Obscure Roots, Solid Foundations:
A Comparative Study on the Architectural Patronage of Ottoman Court Eunuchs

by

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Statement of Authorship

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for any award or any degree or diploma in any University or other institution. It is affirmed by the candidate that, to the best of her knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the architectural works commissioned by Ottoman court eunuchs between the fifteenth and the eighteenth century, with special focus on Istanbul. As the first study that attempts to evaluate the collective behavior of Ottoman court eunuchs as patrons of architecture, it endeavors to chart particular patterns, trends, similarities, and differences among the works of eunuchs in terms of choice of architectural type, location, size, inscriptions, and decorative elements. Contextualizing individual projects within a historical narrative of eunuch patronage, it explores how the eunuchs' architectural output related to their identities, status, and power, as well as to the conceptions of propriety that informed building commissions. This thesis highlights a hitherto poorly studied part of the history of Ottoman court eunuchs, as it brings to the fore the white eunuch patrons who dominated the period before institutional change in the late sixteenth century allowed the chief black eunuch to emerge as an important figure in court politics. It is argued that the Ottoman court eunuch patronage had two main veins, one dominated by white eunuchs and the other by the chief black eunuch, two distinct eunuch identities which differ from one another on the basis of not only race, but also social origins, employment patterns, career prospects, and probably gender identities.

Keywords:
Court eunuchs, patronage, architecture, pious endowments

ÖZET

Bu tez, onbeşinci ve onsekizinci yüzyıllar arasında Osmanlı sarayında görevli hadım ağalar tarafından yaptırılan mimârî eserleri incelemektedir. Osmanlı saray hadımlarının mimarlık hâmileri olarak kollektif davranışlarını değerlendiren ilk araştırma olan bu çalışmada, hadım ağaların yaptırdıkları eserlerin mimârî türleri, yer seçimleri, büyüklükleri, kitabeleri ve dekoratif unsurları incelenerek ortak özellikler, farklılıklar ve genel eğilimlerin belirlenmesine çalışılmıştır. Mimârî projeler bir tarihsel anlatı içine yerleştirilerek, eserlerin gerek hâmilerin kimlikleri, statü ve güçleri, gerekse hâmilik üzerinde belirleyici olan toplumsal normlarla ilişkisi araştırılmıştır. Bu tez, Osmanlı saray hadımları tarihinin şimdiye kadar pek az çalışılmış bir alanını vurgulamakta, onaltıncı yüzyıl sonunda darüssaade ağasının saray siyasetinde önemli bir aktör olarak ortaya çıkmasını sağlayan kurumsal değişiklikten önceki dönemde etkin olan ak ağaların mimârî faaliyetlerini ön plana çıkarmaktadır. Tezde, Osmanlı saray hadımlarının mimârî hâmiliklerinde biri ak ağalar ve babüssaade ağası diğeri de kara ağalar ve darüsaade ağası tarafından temsil edilen iki ana damarın varlığına dikkat çekilmekte, bunların dayandığı kimliklerin yalnızca ırk açısından değil, toplumsal köken, çalışma alanları, atanabilecekleri mevkiler ve hatta toplumsal cinsiyet bakımından da birbirlerinden ayrıldıklarına vurgu yapılmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler:
Saray hadımları, hâmilik, mimâri, vakıflar

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INTRODUCTION

While it is widely known that Ottoman court eunuchs wielded considerable power in the empire's politics especially from the late-sixteenth century onwards, their patronage of art and architecture has so far attracted scarce scholarly attention. As patrons, eunuchs were a peculiar group. Devoid of a lineage to boast and descendants to be concerned about, their works seem to have been intimately connected to present-day concerns of gaining legitimacy and acceptance in the eyes of the courtly community and the Ottoman public at large. The heights of power they attained after coming from the depths of their obscure and presumably lowly origins earned them the notoriety of undeserving individuals who reached authority and wealth through illegitimate means. Moreover, as the products of an archaic body project, they were condemned forever to otherness in the eyes of the rest of the society. What, then, informed, motivated, and shaped their patronage endeavors?

This thesis investigates this question by examining the architectural works commissioned by court eunuchs between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries, especially in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. As such, it is the first study that attempts to evaluate a multitude of architectural projects undertaken under the auspices of this group within a certain time frame and that focuses on the collective behavior of Ottoman court eunuchs as patrons of architecture. It addresses various questions as to not only how the

patronage of individual aghas compared and responded to one another, but also how their collective patronage patterns changed over time.

In doing so, my principal purpose is to make a preliminary survey and analysis of the architectural record of Ottoman court eunuchs in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of their architectural patronage, which can serve as a basis for future research. As a contribution to the recently expanding scholarly literature on Ottoman court eunuchs, I seek to understand how their architectural output related to their identities, status, and power, taking into consideration the heterogeneity of the eunuch community as well as the conceptions of propriety that informed patronage (*i.e.*, the suitability of the scale and sort of architectural undertakings of a given individual to his status).

This research is intended to fill a gap in the academic literature not only through its assessment of architectural evidence but also through its call for a more nuanced understanding of the diversity of the eunuch community and the plurality of eunuch experience. The interest in Ottoman court eunuchs has notably increased in the last two decades, as the growing corpus of scholarly work on this subject implies. However, despite the high scholarly quality of most of these studies, the recent contributions to the existing literature tend to create an imbalanced picture due to their focus on African eunuchs, particularly the "chief black eunuchs" (*darüssaade ağaları*), at the expense of lower-ranking eunuchs and white eunuchs in general, who are conspicuously more understudied. As a result, possible indications of affinity, competition or solidarity among different

members of the eunuch community remain unaddressed to a large extent. Furthermore, given that a large part of the existing literature concentrates on selected individual eunuchs, there is clearly a need for studies that seek to draw a more complete picture of eunuch employment at the Ottoman court. The present study, which uses architectural evidence to reflect on the power configuration among eunuchs over a time period, can be seen as a step towards this goal.

My research has benefited from several descriptive studies of singular structures built by eunuch patrons, which provided the information that I endeavored to integrate into a single historical narrative of Ottoman eunuch patronage of architecture in the early modern era. In fact, the architectural patronage of Ottoman court eunuchs has mostly been dealt with in such documentary-descriptive works,[1] which now need to be surpassed for more sophisticated analyses of patronage. In that sense, recent studies on Ottoman eunuchs' patronage of books represent a more advanced stage. The studies by Jane Hathaway (1994), Zeren Tanındı (2004), and Emine Fetvacı (2005) give insights into the connections between the eunuchs' bibliophilistic activities and their changing positions in the power configuration as well as their personal tastes, inclinations, and ideological

[1] Two examples for these are Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, "Gazanfer Ağa Manzûmesi," *İstanbul Enstitüsü Mecmuası* 3 (1957): 85-96; and Munise Günal, *İstanbul'da Bir XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Mimarlık Eseri: Beşir Ağa Külliyesi*, unpublished MA thesis (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İslam Tarihi ve Sanatları Anabilim Dalı, 2003).

motives.[2] The centrality of eunuch identity in these analyses is also a feature of the present study, which provides a new perspective for looking at several patrons whose eunuchhood is often unacknowledged or deemed insignificant in the present scholarly literature.[3]

While much of the basic information on Ottoman eunuchs and the court structure in general is found in several classicized works on the imperial court, such as those of Penzer (1936), Uzunçarşılı (1945), and Uluçay (1971),[4] in the last three decades there have also been sporadic but significant contributions that have brought to light several essential sources pertaining to Ottoman court eunuchs. An article by Toledano (1984)[5] introduced an important official register comprising the biographies of 194 black eunuchs who served at the Ottoman court at the turn of the twentieth century. The *Risale-i Teberdariyye*, an eighteenth-century treatise that is particularly hostile towards black eunuchs was first examined in an article by Orhonlu (1988).[6] Another key text from the eighteenth century,

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[2] Jane Hathaway, "The Wealth and Influence of an Exiled Ottoman Eunuch in Egypt: The Waqf Inventory of 'Abbās Agha," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37, no. 4 (1994): 293-317; Zeren Tanındı, "Bibliophile Aghas (Eunuchs) at Topkapı Saray," *Muqarnas* 21 (2004): 333-343; Emine Fetvacı, *Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566-1617*, PhD dissertation (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, History of Art and Architecture Department, 2005).

[3] For instance, as the most important study on a prominent eunuch patron, Semavi Eyice's article on Hüseyin Agha's pious foundations does not even mention that the agha was a eunuch; Eyice, "Kapu Ağası Hüseyin Ağa'nın Vakıfları," *Atatürk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Araştırma Dergisi, Prof. Albert Louis Gabriel Armağanı Özel Sayısı* 9 (1978): 149-246.

[4] N. M. Penzer, *The Harem: An Account of the Institution as it Existed in the Palace of the Turkish Sultans, with a History of the Grand Seraglio from its Foundation to Modern Times* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1936; republished New York: Dorset Press, 1993); İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1945); Çağatay Uluçay, *Harem II* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1971).

[5] Ehud R. Toledano, "The Imperial Eunuchs of Istanbul: From Africa to the Heart of Islam," *Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no. 3 (1984): 379-390.

[6] Cengiz Orhonlu, "Derviş Abdullah'ın Darussaade Ağaları Hakkında Bir Eseri: Risale-i Teberdariye Fî Ahvâl-i Dâru's-saâde," in *İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı'ya Armağan* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988).

Hamîletü'l-Küberâ, a compilation of biographies of chief black eunuchs, was published in 2000.[7] Ottoman eunuchs of African origin have also been of interest to scholars who specialize in Egypt. Among those studies that suggest the activities of exiled black eunuchs in Egypt as a fertile ground of research are the two articles by Badr and Crecelius (1992-93)[8] and the publications of Jane Hathaway (1992, 1994, 1997, 2003, 2005).[9] Her inquiry into the political influence exercised by black eunuchs in Egyptian politics recently culminated in her biography of el-Hajj Beshir Agha (d. 1746), the first book devoted entirely to an Ottoman black eunuch.

As these works have recommended Ottoman chief black eunuchs as a worthwhile subject of research, new studies emphasizing different aspects of the ascendancy of these officers have begun to emerge. One of these, the master's thesis of Yıldız Karakoç (2005),[10] highlights the power struggle between chief black and chief white eunuchs, as it explores the historical process by which the former became a pivotal figure in palace politics. Another important contribution, Baki Tezcan's article (2007) on the apparently

[7] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, ed. Ahmet Nezihî Turan (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2000).

[8] Hamza Abd al-Aziz Badr and Daniel Crecelius, "The Waqfs of Shahin Ahmad Agha," *Annales Islamologiques* 26 (1992): 79-114; "The Awqaf of al-Hajj Bashir Agha in Cairo," *Annales Islamologiques* 27 (1993): 291-311. These introduce some documents concerning the *waqf*s endowed by wealthy Ottoman eunuchs in Egypt.

[9] Jane Hathaway, "The Role of the Kızlar Ağası in 17th-18th Century Ottoman Egypt," *Studia Islamica* 75 (1992): 141-158; "The Wealth and Influence of an Exiled Ottoman Eunuch in Egypt: The Waqf Inventory of 'Abbās Agha," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37, no. 4 (1994): 293-317; *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlıs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); "Exiled Chief Harem Eunuchs as Proponents of the Hanafi *Madhhab* in Ottoman Cairo," *Annales Islamologiques* 37 (2003): 191-9; *Beshir Agha: Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Imperial Harem* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2005).

[10] Yıldız Karakoç, *Palace Politics and the Rise of the Chief Black Eunuch in the Ottoman Empire*, unpublished MA thesis (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2005).

only African member of the *ulema* and the Imperial Council provides an interesting insight on the question of race in the Ottoman context as it examines a treatise written by this person in defense of Africans and the black eunuchs who supported him throughout his career.[11]

The present study is also a part of these efforts to understand the power and activities of Ottoman court eunuchs. Yet, diverting from the general trend of these studies which focus exclusively on the period after the late sixteenth century, it suggests taking a broader perspective on the issue, a perspective that takes into account the earlier development of the Ottoman eunuch institution, which has received little scholarly attention. As a work on architectural history, this study also makes a departure from the traditional focus of Ottoman architectural history on grandiose projects, by bringing relatively modest structures into discussion. It particularly takes inspiration from Gülru Necipoğlu's analysis of the norms of decorum that informed the architectural projects by patrons of diverse ranks.[12] In fact, the striking contrast between the tremendous power that eunuchs are so often said to have wielded and the modesty of their architectural undertakings has been a consideration that inspired this research.

[11] Baki Tezcan, "Dispelling the Darkness: The Politics of 'Race' in the Early Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire in the Light of the Life and Work of Mullah Ali," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 13 (2007): 73-95.

[12] See Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 115-24.

The survey of the architectural record by court eunuchs, which is the most important contribution of this study to the existing body of knowledge, is based to a large extent on several compilations and surveys of buildings. An essential work of reference for this research has been the eighteenth-century writer Ayvansarayî's compilation of the mosques in Istanbul,[13] which also provides information on various buildings that did not survive to the present day. Ayvansarayî's other important work, a compilation of inscriptions from Istanbul, has also been very useful.[14] Also indispensable is the 1546 survey of pious endowments in Istanbul,[15] and several modern compilations of the architectural inventory of Istanbul, such as those by Tanışık and Yüksel.[16]

The list of the architectural works of Ottoman court eunuchs obtained from the systematic scanning of these and other studies is assessed in this study in relation to the changing architectural culture and the changing status of eunuchs in the Ottoman Empire. In a large part of this thesis, I try to chart particular patterns, trends, similarities, and differences (e.g., in terms of choice of architectural types and locations) among the works of eunuchs. In my interpretation of the meanings of the architectural record of Ottoman

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[13] Hâfız Hüseyin Ayvansarâyî, *The Garden of the Mosques: Hafiz Hüseyin al-Ayvansarayi's Guide to the Muslim Monuments of Ottoman Istanbul*, ed. and tr. Howard Crane (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

[14] Hâfız Hüseyin Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, ed. Fahri Ç. Derin and Vâhid Çabuk (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1985).

[15] Ömer Lutfi Barkan and Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrir Defteri 953 (1546) Tarihli* (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1970).

[16] İbrahim Hilmi Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, 2 vols (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1943-45); İ. Aydın Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimârîsinde Kānûnî Sultan Süleyman Devri (926-974/1520-1566), İstanbul* (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 2004). Another work of İ. Aydın Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimârîsinde II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim Devri (886-926/1481-1520)* (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 1983) provides a list of all architectural works undertaken in that specific period.

eunuchs, I look at such issues as the proximity of a particular building to other significant buildings (e.g., the probably meaningful proximity of the chief black eunuch Beshir Agha's *sebil-küttab* in Cairo to that of his predecessor el-Hajj Beshir Agha) and the suggestive overlaps among different acts of patronage (*e.g.*, the so-called Ayrılık Çeşmesi [the Fountain of Departure, after the departure of the pilgrimage caravan] on the Asian side of Istanbul, which was built by a chief white eunuch and subsequently rebuilt by another). The inscriptions on buildings and how these compare with one another in terms of their messages are also an important aspect of this analysis.

In trying to answer the question of how the architectural patronage patterns of different groups of Ottoman court eunuchs compare and relate to one another from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, the thesis investigates several other questions revolving around the issues of identity, power, gender, and propriety: In what ways did the buildings they commissioned relate to the eunuchs' educational, religious, and financial roles and to their proximity to women and the imperial family? Were there any recognizable responses, dialogues, and intertextual patterns among the architectural works produced by eunuchs? How did the choices and decisions that eunuchs made as architectural patrons relate to their struggle for or assertion of power? How did architecture serve as a medium for the eunuch patrons to negotiate their places within the power configuration of the empire? What were the limits of propriety concerning the patronage of eunuchs and how were these modified

over time? What clues does architecture give us concerning the perception of eunuchs in terms of gender in the Ottoman world?

One difficulty of this investigation arises in identifying the eunuchs through the existing written evidence. This is done primarily by means of their duties and titles. While there are a number of offices which are known to have been consistently occupied by eunuchs (such as *saray ağası*, which would always be allocated to white eunuchs), there is also a grey area constituted by those cases where we cannot ascertain whether a given individual was a eunuch or not. In the frequently changing system of offices and titles of the Ottoman court, it is not easy to track the holders of offices such as *has oda başı*, which appear to have been assigned to white eunuchs at one point in time and to other palace officers at another. Therefore, this survey takes into consideration all the potential eunuchs and discusses the implications of their activities as well. Still, it should be acknowledged that there is always a possibility that the analysis in this thesis is missing a (hopefully marginal) number of eunuchs because of the gaps and limitations of the sources. In any case, a great majority of the works examined in this thesis were commissioned by the chief black and chief white eunuchs, who are almost always identified.

The focus of this research had to be limited for various considerations. For example, the white eunuchs who served as viziers and provincial governors clearly followed a different pattern in their architectural patronage; therefore, they constitute an elite group separate from the eunuchs who were employed in the palace service. For this reason, this

group is excluded from the focus of this study. It also needs to be noted that this thesis is not an exhaustive survey that takes into account all the extant sources. As a preliminary investigation, it is limited largely to published sources, while an exploration of extensive archival materials, such as the entire corpus of endowment deeds (*vakfiye*s) belonging to eunuchs, is left to future studies. Likewise, the architectural works in Istanbul, which I have been able to examine on site, inevitably receive more attention than those located in other parts of the former Ottoman Empire, including Egypt and the Balkans. In determining the temporal focus, I have taken into consideration the period when court eunuchs were most active and influential both as political actors and as patrons of architecture.

The structure of the thesis consists of an introductory overview of the Ottoman eunuch institution in the early modern era and a series of chapters devoted to specific periods of eunuch patronage. The survey can broadly be construed to consist of two parts: the period marking the apex of white eunuch patronage and power until the late sixteenth century, and the subsequent period dominated by chief black eunuchs.

This investigation will hopefully contribute to the emergence of a more contextualized understanding of the meanings of the patronage agendas of certain individual eunuchs whose architectural undertakings surpassed those of their colleagues in scale and scope (such as the chief black eunuch *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha), as well as to new conclusions concerning the relations between architecture, power, representation, and norms of decorum in the Ottoman context.

CHAPTER I

A SHORT HISTORY OF OTTOMAN COURT EUNUCHS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Almost from its foundation in the fourteenth century until its demise in the twentieth, the Ottoman imperial court followed the example of the earlier empires of the Assyrians, Persians, Romans, Byzantines, and Muslims in employing a corps of castrated male slaves. Recruited from a large pool of ethnicities and provenances, eunuchs worked inside the Ottoman palace as guardians of the inner court and the imperial harem and as tutors of the princes and pages, while a minority of them became viziers and governors in the early centuries of Ottoman history. Throughout their existence, the changes in their numbers, ethnic composition, duties, hierarchy, and standing in the power configuration shaped their group identity and individual experiences. This chapter seeks to delineate the salient features of the practices of eunuch employment at the Ottoman court, with occasional comparisons drawn with the Chinese, Byzantine, and medieval Islamic examples. In doing so, I aim not only to present a concise account of the eunuch community associated with the Ottoman imperial court in the early modern era, but also to provide insight on how the Ottoman case fits into the world history of eunuchs and compares with other traditions of eunuch employment.

Eunuchism and the keeping of castrated servants in royal households have a long history which predates their Ottoman variants by millennia. Human castration was a widespread phenomenon evidenced from ancient to modern times, in a vast geographical area comprising the Mediterranean basin, the Near East, and the Far East. Apparently having originated in Asia, it may have emerged as a form of punishment or a practice inspired by animal gelding.[1] The earliest mentions of eunuch court servants are found in Mesopotamian textual sources from as early as 2000 BC, in Egyptian texts from ca. 1300 BC, and in Chinese sources from 1100 BC.[2] Apart from their courtly duties, one encounters eunuchs in various other capacities in different historical contexts: for instance, as castrated priests in the service of religious cults, and as castrati in early modern Italian opera.[3] The practice of maintaining eunuchs, however, was often related to the need to keep the womenfolk of an elite household under control, although over time eunuchs assumed a greater variety of roles and functions, including military command.[4] The etymology of the word "eunuch" attests to their domestic function, with which they are primarily associated.

[1] Shaun Tougher, "Eunuchs," *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*, vol. 2, ed. Fedwa Malti-Douglas et al. (New York: Thomson Gale, 2007), 486-7.
[2] Kathryn M. Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 8.
[3] Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant*, 9; Miles Hoffman, "Castrati," *The NPR: Classical Music Companion: Terms and Concepts from A to Z* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 45-7.
[4] Lewis A. Coser, "The Political Functions of Eunuchism," *American Sociological Review* 29, no. 6 (1964): 880-1; Tougher, "Eunuchs," 487. The varieties of the practice of eunuch employment, however, have been subject to uneven scholarly attention. Thus, in comparison to the extensive literature on the numerous and powerful court eunuchs of Chinese history, studies on the role of eunuchs in the Islamic world are largely lagging behind. This is despite the fact that, as a pioneer in the latter field, David Ayalon states that "[i]n Islam, … [the eunuch institution] acquired importance and dimensions which may have exceeded any comparable one in other civilizations;" David Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: A Study in Power Relationships* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1999), 13.

"Eunuch" is derived from the Ancient Greek word εὐνοῦχος, comprising εὐνή ("bed") and ἔχω ("to hold" or "to keep"), thus meaning "bed-keeper" or "bed chamber attendant."[5]

In various historical contexts, eunuchs performed a specific set of functions, which would not have been possible had they not been castrated. In addition to this functional differentiation, they were also often readily recognized by their distinct physique and possibly different bodily comportment. In an observation which would also resonate outside the Byzantine context, Kathryn M. Ringrose notes that eunuchs were conceived as a separate gender category; they were "consciously reared and trained to present themselves and act in ways considered appropriate for eunuchs."[6] It is important to remember that the physical appearance of most eunuchs was visibly different from that of non-castrated men. Those who were emasculated before puberty were distinguished by their beardless faces, peculiar high-pitched voices, and prematurely appearing wrinkles in their adult age. The surgical intervention would result in a different hormonal development, which in turn would produce either extremely slim figures or a disposition to obesity.[7] All these features would constitute a distinct physiological profile, which distinguished eunuchs from the non-castrated. While their inborn male sexual identity would be

[5] Gary Taylor, *Castration: An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 33.
[6] Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant*, 4.
[7] In addition, problems in urination, osteoporosis, and disproportionate development of bones were among the problems eunuchs suffered in their lifetime as effects of castration. For a description of the physiological effects of castration, see Jane Hathaway, *Beshir Agha: Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Imperial Harem* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2005), 21.

recognized,[8] the professional and physical distinction of eunuchs from the rest of society must have resulted in a distinct gender identity in most contexts.

In the medieval Islamic world, eunuchs played key roles in elite households as "guardians of political, sacred, and sexual boundaries."[9] Most often these would be emasculated men, rather than "natural" eunuchs, *i.e.*, men who congenitally lacked sexual organs. The Arabic word *khadim* (Turkish: *hadım*), meaning servant, became a common euphemism for eunuch in Islamic contexts from the tenth century onwards, due to their widespread mode of employment in household service.[10] As in the Byzantine judicial and ecclesiastical context, in Muslim religious scholarship human castration was condemned. Yet, as in Byzantium, this condemnation had little effect in practice.[11] Their services being especially needed in the context of sexual segregation sanctioned by Islamic morals, eunuchs worked as male servants whose access to women was relatively permissible.[12] On

[8] Jennifer W. Jay points out that Chinese eunuchs "were referred to as males both in formal address … as well as in kinship terminology. They wore male attire, married, adopted children, and ran the households as male heads of the family when off duty or when retired from the palaces. … Even their sexuality, or rumours of it, remained male-oriented;" Jay, "Another Side of Chinese Eunuch History: Castration, Marriage, Adoption, and Burial," *Canadian Journal of History/Annales canadiennes d'histoire* 28 (1993): 465.

[9] Baki Tezcan, "Eunuchs," *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, ed. Josef W. Meri (London: Routledge, 2006), 242-43.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ayalon, *Eunuchs*, 61; and Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant*, 3.

[12] Still, their direct contact with the women of the household was apparently regarded as somewhat morally pernicious. Therefore, it was sometimes avoided by means of female servants acting as go-betweens among women and eunuchs; Tezcan, "Eunuchs," 242. A document from the mid-eighteenth century implies a similar practice at the Ottoman court. According to this document, the three highest-ranking harem eunuchs had female attendants assigned to serve them: the chief black eunuch had five, the second-ranking eunuch (the "second-in-command of the black eunuch corps") had two, and the agha of the treasury had four female servants; Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 136.

the other hand, in a medieval Islamic elite residence, the usual work space of eunuchs would be the vestibule of the house, as not only the female zone but the entire home was deemed as sacred and forbidden.[13]

The role of eunuchs as guardians of sacred boundaries is most evident in their duties at places of great religious significance. The tomb of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina as well as the Ka'ba in Mecca were guarded by a eunuch corps from the twelfth century onwards almost to the present day: as late as in 1990, seventeen eunuchs in Medina and fourteen in Mecca were guarding these sanctuaries.[14] Eunuchs thus assumed a distinctive role in the Islamic tradition as markers of the sacred quality of certain spaces.

Apart from these, castrated servants performed many duties in medieval Islamic courts. Armed eunuchs guarded palace gates, attended audiences and parades, and fulfilled various tasks within or outside the palace at the ruler's behest.[15] Eunuchs also served in the military establishment as commanders.[16] Moreover, they gained additional functions starting with the creation of the institution of elite slavery during the Abbasid period. As

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[13] Tezcan, "Eunuchs," 242-3; and Shaun E. Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 6-7.

[14] Information from an interview published in a Saudi magazine; Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries*, ix, 111, and 109-110, fn. 320.

[15] Ayalon, *Eunuchs*, 16-17. The multiple tasks assigned to eunuchs, in combination with the usually large harems of grandees, resulted in the employment of enormous numbers of eunuchs in elite households in medieval Muslim societies. According to one medieval text, the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908-932) had 11,000 eunuchs in his court, as opposed to the 4,000 women in his harem. This gives a proportion of almost three eunuchs per one woman, which is explained by Ayalon with reference to the necessity of shifts in keeping watch in the harem as well as to the fact that eunuchs guarded the entire court complex and performed various tasks within and outside the palace. Naturally, all these activities required large numbers of eunuchs; ibid.

[16] See ibid., 122-27.

tutors of *mamluk* novices, *i.e.*, the youths recruited to be military slaves, eunuchs assumed a central role in the training and formation of the military elite.[17] Since the *mamluk* institution was unique to the Islamic world, the duties of eunuchs relating to this institution gave a peculiar character to the Muslim tradition of employing eunuchs, and differentiated it from the practices of keeping eunuchs in other cultures.[18]

Due to their freedom of movement within the court and across sexual boundaries, court eunuchs exercised immense influence. A eunuch not only had access to his patron any time during the day, even in his private quarters, he was also privileged to see and accompany his patron's womenfolk on a large array of occasions. His condition, thus, often entitled him to a freedom of movement, which other members of the court—sometimes including even the patron himself—did not have due to the rules of etiquette.[19]

The reliability of eunuchs in the eyes of their patrons, as evidenced in medieval Islamic texts, appears to have stemmed from their inability to have offspring and form families, which resulted in what Ayalon calls "the absence of divided loyalty."[20] Unlike other slaves, eunuchs did not pose the threat of founding dynasties of their own. Moreover, often coming from outside the realm of Islam, most eunuchs in medieval Islamic contexts were people without roots and without ties in the society that now hosted them. Thus, in the absence of familial bonds, eunuchs were plausibly expected to have a strong allegiance to

[17] Tezcan, "Eunuchs," 243.
[18] Ayalon, *Eunuchs*, 15-16.
[19] Ibid., 18-9.
[20] Ibid., 32.

their patrons who maintained them and gave them an opportunity of attaining power and prestige.[21]

Much of what has been pointed out above concerning the medieval Islamic context resonates with the Ottoman case. The strategic positioning of eunuchs at the significant thresholds of the palace, their various duties at the court, their role in the training of *devşirme* pages, the appointment of some eunuchs to military positions, and the Ottomans' sustenance of the eunuch corps in Mecca and Medina reveals the affinity between the Islamic framework and the Ottoman custom.

Deriving its many facets from this background, the Ottoman eunuch institution was born and flourished together with the Ottoman court and polity in an area where the practice of employing emasculated men was already a well-established tradition. Both the Byzantines and the Seljuks, the Ottomans' two greatest territorial predecessors, employed eunuchs as court servants and military commanders.[22] The Ottomans, just like the Seljuks, inherited from the earlier Islamic empires the age-old tradition of maintaining castrated servants to guard secluded and populous harems in line with Islamic morality. While the Ottomans' cultural debt to earlier Islamic traditions is evident, Byzantine practices

[21] Ibid., 31-2. To this one should add, as Ayalon has noted, the dreadful prospects that awaited the emasculated man if he happened to be ousted from the patron's abode: the likelihood of being an object of contempt in a society hostile and scornful to a man in his condition must have been an additional incentive that urged the eunuch in his attachment to his patron; ibid., 32-3.

