female patronage. We have also seen that rules can be overwhelmed by contingent factors, which, through their construction in the public's understanding, in turn cast a particular meaning on the act of patronage, a meaning not necessarily intended by the patron herself. In sum, the Ottoman case suggests that gender should be understood *not* as an essentializing category of analysis ("*female* patronage"), but rather as a dynamic and nuanced element in the religiously, socially, and politically complex act of patronage in Islamic societies.

NOTES

I am grateful to Rebecca Foote for help in clarifying some of the ideas expressed in this paper.

1. The patronage of Ottoman royal women of this period is discussed by Ülkü Bates, "Women as Patrons of Architecture in Turkey," in *Women in the Muslim World,* ed. L. Beck and N. Keddie, (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 245–60, and "The Architectural Patronage of Ottoman Women," *Asian Art* (Spring 1993): 50–65. See Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) for a study of these women and their peers, their political and diplomatic roles, and their patronage.

2. For a biographical sketch of Safiye, see Susan Skilliter, "Three Letters from the Ottoman 'Sultana' Safiye to Queen Elizabeth," in *Documents from Islamic Chanceries,* ed. S. M. Stern (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 144.

3. Nicoló Barozzi and Giglielmo Berchet, eds., *Le Relazioni degli stati Europei* (Series 5: Turkey) (Venice, 1871–72), 1:39.

4. John Sanderson, *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584–1602,* ed. Sir W. Foster, Hakluyt Series no. 67, second series (London, 1931), 204.

5. A concubine might however give birth to one or more daughters before bearing a son. This policy results statistically in an equal ratio of male to female births overall.

6. On this complex and its endowment deed, see Ibrahim Hakkı Konyalı, "Kanunî Sultan Süleyman'ın Annesi Hafsa Sultanın Vakfiyesi ve Manisa'daki Hayır Eserleri [The Endowment Deed of Hafsa Sultan, Mother of Sultan Süleyman, and Her Pious Works in Manisa]," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 8 (1969): 47–56; see also M. Çağatay Uluçay, *Manisa'daki Saray-ı Amire ve Şehzadeler Türbesi [The Royal Palace in Manisa and the Princes' Tomb]* (Istanbul, 1941), 9.

7. For a brief biographical treatment of Hurrem, see Susan Skilliter, "Khurrem," in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* new ed. (Leiden and London, 1954–), 5:66–67.

8. Luigi Bassano, *Costumi et i modi particolari della vita de' Turchi,* 18 vols. (Munich, 1963). "Ziadi" is Bassano's Venetian rendering of Turkish *cadi,* "witch."

9. Aptullah Kuran, *Sinan: The Grand Old Master of Ottoman Architecture* (Washington, D.C. and London: Institute of Turkish Studies, 1987).

10. On this issue see Gülru Necipoğlu, "A *Kânûn* for the State, a Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Arts and Architecture," in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps,* ed. G. Veinstein (Paris: Documentation Française, 1992), 195–98; Cornell Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah," in ibid., 167–68.

11. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Idéologie officielle et réaction populaire: un aperçu général sur les mouvements et les courants socio-religieux à l'époque de Soliman le Magnifique," in *Soliman le Magnifique,* 185–90.

12. Sanderson, *The Travels,* 77.

13. Ibrahim Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevi* (Istanbul, 1281–84/1864–67), 1:425.

14. Evliya Çelebi, *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa,* trans. J. von Hammer (London, 1834), 1:179–80.

15. On the identity of Gülfem, sometimes thought to be an early concubine of Süleyman, see Peirce, *The Imperial Harem,* 302n12.

16. For the foundation deed of this complex, see St. H. Stephan, "An Endowment Deed of Khâsseki Sultân, Dated the 24th May 1552," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 10 (1944): 170–99. For the Mamluk residence of the Lady Tunsuq Al-Muzaffariya, see Michael Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1987), 485–87. Hurrem's foundation is the subject of a study by Amy Singer, "The *Mülknāmes* of Hürrem Sultan's Waqf in Jerusalem," *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 96–102; she is preparing a monograph on the subject as well.

17. On pollution and piety in Muslim societies, see Kevin Reinhart, "Impurity/No Danger," *History of Religions* 30.1 (1990): 1–23; Shahla Haeri, *Law of Desire: Temporary Marriage in Shi'i Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989); Carol Delaney, *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991); Julie Marcus, *A World of Difference: Islam and Gender Hierarchy in Turkey* (London: Zed, 1992).

18. M. E. Düzdağ, ed., *Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16. Asır Türk Hayatı* [*Sixteenth-Century Turkish Life in the Light of Ebussuûd Efendi's Fetvas*] (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1983), 60.

19. For an account of Kösem's career, see the fine article "Kösem Sulṭān" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* new ed., 5:272–73, an abridged translation of M. Cavid Baysun's article of the same title in the Turkish *Islam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1940–86).

20. Barozzi and Berchet, *Le Relazioni,* 1:302.

21. Mücteba Ilgürel, "Kösem Sultan'ın Bir Vakfiyesi [A Foundation Deed of Kösem Sultan]," *Tarih Dergisi* 16.21 (1966): 86–92.

22. Barozzi and Berchet, *Le Relazioni,* 1:134.

23. Ibid., 2:95.

24. Ibid., 1:372–73, 2:110.

25. Mustafa Naima, *Tarih,* 6 vols. (Istanbul, 1280/1863–64), 5:113.

26. Naima, *Tarih,* 5:113.

5

The Yeni Valide Mosque Complex of Eminönü, Istanbul (1597–1665)

Gender and Vision in Ottoman Architecture

Lucienne Thys-Şenocak

The Yeni Valide mosque complex is a large pious foundation located on the shores of the Golden Horn in the Eminönü district of Istanbul (fig. 5.1). Construction on the mosque began in 1597 under the auspices of Safiye Sultan, the mother of Sultan Mehmed III, but was abandoned shortly after Mehmed's death in 1603. The succession of her grandson, Ahmed I, to the Ottoman sultanate marked the end of Safiye's tenure as *valide,* the title given to the mother of the reigning sultan. She was moved from the harem to the Old Palace and replaced by the new *valide,* the mother of Sultan Ahmed I.[1] With the death of Safiye in 1605, the momentum of the Yeni Valide project was lost.

What had been built of the Yeni Cami's foundations was left untouched for fifty-seven years. The building site that had been expropriated at great cost from the largely Jewish population in the Eminönü quarter was re-inhabited by these minorities and others involved in the bustling trade surrounding the customs depots located there. It was not until 1660, after a fire had devastated a large section of the city from Unkapanı to Eminönü that interest in the Yeni Cami project was reawakened. At the suggestion of the head imperial architect, Mustafa Ağa, the Valide Hatice Turhan Sultan, mother of Mehmed IV, decided to resume construction in 1663 and inaugurated in 1665, along with several other dependencies: a *hünkâr kasrı* (imperial pavilion), *türbe* (tomb), *sebilhane* (large fountain), *sibyan mektebi*