[22] For Seljukid eunuchs, see David Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: A Study in Power Relationships* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1999), 144-65. For the Byzantine tradition, one may consult Shaun F. Tougher, "Byzantine Eunuchs: An Overview, with Special Reference to Their Creation and Origin," in *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James, 168-184 (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), and Ringrose's book *The Perfect Servant*.

probably also played a role in the development of the Ottoman eunuch institution. It is, however, somewhat more difficult to identify the specifically Byzantine elements under the Islamic coloring that marks the Ottoman practices of eunuch employment.[23]

The Ottoman court apparently began to employ castrated slaves from a very early date onwards. In what seems to be a continuation of an earlier practice to entrust court eunuchs with the administration of royal *waqf*s,[24] the eunuch Şerefeddin Mukbil, who was a manumitted slave of Sultan Orhan (r. ca. 1326-62), appears as the trustee in the endowment deed of a dervish convent built by this Ottoman ruler.[25] In a later endowment deed dated to 1360, a certain Evrenkuş Hadım (probably Evrenkuş the Eunuch) appears as a witness.[26] Yet, little is known about the first two centuries of the Ottoman eunuch institution, which had developed into an articulated hierarchy by the sixteenth century. The

[23] On this matter, see for instance M. Fuad Köprülü's discussion in his *Bizans Müesseselerinin Osmanlı Müesseselerine Tesiri* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1981 [Originally printed in *Türk Hukuk ve İktisat Tarihi Mecmuası* 1 (1931): 165-313.]), 75-81. Köprülü rejects the view that the Ottoman eunuch institution was a derivation from the Byzantine custom by emphasizing the affinity between the Ottoman and medieval Islamic traditions of keeping court eunuchs, while he ignores any possible relation with the Byzantine court tradition.

[24] For instance, the Seljukid ruler 'Izz al-Din Kayka'us I appointed the *ustād al-dār*—which M. Cevdet translates to the Ottoman parlance as *darüssaade ağası*, thus a high-ranking court eunuch—and treasurer (*al-ḫāzīn al-ḫāṣṣ*) Ferruḫ b. 'Abdullah as the trustee of the *waqf* of the hospital he built in Sivas in 614/1217; M. Cevdet, "Sivas Darüşşifası Vakfiyesi ve Tercümesi," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 1 (1938): 36 and 37-38. Süheyl Ünver identifies this trustee, who was apparently a eunuch, as the same person as Atabey Cemaleddin Ferruh, a member of the Seljukid military elite under 'Ala' al-Din Kaykubad and the builder of a hospital in Çankırı (constructed in 1235); A. Süheyl Ünver, "Büyük Selçuklu İmparatorluğu Zamanında Vakıf Hastanelerinin Bir Kısmına Dair," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 1 (1938): 22.

[25] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Gazi Orhan Bey Vakfiyesi," *Belleten* 5 (1941): 279-81 and plate LXXXVI. According to Peirce, this information suggests that the early Ottoman royal household was already well-structured in accordance with Islamic practices; Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 36.

[26] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Orhan Gazi'nin Vefat Eden Oğlu Süleyman Paşa İçin Tertip Ettirdiği Vakfiyenin Aslı," *Belleten* 27 (1963): 442; and Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 296, endnote 34.

developing institution also included African eunuchs, who in the Ottoman parlance were designated as *kara ağalar* ("black aghas") and distinguished from the "white" eunuchs, *ak ağalar* ("white aghas"). *Ağa* (agha) was a title commonly applied to eunuchs in court service, along with several groups of non-castrated office-holders. The terms *hadım* and *tavâşî*—borrowings from the medieval Islamic usage and originally euphemisms for "eunuch"[27]—referred unequivocally to emasculated men in the Ottoman jargon.

While the use of castrated slaves was a phenomenon mostly associated with court service in the Ottoman Empire, several white eunuchs were appointed as governors, military commanders, and even grand viziers between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Contrary to the modern assumption that eunuchs were solely needed to ensure the segregation of women, they were also widely employed in the military in medieval Islamic, Byzantine, and Chinese contexts.[28] Accordingly, six of the Ottoman governor-generals of Egypt in the sixteenth century were white eunuchs who rose to military-administrative positions after serving in the imperial household.[29] The military mode of

[27] Both terms originally meant "servant"; for an extensive discussion on the usage of the terms meaning "eunuch" see Ayalon, *Eunuchs*, 200-3 and 207-84.

[28] The military mode of employment gave rise to several famous eunuch commanders, such as the Byzantine Narses, who led the reconquest of Italy during the reign of Justinian I (r. 527-565), and the fifteenth-century Chinese admiral Zheng; Shaun Tougher, "Eunuchs," *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*, vol. 2, ed. Fedwa Malti-Douglas et al. (New York: Thomson Gale, 2007), 487.

[29] Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society Under Ottoman Rule 1517-1798* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 32. Two of these, Hadım Süleyman Pasha and Hadım Hasan Pasha, served in the highest echelons of palace administration typically assigned to eunuchs—for example, as the chief treasurer of the inner court (*hazinedarbaşı*)—before being promoted to posts outside the palace; Münir Aktepe, "Khādim Ḥasan Pasha Ṣoḳolli," *EI* IV: 900-1; Cengiz Orhonlu, "Khādim Süleymān Pasha," *EI* IV: 901-2.

employment, however, discontinued from the seventeenth century onwards, and eunuchs began to serve only courtly duties.

A major dynamic in the history of Ottoman court eunuchs was the relative standings of the "black eunuchs" and the "white eunuchs," which changed significantly over time. Until the late sixteenth century, all eunuchs, whether African or non-African, appear to have been subordinate to the authority of the chief white eunuch (*babüssaade ağası*, "the agha of the Gate of Good Fortune [or Felicity]", or *kapı ağası*, "the agha of the Gate"). Thus, the chief white eunuch was the officer-in-chief in the palace. However, the establishment of the royal family in the capital as well as the installment of the imperial harem in the Topkapı Palace in the course of the sixteenth century led to a new set of arrangements in the social structure of the court. These developments formed the ground for the separation of the office of the chief harem eunuch from the authority of the *kapı ağası* in 982/1574-75, when it was assigned to a black eunuch.[30] The appointment of the Abyssinian (*Habeşî*) eunuch Mehmed Agha as "the agha of the maidens" (*kızlar ağası*) or "the agha of the Abode of Good Fortune" (*darüssaade ağası*), *i.e.*, the "chief harem eunuch" or "chief black eunuch," meant not only the black eunuchs' stepping out from underneath the authority of the white eunuchs, but also a new division of labor based on racial criteria. Beginning with the new regulation, harem eunuchs began to be chosen

[30] As Baki Tezcan has noted, the date was most probably 1575, and not 1574, as is widely assumed; Baki Tezcan, "Dispelling the Darkness: The politics of 'race' in the early seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire in the light of the life and work of Mullah Ali," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 13 (2007): 78, fn. 18.

mostly from among Africans. These would serve in the imperial harem as guardians of women and tutors of young princes, while white eunuchs would be employed mostly as supervisors in the training of palace pages and as guardians at the Gate of Good Fortune (*babüssaade*), the gateway to the third (the inner) court of the Topkapı Palace. In other words, white eunuchs began to concentrate in the male zone of the inner court (*enderun*), whereas the entrance to the harem quarters became the locus of African eunuchs.[31]

This event early in the reign of Murad III (1574-95) also marked the beginning of the ascendancy of the chief black eunuch and black eunuchs in general, due to their newly gained proximity to the imperial family. Moreover, in 995/1586-87,[32] the position of superintendent of the *waqf*s established to support the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina (*Awqāf al-Ḥaramayn*, *Haremeyn evkâfı*) was taken from the hands of the chief white eunuch and assigned to the chief harem eunuch (*i.e.*, chief black eunuch).[33] As a result of this shift, the latter rose to unprecedented prominence as a palace officer with extraordinary financial, religious, and ceremonial functions.[34] In the subsequent period, as the power of the chief white eunuch faded away, the influence of the chief black eunuch in state affairs

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[31] The term *darüssaade* ('the Abode of Good Fortune' or 'the Abode of Felicity') was used to denote chiefly the imperial harem quarters; Ülkü Altındağ, "Dârüssaâde," *TDVİA* 9: 1.
[32] Ibid.
[33] At the time of Mehmed Agha, these *waqf*s included the *Dashīshat al-Kubra* endowed by the Mamluks, the *Hassekiye* established by Hürrem Sultan, wife of Süleyman I, and the *Muradiye* founded by Murad III (1574-1595). A fourth *waqf* was added later to *Awqāf al-Ḥaramayn*, which was the *Mehmediye* endowed by Mehmed IV (1648-1687); Jane Hathaway, "The Role of Kızlar Ağası in the 17th-18th Century Ottoman Egypt," *Studia Islamica* 75 (1992):141-42.
[34] As the overseer of the *haremeyn* foundations, the chief black eunuch had a prominent role in the annual *surre-i hümayun* ceremonies; see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1945), 181-83.

increased to the point of having a say in the appointment of grand viziers.[35] As will be seen in the last chapter of this thesis, the authority of the chief black eunuch reached its culmination during the tenure of el-Hajj Beshir Agha in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The Ottoman sources are silent on the reasons of the new arrangement of offices in 1575. However, it possibly resulted from two considerations: first, a necessity to meet the needs of the expanding harem by creating a new office solely responsible for it; and second, an administrative wisdom to divide the authority of the chief palace eunuch among two officers so as to restrain any single office-holder from becoming overly influential in court affairs.[36] Nevertheless, the question why the positions in the harem service—which proved to be advantageous in the long run—were assigned to black eunuchs rather than white eunuchs still remains unanswered.

I believe that there were at least two factors that recommended African eunuchs as the most suitable servants for serving in the harem. One of these was related to the varieties in castration practices. The emasculation procedure varied from one region of the world to another; the operation consisted either of the removal of the penis or the testicles only or of

[35] For a detailed discussion of this important shift, see Yıldız Karakoç, *Palace Politics and the Rise of the Chief Black Eunuch in the Ottoman Empire*, unpublished MA thesis (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2005).
[36] Ibid., 19.

the severing of both.[37] The vastness of the Ottoman sphere of influence seems to have allowed the imperial court to accommodate eunuchs who underwent different varieties of the operation according to the tradition in their provenance. For the African slaves, who would undergo the operation before entering the Ottoman territories proper, the common manner of castration was the radical removal of all genitalia in one clean cut.[38] Abyssinian children would typically be brought through the two major slave trade routes, which extended from the Darfur region and Sennar respectively to Cairo.[39] Their castration, carried out by Coptic physicians in the villages of Upper Egypt, would entail severe pain and a high risk of mortality, as was often the case with other methods of emasculation.[40] The radical castration of African eunuchs, however, probably increased their chances to serve in the imperial harem, since, as Penzer has noted, a major consideration in selecting eunuchs for harem service was to ensure the Ottoman harem to be guarded only by the fully emasculated.[41] In the case of the white eunuchs from Europe and the Caucasus, who must have been acquired through slave trade or captured in war, the mode of castration

[37] See Penzer, *The Harem*, 142-43. According to a seventh-century medical description, the two methods used by the Byzantines were compression and excision. In either case, it seems that it was only the testicles that were damaged; Shaun F. Tougher, "Byzantine Eunuchs," 175.
[38] For a nineteenth-century description of the operation and its aftermath, see G. Tournès, *Les Eunuques en Egypte* (Genève, 1869), 9-13.
[39] See H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West* (Oxford, 1969), vol. I, pt. I, 305, fn. 3. Abyssinia (*Habeş*) was a region that comprised parts of modern-day Ethiopia and Sudan.
[40] For instance, evidence from sixth-century Byzantium suggests that, in one case, only three people out of ninety survived the operation; Tougher, "Byzantine Eunuchs," 175-6.
[41] Penzer, *The Harem*, 149.

seems to have consisted of the removal of the testicles only.[42] It is noteworthy that this was also the common mode of castration in Byzantium.[43] There are many black holes in our current knowledge of the acquisition and castration practices of non-African eunuchs, who seem to have been recruited in different ways from diverse regions; still, the varieties in castration possibly accounted for some of the disadvantage they suffered in court promotions.

Another point to consider is the fact that it was much harder and more improbable for African eunuchs to maintain contact with their own families, unlike for some white eunuchs, such as the *kapı ağası* Gazanfer Agha (d. 1603), who reunited with their family members and cultivated new alliances with and through them.[44] One may conjecture that such activities on the part of eunuchs, who were supposed to be without family ties, were probably not very pleasing from the perspective of the sultan and the imperial family. As for other Islamic states before them who relied heavily on slaves, for the Ottomans too, the perfect slave-servant was one with no roots and no bonds other than to his master. The sheer unlikelihood of black eunuchs to find their families, whom they were forced to leave behind in a distant land, probably played a role in their consideration as reliable servants fit for close domestic service for the Ottoman royal family. Yet, despite the existence of these

[42] Hathaway, *Beshir Agha*, 19.
[43] Tougher, "Byzantine Eunuchs," 176. When Liudprand of Cremona presented four fully emasculated slaves to the Byzantine emperor as presents during the diplomatic mission in 949, these were clearly regarded as very rare and valuable gifts; ibid., 168 and 176.
[44] For Gazanfer Agha's connection with his family, see Chapter V.

factors before the 1575 regulation, the dynastic preference for harem service shifted onto the black eunuchs only from the first months of Murad III's reign onwards. The reasons for the shift are unclear, to our present knowledge, and prone to speculation.

It is also important to note that the consolidation of the black eunuchs' monopoly over the office of chief harem eunuch did not happen all of a sudden in 1575, but took almost half a century. It was only from Idris Agha's appointment in 1623 onwards that the office of *darüssaade ağası* was occupied by black eunuchs in an uninterrupted fashion. In the period between 1575 and 1623, two white eunuchs held this office. El-Hajj Mustafa Agha of Bosnian origin (tenure: 1592-96) was appointed after the dismissal of the unpopular and unsuccessful Server Agha, the immediate successor of *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha. Ismail Agha of Malatya, who held the office in 1621-23, as the only eunuch to have occupied the offices of *babüssaade* and *darüssaade* simultaneously, was also the last non-African promoted to the latter position.[45]

At the Ottoman court, there were a variety of ranks to be assigned to eunuchs. Some of these seem to have been dominated by white eunuchs from an early date onwards. As already noted, *kapı ağası* or *babüssaade ağası* was the highest among these. As the head of all palace officers and the chief guardian of the *babüssaade* gate opening to the third court of the Topkapı Palace, the *kapı ağası* would be prestigiously lodged in a private room next to this gate. The agha would accompany the sultan during his mosque visits as well as on

[45] Altındağ, "Dârüssaâde," *TDVİA* 9: 1. Altındağ writes that from around 1480 to 1922, seventy-seven Africans, as opposed to around twenty-one white eunuchs, were appointed as *darüssaade ağası*; ibid.

campaigns.[46] The position of the *kapı ağası* as the chief administrator of the palace is revealed in an early seventeenth-century treatise, which laments the "degeneration" of the court order. This source counts the chief white eunuch as one of the three pillars of the sultanate, the others being the *şeyhülislam* and the grand vizier. While the *kapı ağası* was entitled to discuss with the sultan everything related to the inner court, the sultan was dependent on him in order to learn about events outside the palace. This text also accuses the holders of this office in the last quarter of the sixteenth century for the erosion of authority over the palace pages, whose recruitment, discipline, and training was overseen by the chief white eunuch.[47]

After the *kapı ağası* lost the administration of the imperial harem to the now independent chief black eunuch in 1574/75, he continued to administer the rest of the inner court together with the white eunuchs under his authority, whose numbers ranged between forty and eighty.[48] Another change in the court hierarchy in the first half of the eighteenth century took the top position in the palace administration from the hands of the chief white eunuch and assigned it to the *silahdar*, who was not a eunuch.[49] This change was also

[46] Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilâtı*, 355.
[47] Anonymous, "Kitâb-ı Müstetâb," in *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtına Dair Kaynaklar*, ed. Yaşar Yücel (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 25-26.
[48] Ali Ufkî or Wojciech Bobowski, who lived in the imperial palace between the 1630s and the 1650s, gives the total number of white eunuchs as around fifty; Ali Ufkî, *Topkapı Sarayı'nda Yaşam: Albertus Bobovius ya da Santuri Ali Ufki Bey'in Anıları*, ed. Stephanos Yerasimos and Annie Berthier; tr. Ali Berktay (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2002), 27. According to the editors' notes, the number was around forty in the sixteenth century, while it doubled in the eighteenth; ibid., 113, n. 23. Uzunçarşılı writes that there were eighty white eunuchs under the authority of the *kapı ağası* by the eighteenth century; Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilâtı*, 355.
[49] Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilâtı*, 355-56.

reflected in the enthronement (*cülus*) ceremony: while the sultan-to-be would be led to the throne by the *darüssaade ağası* and the *babüssaade ağası*, after the eighteenth century the latter was replaced with the *silahdar ağa*.[50]

Below the *kapı ağası* in the white eunuch pyramid there were several aghas who served as the heads of separate chambers, each of which housed a distinct group of pages. One of these officers was the agha of the Privy Chamber (*has oda başı*), who would take care of the sultan's bedchamber and wardrobe. While white eunuchs would often be appointed to this post, it is true that sometimes non-eunuch pages of the court were promoted to *has oda başı*.[51] A well-known one among these non-eunuch aghas was the *makbul* and *maktul* (favorite and slain) Ibrahim Pasha, who later became a grand vizier under Süleyman the Magnificent.[52]

Another prominent position reserved for eunuchs was chief treasurer (*hazinedarbaşı*). This agha was the head of the pages in the Treasury Chamber and responsible for the sultan's inner treasury, which consisted of precious objects including textiles, jewels, and artifacts of gold and silver as well as money.[53] Ranking below the chief treasurer was the head of the commissary (*kilercibaşı* or *serkilârî-yi hassa*), who could also be a non-eunuch. Together with the pages of the commissary whom he would oversee, the

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[50] Ibid., 188.
[51] Ibid., 340. This officer was responsible for putting on the sultan's ceremonial robes; ibid.
[52] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi 2 (İstanbul'un Fethinden Kanunî Sultan Süleyman'ın Ölümüne Kadar)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1943), 546.
[53] Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 1991), 117.

kilercibaşı was in charge of setting the royal table and maintaining the necessary provisions.[54]

The agha of the palace (*saray ağası*) was also a high ranking white eunuch and responsible for the maintenance and care of the palace complex.[55] The white eunuch hierarchy also included various other positions such as the palace steward (*saray kethüdası*) and the steward of the lads of the gate (*kapı oğlanı kethüdası*).[56] However, this study will show that, out of this varied community, only those occupying the highest echelons became patrons of architecture.

The same is also true for the black eunuch hierarchy. The *kızlar ağası* or *darüssaade ağası* was naturally the most prominent patron of architecture among the black eunuchs. Yet, under him there were various other levels on the ladder of promotion. Starting from the rank *en aşağı* (the lowest), harem eunuchs would ascend through the ranks of *acemi ağası*, *nöbet kalfası*, *ortanca*, *hâsıllı* (or *hasırlı*), *yayla başı gulamı* and *yeni saray baş kapı gulamı*. One of the top positions in the hierarchy of black eunuchs was agha of the Old Palace (*eski saray ağası*), the holder of which would have been a candidate for chief black eunuch. Also important was the harem treasurer (*hazinedar*), who would take care of the harem budget.[57]

[54] Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilâtı*, 313.
[55] Ibid., 356.
[56] Ibid., 356-57.
[57] Ibid., 172-73.

An important reason for the prominence of the chief white eunuch and the chief black eunuch as architectural patrons was the wealth that they were able to accumulate. Not only would they receive the highest stipends among the eunuch community but they would also earn money for serving as the superintendent of various royal *waqf*s. Ali Ufkî writes that by the seventeenth century, the *kapı ağası* had a daily income of a hundred golden coins from the pious foundations under his supervision.[58] According to this author, while the *kızlar ağası* had the same stipend as the chief white eunuch for his courtly duty, the amount that he received from *waqf*s was almost three times as large.[59] In addition to overseeing the immense *waqf*s supporting the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, the chief black eunuch was also the superintendent of many royal foundations, particularly those founded by the mother of the sultan. Being thus at the head of an extensive *waqf* network, the agha was able to pursue his own commercial interests through various connections and agents in different parts of the empire.[60]

A particularly important province in the chief black eunuch's career was Egypt. It was not only an African eunuch's first workplace after his enslavement and castration and a stepping-stone for his career in the imperial capital, but also the place where many of the

[58] Ali Ufkî, *Topkapı Sarayı'nda Yaşam*, 27.
[59] Ibid., 28.
[60] For his commercial representatives, see Hathaway, *Beshir Agha*, 40-41. The intermingling of duty and personal interest is illustrated in Jane Hathaway's analysis of the seventeenth-century chief black eunuch Abbas Agha's *waqf* inventory; Hathaway, "The Wealth and Influence of an Exiled Ottoman Eunuch in Egypt: The Waqf Inventory of 'Abbās Agha," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37, no. 4 (1994): 293-317.

endowments for the Holy Cities were located. Moreover, from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, salaried exile in Egypt had become a routine way of putting an end to a black eunuch's service at the court. This practice had produced a sizeable eunuch population in Cairo, who often played an active role in Egyptian factional politics; yet, it was the chief black eunuch who, even during his tenure, held the greatest sway in this province with the help of his representatives.[61]

The following chapters examine how the eunuchs of the early modern Ottoman imperial court translated the wealth and power they thus acquired into permanent icons in the cityscape of the capital and in the provinces. Establishing pious endowments in one's own name was no doubt a prestigious investment for any patron in a Muslim society and a socially legitimate way of making use of one's wealth. Yet, in contrast to many other patrons who built socio-religious structures, eunuchs did not have descendants whom they could appoint as superintendents of the *waqf*s they established to maintain their buildings. The safe transmission of inheritance to descendents was not a consideration for the eunuchs' patronage. It was, however, not only acceptable but also advisable for them—from both the religious and social points of view—to spend their wealth in such religiously sanctioned ways. Thus, as Ayalon has noted concerning the difference between *mamluk*s and eunuchs in their engagement in architectural projects, "the first did it because they *had*

[61] See Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlıs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 139-64. The activities of Ottoman eunuchs in Egypt have been explored in several studies by Hathaway; also see her "The Role of the Kızlar Ağası in 17th-18th Century Ottoman Egypt," 141-158; and "The Wealth and Influence of an Exiled Ottoman Eunuch in Egypt," 293-317.

children, and the second because they *had not*, and thus found an accepted and very acceptable way to dispose of their inheritance, or part of it."[62] While this chapter has illustrated the diversity of the Ottoman eunuch community and the vicissitudes in their power over the course of the early modern era, how their architectural patronage took shape in accordance with these factors will be investigated in the following chapters.

[62] Ayalon, *Eunuchs*, 32.

CHAPTER II

FROM AMASYA TO ISTANBUL:

THE PATRONAGE OF BAYEZID II'S EUNUCHS

As respectable office-holders in the Ottoman Empire, palace eunuchs of varying ranks inscribed the cityscape of Istanbul over the centuries with mosques, theological colleges, dervish lodges, elementary schools, public baths, libraries, and fountains, which often publicly proclaimed the names of their patrons on carved plaques. Usually structures of quite modest proportions when compared to the works of the royal family and grand viziers, these monuments stand as permanent reminders of the power and prestige that their builders once attained. For their modern users and beholders, these are the vestiges of an obsolete social, political, and economic order and of an extinct species of architectural patron. For Ottoman eunuchs themselves, these buildings possibly stood for sites that encapsulated the memory of their predecessors, works that were to be protected, emulated, and perhaps surpassed whenever possible.

This chapter is the first of a series of chapters that trace the output of the architectural patronage of court eunuchs from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-eighteenth century, with special focus on their constructions in Istanbul. The historical survey that

follows seeks to understand each individual act of architectural patronage by contextualizing it within a chronological sequence that reflects the synchronicities, continuities, gaps, and breaks in the history of Ottoman eunuch builders. The survey presented in these chapters aims to delineate the original contexts of these building projects and to make sense of the various patronage choices surrounding each project in the light of earlier and contemporary patronage activities.

Focusing exclusively on court eunuchs, this investigation excludes the patronage activities of those eunuchs who rose to the ranks of viziers. Eunuch viziers such as Reyhan Pasha, a vizier under Murad II, were, in fact, among the earliest eunuch patrons of architecture.[1] Simple observation reveals that the works of eunuch viziers such as Atik Ali Pasha and Mesih Mehmed Pasha were subject to different propriety rules, which clearly allowed them to commission more monumental buildings compared to the humbler works of court eunuchs.[2] The fact that they began commissioning buildings before palace eunuchs did suggests a greater license for eunuch viziers almost from the beginning. It is, therefore, imperative that they be considered as a distinct category of patrons whose patronage is comparable to those of viziers at large rather than that of the varied community of eunuchs.

[1] See Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimârîsinde Çelebi ve II. Sultan Murad Devri 806-855 (1403-1451)* (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti İstanbul Enstitüsü, 1972), 330, 353, and 362.
[2] For the works of Atik Ali Pasha, see, for instance, İ. Aydın Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimârîsinde II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim Devri (886-926/1481-1520)* (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 1983), 162-77. For Mesih Mehmed Pasha, see Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 403-08.

The patronage of Ottoman court eunuchs, on the other hand, does not seem to have begun before the conquest of Constantinople.[3] The small neighborhood mosque built by a certain Hacı Mercan Agha b. Abdullah to the east of the Old Palace (which occupied the site where Istanbul University is now located) and in the most densely populated area of the new capital might be the first building commissioned by an Ottoman court eunuch (see Map 1). The proximity of the mosque to the Old Palace as well as the attention and care that the mosque received from black eunuchs in later periods[4] suggest that Mercan Agha may have been a eunuch at the court of Mehmed II, possibly employed in the Old Palace.[5] His endowment deed dated to 868/1463-64 lists various residential structures in the vicinity of the mosque and, thus, attests to Mercan Agha's share in the urbanization efforts during the reign of Mehmed II by means of his contribution to the development of this quarter, which was soon to be named after him.[6]

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[3] So far I have not encountered any buildings commissioned by court eunuchs in pre-Ottoman Anatolia, which would have been precedents for the works of Ottoman court eunuchs. One example of pre-Ottoman eunuch patronage, however, is found in Sinop. An inscription pertaining to the repair of a fortress tower in 838 bears the name of *Shihab al-Dīn Shāhīn al-mamlūk al-tavāshī*, a eunuch vizier of the Candaroğulları Principality; M. Fuad Köprülü, *Bizans Müesseselerinin Osmanlı Müesseselerine Tesiri* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1981 [Originally printed in *Türk Hukuk ve İktisat Tarihi Mecmuası* 1 (1931): 165-313.]), 79, fn. 135.

[4] See Chapters IV and V.

[5] Ayvansarâyî states that he was "not [the Mercan Agha who was] *darüssaade ağası*;" Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 221. He also writes that Mercan Agha's grave was there and that the mosque had a quarter. The summary of the agha's endowment deed stipulates that the *waqf* should be overseen by his manumitted slaves and their descendents, which suggests that he did not have offspring; Ömer Lutfi Barkan and Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrir Defteri 953 (1546) Tarihli* (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1970), 84.

[6] Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *The Ottoman Capital in the Making: The Reconstruction of Constantinople in the Fifteenth Century*, unpublished PhD dissertation (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1996), 335-38. Also see the *vakfiye* summary in Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 84, which gives the date of the endowment deed as Zilhicce 878 (April/May 1474) and a list of properties different from that of the 1464 *vakfiye*, according to Kafescioğlu, *The Ottoman Capital*, 335-36, fn. 88. Mercan Agha also had his residence

Another eunuch patron of the early period is identified in the 1546 *waqf* survey as "Sinan Agha the Eunuch" (*Sinan Ağa't-Tavâşî*), the builder of a no-longer extant mosque near the Binbirdirek Cistern (see Map 1).[7] Sinan Agha b. Abdülhayy's endowment is much smaller compared to Mercan Agha's *waqf* record in the survey; yet his mosque also constituted the center of a neighborhood. The clue for the date of Sinan Agha's mosque comes not from his own endowment record but from that of Hızır Agha the Eunuch (*Hızır Ağa't-Tavâşî*), who stipulated the recitation of parts of the Qur'an in the former's *mescid*.[8] Accordingly, the date of Hızır Agha b. Abdullah's endowment deed, 1512 (Ramazan 918) is the *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the Sinan Agha Mosque.[9] A eunuch of the court of either Mehmed II or Bayezid II, Sinan Agha is referred to as a *babüssaade ağası* in Ayvansarâyî's much later survey of the mosques in Istanbul.[10]

No matter to whose reign the Sinan Agha Mosque could be dated, the rise of eunuchs to further prominence as architectural patrons occurred during the reign of Bayezid II (1481-1512), which witnessed an expansion in the range of builders. Thus, whereas construction efforts had been chiefly led by the military elite during the rule of Mehmed II, eminent court eunuchs such as the chief eunuch of the palace (*kapı ağası*)

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in the vicinity of his mosque; see ibid., 362. Another architectural patron of the period is Handan Agha, who is known to have been an attendant in the court of Mehmed II; Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 324. However, whether he was a eunuch or not could not be verified.

[7] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 21.

[8] Ibid., 21 and 73.

[9] Ibid., 73.

[10] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 134.

Hüseyin Agha and the chief treasurer (*hazinedarbaşı*) Firuz Agha endowed large *waqfs* for the buildings they constructed in prominent spots of the capital in the times of Sultan Bayezid.[11]

The patronage of these eunuchs both in the capital and in the provinces seems to have corresponded closely to the imperial urban policies of the period. Possibly in order to balance his father's concentration on the urban development of Istanbul, Bayezid established two lofty socio-religious complexes in Amasya and Edirne during the first years of his reign.[12] In the last two decades of the fifteenth century, when building activities slowed down in Istanbul and their focus shifted to provincial centers, eunuchs of the imperial court followed suit in sponsoring architectural projects in these towns. Thus, some of the earliest products of the architectural patronage of Ottoman court eunuchs appeared in the provinces and, before long, sprang from there back to the heart of the new capital.

In the 1480s and 1490s, three or four high-ranking palace eunuchs commissioned architectural projects in and around the towns of Amasya, Tokad, and Sivas. Given that Amasya was Bayezid's post prior to his enthronement, his eunuchs' constructions in this town suggest that, earlier in their careers, they had possibly served in the princely household of the now reigning sultan. It should also be noted that Amasya and the nearby towns thrived economically in the fifteenth century, owing to a large extent to their location on the north Anatolian trade route which Iranian silk caravans traversed on their way to

[11] Kafescioğlu, *The Ottoman Capital*, 394.
[12] Ibid., 393-4.

Bursa.[13] It was, therefore, both a reflection of and a contribution to this region's importance in long-distance trade that the first building commissioned as part of *kapı ağası* Hüseyin Agha's *waqf* in Amasya was a *bedestan* or covered market (Fig. 1). This building type served merchants by providing them with lodgings as well as quarters for storing and exchanging goods.[14] Completed early in Bayezid's reign, in 888/1483-84, the six-domed rectangular market building in Amasya's Kazancılar quarter was not far from the royal mosque complex that was being built simultaneously (Fig. 2).[15] This middle-sized *bedestan* was probably destined to generate income for the *medrese* that Hüseyin Agha, as a pioneering patron among court eunuchs, was going to found in the same town.[16]

One year after its completion, a new neighboring monument appeared near Hüseyin Agha's *bedestan*. This was a mosque constructed opposite the market building by an officer—probably the head—of the palace commissary, known as *Kilârî* Süleyman Agha, who was most probably also a eunuch (Figs. 2 and 3). Judging by the location and timing

[13] Halil İnalcık, "The Ottoman Economic Mind and Aspects of the Ottoman Economy," in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East: From the Rise of Islam to the Present Day*, ed. M. A. Cook (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 209.
[14] Huri İslamoğlu-İnan, *State and Peasant in the Ottoman Empire: Agrarian Power Relations and Regional Economic Development in Ottoman Anatolia during the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 240.
[15] For the *bedestan*, see Semavi Eyice, "Kapu Ağası Hüseyin Ağa'nın Vakıfları," *Atatürk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Araştırma Dergisi, Prof. Albert Louis Gabriel Armağanı Özel Sayısı* 9 (1978): 154-59; and Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 52-56. For detailed information on the current and original physical characteristics of the *bedestan*, see Uğur Çelik, *Amasya Kapu Ağası Hüseyin Ağa Bedesteni Restorasyon Önerisi*, unpublished MA thesis (Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi, Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Mimarlık Anabilim Dalı, 2008), 29-138. During the controversial destructions in the 1860s and the 1960s, the *bedestan* lost its original domical superstructure and two of its domed units. Today, it survives in its shrunken state, with four domes and a square shape, which it gained during the restoration in the 1970s; Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 156-58.
[16] The relevant *vakfiye* has not yet been discovered; Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 52. For comparisons of the size of this building with those of other *bedestan*s, see ibid., fn. 7; and Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 159.

of the construction vis-à-vis the *bedestan*, we may imagine a close relationship between the two palace aghas, the commissary officer more likely to be a protégé of the chief eunuch. This single-domed and square-shaped mosque, constructed with ashlar masonry and fronted by an unusual double-domed portico, was apparently Süleyman Agha's only architectural creation (Fig. 5).[17] The agha's name, which looks like "Selim" in the mosque's Arabic inscription (Fig. 4), is better known as Süleyman;[18] the latter name being also supported by the endowment records.[19] He is most probably the same agha who appears in the 1546 survey of the Istanbul *waqf*s as "Süleyman Agha, the chief of the commissary officers of the late Sultan Bayezid Khan (may God illuminate his tomb)." According to this record, Süleyman Agha made an endowment for the recitation of the Qur'an in the Mercan Agha Mosque in Istanbul.[20] However, none of the endowed possessions are listed, since, according to the entry, they were not in Istanbul but elsewhere.[21] The location of his mosque brings to mind the possibility that they might be in

[17] Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 37. The structure was completed in 889/1484-85, ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] According to the relevant record in the Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü archive, the agha's name is Süleyman; see Naciye Altaş, *T.C. Başbakanlık Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Tarafından Tescili Yapılan Cami ve Mescitler*, unpublished MA thesis (Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi, 2007), 59.
[20] *Süleyman Ağa reis-i kilârdârân-ı merhûm Sultan Bâyezid Hân tâbe serâhu*; Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 86.
[21] Ibid. There is another Süleyman Agha who endowed houses and other possessions in the *mahalle* of the Firuz Agha Mosque near the Hippodrome for the benefit of his manumitted slaves Hamdi, Süheyl, Yusuf, and other Yusuf. According to the stipulation, the endowments would later be added to the agha's *waqf*(s) in Anatolia (Anadolı); ibid., 25. Although the date is not given, this might be the same Süleyman Agha who built a mosque in Amasya, in the province of Anadolı.

or around Amasya, which in turn suggests that Süleyman Agha might have served at some point in the princely palace in that city.

Yet another architectural project of the 1480s was undertaken by the chief treasurer Firuz Agha in Tokad. In 890/1485-86, he built a smallish *hamam*, as a prelude to his extensive constructions in the next few years. This bath, consisting of a dressing room and a hot room, each covered by a dome, was registered in his endowment deed along with the thirty-nine shops in its vicinity.[22] According to the *waqf* survey of 1546, the *hamam* was producing an annual income of 12,000 *akçe*s.[23] Its inscription, which, according to Uzunçarşılı, consisted of four couplets written in beautiful *thuluth*, albeit on an ordinary stone, used to commemorate the founder not in Arabic but in Persian[24]—an interesting language choice, probably related to the presence of Iranian merchants in the town.

Meanwhile, having completed his *bedestan* and before building his *medrese*, the chief eunuch Hüseyin Agha contributed a Friday mosque and an adjacent *medrese* to the urban development of the small town of Sonisa (today Uluköy) near Amasya.[25] We do not know whether Sonisa had any peculiarity that may have played a role in the agha's favor,

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[22] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Kitâbeler: Anadolu Türk Tarihi Vesikalarından* (Istanbul: Millî Matbaa, 1345/1927), 32; Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 24.
[23] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 24.
[24] Uzunçarşılı, *Kitâbeler*, 32. The *hamam* is known as the "Sultan Hamamı." It had fallen into disuse by the time Uzunçarşılı visited it in the early twentieth century. Today, it does no longer exist; Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 389. The inscription noted by Uzunçarşılı refers to Bayezid II as "the shah of Iran" and gives the construction date as 819, although in the main text Uzunçarşılı gives the date as 890, which must be the correct one; *Kitâbeler*, 32.
[25] Known as Kurşunlu Cami, this mosque was destroyed by an earthquake in 1942. It was covered by six domes, reminiscent of Atik Ali Pasha's mosque near Edirnekapı in Istanbul; Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 166.

other than being a satellite town of the former seat of the princely court. The mosque's surviving inscription in Arabic reveals the date of completion as 892/1486-87. This inscription is identical with those on the agha's Amasya foundations, except for the date. All repeat the same formula, which can be translated as follows:

> This building was constructed by the builder of pious works Hüseyin Agha
> son of 'Abd al-Mu'īn, known as the *kapu ağası* at the sublime threshold
> of the sultan of the two continents
> and the ruler of the two seas, sultan son of sultan, Sultan Bayezid
> son of Mehmed Khan
> —may God perpetuate his reign!—during his heyday, as a token of his generosity
> and beneficence
> —may God immerse him in His mercy!—in the year…[26] (Fig. 7)

Thus, all three inscriptions basically function as an elaborate signature of the chief eunuch, which prestigiously associate his name with that of the sultan. Considered together with the inscription on the lesser palace officer *Kilârî* Süleyman Agha's mosque, which does not cite the sultan's name,[27] associating one's name with the reigning monarch seems to have been a prerogative enjoyed by those in the higher echelons of the palace hierarchy. Thus, Hüseyin Agha apparently took advantage of his privileged position in formulating his public signatures in the Amasya region.

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[26] *Ḳad benā hāẕe'l-binā' ṣāḥibü'l-ḫayrāt bānī mebāni'l-meberrāt Ḥuseyn Ağa ibn ᶜAbdi'l-Mu'īn eş-şehīr bi-Kapu Ağası fi'l-ᶜatabeti'l-ᶜaliyye li-Sulṭāni'l-Berreyn ve'l-Ḫākāni'l-Baḥreyn es-Sulṭān ibni's-Sulṭān es-Sulṭān Bāyezīd ibn Muḥammed Ḫān – halled Allāhu Subḥānehu mülkehu ve sulṭānehu – fī eyyāmi devletihi min ḳurāzati cūdihi ve iḥsānihi – tegammedehu'llahu Teᶜālā bi-gufrānihi – fī tārīḫ sene* ... For the inscriptions of the *bedestan*, the *medrese*, and the mosque in Sonisa, see Uzunçarşılı, *Kitâbeler*, 123, 130, and 82 and Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 155-56, 161-62, and 167-68 respectively. There are some mistakes and omissions especially in Eyice's copy of the Sonisa inscription, which first appeared in Uzunçarşılı's book.

[27] Recep Gün, *Amasya ve Çevresindeki Mimarî Eserlerde Yazı Kullanımı*, unpublished MA thesis (Samsun: Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İslam Tarihi ve Sanatları Ana Bilim Dalı, 1993), 33.

The *medrese* that Hüseyin Agha commissioned in Amasya is sited to the northeast of the town center, near the western bank of the Yeşilırmak river (Fig. 6). Known as the "Büyük Ağa Medresesi" or "Medrese-i Hüseyniye," the building was completed in 894/1488-89, six years after the *bedestan*. The structure is particularly renowned for its octagonal shape, which is noteworthy as an unusual and ambitiously innovative design (Fig. 8). The courtyard is surrounded by a domed colonnade, which in turn is encircled by twenty domed *medrese* cells and a dominating classroom-*mescid*, located forty-five degrees off the entrance axis. An examination of the remaining columns show that, to complement the geometric aesthetics, the column shafts were also given an octagonal shape and their capitals a stepped profile.[28] All these constitute a consciously implemented aesthetic program unprecedented in Ottoman architecture.

Yüksel is probably right in arguing that topographical irregularities must have played a role in the originality of the design by preventing the execution of the more usual rectangular arrangement.[29] Nevertheless, the source of inspiration for the *medrese*'s octagonal design remains a puzzle to be solved. Gabriel, for instance, has raised the possibility that the *medrese*'s architect might have been Iranian, on the grounds of the existence of octagonal *medrese*s in Iran. Eyice dismisses this view for chronological and other reasons and points out the strange coincidental resemblance between the Büyük Kapu

[28] Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 163. There is also a fountain in front of the *medrese*. Given that its marble plaque reserved for an inscription remains uncarved, we may imagine that this fountain was also a charitable work of Hüseyin Agha; ibid., 166.
[29] Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 46-8.

Ağası Medresesi and the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna.[30] While it is likely that the sixteenth-century chief royal architect Sinan found inspiration in Hüseyin Agha's college for designing Rüstem Pasha's octagonal *medrese* in Istanbul,[31] it is more difficult to establish connections between the Amasya *medrese* and its formal precedent(s). None of the scholars, however, have so far noted the more possible and plausible inspiration of the most accessible example of octagonal structures: the Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus in Istanbul, which Hüseyin Agha was to convert into the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque in a few years' time, had an octagonal interior.

II.a. The Firuz Agha Mosque: Appropriating Byzantine Imperial Space

It was, however, not Hüseyin Agha but the chief treasurer Firuz Agha who built the mosque which would arguably be the most prestigiously sited monument among all the buildings ever commissioned by Ottoman court eunuchs.[32] Constructed in 896/1490-91 at the intersection of the Mese (Divan Yolu) with the Hippodrome (At Meydanı) in Istanbul, the mosque constituted a visual and spatial marker of Ottoman rule and Islam in an area characterized by a dense assemblage of Byzantine remains (see Map 1). The dilapidated state of these relics of the glorious Byzantine past, including the ruined Great Palace and

[30] Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 163-64.
[31] Ibid., 164-65.
[32] Although the Firuz Agha Mosque is widely known as a *cami*, the *waqf* survey of 1546 refers to the building as a *mescid*; Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 23. If there is no imprecision in terminology, it appears that the mosque later became a Friday mosque.

the desolate Hippodrome, must have constituted a rather shabby setting for the new mosque, while at the same time a source of motivation for new constructions and the revival of the area. As the first Muslim place of worship to have been constructed in the vicinity of the Hippodrome, which in the post-conquest period had become a locus of crime and the uncanny due to the thieves and the mysterious talismanic columns it housed, the mosque was a move towards the area's rehabilitation.[33] Firuz Agha's large residence built on top of the nearby Binbirdirek cistern,[34] and his endowment of a number of properties in the vicinity of the mosque[35] can also be cited in this context.

Apart from the visible ruins above ground, the site of the Firuz Agha Mosque was also—as construed today—one of great archaeological potential, for it was in its immediate vicinity that the remains of the church of St. Euphemia and the palaces originally founded by the Byzantine eunuchs Lausos and Antiokhos were found in the twentieth century.[36] As the palatial, royal, and ceremonial associations of this area go back many centuries, Firuz Agha was, in fact, adding just another layer to the accumulation of traces that remained from generations of courtly people.

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[33] On the state of the Hippodrome in this period and its "magical" columns, see Seza Sinanlar, *Atmeydanı: Bizans Araba Yarışlarından Osmanlı Şenliklerine* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), 51-53.
[34] Kafescioğlu, *The Ottoman Capital*, 364.
[35] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 23-24.
[36] Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, *İstanbul'un Tarihsel Topografyası: 17. yüzyıl başlarına kadar Byzantion-Konstantinopolis-İstanbul*, tr. Ülker Sayın (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007), 122-25 and 238. Müller also writes that the mosque was possibly erected on top of the foundations of a church dedicated to St. John the Baptist; ibid., 414.

The location of the mosque suggests a resolution on the part of the Ottomans not to violate the Mese and the Hippodrome, but to superimpose their own structures upon the basic layout of the Byzantine city, at least in this part of Istanbul.[37] Indeed, the construction of the Firuz Agha Mosque constituted one of the earliest attempts towards the re-monumentalization of the Mese and, hence, its transformation into an Ottoman ceremonial thoroughfare. Thus, by the end of Bayezid II's reign, the artery featured not only the Firuz Agha Mosque, but also the eunuch grand vizier Atik Ali Pasha's mosque complex (built in 915/1509) in the old Forum of Constantine (today's Çemberlitaş), and the complex of Sultan Bayezid himself at the Forum Tauri.[38]

However, once built, the Firuz Agha *mescid* led to the flourishing of a new *mahalle* (neighborhood or quarter) around it. We know that by the time the street regularization campaign following the 1865 Hocapaşa fire was launched, the dense residential fabric surrounding the mosque was allowing for a much narrower passage from the At Meydanı to the Divan Yolu.[39] It is possible that the residential fabric had grown parallel to the relaxation of Ottoman stately ceremonial, and thus of the traffic of parading retinues. Still, for a long time, until modern conceptions of urbanism intervened to highlight the monument by isolating it, we may imagine that Firuz Agha's minaret and dome were functioning as an urban marker amidst a greater multitude of house roofs than today. The

[37] Sinanlar, *Atmeydanı*, 53.
[38] Kafescioğlu, *The Ottoman Capital*, 395.
[39] Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California, 1986), 61.

mosque's once wider courtyard was also dwarfed by the enlargement of the Divan Yolu in the nineteenth century.[40]

It is probably to its mnemonic quality as the building marking the turn of the ceremonial route that the Firuz Agha Mosque owes its appearance in some sixteenth-century depictions of Istanbul—a distinction that rarely applied to the modest foundations of court eunuchs. In the Ottoman writer and artist Matrakçı Nasuh's well-known representation of Istanbul (1537-38), the relatively small mosque near the leftmost column of the Hippodrome is in all probability the Firuz Agha Mosque (Fig. 9). Precision, however, was not a strong point of Nasuh's depictions of small monuments; therefore, he wrongly placed the mosque's minaret on the right side and omitted the three domes of its portico, conveying little more than its essential "mosqueness." The picture, nonetheless, gives a sense of the significant buildings surrounding the mosque almost fifty years after its construction. In addition to the no longer extant Byzantine building used by the Ottomans as the royal menagerie, a more complete group of the Hippodrome columns and the neighboring palace of Sultan Süleyman's grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha are seen in the mosque's vicinity.

A notable pictorial testimony to the mosque's prominent situation on the ceremonial route is the Dutch artist Pieter Coeck van Aelst's engraving that depicts a procession of Süleyman the Magnificent and his retinue through the Hippodrome (1533) (Fig. 10a). As

[40] Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 250.

Cerasi has noted, the picture works best when reversed, since only then does it show the correct topographical sequence with the Firuz Agha Mosque and the Hippodrome on the left side of the parade (Fig. 10b).[41] Viewed as such, the image reproduces the minaret on the correct side, although there are inaccuracies in the rendering of the portico and the fenestration. The mosque, nevertheless, occupies a central place in the image. Its crowded portico—where the faithful turn their backs to the procession—illustrates its practical function as a *mahalle* mosque and provides an early confirmation to Evliya Çelebi's statement that it had a populous congregation (*cemaat-i kesire*).[42] The picture also shows a curious little structure with a dome, which stands—according to the reversed image—on the left side of the mosque, where now there is a marble sarcophagus framed by the remaining foundations of a building.[43] If the anonymous sarcophagus belongs to Firuz Agha (d. 918/1512-13), as is assumed, then the building seen in van Aelst's engraving is possibly his *türbe*.[44]

In terms of its physical characteristics, the mosque of Firuz Agha moderates its signs of prestige with its formal simplicity. Being anything but experimental, the mosque can be conceived as "the prototype of the single-domed classical Ottoman mosque," as

[41] Maurice Cerasi, *The Istanbul Divanyolu: A Case Study in Ottoman Urbanity and Architecture* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag in Kommission, 2004), 49, fig. 21.
[42] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, ed. O. Ş. Gökyay (Istanbul: YKY, 1996), vol. 1, 126.
[43] See Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 252.
[44] According to Ayvansarâyî, Firuz Agha was "buried in a separate tomb" in the year "divine longing" (*Müştāḳḳ el-ilāhī*) 918/1512-13; Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 173.

Aptullah Kuran has once noted.[45] A dome resting on a twelve-sided drum covers the almost square-shaped prayer hall, which is given access through a three-domed portico (Fig. 11). In accordance with its privileged location, the mosque is constructed entirely of ashlar. The stalactite capitals of its marble columns and the muqarnas decoration repeated on the entrance gate, the mihrab, and the transitional zones of the interior dome also contribute to the overall impression of wealth and status.

Above its entrance gate, there is an inscription of four lines, topped by two identical chessboard kufic renderings of the name "Muhammad" and decorative medallions (Fig. 12). Composed in Arabic, the inscription cites the name and title of Firuz Agha together with the sultan's name; yet it refrains from the grandiloquent expressions that we have seen on Hüseyin Agha's inscriptions in the Amasya region.[46] By virtue of being a work of the celebrated calligrapher Sheikh Hamdullah, this *thuluth* inscription was also an object of prestige. A native of Amasya, Sheikh Hamdullah (d. ca. 926/1520) had achieved fame as Prince Bayezid's teacher of calligraphy during the future sultan's tenure in that town. After the succession, he was invited to Istanbul and held in great esteem in his new post at the imperial palace.[47] It is, therefore, no surprise that Firuz Agha had access to his services; the

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[45] Aptullah Kuran, *Sinan: The Grand Old Master of Ottoman Architecture*, photographs by Ara Güler and M. Niksarlı (Washington D.C.: Institute of Turkish Studies, Inc.; Istanbul: Ada Press Publishers, 1987), 44.

[46] The chronogram is as follows (Howard Crane's translation):

He is the imperial treasurer of Sultan Bayezid / The chief treasurer, Firuz.

The noble Rıdvan composed its chronogram. / "Paradise of shelters and abode of the thankful, [*Cennet al-me'vâ wa dâr al-ḥâmidîn*]" 896 [1490-91]. Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 173, and ibid., fn. 1330.

[47] Ali Alparslan, *Osmanlı Hat Sanatı Tarihi* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 34-40.

two may even have known each other from Amasya. The calligrapher was particularly renowned for developing a novel style of the six scripts (*aklâm-ı sitte*), which had a profound and lasting impact on Ottoman calligraphy.[48] Prior to the mosque of Firuz Agha, Sheikh Hamdullah had written an inscription for the grand vizier Davud Pasha's Friday mosque in Istanbul. By the end of Bayezid's reign, he would have exhibited his calligraphic skills on the sultan's mosque complex in Istanbul, as well as on the Edirnekapı gate, for which he wrote a *kelime-i tevhid*.[49] Thus, it was a token of privilege for Firuz Agha that his mosque was one of the very few places that boasted a public display of the famous calligrapher's legendary talent. Moreover, according to Ayvansarâyî, Sheikh Hamdullah was also the first calligraphy teacher of the *mekteb* of Firuz Agha's mosque.[50] If true, this information indicates an even closer relationship between the chief treasurer and the royal calligrapher.

The summary of Firuz Agha's *waqf* in the 1546 register of pious endowments gives a lengthy list of rich possessions endowed to his mosque and school (*muallimhane*) in Istanbul, his *medrese* and *mescid* in the town of Havza near Amasya, and his fountains in Semendre (Smederevo) and Sarajevo.[51] The written record constitutes the sole evidence for Firuz Agha's foundations in Havza as well as for the *hamam*s in Semedre and Sivas, which

[48] Ibid., 38-40.
[49] The last item is no longer extant; ibid., 40-41.
[50] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 173. It is possible that there was no separate building for this *mekteb* and that it functioned within the mosque.
[51] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 23-24.

were constructed at unknown dates and listed among the revenue-producing establishments of his *waqf*.[52] The fact that the agha's endowments included several villages around Amasya, Sonisa, Havza, Merzifon, and Lâdik, all in the same region, increases the possibility for him to have acquired these lands during his earlier service at Bayezid's princely court. In fact, by 1546, the greatest portion of the *waqf* revenue, amounting to about 43 percent, was coming from this region known as Rum-i Kadim, the province of Old Rum. The now perished *hamam* in Semendre and a host of properties in the urban area of Istanbul were making the other major contributions to the upkeep of the *waqf*. Also included in the list are villages in the vicinity of Istanbul and Izmit (İznigmud) and various shops in Edirne and Sarajevo. Firuz Agha's *waqf* was, thus, receiving its income from various localities lined within the vast geographical span from Sarajevo to Sivas.

Firuz Agha apparently did not cease his charitable activities after establishing this *waqf*, as there are other buildings that have been attributed to him. Some of these attributions, however, are of dubious character. One of these is a small neighborhood mosque (*mescid*), which used to stand to the south of the Valens Aqueduct, on the present-day Atatürk Bulvarı in Fatih, Istanbul. As long as Ayvansarâyî is correct in writing that the patron Firuz Agha was buried next to this mosque, it is unlikely that this patron is the same Firuz Agha who built the mosque at the At Meydanı.[53] There is yet another Firuz Agha *mescid*, still standing in the Firuzağa quarter of Beyoğlu. In this case, Ayvansarâyî clearly

[52] See Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 145, 366, and 373.
[53] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 176. The mosque was demolished in 1934; see ibid., fn. 1361.

differentiates the patron from the other Firuz Agha(s) by noting that the whereabouts of his grave are unknown. He also describes him as "an agha of the palace," thereby distinguishing this high-ranking white eunuch from his namesake, the chief treasurer of Bayezid II.[54] Likewise, Firuz Agha's patronage in Edirne also poses some difficulties, in the absence of adequate written record. He apparently founded a *mescid* at an unknown date in the vicinity of Bayezid II's *imaret* in this town. However, his association with this *mescid* and its *mahalle* is blurred by the existence of another historical Firuz Ağa Mahallesi possibly established at a different date by a namesake.[55]

It is much more likely that a certain *medrese* known to have been completed in 900/1494-95 in the town of Gümüş near Amasya was a charitable work of the same famous Firuz Agha, the builder of the mosque at the At Meydanı.[56] The same is also true for two buildings in Amasya: a mosque (*mescid*) built in the Saray quarter in the same year as the Gümüş *medrese* and a *bedestan* built at an unknown date in the Kazancı(lar) quarter.[57] Given that none of these structures is extant today, hardly anything else can be said about Firuz Agha's construction program in Amasya. It is, however, noteworthy that he also built a *bedestan* in the same quarter where Hüseyin Agha had built one a decade earlier. This suggests the rapid growth of commerce in Amasya as much as the high-ranking eunuchs' interest in this development.

[54] Ibid., 390. The minbar of this mosque was donated by a certain Emine Hatun; ibid.
[55] The Firuz Agha Mosque in Edirne is no longer extant; Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 127.
[56] Ibid., 141.
[57] Ibid., 30.

II.b. The Ayas Agha Complex in Amasya

Sometime before 1495, another court eunuch was undertaking a construction in Amasya. This was the mosque-medrese complex of a certain Ayas Agha, often referred to as "Küçük Kapu Ağası Medresesi,"[58] to be distinguished from the nearby "Büyük Kapu Ağası Medresesi" of Hüseyin Agha. This title suggests that Ayas Agha was a eunuch, though a lesser one ranking under Hüseyin Agha, given that the latter was the *kapı ağası* (chief eunuch of the palace) at the time. On the other hand, his Arabic endowment deed dated to 26 March 1495 (28 Cemâziyelâhir 900) identifies Ayas Agha b. Abdurrahman as a manumitted slave of Bayezid II and the *perdecibaşı* of his son Prince Ahmed, who is known to have held the governorship of Amasya.[59] Obviously, this was a eunuch who had a career in the provincial princely court of this town.

Ayas Agha endowed this complex in the Şamlar quarter and stipulated it to be supported by the revenue of a small *hamam* he built on the other side of the river in Amasya (Figs. 6 and 13).[60] Built near Hüseyin Agha's octagonal *medrese*, the complex

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[58] Ibid., 14.

[59] The translation of Ayas Agha's endowment deed in Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi *defter* no. 582, p. 189, no. 125 is given in Seçkin Tan, *Ayas Ağa Külliyesi'nin Koruma-Kullanma Sorunlarının Saptanması ve Restorasyon Önerisi*, unpublished MA thesis (Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi, Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Mimarlık Anabilim Dalı, 2007), 301-05, appendix 10. *Perdedar*, *perdeci*, and *perdecibaşı* refer to those attendants who guarded entrances (for instance, that of the harem) and controlled the access to private spaces. Therefore, it makes sense that a eunuch was appointed *perdecibaşı*.

[60] See the *vakfiye*, Tan, *Ayas Ağa Külliyesi*, 302. The Kocacık or Komacık Hamamı takes its name from the previous owner of the lot. It was constructed in 900/1494-95, in the same year as the complex; Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 56.

consists of a square-planned, single-domed mosque and a contiguous and rather irregular U-shaped *medrese*, which in turn abuts a *mekteb* consisting of two cells.[61] Both the complex and the *hamam* were built mainly of rubble stone. While the place reserved for the foundation inscription was left empty, the only inscription of the complex is a highly intricate one in the Seljukid style, which is placed in the tympanum of the arched window to the left of the minaret. This inscription, which has not yet been entirely deciphered, possibly originally belonged to the mosque of Melik Danishmend Gazi, which used to stand on the lot now occupied by Ayas Agha's mosque.[62] The court eunuch, thus, seems to have paid homage to the memory of the legendary *gazi* and pre-Ottoman conqueror of Amasya by means of this visual reminder.

Ayas Agha's *vakfiye* lists a relatively limited number of properties endowed for the complex, the most notable of which are several villages near Amasya and Merzifon.[63] Yet another noteworthy information concerns Ayas Agha's brother Ali Bey and the dispute between the two over the properties endowed for the *waqf*. It appears that Ayas Agha replaced his brother as the superintendent (*mütevelli*) after the latter won a legal case against the agha, who intended to reestablish his property rights over his unregistered endowments. Despite this event, the eunuch still prioritized Ali Bey and his descendants for

[61] Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 11. For a detailed description of the physical characteristics of the complex, see Tan, *Ayas Ağa Külliyesi*, 28-74.
[62] Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 12. Also see ibid., 14, pl. 18. See the two widely different suggestions of reading the inscription provided in Tan, *Ayas Ağa Külliyesi*, 61-62.
[63] The *vakfiye*, Tan, *Ayas Ağa Külliyesi*, 303.

the superintendence of the foundation after his death, thus circumventing his own childlessness in order to keep the *waqf* benefits within the family.[64] Considering that his brother's honorific title *bey* and presence in Amasya implies a distinguished family background and even origins in the region, the case of Ayas Agha is certainly a revealing one for the history of Ottoman eunuchs.

These constructions undertaken by Firuz Agha and Ayas Agha around 1494-95 appear to have been the reverberations of the more massive building activities of the 1480s in Amasya, which were led by the sultan and the grand vizier Mehmed Pasha. It is perhaps not accidental that, as the highest ranking eunuch of the royal court, Hüseyin Agha took the lead and synchronized his acts of patronage in this town with those of the sultan and other members of the ruling elite; all these projects completed within the first five years of Bayezid's reign may well have shared the same workforce. However, any assumption of a strict relation between the timing of the constructions and the rank of the patrons seems problematic, given that *Kilârî* Süleyman Agha's mosque precedes the Amasya foundations of Firuz Agha, who must have been his superior. Instead, the propriety of any given architectural project needs to be assessed according to the overall impact of a complex set of signs including not only the project's timing in relation to other projects, but also its physical size, construction materials, formal complexity, economic proportions, specific function(s) within the society, as well as the functional variety of its units, and the

[64] Ibid., 304-05.

composition and aesthetic quality of its inscriptions. Thus, although among the eunuchs of Bayezid II it was Firuz Agha who took initiative for building in Istanbul, the chief eunuch Hüseyin Agha soon crowned the period with a more extensive building project that eventually occupied a wider niche not only in the capital's cityscape but also in the economic and social web of relations.

II.c. The Küçük Ayasofya Complex

Around the turn of the sixteenth century, Hüseyin Agha converted the deserted royal Byzantine church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus into a Friday mosque, making it the centerpiece of a full-fledged Ottoman complex (Fig. 14). By doing so, the agha joined the ranks of a series of Ottoman grandees who had been converting churches in post-conquest Istanbul.[65] The religious legitimacy of this act of patronage was undeniable. Yet, at the same time, as one of the first major endowments of court eunuchs in the capital, the so-called "Küçük Aya Sofya" (Little Hagia Sophia) foundation, with its converted mosque and newly built dependencies, represented an upward step in the negotiation of the limits of eunuch patronage (see Map 1).

[65] The conversion of churches into mosques indeed reached its apogee in the reign of Bayezid II. In this period, the church of the Studios monastery was converted by the chief of the imperial stables (*imrahor*) Ilyas Bey (before 1504), that of the Lips monastery by Fenarizade Alaaddin Efendi (before 1497), the Hagios Andreas monastery (1486) and another church of unknown name (perhaps Hagia Thekla) by the grand vizier Koca Mustafa Pasha, the Myralaion by Mesih Pasha (before 1501), and the Khora by the white eunuch grand vizier Atik Ali Pasha; Semavi Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 170; Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 255, 249, 273, 281, 221, and 177 respectively.

Although Evliya Çelebi incorrectly claims that it was constructed by Constantine I's mother Helena and dedicated to the prophet Zachariah,[66] the church was originally founded by the Byzantine emperor Justinian I (r. 527-565) and his wife Theodora shortly after his enthronement, as an expression of his gratitude to the martyred soldier-saints Sergius and Bacchus, who he believed had saved his life.[67] Constructed *intra muros*, in a locality very close to the Sea of Marmara, the church was situated to the south-west of the Sphendone. It used to adjoin the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the south and the Hormisdas Palace on the north, where Justinian had resided before his accession to the throne.[68] The church also had a direct connection with this part of the Great Palace complex. As the buildings surrounding it did not survive into Ottoman times, Justinian's church began its afterlife stripped of its palatine context and the physical support of its neighbors.[69]

Under Hüseyin Agha's patronage, this thousand year-old building was transformed into a mosque through the addition of a five-domed portico (*son cemaat yeri*) and a non-contiguous minaret in the exterior, as well as a mihrab, a minbar, and a muezzin lodge in the interior (Figs. 16 and 17). One of the earliest interventions includes the creation—or rearrangement—of a courtyard in front of the mosque through the construction of a

[66] Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, vol. 1, 18. He also wrongly attributes its conversion to Mehmed II, ibid., 57.
[67] John Freely, *The Companion Guide to Istanbul and around the Marmara* (Woodbridge: Companion Guides, 2000), 92. The monograms of Justinian and Theodora on the column capitals and the frieze inscription in the interior attest to this, ibid., 93.
[68] John Freely and Ahmet S. Çakmak, *Byzantine Monuments of Istanbul* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 129. "The puzzling misalignments in the plan of SS. Sergius and Bacchus would seem to be due at least partly to its position between these two earlier buildings, which were not entirely parallel to one another," ibid., 130.
[69] For further information on the Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus, see ibid., 129-36.

surrounding row of cells for the use of dervishes (*zâviye*); a school (*mekteb*) was annexed to the southern end of this row. Together with the domed prayer hall, cut-stone portico, minaret, U-shaped row of vaulted cells, and central ablution fountain (*şadırvan*), a typical Ottoman mosque with a courtyard was obtained, albeit a geometrically imperfect one (Fig. 15). Two other dependencies located nearby, a public bath known as the Çardaklı Hamam and a soup kitchen (*imaret*), complemented the foundation (Fig. 18).[70]

A number of modifications that these structures underwent since their construction prevents the modern visitor from perceiving what the complex looked like in Hüseyin Agha's lifetime. For instance, as the dervish convent came to be converted into a *medrese* towards the end of the Ottoman Empire, it seems to have lost several of its cells, which probably stood to the west of the structure.[71] The Küçük Ayasofya's minaret, on the other hand, was rebuilt by a grand vizier in the "baroque" fashion probably in the second half of the eighteenth century.[72] This new minaret with an onion-shaped cap was also demolished for unknown reasons around 1936 to be replaced in 1955 by the still standing minaret.[73]

In fact, as a consequence of its significance to the community, Küçük Ayasofya attracted several other benefactors who contributed to it in various ways. Most notable

[70] Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 259; Semavi Eyice, "Küçük Ayasofya Camii", *DBİA* 5: 146-47.
[71] Although Ayvansarâyî gives the number of cells as thirty-six, Eyice notes that only twenty-two survived to the republican era; Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 209; and Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 189. Eyice suggests that some of the structures belonging to the complex, including the sheikh's cells and the Küçük Ayasofya *imaret*, were probably standing on the plot to the west of the *zâviye-medrese*; ibid., 189-90.
[72] Ayvansarâyî identifies the grand vizier as Mustafa Pasha; Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 209. Eyice suggests that he must have been Köse Bâhir Mustafa Pasha, in which case the minaret was built probably between 1752 and 1765, when he served as the grand vizier for three separate terms; Semavi Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 176.
[73] Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 176, fn. 58, and 177.

among these were the rebuilding of the *mekteb* and the *şadırvan* in 1153/1740-41 by another grand vizier of the eighteenth century, and the addition of a nearby hadith college (*dârülhadis*) to the endowment by a certain Amine or Emine Hatun.[74] This hadith college, just like the foundation's original soup kitchen (*imaret*), has since perished without a trace. As a more recent modification, the mosque's connection with the sea walls was cut off by the railroad built between them in the 1860s. Harmful to the building's stability, this development also caused the area between the mosque and the *zâviye* courtyard to be used as a passage to the railroad, and thus, separated the two halves of the complex (Fig. 17).[75]

These later modifications put aside, what remains from the earliest Ottoman interventions in Küçük Ayasofya allows us to trace a number of choices that may well have belonged to the patron Hüseyin Agha. The transformation of the Byzantine church into an Ottoman mosque involved more than the attachment of external and internal symbols such as a finial (*alem*) and a mihrab. It also involved an aesthetic adjustment that included the remodeling of gates and windows in the "Ottoman style" (Fig. 21) and the carving of small engaged columns in hourglass forms on the corners of the piers.[76] During the process, some Byzantine pieces of carved stone, which were presumably found in or around the building, were assigned new contexts and functions. One such stone plaque was skillfully placed above the staircase leading to the upper gallery, and two others assumed new roles on the

[74] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 209. The benefactor who installed the minbar of the Firuz Agha Mosque in Beyoğlu is also identified as a certain Emine Hatun, "a founder of charitable works;" ibid., 390.
[75] Eyice, "Küçük Ayasofya Camii", *DBİA* 5: 147.
[76] Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 183.

minbar.[77] Yet another piece of Byzantine carved stone was respectfully displayed on the entrance of the *hamam*,[78] which seems to have adopted its unusual plan from a Byzantine building upon the foundations of which it may have been erected.[79] Finally, several inscriptions attached to different parts of the complex complemented the conversion of the Küçük Ayasofya.

Among the inscriptions there is a remarkable concentration of hadith, as no less than three quotations are placed above the northern entrance of the precinct and the mosque's main portal and northern gate. The one at the main entrance to the enclosure is apparently a shortened form of the hadith that promises forgiveness of sins as long as one behaves properly during the performance of the Friday rituals of communal prayer and sermon (Figs. 19 and 20).[80] Placed at the entrance facing the neighborhood, it underscores the Küçük Ayasofya's function as a Friday mosque. Another inscription attached to the remodeled northern gate of the narthex reiterates the hadith that heralds that awaiting the righteous believers are such marvelous things "as no eye has ever seen, nor an ear has ever heard nor a human heart can ever think of" (Figs. 21 and 22).[81] In the specific spot where it is found, the inscription may well have been intended to convey a second and this-worldly meaning that acknowledges the unusual beauty of the mosque interior, which awaits the

[77] Ibid., 182 and 184.
[78] See ibid., 192-93.
[79] This point has been made by Semavi Eyice, ibid., 193.
[80] Bukhari, *Sahih*, vol. 2, book 13, no. 8. For the Arabic text of the inscription, see Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 177.
[81] Bukhari, *Sahih*, vol. 9, book 93, no. 589. For the inscription text, see Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 178.

faithful who enter through this door. Finally, a third hadith pertaining to the recording of one's good and bad deeds is seen on top of the mosque's main entrance on the western façade (Fig. 23).[82] Eyice suspects, however, that this one might have originally been placed on the monumental western entrance of the dervish convent (Fig. 24).[83] Next to it is what looks like the mosque's foundation inscription, which is so intricate and illegible that it seems to defy its own purpose of conveying information about the patron and the building date (Fig. 23).[84] On the other hand, it is true that, perhaps with the exception of the foundation inscription, the Küçük Ayasofya inscriptions—including the three hadith quotations and the calligraphic band on the mihrab that cites the first verse of sura al-Isra[85]—are difficult to attribute to Hüseyin Agha with certainty. There is a chance that some of these might be the contributions of unknown benefactors after the patron's death.

On the other hand, the foundation inscription of double-bath called the Küçük Ayasofya Hamamı or Çardaklı Hamam (see Map 1), which Hüseyin Agha built in 909/1503-4 in order to fund his *waqf*,[86] apparently dates from his lifetime and contains a

[82] Bukhari, *Sahih*, vol. 1, book 2, no. 40. See the inscription text in Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 180-81.
[83] Ibid., 180.
[84] See ibid., 179-80.
[85] Ibid., 183-84. Eyice also writes that there is a *kelime-i tevhid* inscription on the mihrab, ibid., 184. Today, the *kelime-i tevhid* is seen on the minbar, while the mihrab inscription cites the Qur'anic verse 3:37: *Kullimā dahala 'alayhā Zakariyyā al-mihrāba* ("Whenever Zachariah visited her in the sanctuary").
[86] Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 191. The Çardaklı Hamam was thus named probably because of a gallery (*çardak*) unusually placed within the men's hot room; ibid., 194-95. As Evliya Çelebi jocularly matches public baths with groups of people according to profession or physical trait, he includes both names of this *hamam* in his list and assigns the Küçük Ayasofya Hamamı to *imam*s and the Çardaklı Hamam to pederasts; Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, vol. 1, 137. Apparently, the Küçük Ayasofya was associated with piety, but the name "Çardaklı" had a different connotation.

noteworthy detail. This elaborate calligraphic inscription placed above the entrance to the male section refers to the patron as "Hüseyin Beğ" and as an *emîr*. Although it also identifies him as the *kapı ağası*, the use of the titles *beğ* (*bey*) and *emîr* is, needless to say, very unusual for eunuchs and brings to mind a military position and a non-eunuch grandee. To stretch the imagination further, his descent from a family of notables—perhaps even from one of the "aristocratic" families who were more influential in the early centuries of the empire—could be considered as a possibility. If this is the case, it might not necessarily mean that he was not a eunuch. As seen above, the implication of a military function is completely absent in the inscriptions of Hüseyin Agha's earlier foundations in Amasya and Sonisa, where he is referred to by the title "Agha," as the *kapı ağası* working at the sultan's "sublime threshold." His association with the sultan is also omitted from the foundation inscription of the *hamam*—and also apparently from that of the mosque. Granted that those buildings and the Küçük Ayasofya belonged to the same person's *waqf*, this change of title and the general manner of reference is interesting for the history of Ottoman eunuchs as well as of the *kapı ağası* office, and therefore, in need of further consideration.

Legend holds it that, after establishing his foundation, Hüseyin Agha was falsely accused of letting in spies through a crack in the sea walls near the Küçük Ayasofya, and as a result of this calumny, he was decapitated. However, he did not die until after he carried his severed head to the spot where his mausoleum stands today. This miraculous event led the sultan to accept Hüseyin Agha's innocence. Inspired by this legend, the misfortunate

agha's mausoleum came to be known to the general public as the tomb of "*Kesikbaş* Hüseyin Ağa" (Hüseyin Agha the Severed Head).[87] His octagonal *türbe* made of brick and rubble stone still stands within the cemetery to the north of the mosque (Fig. 25). Ayvansarâyî, who partly confirms this legend by writing that Hüseyin Agha was either executed or murdered (*maktûlen*), records a couplet which he claims was written on the *türbe* wall: "Life in the world is a single moment. / Spend the time only in obedience to God!"[88] Given that he died during the reign of Bayezid II,[89] the date of his death must have been between 1507, the date of his endowment deed,[90] and 1512, the date of Bayezid's death.

Today, the mausoleum contains not only the tomb of Hüseyin Agha but also that of the Halvetî sheikh Hacı Kâmil Efendi (d. 1330/1912), who used to be associated with the Küçük Ayasofya *zâviye*/*medrese*.[91] This fact attests to the strong Sufi presence at the Küçük Ayasofya throughout the history of the complex. A Halvetî center in the mid-sixteenth century, the Küçük Ayasofya *zâviye* possibly housed this Sufi order from the beginning of its foundation. After the renowned Aziz Mahmud Hüdaî became its sheikh in

[87] Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 152-53, fn. 10.
[88] *Saat-i vâhidedir ömr-i cihân* / *Saat-i taata sarf eyle hemân*.
[89] Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmânî*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, tr. Seyit Ali Kahraman (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı and Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996), vol. 2, 198.
[90] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 16.
[91] Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 187.

1584, the Celvetî order dominated the dervish convent until a branch of the Şabanî order took over in the twentieth century.[92]

The Sufi presence in the complex, moreover, was not restricted to the dervish cells only, as the mosque itself was used as the *tevhidhâne*, *i.e.*, the hall where Sufi rituals and ceremonies were practiced. Indeed, Baha Tanman has noted that, with its central octagonal plan and spacious gallery, the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque provided an appropriate environment for the Halvetî and Celvetî mystic rites.[93] In addition to this link between the *zâviye* and the mosque, the soup kitchen (*imâret*) unit of the complex also appears to have been an integral part of the dervish convent. The summary of the complex's endowment deed in the *waqf* register of 1546 stipulates that daily meals should be prepared "in the *zâviye*" and served to the poor residing there.[94] The Küçük Ayasofya foundation, thus, functioned as one social unit consisting of complementary branches that supported a community of dervishes and—according to the *waqf* register—a staff of no less than thirty people.[95]

The summary of the *vakfiye* of Hüseyin Agha b. Abdülhayy signed in 913/1507 by Mehmed b. Mustafa lists a number of properties in Istanbul, Galata, Iznik, and Edirne that were assigned to generate revenue for the Küçük Ayasofya complex. In addition to two

[92] Baha Tanman, "Küçük Ayasofya Tekkesi," *DBİA* 5: 149.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 17.
[95] Ibid.

*han*s near the Ayasofya and another one in Edirne,[96] the list includes the Çardaklı Hamam, which used to have an annual contribution of 42,500 *akçe*s as of 1546 (*i.e.*, around 30 percent of the entire *waqf* revenue).[97]

In the absence of descendants, the superintendence of Hüseyin Agha's *waqf* was assigned to manumitted slaves. As the holder of the office of *kapı ağası* for at least twenty years, Hüseyin Agha also stipulated that whoever became *kapı ağası* were to be the "honorary superintendent" (*hasbî nâzır*) of the Küçük Ayasofya *waqf* and entitled to dismiss staff in the case of misdeed.[98] The agha thus encouraged his successors to honor his memory and strengthened the ties that linked him to the future holders of his office.

Although his successors in the office apparently did not attach their names to any notable contribution to the Küçük Ayasofya complex, the small neighborhood mosque that Hüseyin Agha is known to have founded in Esirpazarı in Istanbul was indeed rebuilt by a *kapı ağası* after a destructive fire (see Map 1). Seyyid Salih Agha, the chief white eunuch (*kapı ağası*) under Selim III (r. 1789-1807), constructed the mosque anew in 1217/1802-03, in the year "Hüseyin Agha's congregational mosque became even loftier than before."[99] The chronogram composed for the reconstruction begins with the usual reference to the reigning sultan; then it duly acknowledges the original patron by reiterating his name three

[96] Ibid., 16-17. None of these *han*s have survived; see Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 199-200.
[97] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 16.
[98] Ibid., 17.
[99] Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 196-97. *Hüseyin Ağa'nın oldu câmii evvelkinden zîbâ*, in Pertev Efendi's chronogram, ibid., 197.

times, while Seyyid Salih Agha's name is mentioned only once in the poem.[100] Today, perhaps with the exception of the minaret base, nothing remains from Hüseyin Agha's original building.[101]

The Çarşıkapı/Esirpazarı mosque was recorded not in the same *vakfiye* as the Küçük Ayasofya but in a separate endowment deed, together with a *mescid* and a single bath in Samakov (Samokov in present day Bulgaria) and a *hamam* in Leskofça (Leskovac in present day Serbia).[102] Hüseyin Agha's pious foundations in the Balkans also included a *mescid* and a school in Filibe (Plovdiv in present-day Bulgaria).[103]

Two other architectural products of eunuchs during the reign of Bayezid are dated to the same decade as the Küçük Ayasofya. One of these is the fountain built in 912/1506-07 in Kadıköy by a certain Mehmed Agha, whose identification as *kapı ağası*—if correct—suggests that Hüseyin Agha had already retired by that time or been appointed to a different post.[104] The other one, the small mosque built by Selman Agha near the seashore in Üsküdar was completed in the same year[105] as one of the first mosques of this town. Situated not far from the late-fifteenth-century mosque of Rum Mehmed Pasha, the Selman

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[100] The poem is recorded in a certain copy of Ayvansarâyî's *Hadîka*, Süleymaniye Manuscript Library, Esad Efendi collection, MS no. 2248, fol. 26; Eyice, "Kapu Ağası," 196. See the poem in ibid., 196-97.
[101] Ibid., 198-99.
[102] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 71. The Samakov *hamam*'s annual revenue was 3150 *akçe*s and that of the Leskofça hamam was 1900 *akçe*s by 1546; ibid.
[103] Ibid., 71-72.
[104] Kolağası Mehmed Râ'if, *Mir'ât-ı İstanbul, I. Cild (Asya Yakası)*, ed. Günay Kut and Hatice Aynur (Istanbul: Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), 48-49. This is the oldest fountain in the Asian side of the city, according to Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. 2, 253. It does not exist any more.
[105] Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 177.

Agha Mosque belongs to the wave of construction in Üsküdar in the early sixteenth century, which also included the Kapudan Pasha Mosque (before 1499-1500) and the Küçük Davud Pasha Mosque (ca. 1505-06). Clearly, these constructions responded to the growing needs of the Muslim community flourishing in Üsküdar.[106]

The Selman Agha Mosque, which is also known as the Horhor Mosque, is a modest one with a rectangular plan, a pitched roof, and a thick minaret made of brick. Constructed of brick and stone, the mosque has an Arabic foundation inscription, which simply gives the patron's name and the date.[107] The inscription on Selman Agha's tomb in the mosque's precinct reveals the date of his death as 914/1508 and identifies him as the *darüssaade ağası*, thus adding one more title to the range of eunuch patrons of the Bayezid era.[108]

The survey presented so far has, indeed, featured holders of almost all of the major offices that were associated with eunuchs: two officers serving as *kapı ağası* (Hüseyin Agha and Mehmed Agha), a *hazinedarbaşı* (Firuz Agha), a *darüssaade ağası* (Selman Agha), a *kilârî* (Süleyman Agha), and even a provincial court's *perdecibaşı* (Ayas Agha). To these we may also add a certain Hüseyin Agha, identified as an agha of the Old Palace,

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[106] Sinem Arcak, *Üsküdar as the Site for the Mosque Complexes of Royal Women in the Sixteenth Century*, unpublished MA thesis (Istanbul: Sabancı University, 2004), 17-18. The Kapudan Pasha Mosque was originally commissioned by Hamza Fakih and received its name from the eighteenth-century admiral who built it anew. Other constructions of the early sixteenth century include the Demirci *mescid* (before 1508), the Toygar Hamza Mosque (before 1509-10), and the Kazgancı Mosque (before 1523); ibid.

[107] Recording the eunuch's name wrongly as Süleyman Agha, Ayvansarâyî gives the mosque's Arabic chronogram: "Seeking God's mercy, the foundations were laid for the construction of this blessed place by Süleyman Ağa ibn Abdullah, and it was completed in Receb of the year nine hundred twelve, 912 [1506]. At the beginning of Cemaziyelâhir;" Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 503.

[108] Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 177. According to Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 503, he was *kapı ağası*.

who, according to the 1546 survey, built—or rebuilt—the mosque known as the *Mescid* of Âşık Pasha in Istanbul in Muharrem 898/1492 (see Map 2).[109] It is noteworthy that even in this early period—apparently not long after their debut as architectural patrons—court eunuchs of a variety of offices undertook architectural projects. The need and the drive for new buildings as well as the relatively large number of available spots in the new capital no doubt had a role in prompting this situation. Yet it is also striking that Amasya and the nearby towns on the north Anatolian route stood out as an important locus of the patronage of court eunuchs in this period. By showing so much interest in this provincial capital, the eunuchs were not only emulating their master Bayezid II's favor for the town, but also providing the earliest examples of a general tendency among eunuch patrons to build near royal courts, which were also their current or former workplaces.

On the other hand, although it is true that the availability of space made it possible for Firuz Agha to build his mosque in such a prominent spot and the availability of a splendid and ready-to-convert Byzantine church allowed Hüseyin Agha to create a socio-religious complex around it, it is important to note that it was their being the two highest-ranking eunuchs that allowed these aghas to undertake these relatively ambitious projects.

[109] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 273-74. Based on this *defter*, Mitchell suggests that Hüseyin Agha might have rebuilt an existing mosque that stood together with a dervish convent; Edward Mitchell, "Âşık Paşa Çeşmesinin Gizli Tarihi," *Tarih ve Toplum* 90 (1991): 370. The mosque is also associated with the historian Âşıkpaşazâde, who might be its original builder and the same person as Şeyh Ahmed, who is buried inside the mosque; ibid., 369. For the mosque, also see Kafescioğlu, *The Ottoman Capital*, 332-33. Ayvansarâyî's designation of Hüseyin Agha as *babüssaade ağası* is most probably wrong, given that he was identified as the agha of the Old Palace in the *waqf* survey, a much earlier source; Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 170.

The architectural works of eunuchs were, indeed, permeated with a sense of hierarchy which regulated the dimensions of each patron's individual imprint on the city and the empire at large. It was clearly the *kapı ağası* who, by virtue of being practically the chief eunuch of the imperial palace, surpassed all the others in creating large *waqf*s. In his undertakings, whether in Istanbul, Amasya, or Sonisa, Hüseyin Agha acted confidently in shaping and transforming urban spaces. The Küçük Ayasofya complex supported by his wealthy *waqf*, his centrally situated *bedestan* and unusually designed *medrese* in Amasya, as well as his pioneering building project in Sonisa became the foci of their respective urban environments. While it is difficult to make precise judgments in the absence of evidence for other possible works of the other contemporary eunuchs, the second-largest architectural legacy among them apparently belongs to the chief treasurer Firuz Agha. On the basis of their known constructions, it looks as if it was not the *darüssaade ağası* Selman Agha but the *hazinedarbaşı* Firuz Agha who was second in rank after the *kapı ağası*.

It is also important not to project the popular feminized image of the socially uprooted late Ottoman court eunuchs upon the eunuchs of this early period. The evidence on Ayas Agha's family connection and the use of *bey* as a title for Hüseyin Agha suggests that assumptions about court eunuchs on the basis of later examples may not necessarily be true for these early aghas. Yet another example in this respect is Firuz Agha himself, who, according to the *Heşt Behişt* of Idris-i Bitlisî, was later promoted to the governorate first of İşkodra (Shkodër) and then, in 912/1506-07, of Bosna (Bosnia), and thus became "Firuz

Bey."[110] This information attests to the permeability of the division between courtly posts and military-administrative positions in this early period. As castrated officers with little or no contact with women—except for the Old Palace agha—the eunuch patrons in Bayezid's reign were perhaps seeing the difference between themselves and vizier patrons simply as a matter of rank—a gap which could easily be bridged with a promotion. How this gap evolved in subsequent periods will be addressed in the following chapters.

[110] Noted in Uzunçarşılı, *Kitâbeler*, 32-33.

CHAPTER III

READJUSTING THE LIMITS:

THE PATRONAGE OF SÜLEYMAN'S EUNUCHS

Focusing on the patronage of palace eunuchs during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-66), this chapter offers a bottom-up look into what is often characterized as the golden age of the history of Ottoman architecture as well as of the Ottoman polity itself. Evoking prolific building activity and grandiose construction projects launched under the supervision of the celebrated royal architect Sinan, the long reign of Süleyman was marked by some of the greatest architectural achievements of Ottoman history. However, overshadowed by these ambitious undertakings which claimed the Ottoman skyline in the name of the sultan and his family, there were also minor projects that pursued the glorification of courtly patrons—and, by extension, of the imperial court—on the neighborhood level. This chapter looks at the buildings commissioned by a succession of high-ranking palace eunuchs in this period, some of which constituted the humblest works undertaken by Sinan in the 1550s and 60s.

What is noteworthy in the first place is the shrunken volume of the architectural works by court eunuchs in the first half of the sixteenth century. Although probable deficiencies in the endowment records hinder precision in any comparison between the

reign of Bayezid II and the reigns of his two successors, the impression one gets from the available evidence is that no eunuch of the later era established *waqf*s that were in proportions comparable to those of Hüseyin and Firuz Aghas. While one reason could be that these two aghas had relatively longer terms of office, which allowed them to expand their foundations, another reason could well be the renegotiation of the allowed limits of patronage during the reign of Süleyman. The latter possibility is supported by the fact that, in spite of the visibly increased amount of construction by the mid-sixteenth century, the architectural works of court eunuchs do not seem to have increased in a proportionate fashion. Having said that, the building activity of eunuchs still seems to have been affected by the general increase of constructions in the 1550s and 60s, as in these years their architectural undertakings became slightly more frequent and the highest-ranking court eunuchs, after a long interval, had a comeback as patrons of architecture.

The consolidation of the royal family in the capital and particularly in the Topkapı Palace—a significant process the first steps of which were taken during the reign of Süleyman—also seems to have had an impact on the architectural patronage of court eunuchs. Unlike in the times of Bayezid II, when the prestigious provincial capital Amasya and the region around it rivaled Istanbul in attracting eunuch patrons' attention, eunuchs under Süleyman began to concentrate their building efforts on the imperial capital. While

occasional constructions also took place in the provinces, on the whole Istanbul emerged as the principal scene of the eunuchs' public display of wealth, status, and piety.[1]

The leading role of the *kapı ağası* among the eunuch patrons in the late fifteenth century appears to have had a weakened continuation in the sixteenth. While the holders of this office were better represented among eunuch patrons, their architectural projects never reached the spectacularity of Hüseyin Agha's works in the earlier era. In fact, what characterized this period was that the differences among the outputs of eunuch patrons of diverse ranks came to be less pronounced. As the number of separate architectural projects undertaken by any given eunuch patron decreased, small unpretentious *mahalle* mosques accompanied by elementary schools, plain fountains, and the founders' graves seemed to become the norm.

During the relatively short reign of Selim I (1512-20), which was marked by the victorious campaigns against the Safavids and the Mamluks, there was a sharp decrease in building activity compared to the previous period. Consequently, we find only one building sponsored by a court eunuch patron in the whole empire: a dervish convent (*tekke*) built by *kapı ağası* Mustafa Agha in the vicinity of Hagia Sophia and thus of the Topkapı Palace, the workplace of the builder (see Map 1). The chronogram of the no longer extant convent was recorded by Evliya Çelebi, who possibly omitted the beginning of the inscription

[1] Gülru Necipoğlu observes that the focus on Istanbul was a general feature of the patronage of the aghas and attendants of the inner imperial palace—a group which also included non-eunuchs—from the 1550s to the 1580s: "[t]he mosques of patrons belonging to this group invariably situated in the capital and its suburbs;" Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 489.

where the patron's name might have been cited. It yields the year 926/1519-20, dating the construction to the very end of Selim's reign and possibly the beginning of the age of Süleyman.[2]

From this date to the 1540s, there is again a conspicuous gap in the architectural patronage of court eunuchs, which is interrupted only by the works of a certain *Tavâşî* Süleyman Agha b. Abdülkerim. Süleyman Agha's situation as a castrated man of non-Muslim origin is underlined by this appellation; nevertheless, his rank is not specified.[3] His endowment deed summarized in the 1546 *waqf* survey is dated to February-March 1531 (Receb 937). According to the summary, in order to fund his *mescid* and *mekteb*, Süleyman Agha endowed among other properties 15 cells in the mosque's vicinity and a *han* in At Pazarı, Fatih, with an annual income of 5,000 *akçe*s.[4] While the *mekteb* and the *han* have perished, the mosque that he built in Kumkapı, which used to form the nucleus of a

[2] *Ola makbûl-i Hüdâ bânî, didi târîhini* / *Hamdullah: Oldı zîbâ tekyesi hâlen tamam 926* (May its builder be a favorite of God! Hamdullah composed its date: His lofty convent has now been completed.); Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, ed. Orhan Şaik Gökyay (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1996), vol. I, 320; also quoted in Yüksel, *II. Bâyezid Yavuz Selim*, 438. Soon after the completion of this convent, in May 1521 ("927 Cümadelührâ'sının evâili"), a certain Sinan Agha endowed a mosque that he constructed in a location very close to the present day Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Even though it later came to be known as the *Kapı Ağası* Sinan Agha Mosque, neither the 1546 *waqf* survey nor Ayvansarâyî's *Garden of the Mosques* indicate that the builder was a eunuch. Ayvansarâyî, in fact, identifies him as *müteferrika başı*; therefore, the apellation of *Kapı Ağası* might well be the result of confusion. See Ömer Lutfi Barkan and Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrir Defteri 953 (1546) Tarihli* (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1970), 8 and fn. 1; and Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 192. The statement in Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 192, fn. 1493 that the mosque was "originally built in the seventeenth century" is also doubtful, given the information in the 1546 survey.

[3] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 125; see fn. 2 and 3.

[4] Ibid.

neighborhood, survives in the form it was given during a remodeling in the late Ottoman period (see Map 2).[5]

In 948/1541, the *waqf* of another Süleyman Agha was registered. It is unclear whether this Süleyman Agha b. Abdülmu'in was the same person as *Tavâşî* Süleyman Agha, yet his being a eunuch is implied by the proximity of his *mekteb* to the Old Palace. Another indication is the fact that he assigned his *waqf*'s superintendence first to his manumitted slaves and, after the end of their line of descendants, to whoever would be appointed by the agha of the Old Palace. Apart from various properties in Istanbul, Süleyman Agha also endowed for his *mekteb* a meadow near Deliorman in the Balkans. His endowment deed allocates part of the *waqf* revenue for the staff of the Kalenderhane Mosque and the Bayezid Mosque.[6]

The next court eunuch who engaged in architectural patronage in the 1540s was also an affiliate of the same palace. Yakub Agha (d. 954/1547-48) was the chief eunuch or the Agha of the Old Palace (*eski saray ağası*). As the second eunuch patron identified with this title after Hüseyin Agha—the rebuilder of the Aşık Paşa *Mescid*—around half a century earlier, Yakub Agha's term of office corresponded to a period when the Old Palace began to decline in importance. The first palace to have been built after the conquest of the city, the Old Palace had served after the construction of the Topkapı Palace (the New Palace) as

[5] İ. Aydın Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimârîsinde Kānûnî Sultan Süleyman Devri (926-974/1520-1566)*, İstanbul (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 2004), 713.
[6] Barkan and Ayverdi, eds., *İstanbul Vakıfları*, 437.

the residence of royal mothers, young princes and princesses as well as the women population constituting the bulk of the imperial harem. During the reign of Süleyman, the royal favorite (then the sultan's legal wife) Hürrem and her children began to reside in the Topkapı Palace, even though the Old Palace on paper remained their official residence.[7] By the 1540s, when Yakub Agha was in charge, it was functioning basically as a repository of young girls, as the royal family was no longer residing there and the sultan's mother Hafsa Sultan had already died in 1534. Still, the palace was probably housing a population close to 167, *i.e.*, the number of people living there by 1552, including the household staff.[8]

As a patron of architecture, Yakub Agha sought to construct a structure of practical value for the palace population and built a *mescid*, together with a fountain, across the entrance gate of the Old Palace (see Map 2). Thus cultivating the agha's link with his workplace, his mosque was intended to be of service especially during the funerals of the palace residents;[9] at other times, it was probably used by the palace staff. Located to the east of the palace grounds, the mosque is also not far from the Mercan Agha Mosque, the builder of which was probably, just like Yakub Agha, also employed in the management of the imperial harem. Given Yakub Agha's connection with royal women, it is thus not a

[7] Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 119-121. Peirce points out that even after Hürrem and her suite took up residence in the Topkapı Palace, they were still recorded in the privy purse register as residents of the Old Palace; ibid., 122, the note under the table.
[8] See the table on ibid., 122.
[9] "[The leading of] funeral services in the Eski Saray opposite [the mosque] is assigned to the imams of the mosque;" Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 44. After being destroyed by a fire, the mosque was built anew by the Italian architect Bariori in 1869 under the auspices of the grand vizier Âli Pasha; Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 740. Today, it is to the east of the Istanbul University complex, at the intersection of Fuat Paşa Caddesi and Mercan Caddesi.

surprise that it was Nurbanu Sultan, the consort of Selim II and mother of Murad III, who upgraded his *mescid* to a Friday mosque by installing its minbar.[10] In fact, it is quite probable that Nurbanu was personally acquainted with the agha.

According to Ayvansarâyî, *eski saray ağası* Yakub Agha was the builder of another *mescid* and an adjoining *mekteb* located not far from the Divan Yolu axis. Interestingly, the minbar of this mosque was also installed by a palace woman called Fatma Hanım at an unknown date.[11] In raising the status of the agha's mosques to Friday mosque, these women were honoring the memory of either an acquaintance or a former servant and fellow resident of the Old Palace.

Yakub Agha died in 954/1547-48 according to his tombstone inscription and was buried in the courtyard of a *mekteb* that he had established in Otakçılar, Eyüp.[12] The date of his death is also the date of construction of a Yakub Agha Mosque Complex in Kastamonu, which puzzlingly also includes a mausoleum. Among the dependencies of the "Yakup Ağa İmaret Camii" are a *medrese*, a soup kitchen, an elementary school, a hostel (*tabhane*), and a *hamam*.[13] Constructed of ashlar masonry, the single-domed square-shaped mosque with a three-bay portico and its dependent *medrese* comprising eighteen cells are perched on a hillside overlooking the town.[14] If built by a eunuch as it seems, the mosque complex

[10] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 44.
[11] Ibid., 246.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 762.
[14] Godfrey Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1971), 191.

arguably constitutes the most spectacular architectural work by a eunuch patron in this period. The building project apparently took advantage of the larger available space and perhaps also less rigid norms of decorum in the provincial center. While the reasons for Yakub Agha's interest in building in Kastamonu are obscure, the fact that his construction was simultaneous with that of Kara Mustafa Pasha's *medrese* in this town suggests a concerted Ottoman elite interest in giving an impetus to the development of this old Anatolian capital.[15]

Another major eunuch patron of the era was *kapı ağası* Mahmud Agha, whose most notable work was a neighborhood *mescid* in Nahlbend (today Ahırkapı) (Fig. 26, see Map 1). The no longer extant Persian chronogram used to give the mosque's construction date as 961/1553-54.[16] The building is counted among the works of the royal architect Sinan, who was simultaneously in charge of several other projects, including the Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul. As the mosque was heavily rebuilt in the late nineteenth century, little remains from its original construction apart from its cut-stone basement. Nevertheless, the current structure consisting of a square shaped prayer hall and an adjacent square extension

[15] Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 762.
[16] Mahmud Ağa, that sun of felicity, / Mine of prosperity and spring of generosity,
[Built] his mosque as a pious deed. / He composed the date. "Charitable building of Mahmud," 961[1553-54]; Howard Crane's translation on Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 58. The chronogram is *Binā-ı ḫayr-ı Maḥmūd*; ibid., fn. 440. Ayvansarâyî notes that Mahmud Agha's tomb was next to the mosque and that the mosque had a quarter.

for latecomers, both covered with a hipped roof, possibly bears some similarity to the original mosque (Fig. 27).[17]

Several archival documents noted by Gülru Necipoğlu unravel the mosque's subsequent conversion into a Friday mosque at the agha's request. The permission was given in 1574, while Mahmud Agha survived until 1579, when he obtained another permit for being buried next to his Friday mosque.[18] The endowment deed, which dates from 1575, assigns the agha's residence in the mosque's vicinity as a source of revenue for the Friday mosque and its *mekteb*.[19] Sinan's autobiographies also refer to a *medrese* as part of the complex; this unit was probably subsequently added to the ensemble.[20] The fountain that Ayvansarâyî mentions is still standing near the mosque.[21]

An even humbler building project of the period was the *mescid* built by Sinan in Nişanca, Eyüp, under the auspices of Davud Agha, who is identified in the inscription as

[17] Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan,* 489.
[18] Ibid., 490. As a senior and much respected palace agha who lived to see the reign of Murad III, Mahmud Agha was probably the same person described in an early-seventeenth-century treatise as the last perfect *kapı ağası* before the "deterioration" of the palace order during this sultan's reign; Anonymous, "Kitâb-ı Müstetâb," in *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtına Dair Kaynaklar*, ed. Yaşar Yücel (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 25-26. According to this, while the ideal *kapı ağası* was Mahmud Agha, the ideal grand vizier was Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and the ideal *şeyhülislam* Ebussu'ud Efendi. This source's claim that Mahmud Agha was still holding the office by the time Murad III ascended to the throne is probably incorrect. Given that Cafer and Yakub Aghas were in charge during the last years of Süleyman, Mahmud Agha must have already been retired by that time. Another Mahmud Agha became *kapı ağası* after Yakub Agha in 1566 and, according to *Sicill-i Osmânî*, died early in the reign of Selim II; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmânî*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, tr. Seyit Ali Kahraman (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı and Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996), vol. 3, 907. *Sicill* gives the date of the earlier Mahmud Agha's death as 961/1553-54; ibid.
[19] Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan,* 490.
[20] Ibid. According to Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 58, the mosque's lower storey was used as a *medrese*.
[21] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 58.

ağa-yı saray, the agha of the palace (see Map 2).[22] As noted in the first chapter, this was an office assigned to white eunuchs, and its holder was in charge of the cleaning and maintenance of the imperial palace.[23]

The mosque itself is almost square-shaped, yet smaller than the square-shaped mosques of the earlier eunuchs Firuz Agha, Ayas Agha and *Kilârî* Süleyman Agha.[24] It is made of rubble stone and has a hipped roof instead of a dome. Complemented with a short and thick minaret, the mosque is, thus, of a very modest appearance.[25] Its three-lined *thuluth* foundation inscription in Arabic above the door gives the year 962/1554-55, the same date given on Davud Agha's gravestone within the mosque precinct.[26] Ayvansarâyî also mentions a *mekteb* of the same patron, which might have been near the mosque.[27]

A better-known eunuch patron of the reign of Süleyman was Cafer Agha, who is referred to as *kapı ağası* or *babüssaade ağası* in Ayvansarâyî's compendium, in the treatises of Sinan, as well as in one of the inscriptions of his Soğukkuyu Medresesi.[28] Cafer Agha is known as a brother of the famous chief white eunuch Gazanfer Agha (d. 1603), who is believed to have completed the Soğukkuyu Medresesi in 967/1559-60 after his

[22] This appellation is also repeated in the autobiographies of the mosque's architect Sinan in the form of *saray ağası*; Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 104. Ayvansarâyî might be confusing two typical white eunuch offices when he refers to Davud Agha as *kapı ağası*; Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 310.
[23] Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilâtı*, 356.
[24] Its inner dimensions are 7.70 x 7.75 m.; Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 104.
[25] Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 104.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 310. The mosque was the center of a neighborhood; ibid.
[28] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 10; Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 78-79.

brother's death in 964/1557.[29] As this identification—as well as the whole story about the two brothers' voluntary castration—seems dubious,[30] it is possible that this Cafer Agha is confused with his namesake, the brother of Gazanfer.

Kapı ağası Cafer Agha's most well-known construction is the theological college that he built on the slope of the same hill as Hagia Sophia (see Map 1). The proximity of this location to the Topkapı Palace, no doubt, must have facilitated Cafer Agha's inspection of the project. This was the second *medrese* of a eunuch builder, after that of Mustafa Agha, to have been constructed in the vicinity of the great imperial mosque; and acquiring property in this area, as the *waqf* summaries of Hüseyin and Firuz Aghas also suggest, was not at all uncommon among court eunuchs.

The *medrese* consists of a domed classroom and a courtyard surrounded by a U-shaped row of sixteen cells, which are fronted by a colonnaded portico featuring pointed arches (Figs. 28 and 29).[31] Laundry and ablution facilities are thought to have been located in the area behind the classroom. Alternating courses of brick and stone were used in the construction, while the classroom façade and the colonnade facing the courtyard were made of cut stone. Due to the sloped terrain, the *medrese* cells bordering today's Alemdar Caddesi were constructed on top of a series of shops (Fig. 30). The *medrese* entrance is

[29] Aptullah Kuran, *Sinan: The Grand Old Master of Ottoman Architecture* (Istanbul: Ada Press Publishers, 1987), 134.
[30] See Chapter IV.
[31] Yüksel notes that some sources refer to a greater number of cells; Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 78 and 79, fn. 1.

from the Hagia Sophia direction, through a cul-de-sac leading to the arched gate of the courtyard.[32]

While Cafer Agha did not place any inscription on the *medrese* in his lifetime, three inscriptions were attached next to the classroom door in later periods (Fig. 31). These are very unusual inscriptions of "documentary" character, which give the impression of archival documents carved in stone. The earliest one, placed above the door, dates from July 1560 (Zilkāde 967) and reveals that Cafer Agha had died by that time. This is an order of Sultan Süleyman commanding a certain amount of water to be allocated to the *medrese*.[33] The other two inscriptions on the classroom façade date from the 1840s and record two endowments of olive oil for the consumption of the *medrese* residents. Both of these were dedicated to the souls of two deceased palace employees by their heirs who were members of the corps of halberdiers with tresses.[34] The closeness of the imperial palace once more seems to have played a role in these endowments, which served to link the memory of fellow palace staff members to that of Cafer Agha. The interest of halberdiers in the chief eunuch's *medrese* may also have stemmed from the proximity of this group of officers to court eunuchs.[35]

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[32] Ibid., 78-79.
[33] Ibid., 79-80.
[34] The inscription on the right, dating from 1261/1843, gives the names of the late el-Hajj Mustafa Agha, a flour provider at the imperial palace (*uncubaşı*), and his heir Süleyman Agha, the chief of the halberdiers (*serteberdârân-ı hassa*); ibid., 80. The other inscription bears the date 1263/1846-47 and mentions Süleyman Agha of Niğde, the steward of the halberdiers (*teberdârân-ı zülüfliyân-ı hassa kethüdâsı*), who died during a pilgrimage, and his heir Mustafa Agha, a halberdier (*teberdârân-ı merkum neferâtından*); ibid., 81.
[35] See İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1945), 432-38.

In addition the Soğukkuyu Medresesi, Cafer Agha also built a *han* in Antakya, as understood from an imperial order dating from 975/1567.[36] It is, however, less certain whether it was the same Cafer Agha who built the mosque of this name in Kadıköy. Ayvansarâyî writes that it was built by *babüssaade ağası* Cafer Agha, although he does not explicitly state whether he was the same agha who built the *medrese* near Hagia Sophia.[37] Today, this simple mosque with a hipped roof does not seem to have any part remaining from the sixteenth century. Cafer Agha's grave, which, according to the eighteenth-century writer, was next to this mosque, is no longer extant. In the absence of Cafer Agha's endowment deed, the attribution, thus, remains uncertain.[38]

Odabaşı Behruz Agha's mosque commissioned to Sinan and his other pious works also need to be cited in this context. As the chief agha of the Privy Chamber, Behruz Agha was likely to have been a eunuch. Even though the appointment of a non-eunuch to this office during the reign of Süleyman weakens this possibility,[39] Behruz Agha's constructions still need to be taken into account in any general assessment of court eunuchs' patronage.

[36] Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 78.
[37] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 544. The present mosque was probably built in 1760-73; ibid., fn. 3743.
[38] Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 78.
[39] See Chapter I.

Behruz Agha completed his Friday mosque in Şehremini in 970/1562-63 and also built an accompanying elementary school and a fountain within its precinct (see Map 2).[40] However, the rectangular mosque, covered with a hipped roof, might well have been originally built as a *mescid* and converted afterwards into a Friday mosque (Fig. 32). Its prayer hall is larger compared to many other buildings by eunuch patrons in this period.[41] Considered together with the relatively large number of monuments attributed to Behruz Agha, the patron's high status among other palace aghas seems clear. As we learn from Sinan's autobiographies, the agha also built a public bath in the same district as his mosque in order to support his *waqf*.[42] Ayvansarâyî's *Mecmuâ* mentions a market building (*çarşı*) near the mosque, and adds a fountain and a *hamam* in Beykoz.[43] The Beykoz fountain later came to be known by a certain Ishak Agha's name, as this person—a customs officer—rebuilt it in 1159/1746.[44]

The last of the eunuch patrons under Süleyman the Magnificent was Yakub Agha, who was the *kapı ağası* until his death soon after the sultan's demise on the Szigetvár

[40] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 33. This source also provides the mosque's chronogram, which is not extant today: "Obligation of obedience to God," (*Minnet-i ṭā'at*) 970/1562-63. According to Ayvansarâyî, the whereabouts of the agha's grave are unknown. However, a tomb located next to the mosque is known as Behruz Agha's grave; Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 416.
[41] Its internal dimensions are 9.80 x 16.50 m.; Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 415. The building used to have a wooden portico, which is enclosed today. Although the mosque was extensively rebuilt in subsequent periods, it still retains its original walls made of stone and brick; see ibid. and Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan,* 492.
[42] Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan,* 492.
[43] Hâfız Hüseyin Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, ed. Fahri Ç. Derin and Vâhid Çabuk (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1985), 260-61.
[44] It is also known as "On Çeşmeler" (the Ten Fountains); Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 416 and 426.

campaign.[45] The double bath that Yakub Agha commissioned in the present day Samatya (Kocamustafapaşa) is acknowledged as a work of Sinan in the treatises that listed the architect's constructions, *Adsız Risale*, *Tuhfetü'l-Mimârîn*, and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* (see Map 2).[46] The *hamam* had apparently achieved some fame by the time the nineteenth-century writer R. Walsh introduced it in his book, which also included a pictorial representation of a men's "cooling room" or dressing room by Thomas Allom (1804-1872) (Fig. 33).[47] Allom's engraving is often taken for granted as a documentary image of the Yakub Agha *hamam*'s interior as of the nineteenth century. However, as Semavi Eyice has noted, the inconsistency between the depiction of the dressing room and the actual plan of the building make it difficult to accept Allom's picture as a straightforward representation of this particular bath.[48] The plan of the *hamam*'s women's section drawn by Glück in 1917-18, which is identical with the men's section, features a simple rectangular dressing room which lacks the colonnaded central pool that appears in Allom's depiction.[49] Therefore, it is possible that Allom inserted dressed human figures into what looks like a hot chamber in creating his image.

[45] Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1989), vol. 1, 38-39.
[46] Semavi Eyice, "Ağa Hamamı," *DBİA* 1: 92.
[47] Ibid. Allom's engraving is in R. Walsh, *Constantinople and the Scenery of the Seven Churches* (London, 1838), 115.
[48] Eyice, "Ağa Hamamı," *DBİA* 1: 92.
[49] Ibid.

According to Sinan's autobiographies, Yakub Agha is also the builder of another *hamam* in Tophane, which might be the extensively rebuilt bath known as the "Ağa Hamamı" in Beyoğlu.[50] Given that these *hamam*s must have been built for the upkeep of a pious foundation, a likely candidate is the *mescid* and *mekteb* situated near the Divan Yolu, which were possibly the works of this Yakub Agha. Ayvansarâyî also mentions a mosque that the agha built in Harami Deresi.[51] The agha's other patronage activities are traceable in several imperial orders by Süleyman the Magnificent. One dating from 23 March 1562 (15 Receb 969) gives permission for the agha's construction of a lighthouse (*fener*) in Kalamış for the secure passage of vessels. Other *ferman*s refer to his minor works of charity, such as a water mill.[52]

Although the survey presented in this chapter possibly misses several unidentified eunuchs who engaged in architectural patronage,[53] the limited set of identifiable examples does convey a more or less consistent picture concerning the characteristics of the architectural patronage of eunuchs during the reign of Süleyman. A noticeable feature is the popularity of small neighborhood mosques and elementary schools as favorite building types among eunuch patrons. We have seen among the limited constructions in this period at least four *mescid-mekteb* combinations and two separate *mekteb*s standing on their own.

[50] Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 740. Tanman does not mention this possibility and writes that the construction date and the builder of this sixteenth-century *hamam* are unknown; Baha Tanman, "Ağa Hamamı," *DBİA* 1: 91-92.
[51] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 391.
[52] Yüksel, *Kānûnî Devri*, 739.
[53] I have excluded from this survey several "aghas" who built in the suburbs of Istanbul and in the provinces, in the absence of further proof for their being eunuchs; see the list in ibid., 745-80.

In an age when lofty Friday mosques proliferated as privileged status symbols for the highest-ranking members of the Ottoman elite, the eunuchs of the imperial court fitted into the ranks of relatively lowly patrons who commissioned much less pretentious *mescid*s, often accompanied by elementary schools or fountains instead of all-encompassing complexes.[54]

Apart from being cheaper and easier, constructing a *mescid* was a simpler process compared to building a Friday mosque, which required the builder to obtain a royal permit.[55] A *mescid* was also a much more intimate structure central to the perpetuation of communal ties within a neighborhood. Its *imam* would be a natural leader for the neighborhood community, and the *mahalle* itself would often be named after the patron who built the *mescid*.[56] In considering what a neighborhood mosque meant in the mid-sixteenth-century context, it should also be noted that, complementary to the boom of monumental Friday mosques, the plethora of *mescid*s constructed in this period by eunuch and non-eunuch patrons were practical tools for the enforcement of congregational prayers

[54] The *mescid* builders were from among a greater variety of office-holders compared to the Friday mosque patrons, and they included "minor officers of the imperial council and the military establishment, members of the ulema, wives and daughters of grandees, servants and aghas of the imperial palace (including the chief architect himself), and chiefs of craft guilds;" Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 47.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

five times a day, which was part of the general imperial policy of promoting Sunni orthodoxy against the Safavid threat.[57]

Thus, in contrast to the variety and flexibility of patronage possibilities in Bayezid's era, the architectural patronage of the court eunuchs of Süleyman seems to have taken a more standardized form. The eunuchs' constructions in this period rarely went beyond square or rectangle-shaped domeless mosques with hipped roofs and simple minarets, small elementary school units and generic pointed-arched fountains, which would be combined as a package service to the neighborhood. The *medrese* of Cafer Agha, for instance, is clearly an exception in this regard. While the only full-fledged mosque complex of the period was constructed in a provincial town, neighborhood mosque-school-fountain combinations became the common "town-planning devices" that eunuch patrons employed in the imperial capital. Some of these were, indeed, situated at the outskirts of the city in parallel to the urban development towards the periphery.

It is noteworthy that the inscriptions on the buildings of this period are either short or altogether absent, presumably as a token of humility. Yet, the possibility that some of these might have been lost in the subsequent centuries, like some of the endowment deeds and original decorations, also need to be taken into account in assessing these structures. In general, the reign of Süleyman featured a restriction upon the use of status symbols on the

[57] Ibid., 48-49. Yet another impact of the religious policy under Süleyman was the unpopularity of dervish convents as a building type among patrons of architecture; ibid., 54. Accordingly, no eunuchs endowed a *tekke* in this period.

buildings of eunuch patrons: the extant remains suggest that domed baldachins, colonnaded porticoes, ashlar masonry, and elaborate calligraphic inscriptions became more exceptional and rarer for the works of eunuchs.

As noted above, while the allowed limits for the architectural patronage of eunuchs were readjusted to fit to the non-written codes of decorum refined during chief architect Sinan's term of office, the hierarchical differences between the patronages of court eunuchs of various ranks became less relevant or less striking compared to the differences between the architectural works of palace aghas and the office-holders of higher ranks. In contrast to the clear predominance of the *kapı ağası* and the *hazinedarbaşı* in the late fifteenth century, during the reign of Süleyman the architectural patronage of two aghas employed in the "private" sections of the imperial palace compounds, Yakub Agha of the Old Palace and Behruz Agha of the Privy Chamber, equaled and sometimes even surpassed that of any *kapı ağası* of the period. While these changes are significant in their own right, major transformations in the hierarchy of court eunuchs in the second half of the sixteenth century and the impact of these in the realm of architectural patronage will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

HOW FAR CAN THE LIMITS BE STRETCHED?

THE PATRONAGE OF *HABEŞÎ* MEHMED AGHA

This chapter discusses the architectural repercussions of the sudden and magnificent arrival of a new agent on the scene of court politics: the *darüssaade ağası* or—to put it in the self-explanatory English rendition of the term—chief black eunuch.[1] Having arisen from among the same old circle of Ottoman court eunuchs, the chief black eunuch was the product of a novel arrangement in the court structure, changing rulership and legitimization practices, and a redefined image for the sultan as a sedentary and secluded sovereign. Even though the name of the office had existed before,[2] from the last quarter of the sixteenth century onwards it acquired a new connotation: a very high-ranking officer who usually was of African descent and who had close connections with the increasingly powerful harem women and an influence almost matching that of grand viziers. Although his rise to power and the architectural works he was capable of commissioning hark back to Hüseyin Agha, the prolific and apparently powerful *kapı ağası* of Bayezid II, the first chief black eunuch *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha's ascendancy was intimately related to the changing nature

[1] I translate *darüssaade ağası* as "chief black eunuch," specifically for the African eunuchs who held the office in the post-1574/5 context. Given that there were also white eunuchs who held this office in this period, the term is most accurately rendered as "chief harem eunuch."
[2] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, ed. Ahmet Nezihî Turan (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2000), 44.

of the court and the exercise of sovereignty in the post-Süleymanic environment. Therefore, his emergence on the scene of politics—and architecture—was not just another waxing period for the fortunes of court eunuchs; it was a different and unprecedented phenomenon.

The demographic and architectural expansion of the imperial harem during the reign of Murad III enhanced the role of the harem eunuchs and assigned them a key position within the social world of the court. As the head servant of the harem institution, the chief black eunuch began to oversee the education of young princes from 1574/5 onwards in the black eunuchs' courtyard, which was strategically located between the women's apartments and the second court of the Topkapı Palace, with connections to the spacious quarters belonging to the sultan and the *valide sultan*, the sultan's mother. The centralization of the royal family and the rearrangement of the architectural space of the harem increased the importance of the chief black eunuch and his eunuch corps as close domestic servants who mediated between the royal family and the court.[3]

In his architectural undertakings, the generic chief black eunuch of the next two centuries represented a sub-tradition within the tradition. Although he belonged to the larger category of court eunuchs and was often restrained by the norms of decorum that applied to these, his patronage was also informed by his distinct identity vis-à-vis other

[3] For the changes in the imperial harem during the reign of Murad III, see Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 1991), 164-81.

eunuchs: his proximity to the royal family as a close confidant and loyal servant, his role as an educator of princes, his control over the revenues supporting the Two Holy Cities, and his connection with Egypt became the facets of the public image that he sought to fashion for himself through his patronage. In examining the output of *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha as a patron of architecture, this chapter points out the incipient manifestations of this newly emerging chief black eunuch identity in the works he commissioned.

It is significant that Mehmed Agha's appointment to the office in 1574/5 and his climactic patronage activities which began a few years later were preceded by a period when court eunuchs kept a low profile. After the consecutive demises of Süleyman the Magnificent and his *kapı ağası* Yakub Agha in 1566 and the replacement of the late sultan's court with that of Selim II in the imperial palace, the building activities of court eunuchs came to a halt, thus terminating the period of constructions between the late 1540s and 1560s. The inactivity of court eunuchs in architecture continued, as public building activity lost momentum during the eight-year reign of Selim II (1566-74).

The reigns of both Selim II and his successor Murad III (r. 1574-95) were characterized by increasing royal retreat from public visibility, which was also connected to their smaller number of architectural works compared to Süleyman's era. Selim departed from the custom of his predecessors when he built his sultanic mosque not in Istanbul but in Edirne. As he had the Selimiye built in the "abode of the *gazi*s" with the booty from the conquest of Cyprus, which he did not personally lead, Selim presumably attempted to give

a warlike flavor to his unpopular image of a secluded and hedonistic sultan.[4] His son Murad III had an even worse image problem, which gave rise to acerbic remarks in the writings of the period about his powerlessness vis-à-vis his confidants and boon companions who constantly interfered in state affairs.[5] An important patron of illustrated manuscripts but a poor patron of architecture, Murad concentrated his architectural projects in the provinces instead of the capital.[6] The sedentary sultan's failure to command the army in a victorious war probably played a major role in his patronage choices.

An important factor in assessing the architectural patronage of court eunuchs is the proportion between the constructions sponsored by sultans and their eunuchs. Also important is the relation between the image of a sultan and the patronage of the eunuchs in his household. During the age of Süleyman, which was idealized by later generations as a period when everyone knew their assigned position and did not overstep their limits, it must have been deemed legitimate for court eunuchs to keep a modest profile in architectural patronage. Arguably, that would have been more problematic under Selim II, when the patronage of eunuchs might even have been intentionally restrained in order not to exacerbate the already deteriorating sultanic image. What is, however, truly striking is

[4] It is Evliya Çelebi's account that suggests that Edirne's association with holy warfare was decisive in the selection of this city for the mosque project; see Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 241-42. An alternative possibility is that the sultan might have shied away from building in the capital, as he did not personally lead the army during the conquest of Cyprus in 1570-71. The lack of adequate empty space in Istanbul could also have been a factor that informed Selim's decision to build in Edirne; ibid., 242.

[5] See, for example, Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1989), vol. 2, 444-45.

[6] Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 257.

the contrast between Murad III's invisibility to the public eye and the augmented visibility of his principal eunuch Mehmed Agha. While the sultan sought legitimacy in royal seclusion, the *darüssaade ağası* stepped into the picture as his trustworthy agent and intermediary. As Emine Fetvacı has shown in her analysis of Mehmed Agha's patronage of illustrated manuscripts, the agha actively took part in the cultural front of the intra-elite struggle, fashioning himself in the books as the indispensable agent and extension of the sultan and the royal family, whose aloof and sedentary lifestyle was the *raison d'être* of his powerful position.[7] Nevertheless, this newly defined relationship between the ruler and his court elite in the post-classical Ottoman world order was met with escalating public discontent and a growing sense of degeneration and decline.

Mehmed Agha began commissioning architectural works not long after his status as chief harem eunuch became equal to that of the chief white eunuch. Possibly emulating Murad III, who focused his architectural patronage on remodeling the sanctuaries in the Two Holy Cities, Mecca and Medina,[8] Mehmed Agha initiated his construction activities with a project in Medina. Two decrees issued in 986/1578 gave permission to the agha to rebuild a water dispenser with an upper-storey library (*sebil-küttab*), an elementary school, and a convent, structures dating from the Mamluk period.[9]

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[7] See Emine Fetvacı, *Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566-1617*, PhD dissertation (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, History of Art and Architecture Dep., 2005), 202-56.
[8] Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 257.
[9] Ibid., 498 and 555, note 70.

About two years later, in 988/1580-81, the first product of Mehmed Agha's patronage in Istanbul appeared on the prestigious Divan Yolu. It is noteworthy that this composite building that consisted of a water dispenser (*sebil*) and an elementary school (*mekteb*) on top of it was the first building by a court eunuch patron on the main artery of the Divan Yolu after the mosque constructed by Firuz Agha in the late fifteenth century (see Map 1). Reminiscent of the Mamluk *sebil-küttab*s in Egypt, the water dispenser-*cum*-library type of buildings, and more particularly the one that Mehmed Agha restored in Medina,[10] the *sebil-mekteb* seems to have been meant to allude to the agha's connection with Egypt, where he had a sojourn before he was sent to Selim II's princely court.[11] As Mustafa Âlî implies in a treatise, Egypt, being recognized as the cradle of the eunuch institution, was a place associated with eunuchs in the eyes of the Ottomans.[12] This

[10] Ibid., 498.

[11] An account of how Mehmed Agha came to the imperial court in Istanbul is found in the marginalia of a treatise written by the agha's Abyssinian protégé Ali b. Abdurrauf in 1621, *Râfâ'ilü'l-Gubûş fî Fezâ'ilü'l-Hubûş*, Süleymaniye Library, Fatih, nr. 4360, fol. 9b. According to this account, Mehmed Agha was initially bought by a European man (*Frenk*) in Africa. After this owner lost him to Muslims in a sea battle, the agha was brought to the governor of Egypt, who then sent him to Selim's court. Mehmed Agha first came into the possession of *kapı ağası* Hüseyin Agha, and after his decapitation, he was appropriated along with the late agha's other belongings by the imperial court; Fetvacı, *Viziers to Eunuchs*, 334; Yıldız Karakoç, *Palace Politics and the Rise of the Chief Black Eunuch in the Ottoman Empire*, unpublished MA thesis (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2005), 91. The reference to a decapitated *kapı ağası* Hüseyin Agha is most interesting: while the temporal gap would have made it impossible for Mehmed Agha to be acquainted with the patron of the Küçük Ayasofya Complex, it might have been that the chief black eunuch or his circle wished to associate him with this powerful white eunuch—unless another *kapı ağası* Hüseyin Agha was beheaded during the reign of Selim II or the writer simply confused two different white eunuchs.

[12] In an account of how Ottoman white eunuchs began to be sent to Egypt as provincial governors, Âlî suggests: *'Ale'l-husus ecdâd-ı 'izâmun zamânında dahi böyle olagelmişdür; ya'ni ki Mısr mahlûl oldukça tavâşî zümresinden olana virilmişdür*; Gelibolulu Mustafa 'Âlî, *Mustafa 'Ālī's Description of Cairo of 1599: Text, Transliteration, Translation, Notes*, ed. and tr. Andreas Tietze (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), 162.

association was strengthened by the white eunuchs who were sent to rule Egypt as governors as well as by African eunuchs like Mehmed Agha who were received by the imperial court after their training at the court of the governor of Egypt.[13] Thus, bearing the flavor of Mamluk architecture, the *sebil-mekteb* could have been read as a subtle allusion to the builder's connection with Egypt and his eunuch identity.

The now lost inscription of the *sebil*, which was noted by Ayvansarâyî, legitimized the construction by giving credit to Murad III, during whose reign even the lowliest patrons allegedly found the means and opportunity to occupy themselves with establishing charitable works:[14]

> During the reign of Murad Khan,
> The world is prosperous and its inhabitants occupied with charity.
> Mehmed Agha, that source of munificence,
> Who is his favorite slave,
> Built this lofty water dispenser in this place.
> May he find the way to the pool of Kawthar in the afterlife!
> They said that no charity could be above it;
> The school building became an agreeable work of charity.
> As it is agreed, the Unseen Voice
> Expressed its date "agreeable work of charity," 988 (1580-81).[15]

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[13] Before they were sent to the imperial or princely courts, African eunuchs would typically stay for a while at the court of the Ottoman governor of Egypt, where they would learn about courtly manners; Jane Hathaway, *Beshir Agha: Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Imperial Harem* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2005), 23.

[14] Necipoğlu notes that the first couplet that referred to Murad III is repeated in the inscription on Kılıç Ali Pasha's mosque complex at Tophane, which was built in the same year as the *sebil-mekteb*; Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 498.

[15] *Zamân-ı devletinde Hân Murâd'ın / Cihân ma'mûr halkı hayra meşgûl*
Mehemmed Ağa ol kân-ı mürüvvet / Ki anın bende-i makbûlüdür ol
Yerinde yapdı bu zîbâ sebîli / Bula 'ukbâda havz-ı kevsere yol
Bunun fevkinde hayr olmaz dediler / Binâ-yı mekteb oldu hayr-ı makbûl
Kabûl olduğu için hâtıf-i gayb / Dedi târîhin anın "hayr-ı makbûl" 988 (1580);

In 990/1582-83, Mehmed Agha completed a small theological college (*medrese*) behind the *sebil-mekteb*, thus producing a tiny complex that emphasized education as its salient function. The *medrese*, which comprised ten cells, is listed in the *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* among the works of Sinan.[16] Later in the sixteenth century, the *sebil*, which functioned as an icon of the power of the chief black eunuch on the city's main ceremonial thoroughfare, assumed a funeral function when two *musahib* aghas (the sultan's confidants), Anber and Abdullah, who were presumably eunuchs as well, were buried inside it.[17] The character of the *sebil* as a commemorative monument for (black) eunuchs was thus strengthened.

Imperial permits dating from 1579-81 reveal that the agha built another *sebil* on the Divan Yolu axis, this time in Irgadpazarı near Constantine's column. This water dispenser and the accompanying fountain are also listed in the agha's endowment deed dating from 5 February 1591.[18] Clearly, by means of these constructions, Mehmed Agha increased his symbolic presence on the city's main ceremonial route.

In the same year as Mehmed Agha's Divan Yolu projects, across the Bosphorus, the chief white eunuch (*kapı ağası*) Ibrahim Agha constructed an unpretentious mosque together with a dervish convent and a fountain in a meadow in Haydarpaşa. Built in a royal excursion spot, the mosque came to be known as "İbrahim Ağa Çayırı Mescidi" (the

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Hâfız Hüseyin Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, ed. Fahri Ç. Derin and Vâhid Çabuk (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1985), 385.
[16] Zeynep Ahunbay, "Mehmed Ağa Medresesi," *DBİA* 5: 356.
[17] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 111.
[18] Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 498.

Mosque of the Ibrahim Agha Meadow).[19] Comparing this work with the simultaneously built *sebil-mekteb* of Mehmed Agha reveals the two aghas' changing places within the power configuration. Unlike the works of Mehmed Agha, who was allowed to build on the Divan Yolu and display his name on an inscription, Ibrahim Agha's mosque on the much less prestigious Asian side, which had a hipped roof and apparently no inscription, seemed to be a continuation of the tradition of humble *mescid*s built by white eunuchs in the sixteenth century. Also, considered together with the similarly unpretentious mosque of *Tavâşî* Hasan Agha, which was completed a few years later (995/1586-87) in Üsküdar,[20] the Ibrahim Agha Mosque marks a new trend for court eunuchs to build on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, an area featuring royal hunting grounds, summer palaces, and excursion spots.

Arguably the most impressive monument of Ottoman court eunuch patronage was the funerary mosque complex constructed by *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha in the Beycügez (Beyceğiz) or Çarşamba Pazarı quarter of Istanbul in the mid-1580s (see Map 2). It included a Friday mosque, a double bath (*çifte hamam*), a mausoleum (*türbe*), and two fountains, as well as a no longer extant Halvetî convent (*tekke*) and hadith college for ten

[19] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 537.
[20] Ibid., 511. Hasan Agha also built an elementary school near the mosque; İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, *Âbideleri ve Kitâbeleriyle Üsküdar Tarihi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yeşilay Cemiyeti), vol. II, 333. The mosque was renovated by a certain Hadice Hanım in the late nineteenth century; ibid., vol. I, 302.

students (*darülhadis*) (Figs. 34, 35, 37, and 39).[21] The mosque and the mausoleum are enclosed within an irregular-shaped precinct, which is given access by three gates (Fig. 34). Fitted into an area carved within the web of narrow streets, the complex represented an attempt to Islamize a non-Muslim neighborhood, as a multitude of properties belonging to non-Muslim inhabitants were purchased for its construction. As such, it seemed to be connected with Murad III's conversion of the nearby Pammakaristos Monastery housing the Orthodox Patriarchate in 1587-88, as well as with the conversion of other Christian structures in the vicinity, including the church converted by Hıramî Ahmed Pasha.[22]

As the first full-fledged complex built by a eunuch patron within the walled city since the Küçük Ayasofya, the Mehmed Agha Complex challenged the norms of decorum by means of its elegant mosque which has an unusually complex domical structure (Figs. 35 and 36). Gülru Necipoğlu finds the mosque remarkable not only by virtue of its monumentality, but also because of its emulation of the plan type employed in the mosques of contemporary viziers—a sign of ambition, which seems to have been balanced by the mosque's smaller size and less costly masonry fabric.[23] Like the mosques of the white eunuch vizier Mesih Mehmed Pasha (1584-87) and the vizier Nişancı Mehmed Pasha (1584/85-88/89), Mehmed Agha's mosque features a protruding mihrab covered with a

[21] The *darülhadis* had apparently fallen into disuse when it was occupied by immigrants in 1918; Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *XX. Asra Erişen İstanbul Medreseleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000), 245.
[22] Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 499; Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, *İstanbul'un Tarihsel Topografyası: 17. yüzyıl başlarına kadar Byzantion-Konstantinopolis-İstanbul*, tr. Ülker Sayın (Istanbul: YKY, 2007), 133 and 144.
[23] Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 501.

half-dome and a central dome that rests on an octagonal baldachin and is supported by half-domes on the corners.[24]

The mosque also employs several other status symbols that court eunuchs had long abstained from using. One of these is the cut stone portico with five domes and muqarnas capitals; another is the muqarnas decoration used on the minaret (Fig. 38), the mihrab, and the entrance of the prayer hall. Yet more striking are the expensive Iznik tiles on the mihrab and the lunettes inside the prayer hall and on the wall of the portico. Coinciding with the heyday of the Iznik tile industry, the mosque stands out as the first building by a eunuch patron that displays tiles as decorative elements.

Long and elaborate, the mosque's *thuluth* foundation inscription on the gate of the precinct can also be counted among the status symbols that distinguish the building (Fig. 40):

> The praying slave of the world [ruler] Murad Khan,
> That virtuous Mehmed Agha,
> Namely, the *darüssaade ağası*:
> Expended such zeal on pious works!
> He built this noble Friday mosque.
> It became the sum of the mosques of mercy.
> For its founder, may God make this pious work
> A reason for the Paradise on the morrow!
> God is his pardoner, the Prophet is his intercessor.
> May the Sunna and the obligatory worship be carried out here!
> Come what may, let prayers be accepted in it!
> May it be that which fulfils the needs of the Muslims!
> Its perfect architect was Davud.

[24] See ibid., 404, illus. 404 and 410, illus. 413.

He built [it] by inscribing art with his soul.
O Âsârî! The Unseen Voice expressed the date:
"House of God and mosque of the Community," 993 (1585).[25]

As was the case with the inscriptions on *kapı ağası* Hüseyin Agha's buildings a century earlier, the high-ranking eunuch is presented in this inscription as a loyal servant who derives his authority and legitimacy from his master, the sultan. Yet, deviating from the common practice, it also gives the name of the architect Davud, who undertook the project while Sinan was still the chief royal architect. The patronage relationship between Mehmed Agha and Davud, who was the water channel superintendent, probably developed during the agha's construction of his *sebil*s and was reinforced when Davud was chosen to build a new bath in the imperial harem in 1585.[26] The inscription, thus, names three levels

[25] This is a slightly modified version of the translation in Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 500, which is also a slightly changed version of Crane's translation on Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 218. I have replaced "humble servant" on the first line with "praying slave." I believe "Asari, the Voice, expressed its date" (*Didi Âsârî târîhin hâtif*) on the fifteenth line should either be "O Âsârî! The Unseen Voice expressed the date" or "The Unseen Voice expressed the date of his works" (*Didi âsârı târîhin Hâtif*), where the "Unseen Voice" would be lending anonymity to the chronogram composer. Âsârî, however, is acknowledged as the poet in Muzaffer Erdoğan, "Mîmar Davud Ağa'nın Hayatı ve Eserleri," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 12 (1955): 188; and Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 120. He also seems to be the poet of the inscriptions on the agha's fountains in Üsküdar; see Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 66-67. The Turkish poem is as follows:

Abd-i dâ'î-i Hân Murâd-ı cihân / Ol Mehemmed Ağa-yı hoş-haslet
Â'ni Dârü's-sa'âde ağası / Bunca hayrâta sarf edip himmet
Kıldı bu câmi'-i şerîfi binâ / Oldu mecmu'a câmi'-i rahmet
Sâhibine bu hayrı hazret-i Hakk / Ede yârın vesîle-i cennet
Gâfiri Hakk ânın şefî'i Resûl / Kıla bunda ferâyiz ü sünnet
Müstecâb olsa n'ola bunda du'â / Ehl-i İslâm'a kıble-i hâcet
Oldu mi'mar-ı kâmili Dâvud / Yapdı câniyle derc idüb san'at
Didi Âsârî târîhin hâtif / Beyt-i Hâdi vü câmi'-i ümmet 993 (1585);

Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 120; I have slightly changed the orthography.

[26] On the basis of such clues, Necipoğlu believes that Mehmed Agha's favor must have been decisive in Davud's appointment as the chief architect after Sinan in 1588; Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 500. Davud also signed the endowment deed of the *sebil-mekteb* on the Divan Yolu as a witness. The building of the Çarşamba complex coincides with the absence of Sinan from the capital in 1584-85; ibid.

in a chain of patronage: the sultan, the eunuch, and the architect, all of whom were involved to varying degrees in making the construction possible.

Mehmed Agha's endowment deed dating to 999/1591[27] provides a relatively lengthy list of constructions for a court eunuch.[28] These include a small mosque known as the Yeniçeşme Mescidi and five fountains in Üsküdar,[29] a fountain and open prayer space near the gate of Edirnekapı, a fountain near Hagia Sophia, and another one in front of his residence in the vicinity of the Old Palace. Particularly noteworthy is the ablution fountains that he installed in the courtyard of the Mercan Agha Mosque, as this act suggests that the agha aimed to link his image to the memory of a former eunuch servant of the Ottoman court and to situate himself in a line of court eunuchs. As we will see, one of his own works also became the object of a similar act of patronage by a later chief black eunuch who wished to display the continuity in tradition.

Clues indicating that Mehmed Agha's eunuch identity was an essential component of the perception of his works by later generations are found in the account of the seventeenth-century traveler Evliya Çelebi. This author, who praises the beauty of the mosque in Çarşamba, mentions Mehmed Agha's mosque immediately after that of Firuz

[27] The *vakfiye* is now in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Emanet Hazinesi, no. 2023.
[28] Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 498-99.
[29] For the *mescid*, see Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 504-5, and Kolağası Mehmed Râ'if, *Mir'ât-ı İstanbul, I. Cild (Asya Yakası)*, ed. Günay Kut and Hatice Aynur (Istanbul: Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), 136. Two Persian chronograms and one Turkish chronogram belonging to the multi-faceted Yeniçeşme fountain are recorded in Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 66-67. The dates of the chronograms are 1582 and 1587.

Agha.[30] Moreover, in his amusing list of *hamam*s where he matches each one with its appropriate group of users, Evliya Çelebi finds the bath of the Mehmed Agha Complex fit for the use of eunuchs,[31] thus underlining Mehmed Agha's image as the "patron saint" of this group.[32]

While we find no clue in the sources concerning the public reaction to Mehmed Agha's unusually monumental mosque in Çarşamba, the contemporary chronicler Selânikî provides evidence for wide-spread discontent about the castle and town that he established in İsmail Geçidi on the bank of the Danube (today in Romania).[33] In an entry where he records Mehmed Agha's death due to a stomach disease, his funeral in the mosque of Mehmed II and the burial in his mausoleum in Çarşamba, Selânikî writes that all his properties were appended to his *waqf*. The chronicler then adds that, as the agha's foundations in İsmail Geçidi were a cause of grievance for the public, they expressed the date of his death (999/1590-91) with the chronogram "That black calamity is gone from the world."[34]

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[30] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, ed. Orhan Şaik Gökyay (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1996), vol. 1, 126. He describes the mosque as *cāmi'-i rūşen-binā bir cāmi'-i zībādır*.

[31] Ibid., 137. In a more serious passage below, he describes it as a particularly clean and distinguished *hamam*; ibid.

[32] The expression is taken from Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 501.

[33] This town and the Çarşamba complex constitute the two most important acts of patronage by Mehmed Agha, according to Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 45. Fetvacı writes that the town was endowed for the Holy Cities; Fetvacı, *Viziers to Eunuchs*, 229.

[34] Selânikî, *Tarih*, vol. 1, 229-30. *Reft āz 'ālem ān belā-yi siyāh*; ibid., 230.; also cited in Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ*, 385.

The public resentment briefly noted by Selânikî is all the more significant when we consider the reduced amount of constructions by the agha's successors. As the initiator of the ascendancy of black eunuchs at the Ottoman court, Mehmed Agha stood at the beginning of a new line of tradition, the succession of chief black eunuchs who continued to be influential at the court for a long time. Nevertheless, while he opened new possibilities for later eunuch careers, his architectural patronage conversely seemed to have served to suppress the patronage possibilities for his successors by denoting the topmost limit that a eunuch was allowed to reach. I believe that the public disapproval of the challenge he posed to the unwritten norms of decorum explains why later eunuchs never attempted to surpass his constructions.

Without a doubt, this reaction was triggered not simply by the increased visibility of the signs of a court servant's power, but also by the sultan's physical disappearance from the public realm. While Murad III avoided building a royal mosque in his name in the capital, other courtly patrons such as Mehmed Agha filled the vacuum by increasing their patronage activities. A leading figure among these patrons, the *valide sultan* Nurbanu built the massive Atik Valide Complex in Üsküdar, which she had begun while her husband Selim II was alive. As an imperial permit copied by Ayvansarâyî shows, Mehmed Agha, the overseer of her endowments, took an active role in the enlargement of the complex after

her death 1583;[35] it is quite probable that he was involved in the project already during her lifetime.

Not only during the tenure of Mehmed Agha, but also during the time of his successors, the chief black eunuch's role as the extension of the royal family was most apparent in his dealings with the royal *waqf*s. From 995/1586-87 onwards, he also administered the endowments supporting Mecca and Medina in the name of the sultan. As the first *darüssaade ağası* to act in this capacity, Mehmed Agha commemorated the concentration of the *waqf*s in his hands by an inscription on the gate of the domed vestibule that linked the harem with the second court of the Topkapı Palace. It was at this gate that the agha was holding audiences every week concerning the administration of the royal foundations. The inscription conveys that the "Audience Gate" was rebuilt upon Mehmed Agha's suggestion in a more impressive fashion in 996/1587-88.[36]

While Mehmed Agha in this manner reminded later generations of black eunuchs of his pivotal role, he also made sure that future chief black eunuchs were to perpetuate his memory. In an arrangement reminiscent of Hüseyin Agha's assignment of later aghas of the *babüssaade* as the overseers of his foundation, Mehmed Agha saw to it that his endowments should benefit not only his manumitted slaves and their children, but also future chief black eunuchs, who, according to his stipulation, were to oversee his *waqf*.[37]

[35] Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 362-63.
[36] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 174.
[37] Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 499.

As he thus set himself as the illustrious "ancestor" of chief black eunuchs, Mehmed Agha became instrumental in the shaping of a group identity among the holders of this office. The agha's significance was indeed acknowledged by the eighteenth-century biographical compendium *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, which begins its series of chief harem eunuch biographies with that of Mehmed Agha.[38]

As a patron of architecture, Mehmed Agha's output also suggests to some extent a discontinuity with earlier patterns of eunuch patronage. Yet, the bold standards that he set forth as the founder of a new tradition failed to be emulated by later chief black eunuchs, who avoided echoing the vizierial aspirations of his mosque complex in their undertakings. Arguably, in spite of his uniqueness, the legacy he left as the first chief black eunuch had a lasting impact on the generations of eunuchs to come, and his patronage became a criterion against which the works of his successors were to be measured.

[38] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 45.

CHAPTER V

BUILDING AFTER MEHMED AGHA: COURT EUNUCH PATRONS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

One indication that the scope and scale of a patron's architectural works is not always necessarily proportionate to the power s/he wields may be the buildings commissioned by Ottoman chief black eunuchs during the long seventeenth century. In contrast to their increased recognition as notable actors in court politics, the works commissioned by the later chief black eunuchs never reached the monumentality of *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha's Friday mosque in Çarşamba; likewise, apart from el-Hajj Beshir Agha in the eighteenth century, none of the later eunuchs created as many structures as he did. Moreover, in contrast to what may be expected, in terms of the frequency and scale of the architectural projects commissioned by court eunuchs, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not display any striking difference from the periods prior to 1574/5. Even though the chief black eunuchs emerged as major patrons of architecture among court eunuchs, most of these aghas did not build any structures at all in Istanbul. As in the earlier periods dominated by white eunuchs, in this period too, architectural patronage was the privilege of a select few who seem to have been authorized by their seniority or royal favor. In an effort to understand the dynamics underlying the sporadic building activity in this

period, this chapter explores the subsequent development of court eunuch patronage after Mehmed Agha's ambitious and challenging undertakings. The focus of this chapter is on the period from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century, between the tenures of Mehmed Agha and el-Hajj Beshir Agha, the two most prominent chief black eunuchs.

After Mehmed Agha's death in 999/1590, an immediate turn of tide in the fortune of court eunuchs denied his successors any chance to emulate his extravagant architectural patronage. Mehmed Agha was succeeded by Server Agha (or Sünbül Agha[1]), the agha of the Old Palace. As related by *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, due to his discordance with the subordinate harem eunuchs, Server Agha was dismissed in 1000/1592, only nineteen months after his appointment, before he had any opportunity to add a monument of his own to the capital's cityscape.[2] The Bosnian *saray ağası* el-Hajj Mustafa Agha was appointed in his place and ordered to enforce his authority over the unruly black eunuchs of the harem.[3]

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[1] Sünbül, meaning "hyacinth," was a derogatory appellation implying eunuchism; see Baki Tezcan, "Dispelling the Darkness: The politics of 'race' in the early seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire in the light of the life and work of Mullah Ali," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 13 (2007): 82-85. According to the "Dârüssaâde Ağaları Defteri," a register of the chief black eunuchs dated 1898 (the original is in the Türk Tarih Kurumu Library manuscript collection), published in Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 163-75, Server Agha and Sünbül Agha were two different people who occupied the post between Rebîü'i-âhir 999/January-February 1591 and 1000/1591-92 and between 1000/1591-92 and 1001/1592-93 respectively. It is also mentioned that Server Agha was buried in Egypt and Sünbül Agha in the Divan Yolu; ibid., 164.

[2] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, ed. Ahmet Nezihî Turan (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2000), 45-46. According to this source, Server Agha's relations with his fellow harem eunuchs bordered on hostility as he tried to curb their communication with outsiders. The term *kapu gılmânı* must be referring to the eunuch guardians of the harem and not, as Karakoç assumes, to the white eunuchs of the Gate of Good Fortune, who were not under his authority; see Yıldız Karakoç, *Palace Politics and the Rise of the Chief Black Eunuch in the Ottoman Empire*, unpublished MA thesis (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2005), 41.

[3] *Dârüssa'âde Ağalığı Sarây-ı Âmiresi Ağası Hacı Mustafa Ağa'ya fermân olunup, kara-ağalara ak-ağa zecr u kahr ile hâkim olmak buyruldı*; Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1989), vol. 1, 281.

Thus, around seventeen years after the establishment of the chief black eunuch's office, there seemed to be a reversal to the pre-1574/5 state of affairs and restoration of the white eunuchs' domination over the African eunuchs.

On the other hand, although he was a white eunuch, el-Hajj Mustafa Agha had previously worked in Yemen, at the court of the Ottoman governor, which might account for his selection to the harem service among African eunuchs. After he retired as an ailing man with a generous allowance in 1004/1596, he was sent to Egypt just like an African eunuch.[4] While Mustafa Agha does not seem to have built anything as *darüssaade ağası*, earlier in his career he possibly commissioned the Mustafa Ağa Medresesi and a fountain in Eminönü, in a location very close to the outer walls of the Topkapı Palace (see Map 1). These structures were constructed in 999/1590-91 by the chief treasurer (*serhâzîn*) Mustafa Agha who later became *saray ağası*, a post that el-Hajj Mustafa Agha occupied before becoming the chief harem eunuch.[5] The inscription of the fountain stated that the chief treasurer lavished a "treasure" in order to build it.[6]

The first chief harem eunuch appointed after Mehmed III's accession in 1595 was Osman Agha, an African eunuch servant of Safiye Sultan, who was now the *valide*.[7] His

[4] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 46.
[5] İ. H. Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1943), 46-48. Before it was torn down in 1938, the *medrese* had the capacity for at least nineteen students; see M. S. Kütükoğlu, "1869'da Faal İstanbul Medreseleri," *İ. Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 7-8 (1977): 294 and 345.
[6] Hâfız Hüseyin Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, ed. Fahri Ç. Derin and Vâhid Çabuk (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1985), 282; Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. 1, 46. Ayvansarâyî refers to him as *babüssaade* rather than *darüssaade*.
[7] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 46.

appointment, thus, signaled and contributed to the increasing influence of the sultan's mother at the court. While Osman Agha seems to have continued his two predecessors' abstinence from building in Istanbul, we encounter his name in the passages in Selânikî's chronicle that pertain to the construction of the Yeni Valide Mosque (Yeni Cami) in Eminönü, the great architectural initiative of Safiye Sultan. Osman Agha's involvement in the project seemed to have been mainly through his steward *kapıcı* Kara Mehmed Agha, who was appointed as the building supervisor (*bina emini*).[8]

In 1006/1598, early during the mosque's preparation phase, Osman Agha became the superintendent of the royal *waqf*s of Mehmed II, Bayezid II, Selim I, and Süleyman I.[9] This was the second breakthrough after that of Mehmed Agha that raised the office of chief black eunuch to extraordinary prominence in the empire's financial matters. Probably, it was made possible thanks to Safiye Sultan, who was noticeably influential in appointments and promotions during the reign of her son and who presumably aimed to extend her grip on these resources.[10] Eventually, however, the Safiye Sultan-Osman Agha duo ran into serious difficulties in the mosque project and the chief black eunuch's steward Kara Mehmed Agha was dismissed from his supervising duty upon his failures in the expropriation process.[11]

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[8] Selânikî, *Tarih*, vol. 2, 723.
[9] Ibid., 740. This was much lamented by Selânikî, who claims that the *waqf*s were neglected by their new overseers who received the jobs through bribery; ibid., 740-42.
[10] Karakoç, *Rise of the Chief Black Eunuch*, 44-45.
[11] Selânikî, *Tarih*, vol. 2, 849-51.

While Osman Agha was instrumental in Safiye Sultan's realization of her patronage aspirations as a palace woman confined in the harem, he also had a posthumous contribution when she appropriated his mosque project in Cairo. Apparently the only architectural work that Osman Agha attempted to construct as a patron in his own right, the mosque is said to have caused legal problems for a slave patron whose properties had to be returned to his owner after his death. Therefore, after the agha's execution following a cavalry uprising in 1603, it became the property of Safiye Sultan, who transformed it into the "Mosque of Malika Safiyya" by 1610 (Figs. 41 and 42), after the failure of the Yeni Cami project to reach completion.[12] While legal issues never seemed to have been a problem for other projects by Ottoman court eunuchs, the story of this mosque illustrates how the patronage of women and eunuchs could be intertwined.

The lack of a building in Istanbul that is attributed to the chief harem eunuch's patronage is all the more conspicuous when we consider that in this period new types of lesser-ranking court eunuchs emerged as architectural patrons. One of these was *Dilsiz* Süleyman Agha, a white eunuch affiliated with Safiye Sultan. Like the court dwarf Mehmed Agha, who built a fountain in Kumkapı in 999/1590-91,[13] the court mute Süleyman Agha was one of the courtly patrons who gained visibility during the reign of Murad III. The first product of his patronage was a fountain built in 995/1586-87 in

[12] Doris, Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo: An Introduction* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 162.
[13] Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. 1, 46. Dwarf Mehmed Agha might also have been a eunuch.

Nişanca, Eyüp, near the mosque of *saray ağası* Davud Agha, an earlier white eunuch.[14] In 1001/1592-93, he built another one in Etyemez, the enigmatic inscription of which stated that "the mute named Süleyman Agha, being ashamed of his creation … built this fountain."[15] Yet, the agha saved his most ambitious project for Djakovica (Yakova or Yakoviçse) in Serbia, which is said to have been his hometown. In 1594, he constructed there a mosque, which came to be known as the Hadum Mosque (the Eunuch's Mosque), a library, and an elementary school. Like other mosques by eunuch patrons built in provincial towns, this mosque is also a domed square. It has a cut-stone minaret and a three-bay portico with a dome over the middle bay. The library also has a dome.[16]

Yet another representative of new types of eunuch patrons that emerged in the late sixteenth century was the chief agha of the Galata Palace Hüseyin Agha, who built the Ağa Camii on İstiklâl Caddesi in 1005/1596-97.[17] Like the Edirne and the Ibrahim Pasha Palaces, the Galata Palace was also assigned the function of training pages for the Topkapı Palace and its chief agha would normally be a white eunuch.[18] As the first among the Galata aghas to become an architectural patron, Hüseyin Agha built his small single-domed

[14] Ibid., 36. See Chapter III for Davud Agha's mosque.
[15] *Süleyman Ağa nam dilsiz kim utanıb hulkundan* / *Revâdır imtizâc itse eğer ki âbıla âteş* / *Binâ itdikde bu 'aynı Fedâî didi târîhin* / *"Zülâl-i selsebîl ü âb-ı pâk u çeşme-i dilkeş"*; ibid. 48. The composer of inscription is probably playing with the word *dilsiz*, "mute" (literally "tongue-less"), as he points out the paradox that a "tongue-less" person built a fountain.
[16] See Said Zulficar, "Mosques in the Balkans," *Cairo Times*, 2001; and Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimarî Eserleri: Yugoslavya*, vol. 3, eds. Gürbüz Ertürk and Aydın Yüksel (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Derneği, 1981), 313-14. Ayverdi provides a plan of this mosque and writes that its builder is unknown, as there is no inscription on the mosque.
[17] The chronogram is noted in Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 333; see ibid., fn. 2546 for the date.
[18] See İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1945), 302-06.

cut-stone mosque not far from his workplace.[19] We learn from Ayvansarâyî that, later in his career, Hüseyin Agha became *şeyhülharem*, *i.e.*, the head of the eunuchs guarding the Prophet's tomb in Medina, and died in that city.[20] This piece of information is given in the entry on a neighborhood mosque built in Tophane by the agha's secretary Kâtib Mustafa Efendi near a fountain commissioned by Hüseyin Agha. Perhaps as a token of his proximity to court eunuchs, this *kâtib* also constructed an elementary school opposite the Firuz Ağa Camii in Beyoğlu—as we have seen above, this mosque was commissioned by a *saray ağası* Firuz Agha at an unknown date.[21] It is, thus, significant that Ayvansarâyî makes note of such dialogues between patronages of eunuchs and their associates, revealing a particular way in which these buildings were given meaning by their spectators.

In addition to these lesser-ranking white eunuch patrons of the late sixteenth century, the lack of a construction by Mehmed Agha's earliest successors in Istanbul needs to be considered in comparison with the contemporary works of the famous *kapı ağası* Gazanfer Agha as well. While his most important work was the *medrese* complex next to the Valens Aqueduct, Gazanfer Agha, as noted in Chapter III, is credited for the completion of the Soğukkuyu Medresesi commissioned by Cafer Agha, an earlier *kapı ağası* who is probably erroneously identified as the former's brother. Gazanfer Agha and his real brother Cafer, on the other hand, are associated with the best-known case of voluntary castration in

[19] Tarkan Okçuoğlu, "Ağa Camii," *DBİA* 1: 91; and Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 333, fn. 2546.
[20] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 333 and 391. This later post brings to mind the possibility that the agha might have been African.
[21] Ibid., 391. The Firuz Agha Mosque in Beyoğlu is mentioned in Chapter II.

the Ottoman Empire. As related by the agha's protégé Mustafa Âlî in his *Künhü'l-aḫbār*, the two brothers were castrated at their own will in order to maintain their proximity to Selim II after his accession to the throne. While Cafer died as a result of the operation, Gazanfer survived to serve the royal house for many years, throughout the reigns of Selim II, Murad III and Mehmed III.[22] However, contrary evidence from the Venetian state archives suggests that Gazanfer Agha not only had his brother serving as the head of the Privy Chamber under his authority from 1577 to 1582, but also reunited with his mother and sister, whom he introduced to the imperial harem. Particularly his sister Beatrice, who converted to Islam, served as a link between the Venetians and the imperial court, while Gazanfer Agha also made use of her marriage to create new alliances for himself.[23] Therefore, Mustafa Âlî's story may have been invented in order to disguise Gazanfer Agha's family connections extending to Europe and to convey the image of a loyal eunuch who suffered the loss of not only his sexuality but also his brother in his quest to be closer to the sultan.

Although he served as *kapı ağası* over the last three decades of the sixteenth century and as the agha of the Privy Chamber after 1582,[24] Gazanfer Agha built his major work, the *medrese* complex, in a much later part of his career, during the reign of Mehmed III, when, affiliated with the faction of Safiye Sultan, he achieved significant power. His relationship

[22] Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 12.
[23] Maria Pia Pedani, "Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy," *Turcica* 32 (2000): 14 and 25-27.
[24] Ibid., 14.

with the chief black eunuch Osman Agha, from whom he differed greatly as a patron, must have been determined to a great extent by their common alliance with the *valide sultan*. In fact, they shared a common fate when the power they enjoyed apparently in harmony with each other came to an abrupt end when both were decapitated in 1603 in compliance with the demands of the rebellious cavalry.[25]

Gazanfer Agha's elaborate complex abutting the Valens Aqueduct comprises a *medrese*, a *sebil*, the founder's mausoleum (*türbe*), and a small graveyard (*hazîre*) (Fig. 43, see Map 2).[26] Probably completed by 1596,[27] the complex is often attributed to Davud, the chief imperial architect between 1588 and 1598, although this is not verified by any data other than the evident mastery in its construction.[28] Indeed, with its elegant design, ashlar

[25] Emine Fetvacı, *Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566-1617*, PhD dissertation (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, History of Art and Architecture Department, 2005), 338-39. In the biography of Osman Agha, the author of the *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ* uses an imagery of energetic race horses to illustrate the two aghas' power in their heyday: *bir müddet kapu ağası Gazanfer Ağa ile feresân-ı rihân gibi meydân-ı kâmrânîde mezîd ferr u haşmetle cünbüş ü cevelân üzereler iken*; Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 46-47.

[26] The complex is located to the north of the Valens Aqueduct, on Atatürk Boulevard in the Fatih district of Istanbul. The structure was given a new function as a museum hall from 1945 onwards. In that year, after a controversial restoration, the structure began to be used as the new place of the Municipality Museum (*Belediye Müzesi*), which operated there until 1988. During this period, many objects representing daily life in Ottoman Istanbul as well as various works of art were displayed in the *medrese* halls. The complex currently houses the Museum of Caricature and Humor (*Karikatür ve Mizah Müzesi*), which re-opened there in the late 1980s to offer a survey of the history of caricature in Turkey. For the afterlife of the Gazanfer Agha *medrese* as a museum, see Yaşar Çoruhlu, "Şehir Müzesi," *DBİA* 7: 143; and idem., "Türk Karikatür ve Mizah Müzesi," *DBİA* 7: 314.

[27] This is the date of the *vakfiye*; Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 509.

[28] Godfrey Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1971), 338. Judging by the structure's "soft and fluent" style as well as the fact that it is not cited among Sinan's works, Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi is assured that the architect was Davud; E. H. Ayverdi, "Gazanfer Ağa Manzûmesi," *İstanbul Enstitüsü Mecmuası* 3 (1957): 86.

masonry, and central location, the Gazanfer Agha *Medrese* Complex constitutes one of the masterpieces among the entire architectural record of Ottoman court eunuchs.

Gazanfer Agha received imperial authorization to build his *medrese* complex in 1593, after a waiting period of two years. At the agha's request, the permission was given for this particular plot adjoining the aqueduct, where a church standing in the middle of a Muslim neighborhood had recently been torn down. Thus, the construction of the *medrese* served to accentuate the Islamic character of the area—a consideration which possibly gave further legitimacy to the undertaking.[29]

As one of the earliest examples of the funerary *medrese* complexes built around the Divan Yolu axis from the late sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century, the complex of Gazanfer Agha recalls that of the grand vizier Koca Sinan Pasha, also dating from the 1590s, by virtue of its compactness as well as the form of its projecting *sebil*.[30] Compared to its vizierial counterpart, the agha's *medrese*, overshadowed by the towering aqueduct, is more peripheral to the Divan Yolu. Still, the agha's domed mausoleum seems to echo the vizier's *türbe* in dominating an educational institution and a *sebil* packed in a tiny precinct. Both complexes, as Goodwin notes, can be construed as part of a larger "trend towards reducing the emphasis on the mosque in the capital, where there were now so many, and

[29] Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 508-9.
[30] Goodwin, *Architecture*, 338; Maurice Cerasi, *The Istanbul Divanyolu: A Case Study in Ottoman Urbanity and Architecture* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag in Kommission, 2004), 59-60; Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 508.

instead supplying educational centres and waterworks alongside the tomb of the potentate who endowed the foundation."[31]

In the history of Ottoman architecture, the Gazanfer Agha Complex represents an allusion if not return to the Seljukid *medrese-türbe* combination, even though it diverges from the Seljukid tradition because of the tomb's detachment from the college and the addition of a *sebil*.[32] As such, the complex—together with its contemporary Sinan Pasha Complex—constitutes an innovation in Ottoman architectural design. The novelty in the arrangement of the complex and its refined aesthetics are recognized in the relevant *vakfiye* by the reference to its "heart-catching novel design" (*tarh-ı cedîd-i dil-firîbi*) and "beautifully arranged right style" (*tarz-ı sedîd-i bedi'ü't-tertîbi*).[33] The endowment deed also includes a couplet praising the high quality stonework on marble.[34]

In spite of the aesthetic achievements characterizing the complex and the evident confidence in the introduction of an innovative design, it is noteworthy that there is no inscription in any part of the complex to celebrate and give credit to the patron and the architect. The lack of such an inscription is in contrast not only to *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha's mosque complex in Çarşamba, where both the patron and the architect Davud are eulogized in the foundation inscription, but also to the contemporary *medrese* complex of Sinan

[31] Goodwin, *Architecture*, 351.
[32] Ayverdi, "Gazanfer Ağa Manzûmesi," 86.
[33] Ibid., 85. The *vakfiye* is in Vakıflar Umum Müdürlüğü Arşivi, Kuyud-ı Kadime İstanbul Sâni Defteri no. 571, 11-12.
[34] Ibid.

Pasha, where the name of Davud is carved in stone together with that of the patron.[35] One wonders whether this anonymity was intended to exhibit an ethos of modesty and disinterested service in the advancement of education and the Islamization of the urban fabric—to display those qualities that may have been considered fit for the perfect eunuch servant in the sultan's service. As Fetvacı notes, an ethos of disinterested dedication to educational, intellectual, and artistic activities was something that apparently characterized Gazanfer Agha's patronage of books as well.[36]

In contrast to his *medrese* complex, however, the *sebil* that Gazanfer Agha constructed in Eyüp did bear an inscription. This *sebil* was beside the Otakçılar Mosque, which was originally founded by Fethullah Efendi, son of an *otakçı* (an official in charge of tents during a campaign), and rebuilt by Gazanfer Agha after it was ruined.[37] What is interesting is that, amidst the usual eulogy of the patron's generosity and piety, the *sebil*'s inscription praises the *kapı ağası* as the "pride of the warriors" (*fahr-i ehl-i vegâ*),[38] or "the pride of those who utter battle-cries." Needless to say, this emphasis on martialness is highly unusual for a court eunuch and makes the inscription unique. On the other hand, it echoes similar expressions in Mustafa Âlî's *Hâlâtü'l-Kahire mine'l-'âdâti'z-zâhire* and

[35] Their names are on the inscription of the *sebil* dated to 1002/1593-4; Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 508. Tülay Artan notes that, beginning with his appointment as chief architect, Davud "did not get to attach his name to the major projects of the period," including Cerrah Mehmed Pasha's complex completed in 1593-4; T. Artan, "Arts and Architecture," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 3: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi, 449 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
[36] See Fetvacı, *Viziers to Eunuchs*, 257-96.
[37] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 307.
[38] Ibid.; and Ayvansarâyî Hüseyin Efendi, Alî Sâtı' Efendi, and Süleyman Besîm Efendi, *Hadîkatü'l-Cevâmi': İstanbul Câmileri ve Diğer Dînî-Sivil Mi'mârî Yapılar* (Istanbul: İşaret Yayınları, 2001), 369.

Nâdirî's *Dîvan* that praise the prowess of Gazanfer Agha, who accompanied the sultan in the major battles of the period.[39] The use of such wording in reference to a chief white eunuch brings to mind the possibility that the allocation of the male zone and the female zone of the palace to the white and the black eunuchs respectively also entailed a gender differentiation between these two eunuch identities. If they could be supported by comparable data that related to other court eunuchs, these expressions can shed light on the gender identities of the castrated officers of the Ottoman court.

Gazanfer Agha is also the builder of the well-known Ayrılık Çeşmesi (the Fountain of Departure) in Kadıköy. The fountain was thus named as it stood at the significant location where the *Sürre-i Hümâyûn* and pilgrimage caravans would set out.[40] The current structure, however, dates from the eighteenth century, since it was rebuilt by Ahmed Agha,

[39] *Hâlâtü'l-Kahire mine'l-'âdâti'z-zâhire* is a book that Mustafa Âlî wrote during his sojourn in Cairo in 1599 and dedicated to his patron Gazanfer Agha. In a dedicatory passage, Mustafa Âlî describes the agha as "the Ardashīr of our time, the male lion of the assemblies, the breaker of the necks of the treacherous, … the lion of battle and warfare," Gelibolulu Mustafa 'Âlî, *Mustafa 'Ālī's Description of Cairo of 1599: Text, Transliteration, Translation, Notes*, ed. and trans. Andreas Tietze (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), 28. He probably alludes to the fact that the chief white eunuch accompanied Mehmed III in the Eger campaign as well as in the Battle of Haçova (Mezőkeresztes); see Zeren Tanındı, "Bibliophile Aghas (Eunuchs) at Topkapı Saray," *Muqarnas* 21 (2004): 336. This eulogy of the agha's martial prowess is followed by a statement that explains the presentation of the book to Gazanfer Agha with a clear sexual allusion: "This novel work, a virgin in the veils of chastity, worthy of being praised, should have the veil lifted from her perfect beauty—thus I found it best—by the hand of that angel-like person who, as his generosity-promising reputation has it, is the best of all men;" ibid. Also see Numan Külekçi, ed., *Ganî-zâde Nâdirî ve Dîvânından Seçmeler* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1989), 262.

[40] Affan Egemen, *İstanbul'un Çeşme ve Sebilleri: Resimleri ve Kitabeleri ile 1165 Çeşme ve Sebil* (Istanbul: Arıtan Yayınevi, [1993]), 54. Also see Semavi Eyice, "İstanbul-Şam-Bağdad Yolu Üzerindeki Mimârî Eserler I: Üsküdar-Bostancıbaşı Derbendi Güzergâhı," *Tarih Dergisi* 9, no. 13 (1958): 81-110.

who was the *kapı ağası* under Mahmud I (Fig. 44). Its inscription pays homage to Gazanfer Agha and identifies Ahmed Agha as a loyal successor.[41]

It was during the reign of Ahmed I (1603-17) that for the first time after *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha, a chief black eunuch built in the capital. El-Hajj Mustafa Agha was clearly a well-reputed court official; he was appointed to the office as soon as he returned from pilgrimage and retained his post during the accessions of Mustafa I and Osman II. He not only had a long tenure that exceeded fourteen years—between 1014/1605 and 1029/1620—but was also appointed for a second time during the reign of Murad IV and remained in the office until his death a few months later in 1033/1624.[42]

In fact, el-Hajj Mustafa Agha's case suggests that a relatively long length of tenure may explain why certain eunuchs could become patrons of architecture while others could not. Information on chief harem eunuchs' lengths of tenure, which is available from *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha onwards, reveals that he and Mustafa Agha were among those who served the longest as *darüssaade ağası*—for sixteen and more than fifteen years respectively.[43] Both aghas became patrons of architecture apparently a few years after their appointment: Mehmed Agha completed his earliest known work, the Divan Yolu *sebil-mekteb*, in his sixth year in the office, while Mustafa Agha's earliest dated construction was brought to

[41] *Çeşme-i pâki Gazanfer Ağa'nın* / *Bulıcak dehrin mürûriyle fenâ* / *Kapu ağası kerim-i hayr-ı halef* / *Ahd-i lûtfunda güzel kıldı binâ* / *Geldi bir hayr ehli tarihin didi* / *Pâk ihyâ eyledi Ahmed Ağa*; Egemen, *Çeşme ve Sebiller*, 54.
[42] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 48-49.
[43] *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha served as *darüssaade ağası* from the beginning of 1575 until the end of 1590.

completion in his eighth year as *darüssaade ağası*.[44] This implies that, for many chief black eunuchs whose term of office did not exceed a couple of years, lack of seniority in the office was possibly a reason that prevented them from becoming patrons of architecture. While, as will be seen, length of tenure does not always explain patronage behavior, building in Istanbul in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century seems to have been a privilege enjoyed by only those chief harem eunuchs who managed to have a longer and stronger hold in their position.

Thus, a few years after his promotion and during the period when he was overseeing the construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque,[45] el-Hajj Mustafa Agha built his first known fountain in the "Efrâziyye yokuşu" in Fatih in 1022/1613-14.[46] In 1225/1616-17, he built a *sebil* and a fountain near the Mahmud Pasha Mosque.[47] At unknown dates, though presumably during his first term of office, Mustafa Agha extended his patronage to two other structures dating from the reign of Mehmed II: he rebuilt the Tekneciler Mosque in Eminönü and installed minbars both in this mosque and in the Akbıyık Mosque in Ahırkapı (see Map 1).[48] After the deposition of Mustafa I and the accession of Osman II, in which he

[44] The Efrâziyye fountain; see below. Osman Agha's abstinence from building in the capital city could also be problematized in the light of this information, given that he served as *darüssaade ağası* almost for a full six years; Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 46-47, and "Dârüssaâde Ağaları Defteri," ibid., 164.
[45] Ülkü Altındağ, "Dârüssaâde," *TDVİA* 9: 3.
[46] Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 380-81.
[47] *Ey Hâşimî gören dedi târîhini anın / Dil-cû sebîl-i âb-ı hayât ola nûş-i cân 1025 (1616)* in Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 206 ; and *Hâşimî dâ'î dedi seyreyleyüb tarihini / Hak yoluna çeşme zîbâ suyu 'ayn-ı selsebîl* in Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. 1, 64.
[48] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 264-65 and 50.

played a role,[49] the agha was identified in the inscription of another fountain he built in Hasköy as the *darüssaade ağası* of "Osman the Just."[50] Again in 1028/1618-19, Mustafa Agha built a *sebil-küttab* in Cairo,[51] and sometime during the reign of Osman, a mosque in the town of Lubin (Ljubinje) in Hersek.[52] The last piece of his architectural heritage appears to be the funerary *sebil* next to the tomb of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari in Eyüp, which was his place of burial.[53]

In accordance with the shift in the relative positions of the two main eunuch groups within the power configuration, the first half of the seventeenth century also saw some of the last major works commissioned by chief white eunuch patrons. One of these was the Osman Agha Mosque, built by the chief white eunuch *Buhûrî* Osman Agha in Kadıköy and completed in 1021/1612-13 apparently after the founder's death (Fig. 45).[54] Located not far from the fountain built by *kapı ağası* Mehmed Agha in 912/1506-07, the mosque was constructed on a plot previously occupied by another mosque that was built by a *kadı* during the reign of Mehmed II.[55] Covered with a hipped roof and enclosed within a precinct, the rectangular mosque is reminiscent of the neighborhood mosques constructed by white eunuchs in earlier periods. Yet, it also displays certain status symbols on its qibla

[49] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 48.
[50] Egemen, *Çeşme ve Sebiller*, 622.
[51] André Raymond, "Les fontaines publiques (sabīl) du Caire à l'époque ottomane (1517-1798) I," *Annales Islamologiques* 15 (1979): 246.
[52] Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, "Yugoslavya'da Türk Âbideleri ve Vakıfları," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 3 (1956): 184.
[53] Egemen, *Çeşme ve Sebiller*, 622 and 625.
[54] The foundation inscription reveals that the agha was dead by 1021/1612-13; Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 542.
[55] Hence the name Kadıköy; see ibid., 543.

wall such as a muqarnas-decorated mihrab and Kütahya tiles, which are rarely used in the buildings of court eunuch patrons.[56] Constructed simultaneously as the lofty royal mosque of Ahmed I at the At Meydanı, the Osman Agha Mosque reinforced the relatively lowly status of the Asian side of the Bosphorus as an area suitable for the constructions of eunuch patrons, while at the same time it represented a slight enhancement in the norms of decorum with its prestigious decorative elements. Its foundation inscription recorded by Ayvansarâyî emphasizes the late Osman Agha's status as "the most favored of imperial slaves" of Ahmed I and states that this "Kaaba-resembling" mosque was constructed by the sultan's order.[57]

Within a decade, Osman Agha's namesake and successor in the post of *babüssaade*, *Mısırlı* Osman Agha paid homage to him by donating ablution fountains to his mosque in Kadıköy as well as by building a fountain in its vicinity.[58] Built in 1030/1620-21, during the reign of Osman II (1618-22), the simple classical fountain bears a short inscription that cites the builder's epithet "Egyptian" (*Mısırlı*), differentiating him thus from the other

[56] Deniz Çalışır, "Osman Ağa Camii," *DBİA* 6: 159.
[57] See a transliteration of the inscription in Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 391, where Ayvansarâyî refers to the mosque as *câmi'-i kebîr* (the great mosque); an English translation is in Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 542. Osman Agha might also have been the builder of the Karaağac Camii in Sütlüce; ibid., 319.
[58] Kolağası Mehmed Râ'if, *Mir'ât-ı İstanbul, I. Cild (Asya Yakası)*, ed. Günay Kut and Hatice Aynur (Istanbul: Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), 50; Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 543. Earlier in his career, in 1012/1603-04, *Mısırlı* Osman Agha had built another fountain in the kitchen of the Topkapı Palace; Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. 1, 56.

Osman Agha (Fig. 46).[59] The mosque and the fountain of the two Osman Aghas who held the office of *kapı ağası* in the first quarter of the seventeenth century still stand on opposite sides of the avenue known as Söğütlüçeşme Caddesi, in short distance from each other. When considered together with the early-sixteenth-century *kapı ağası* Mehmed Agha's fountain near the intersection of this avenue with the one running parallel to the shore, the buildings of eunuch patrons in this area constituted a chain of monuments that expended in not only a territorial but also a chronological sequence towards inland. The last piece in this sequence was the fountain built by the chief black eunuch Halid Agha in the late eighteenth century to the east of the *Mısırlı* Osman Agha fountain.[60] The road on which these structures were located was a branch of the same web of roads as the Ayrılık Çeşmesi that linked the Asian shore of the Bosphorus to the main route running through Anatolia.[61]

Seen from a long term perspective, the commissions of the two Osman Aghas on the Asian side of Istanbul seem to be part of a process whereby white eunuchs shifted the locus of their patronage out of the more prestigious *intra muros* part of the city and limited it to the outer areas. Unlike black eunuchs who continued to build in the historical peninsula, the very last commissions of white eunuchs *intra muros* date from the first half

[59] See Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 391-92; and Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 543. The inscription on a fountain that *Mısırlı* Osman Agha built a year later near the *medrese* of Mahmud Pasha begins with citing the name of the sultan Osman II; Egemen, *Çeşme ve Sebiller*, 674.
[60] For the Halid Agha fountain, see Mücteba İlgürel, "Hâlid Ağa Çeşmesi," in *Semavi Eyice Armağanı: İstanbul Yazıları*, 299-306 (Istanbul: Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1992). In the twentieth century, this fountain was removed to a nearby location; ibid., 300.
[61] See the map no. 1 attached to Eyice, "İstanbul-Şam-Bağdad Yolu."

of the seventeenth century. Some of these were minor structures that included *Mısırlı* Osman Agha's fountain in the kitchen of the Topkapı Palace in 1012/1603-04 and the fountain that he appears to have repaired or rebuilt in the Mahmud Pasha Complex in Eminönü in 1031/1621-22.[62] Another one is the fountain built by the *kapı ağası* Mehmed Agha in 1041/1631-32, probably near the Firuz Agha Mosque in the Hippodrome.[63] Yet the last major work by a white eunuch *intra muros* was a dervish convent commissioned by *Malatyalı* Ismail Agha near Hagia Sophia.

The sources provide conflicting information about *Malatyalı* Ismail Agha, who is known as the last *ak ağa* to become chief harem eunuch. Both Ayvansarâyî's *Garden of the Mosques* and *Sicill-i Osmânî* identify Ismail Agha as a white eunuch who held the offices of *darüssaade* and *babüssaade* simultaneously.[64] Yet, he does not appear in the canonical list of chief harem eunuchs in *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, presumably because he was regarded as a chief white eunuch rather than an agha of *darüssaade*. For the seventeenth century, this source provides an uninterrupted sequence of black eunuch biographies, omitting Ismail Agha from the narrative. On the other hand, based on archival sources, Ülkü Altındağ dates

[62] Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. 1, 56 and 58. *Dilsiz* Ali Agha's fountain dated to 1029/1619-20 might also be added to this list, if this mute servant of the imperial palace was a eunuch. The fountain's location is unknown, yet it might be *intra muros*, as Tanışık found its inscription at the "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi;" ibid., 66.

[63] According to Tanışık, Mehmed Agha served as *kapı ağası* during the reign of Ahmed I. Tanışık records that he died in 1048/1638-39 and was buried in Sultanahmet; ibid., 72.

[64] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 10 and 510. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmânî*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, tr. Seyit Ali Kahraman (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı and Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996), vol. 3, 811.

Ismail Agha's tenure as *darüssaade ağası* to the years 1621-23,[65] which corresponds to Süleyman Agha's term of office according to *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*.[66]

Ismail Agha is associated with two groups of charitable works in Istanbul. One of these is a complex in Üsküdar that comprised a mosque, a double bath, a dervish convent, and a fountain. Ayvansarâyî writes that Ismail Agha built these when he was an agha of the inner commissary (*iç kilar ağası*) and dates the completion of the mosque to 1045/1635-36.[67] This information is clearly in conflict with the abovementioned date of his appointment as chief harem eunuch, which must have been posterior to his tenure at the commissary. The alternative date 1018/1609-10 offered by the inscription above the mosque entrance that commemorates the repair or rebuilding in 1902 is more congruous with Ismail Agha's appointment date given as 1621.[68] This earlier date is also in accordance with the date 1026/1617 given on the inscription of the fountain that Ismail

[65] Ülkü Altındağ, "Dârüssaâde," *TDVİA* 9: 1. The sources that she cites are TSMA, nr. E 1725/1, 7364/77, and 8395/1.
[66] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 49. The "Dârüssaâde Ağaları Defteri" from the late nineteenth century mentions two Süleyman Aghas in these years; ibid., 165. One of these is clearly the same Süleyman Agha included in *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*; he was appointed in 1029/1620-21 and martyred in 1031/1622-23. The register adds that he was buried in his mosque in Kumkapı; ibid., 165. Given the fact that no such mosque is known from that date, I believe that this note is due to a confusion with the sixteenth-century Süleyman Agha who built a mosque in Kumkapı; see Chapter III. The second Süleyman in the list is identified as an *ak ağa* who served between 1031 and 1032. It is added that he was in fact buried under the minaret of his mosque at "Ağa Hamamı" in Üsküdar, even though his grave is known to be in Malatya. This information makes it clear that "Ak Ağa Süleyman Ağa" refers to *Malatyalı* Ismail Agha.
[67] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 510. The dervish convent is omitted in Ayvansarâyî's text, but mentioned in Howard Crane's footnote; ibid., fn. 3543. According to Konyalı, the chronogram that Ayvansarâyî cites, in fact, gives the date as 1040 instead of 1045; Konyalı, *Üsküdar Tarihi*, vol. I, 83.
[68] Konyalı, *Üsküdar Tarihi*, vol. I, 83.

Agha built near the mosque and the bath.[69] Thus, having been built at an early date in its patron's career, this small mosque complex indicated the *kilârî* Ismail Agha's favored position that ultimately led to his appointment as the chief of all the eunuchs at the imperial palace. Also, in contrast to Ayvansarâyî's claim that the agha's grave is in his hometown Malatya, he appears to be buried in this mosque's cemetery, where Konyalı found his tombstone bearing the date 1050/1640-41.[70]

The other work by Ismail Agha is a dervish convent that was originally adjacent to Hagia Sophia (see Map 1). The construction date of this no longer extant *tekke* is unknown. According to Ayvansarâyî, it was replaced in 1153/1740-41 by the *imaret* of the imperial mosque, and moved to an opposite spot adjoining the outer wall of the Topkapı Palace and to the west of the entrance to the first court (*Bâb-ı Hümâyûn*).[71] Yet, the two buildings were institutionally connected to each other, as the sheikh of the Ismail Agha *tekke* was also the sheikh of the *imaret*.[72]

As the last white eunuch to become *darüssaade ağası* and to build in the central part of Istanbul within the city walls, *Malatyalı* Ismail Agha was an important figure that marked the closing of the age of prominent white eunuchs. Nevertheless, the fact that his

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[69] *Çeşme-i Peygamber oldu geldi bu kavme izzet / Hazretin yüzü suyiçün diledi âb-ı sıhhât*
Bin yiğirmi altı oldu târîhi bu çeşmenin / Mü'minînden kim içerse ola cânına rahmet 1026 (1617)
Ayvansarayî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 63. The fountain was repaired or rebuilt in the early eighteenth century ; Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. II, 296.

[70] Ibid., and Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 510.

[71] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 10 and ibid., fn. 41.

[72] Ibid., 10. A certain Ismail Efendi built a fountain adjacent to the convent in 1216/1801-02; Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. I, 222.

constructions were followed by a relatively unproductive period suggests that chief black eunuchs were slow in taking over the leadership in patronage from the hands of chief white eunuchs. The patronage of eunuchs was no doubt adversely affected by the general slowdown in the architectural commissions by elite patrons in the mid-seventeenth century.[73] Thus, from the 1620s until the constructions of Abbas Agha in the 1660s, the only commission by a black eunuch in the capital city was the mosque built by the *darüssaade ağası Çuçu* (or *Çaçu*) Ibrahim Agha in Üsküdar.

It is also important to note that length of tenure, which seems to be a significant factor that determined patronage behavior in the earlier part of that century, fails to account for the chief black eunuchs' commissions or the lack thereof in this period. The cases of Idris and Ibrahim Aghas in particular constitute counterevidence against the assumption that architectural patronage was related to length of tenure. In spite of his lengthy service for fifteen years and a half from July/August 1624 to January/February 1640 (Şevval 1033-Şevval 1049),[74] Idris Agha did not commission any socio-religious structures in Istanbul. His successor Ibrahim Agha, on the other hand, served for only a few months in 1640 (from the Şevval of 1049 to the first months of 1050) and became the builder of the so-called *Harab* (Ruined) Mosque in Üsküdar.[75] In the absence of information on the earlier part of Ibrahim Agha's career, it is also not possible to assume that a lengthy service at the

[73] Artan, "Arts and Architecture," 457-59.
[74] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 49.
[75] Ibid., 50; and Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 520. According to Ayvansarâyî, Ibrahim Agha was appointed chief black eunuch in 1048/1638-39 and succeeded by Sünbül Agha two years later.

imperial household enabled him to become a patron of architecture. Ibrahim Agha was succeeded by a series of chief black eunuchs most of whom did not serve more than a couple of years. While none of the aghas of *darüssaade* engaged in architectural patronage in the 1640s and 50s, the only commission by a eunuch patron in this period was the chief treasurer (and white eunuch) Ali Agha's fountain built in 1064/1653-54 in Selimiye.[76]

During the reign of Mehmed IV, the imperial court's prolonged sojourn in Edirne did not lead to much building activity in this town, except for palatial constructions.[77] This development, nevertheless, did have an impact on the architectural patronage of court eunuchs, albeit limited. In 1076/1665-66, the year before he constructed a fountain near the Sultan Ahmed Mosque,[78] the chief black eunuch Muslı Agha rebuilt an existing dervish convent in Edirne as a Friday mosque. The mosque's inscription begins by citing the name of the patron, who is identified as a trustworthy man who "was for a long time Agha of the Abode of Grandeur of the Sovereign of the Sea and the Land, the *gazi* king Mehmed."[79] The inscription thus attests to the favor Muslı Agha received from the sultan as a chief black eunuch who was promoted to this rank from *baş kapu oğlanı*, a rather low rank for

[76] Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. II, 270. Ali Agha was a native of Skopje (Üsküp). Prior to his appointment as chief white eunuch in 1066/1655-56, he served as *miftah gulamı*, *saray ağası*, *kilercibaşı*, *hazinedar*, and *musahib*; ibid., 272. His fountain was repaired in 1262/1845-46 by a royal consort; ibid., 270.
[77] Artan, "Arts and Architecture," 460.
[78] Egemen, *Çeşme ve Sebiller*, 621-22.
[79] *Pādişāh-ı bahr u berr gāzī Mehemmed serverin / Nice dem ağa-yı dārü'l-'izzi oldu ol emīn*; F. Th. Dijkema, ed., *The Ottoman Historical Monumental Inscriptions in Edirne* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 77. The chronogram refers to the mosque as the "Friday mosque of Mesud," naming it after the convent which was associated with a certain sheikh Mesud who died during the reign of Mehmed II; ibid., 78.

this appointment.[80] The reference to his long term service, on the other hand, probably takes into account not only the two or three years that had elapsed after his appointment but his entire career at the imperial court.[81] In addition to leading the chief harem eunuch to build in Edirne, the sultan's presence in this town seems to have eventually brought the agha of the Edirne Palace to significance: one holder of this office, Mustafa Agha built a fountain in Karagümrük, Istanbul in 1092/1681-82.[82]

After the death of the much cherished Muslı Agha in 1078/1668, Abbas Agha became the *darüssaade ağası*. The new chief black eunuch was previously the chief agha of the *valide sultan* Hadice Turhan,[83] who had been leading the building efforts of the royal house with the fortresses she constructed on the Dardanelles as well as the Yeni Valide mosque complex—the former *valide* Safiye Sultan's abandoned project which Turhan revived and brought to completion.[84] The connection between Turhan Sultan and Abbas Agha seems to have been a crucial factor in determining the agha's patronage, as the enhanced position of the *valide sultan* in this period must have had a positive impact on his own standing within the power configuration.

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[80] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 58.
[81] Muslı (or Muslu Mustafa) Agha became the chief black eunuch on 11 Zi'l-ka'de 1073/13 June 1663, according to the "Dârüssaâde Ağaları Defteri" in Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 168. After his death on 26 Şevvâl 1078/9 April 1668, the agha was buried in Edirne; ibid.
[82] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 57. Tanışık records the chronogram verse in *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. I, 90. The fountain appears as "Çeşme-i Zincirli Kuyu" and its date as 1093 in Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 146.
[83] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 58.
[84] For Hadice Turhan Sultan's architectural patronage, see Lucienne Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders: The Architectural Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

In fact, Abbas Agha's best-known work, the Friday mosque which forms the nucleus of the Abbasağa neighborhood in Beşiktaş, probably dates from the period when he was at the service of the *valide sultan*. According to Ayvansarâyî, the construction was completed in 1076/1665-66, around two years before the agha's appointment as *darüssaade ağası*.[85] The Abbas Agha Mosque's construction date also coincides with the completion of the Yeni Valide Mosque.[86] Significant as the first mosque ever commissioned by an agha of the *valide sultan*, it, therefore, attests to her and her circle's boosted prominence at the court. The Kavak İskelesi Mosque built by the harem treasurer (*hazinedar*) *Lala* Beshir Agha in Üsküdar in 1077/1666-67, only one year later than Abbas Agha's mosque,[87] could perhaps also be interpreted in the same manner, as part of the synchronized building efforts of the people of the harem.

Either at this time or after he became the chief black eunuch, Abbas Agha underlined his closeness to the royal family by adding an imperial tribune (*mahfil-i hümâyûn*) to his Friday mosque.[88] The rectangular mosque, the current state of which is at least partly a product of Mahmud II's rebuilding in 1834-35, must have been otherwise unpretentious.[89] Abbas Agha also expanded his foundation with an elementary school,

[85] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 418.
[86] Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 202.
[87] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 520. The mosque was demolished in 1959; ibid., fn. 3617. *Lala* Beshir Agha died around 1080/1669-70, according to Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmânî*, vol. 2, 371.
[88] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 418.
[89] Tarkan Okçuoğlu, "Abbas Ağa Camii," *DBİA* 1: 7.

which has not survived, as well as a fountain.[90] Added to the ensemble in 1080/1669-70, i.e., after the agha's promotion to the *darüssaade* office, the fountain attached to the high walls surrounding the mosque bears a lengthy inscription composed in a rather unusual manner (Fig. 47). Contrary to what would be expected from an inscription commemorating a high-ranking eunuch, this one omits any mention of the reigning sultan. Instead of the ruler, Abbas Agha seeks to derive legitimacy for his patronage directly from God, whom he beseeches in the following manner:

> The agha of the Abode of Good Fortune His Excellency Abbas Agha said, "O God!
> "Thankfulness is due to Your beneficence, for You have shown [me] munificence.
> "My entire endeavor day and night is for gratuitous service for the sake of God.
> "All about me is evident to You; You have the knowledge, the Eternal One!
> "For the sake of Your Beloved [the Prophet], ignore my sins and disobediences!
> "O God, manifest Your mercy, show Your grace[ful face]!
> "I have come to Your abode for supplication, my gratitude is only to You!
> "Accept [and appreciate] my charities, great and generous God!"
> May there be mercy upon whoever recites the *fâtihâ* [for Abbas Agha];
> May the one who rejoices his soul not be sad even a single moment.
> I have composed this chronogram so that thirsty hearts find life:
> May it be as if you drank life, drink the pure water of this fountain![91]

The direct address of God in the first person singular is quite unusual and adds a very personal tone to the undertaking. The same inscription also appears on Abbas Agha's

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[90] Ibid., and Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 418.

[91] *Dedi Dârü's-sa'âde hazret-i Abbâs Ağa yâ Râb / Çok şükür ihsânına lûtf eyledin cûd u nevâl*
Hasbeten-li'llah içindir hep bu sa'yim rûz u şeb / Cümle hâlim sana ma'lûm sen bilirsin lâ-yezâl
Cürm ü isyânıma bakma ol habîbin hürmeti / Yâ ilâhî rahmetin izhâr edip göster cemâl
El açıp dergâhına geldim sanadır minnetim / Eyle hayrâtımı makbûl yâ kerîm-i Zü'l-celâl
Rahmet olsun cânına her kim okursa fâtihâ / Rûhunu şâd eyleyen hiç olmaya bir dem melâl
Söyledim bu târîhi dil-teşneler bulsun hayât / Nûş-ı cân olsun için bu çeşmeden âb-ı zülâl
Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 201-2, with slight changes in orthography.

fountain near the mosque of Hayreddin Çavuş in Üsküdar, built in the same year.[92] The inscriptions on the agha's other fountains, however, do not follow suit; the ones on his fountain near the Arakiyeci Mosque in Üsküdar and his other fountain near the Defterdar Kapısı, both dated to 1080/1669-70, are of a much more ordinary composition. They too, however, omit mentioning the sultan's name.[93]

Abbas Agha is also the second patron of the Selçuk Hatun Mosque in Fatih, Istanbul (see Map 2). As the chief eunuch in charge of the imperial harem, he made a meaningful patronage choice in rebuilding the mosque of an earlier princess of the House of Osman, Selçuk Hatun, daughter of Mehmed I (*Çelebi*). He revived the mosque, which had burnt down, and apparently also raised its status to a Friday mosque by installing a minbar.[94]

Although it lasted only around three years and three months from 26 Şevvâl 1078/9 April 1668 to 9 Rebîü'l-evvel 1082/16 July 1671,[95] Abbas Agha's tenure as the chief harem eunuch proved to be astonishingly productive in terms of his architectural patronage. According to Ayvansarâyî, he built twelve fountains in Istanbul proper and two in Üsküdar;

[92] İ. Hakkı Konyalı, *Âbideleri ve Kitâbeleriyle Üsküdar Tarihi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yeşilay Cemiyeti), vol. II, 3. According to Konyalı, the chronogram yields the date 1084, which is written on the fountain in Üsküdar.
[93] The one near the Arakiyeci Mosque is reproduced in Arabic letters in ibid., 4, and in a shorter and slightly different form in Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 62. For the other fountain's inscription, see ibid., 233-34.
[94] Emine Naza, "Selçuk Sultan Camii," *DBİA* 6: 497. The mosque was demolished during the enlargement of Millet Caddesi in 1956 and rebuilt in 1964; see ibid., 497-98.
[95] "Dârüssaâde Ağaları Defteri" in Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 168.

most of these are no longer extant.[96] Likewise, his double bath in Laleli, dated to 1080/1669-70 like his fountains, as well as his single bath, elementary school, and *sebil* in Eminönü, all of which are mentioned by Ayvansarâyî, have been destroyed.[97] Still, the list is a very remarkable one, compared to the limited constructions of many other chief black eunuchs of the seventeenth century, and seems to be very much a product of Abbas Agha's efforts to echo Turhan Sultan's increased visibility through her architectural patronage.

His prolific patronage and career, nevertheless, were cut short by his dismissal and exile to Egypt in 1082/1671.[98] It is noteworthy that after Abbas Agha black eunuchs ceased to engage in architectural patronage until the beginning of the next century. For instance, Abbas Agha's immediate successor Yusuf Agha, who remained in the office for sixteen years from 1082/1671 to 1098/1687,[99] built not in Istanbul but in Cairo. In 1088/1677-78, in the sixth year of his tenure as *darüssaade ağası*, Yusuf Agha constructed a *sebil-mekteb* in Cairo with the help of his agent Mustafa Agha.[100]

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[96] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 418. In addition to the ones cited above, Abbas Agha's fountains include the one in İnadiye, Üsküdar, built in 1080/1669-70; ibid., fn. 3022. The fountain in Şehremini built in 1032/1622-23 attributed to Abbas Agha in ibid., however, probably belongs to another Abbas Agha.

[97] The bath in Laleli was destroyed by fire in 1911 and the others in 1909; ibid., fns. 3023 and 3024.

[98] In her study of the *waqf* that Abbas Agha endowed in Egypt, Jane Hathaway asks whether his religious and mystic affiliations had any role in his dismissal, as these seem to be at odds with the puritanist Kadızadeli movement on its heyday. Hathaway, "The Wealth and Influence of an Exiled Ottoman Eunuch in Egypt: The Waqf Inventory of 'Abbās Agha," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37 (1994): 316.

[99] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 58.

[100] Raymond, "Les fontaines publiques (sabīl) du Caire,": 257. Also see idem., "The *Sabil* of Yusuf Agha Dar al-Sa'ada (1088/1677) According to Its *Waqf* Document," in *The Cairo Heritage: Essays in Honor of Laila Ali Ibrahim*, ed. Doris Behrens-Abouseif, 223-33 (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2000).

White eunuchs also built little in the last three decades of the seventeenth century. Apart from the fountain built by the Edirne *saray ağası* noted above, the only product of court eunuch patronage in Istanbul in this period is the large elementary school under the auspices of the *saray ağası* Yakub Agha in 1089/1678-9 in a location close to the Atik Valide Complex in Üsküdar.[101] As a sign of the patron's prestige, the building was constructed of ashlar masonry and covered by a dome. It was accompanied by an adjoining fountain on which a seven-couplet long inscription identified the patron and gave the date. Yakub Agha is known to have become chief white eunuch within the next two years before his death in 1091/1680-81. His tombstone, which referred to him as *kapı ağası*, was, indeed, discovered by İ. Hakkı Konyalı in the vicinity of the *mekteb* and the fountain.[102]

Three decades after Abbas Agha, chief black eunuchs resumed their engagement in architectural patronage. The role of sultanic favor in determining the patronage of eunuchs is evident in the case of *Solak* (Left-Handed) Nezir Agha, who was the *darüssaade ağası* between 1112/1700 and 1115/1703. *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ* emphasizes the good relations he had maintained with the sultan Mustafa II long before his appointment in the place of his less successful predecessor *Yapraksız* Ali Agha.[103] In 1114/1702-03, Nezir Agha undertook the rebuilding of the Mercan Agha Mosque, which had been ruined by fire.[104] The inscription recording this event commemorates the reconstruction after the destructive fire

[101] Konyalı, *Üsküdar Tarihi*, vol. II, 314-16.
[102] Ibid., 82-84.
[103] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 61 and "Dârüssaâde Ağaları Defteri," ibid., 169.
[104] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 221.

and cites the names of Mercan Agha, Nezir Agha, and Mustafa II.[105] In the same year, Nezir Agha also built a fountain in Kasımpaşa, near the İbâdullah Mosque. The chronogram of this fountain composed by the poet Nedim points out the agha's enviable status and prays to God to prevent him from error.[106] The Edirne Incident in 1703, however, ended Nezir Agha's brilliant career; he was exiled to Limni and then executed.[107]

The last chief black eunuch who commissioned a building in Istanbul before the long tenure of el-Hajj Beshir Agha appears to be *Uzun* Süleyman Agha, who built a mosque in Beşiktaş. Previously the chief agha of the *valide sultan*, Süleyman Agha, together with el-Hajj Beshir, had served Ahmed III while he was a prince.[108] The inscription of the fountain next to his mosque gives the date of construction as 1116/1704-05, the same year when the agha became *darüssaade ağası*. According to Ayvansarâyî, there used to be a public bath and an elementary school in the vicinity of this small

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[105] *Mefhâr-ı Dârü's-sa'âde menbâ'-ı hayr u kerem / Zübde-i âlem Nezîr Ağa-yı Sultân Mustafa*
Emr-i Hakk'la câmî'-i Mercân Ağa ihrâk olub / Kıldı ol gülşen-sarây-ı dîni bî-berk ü nevâ
Seyr edip itmâmını bu kıble-gâhın Hâfızâ / Eyledim bu beyti ben de on yedi târîh ana
Dâr-ı Hakk vâlâ binâ bu câmî'-i ehlü's-salât / Mesken-i erbâb-ı takvâ melce'-i ehl-i salât 1114 (1702-03)
Hâfız Hüseyin Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, ed. Fahri Ç. Derin and Vâhid Çabuk (Istanbul: İ. Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1985), 360. On ibid., 306, the builder's name is wrongly given as Mustafa Agha.

[106] *Cenâb-ı Hazret-i Dârü's-sa'âde / Nezîr Ağa ki zâtı reşk-i dârâb* [*sic*]
Murâd u maksadı hayr olmağile / Du'âcısıdır anın şeyh ile şâb
Ahâli-i İbâdullah'a dahi / Mücedded çeşme yapıp etti sîrâb
Nedimâ hıfz ede dâ'im hatâdan / Ol ağa-yı celîlü'ş-şânı Vehhâb
Dedim târîhini lûtf-i Ahad'la / İbâdullah'a su rahmetdir iç âb 1114 /1702-03
Ayvansarâyî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih*, 363-64. The last verses are also in Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. 2, 40.

[107] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 61.

[108] Ibid., 62.

mosque; these structures, however, are no longer extant.[109] In 1124/1712-13, Süleyman Agha built another fountain in Beşiktaş, this time near the Şenlik Dede Mosque.[110]

The return of the court to Istanbul appears to have had a positive impact on the patronage of court eunuchs, as the frequency of their commissions in the capital clearly increased in the early eighteenth century. Two aghas whose ranks were lower than the *darüssaade ağası* made modest contributions to the city's architecture in this period. Eyüb Agha, a *hazine emini* or *hazinedar* who was to become *şeyhülharem* the following year, built a fountain in 1118/1706-07 in Hasköy, adjoining the *Keçeci* Piri Mehmed Agha Mosque.[111] In 1124/1712-13, Nezir Agha, an agha of the Old Palace, revived the *Sadrazam* Ali Pasha fountain in Kasımpaşa.[112] A shift to the northern outskirts of the central Istanbul is also evident in these early eighteenth-century constructions.

To sum up this survey of the long seventeenth century, the period is characterized by a decrease in the frequency of constructions in comparison to *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha's prolific term of office. This may partly be explained by Mehmed Agha's singularity as an extraordinarily favored court officer and an atypical patron of architecture among his fellow court eunuchs. His successors, on the other hand, seem to have been affected by a general slowdown in the architectural patronage in the seventeenth century, when financial problems and military setbacks prevented the continuance of the architectural efflorescence

[109] Belgin Demirsar, "Süleyman Ağa Mescidi," *DBİA* 7: 92-93.
[110] Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, vol. 2, 48.
[111] Ibid., 44-46.
[112] Ibid., 17. Nezir Agha was sent to Egypt in 1159/1746-47; ibid., 19.

of the sixteenth century. As a result, the general productivity of eunuch patrons seems to have only slightly increased compared to the period before *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha.

Still, in accordance with what may reasonably be expected, it was in this period that chief black eunuchs replaced chief white eunuchs as the leading patrons of architecture among court eunuchs. This development, nevertheless, occurred rather late and only from Abbas Agha onwards did black eunuchs establish themselves as the prevailing eunuch builders. In fact, of the thirty-five chief harem eunuchs who served in the period between *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha's death and el-Hajj Beshir Agha's appointment, only eight built in Istanbul; and two of these were white eunuchs.[113] Thus, as in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, only a minority of the highest-ranking eunuchs went beyond being the intermediaries of royal projects and became patrons of architecture in their own right.

Given this situation, the most prolific eunuch patrons of the period, el-Hajj Mustafa Agha, *Malatyalı* Ismail Agha, and Abbas Agha stand out as exceptional cases, rather than the representative examples of a eunuch community that translated their power to architectural patronage. Each of these aghas enjoyed royal favor in a special way: Mustafa Agha by being appointed for a second time after an already long tenure; Ismail Agha by combining the two highest offices of the eunuch hierarchy; and Abbas Agha probably by the support of the *valide sultan*. In general, high rank, lengthy tenure, and close relations with the royal family seem to be important factors that have an impact on architectural

[113] The thirty-four aghas listed in *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ* plus *Malatyalı* Ismail Agha are the chief harem eunuchs who served in this period.

patronage; however, none of these singularly guarantees that a given individual is going to become a patron. The next chapter looks at the last of the extraordinary eunuch patrons, whose patronage behavior was favorably affected by a combination of all these factors.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST OF THE GREAT EUNUCH PATRONS: EL-HAJJ BESHIR AGHA

The focus of this chapter is on a single eunuch patron who dominated the first half of the eighteenth century. El-Hajj Beshir Agha's lengthy tenure allowed him to construct as many buildings as several eunuch patrons could have managed to undertake. This chapter particularly explores the agha's mosque complex in Cağaloğlu and discusses the public image that he was trying to build for himself through his patronage, by means of an evaluation of the inscriptions, locations, and the architectural characteristics of his buildings as well as an assessment of the patron's identity and career.

VI.a. Beshir Agha's Life and Patronage

El-Hajj Beshir Agha not only was the best-known and influential of the chief black eunuchs in Ottoman history, but he also held this office for the longest period—almost thirty years—from 1717 to 1746, during the reigns of Ahmed III (1703-30) and Mahmud I (1730-54). Throughout his long career, his status proved to be remarkably unshakable in the face of crises, the most catastrophic of which was the Patrona Halil Rebellion in 1730, which brought about the abdication of Ahmed III and the execution of the grand vizier

Damat Ibrahim Pasha, while producing no effective result on the position of the chief black eunuch. El-Hajj Beshir Agha, who apparently owed his invulnerability all these years to his outstanding ability in managing court politics, emerged as an even more powerful figure in the reign of Mahmud I, intervening in decision-making and in appointments to such high offices as the grand vizierate.[1]

Born in Abyssinia probably around 1655, Beshir Agha was enslaved and castrated in his boyhood.[2] After serving in a grandee's household in Egypt,[3] Beshir entered the Ottoman imperial court at an unknown date as a protégé of *Yapraksız* Ali Agha, the chief black eunuch from 1694 to 1700. He managed to become a companion (*musahib*) of the sultan Mustafa II (r. 1695-1703) apparently by the 1690s and retained this title through the Edirne Incident in 1703, which caused the abdication of Mustafa II.[4] He was appointed harem treasurer (*hazinedar*) in 1707;[5] however, in 1713 he was ordered to accompany the chief black eunuch *Uzun* Süleyman Agha in his exile first to Cyprus and then to Egypt. After joining the group of exiled Ottoman eunuchs during his sojourn in Cairo, Beshir

[1] For the fullest modern bibliography of Beshir Agha, see Jane Hathaway, *Beshir Agha: Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Imperial Harem* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2005). For a short, eighteenth-century bibliography, see Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, ed. Ahmet Nezihî Turan (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2000), 63-4.
[2] Hathaway, *Beshir Agha*, 17-19.
[3] Little is known about his early years in Egypt except for an indication in an Arabic chronicle that he served in the household of Ismail Bey, the chief financial official in this province. According to Hathaway, this may partly account for Beshir Agha's later inclination to favor the Faqari faction in the factional politics of Egypt, as Ismail Bey was affiliated with the Faqaris; ibid., 25-26.
[4] The title *musahib*, by that time, appears to have been monopolized by harem eunuchs. Beshir Agha apparently owed the continuation of his office to the support of the *valide sultan* Gülnush Emetullah, who was the mother of both Mustafa II and his successor Ahmed III; ibid., 29-35.
[5] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 63 gives the date as 1705-06.

Agha was appointed chief of the eunuchs who guarded the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, becoming the only person who served in this post before being promoted to chief black eunuch.[6] Having received his epithet "el-Hajj" by doing his pilgrimage either then or before,[7] finally in 1717 he was called back to Istanbul on account of his promotion as the new chief black eunuch. Being around sixty when he was appointed, Beshir Agha remained in this office throughout the so-called "Tulip Era" (1718-30)[8] and the first sixteen years of Mahmud I's reign, until he died on 3 June 1746, when he was around the age of ninety. He was buried in the cemetery in the Eyüp district of Istanbul, his tomb being prestigiously placed next to that of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari.[9]

Beshir Agha appears to have been acknowledged by his contemporaries as a prolific patron of architecture.[10] He started his building projects with the convent (*zaviye*) he built during his stay in Medina.[11] He also commissioned a *sebil-küttab* during his exile in

[6] Hathaway, *Beshir Agha*, 39-59.
[7] Compare ibid., 59 with Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 63. According to Ahmed Resmî Efendi, Beshir Agha accompanied the sultan's nursemaid (*daye kadın*) on her pilgrimage to Mecca in 1704/5, on account of which he seems to have received the sobriquet "El-Hajj," which distinguished him from the other eunuchs by the name of Beshir. Beshir seemed to be a particularly popular name for black eunuchs in this period: the *Sicill-i Osmânî* records eleven eunuchs named Beshir in the period between the mid-seventeenth century and the early nineteenth century, but probably there were more of them; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmânî*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, tr. Seyit Ali Kahraman (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı and Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996), vol. 2, 370-1.
[8] One of the sources on his earliest years in this office is the 1720 *surname*, where he has several depictions by Levni: Esin Atıl, *Levni and the Surname: The Story of An Eighteenth Century Ottoman Festival* (Istanbul: Koçbank, 1999).
[9] Hathaway, *Beshir Agha*, 103-6.
[10] Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü'l-Küberâ*, 64; this is also attested to by the references to his countless pious works in the inscriptions of his mosque complex.
[11] Hamza Abd al-Aziz Badr and Daniel Crecelius, "The Awqaf of al-Hajj Bashir Agha in Cairo," *Annales Islamologiques* 27 (1993): 303.

Cairo,[12] and throughout his career as the chief black eunuch, he built numerous structures including a hadith college (*darülhadis*) in Eyüp (see Map 2), a *medrese* and library in Medina, a *medrese* and library in Ziştovi (Svishtov), a *han* (market building) in Izmir, another *han* in Damascus, a school in Chios, and at least thirteen fountains in Istanbul and its suburbs, in addition to the mosque complex he built in Cağaloğlu, Istanbul, during the last two years of his life.[13] The "Beshir Agha mosque" in the second courtyard of the Topkapı Palace is also attributed to him.[14] In 1133/1720-21, he installed a minbar in the former treasurer *Lala* Beshir Agha's mosque in Üsküdar.[15]

Beshir Agha expended even more zeal on creating rich book collections, which earned him a reputation as one of the most prominent bibliophiles of his time. In addition to the various book collections he endowed in Eyüp, Medina, Baghdad, and Svishtov, and apart from his personal library, one of his major collections was housed by the lavishly decorated library of his mosque complex.[16] Indeed, this room adjoining the prayer hall, which served both as book depot and reading hall—as Beshir Agha had stipulated in his

[12] For his *waqf*s in Cairo, see ibid., 291-311. This was completed in 1131/1718-19; André Raymond, "Les fontaines publiques (sabīl) du Caire à l'époque ottomane (1517-1798) I," *Annales Islamologiques* 15 (1979): 264. According to one source, the *sebil-küttab* was together with an elementary school; ibid., 265.
[13] Munise Günal, *İstanbul'da Bir XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Mimarlık Eseri: Beşir Ağa Külliyesi*, unpublished MA thesis (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İslam Tarihi ve Sanatları Anabilim Dalı, 2003), 8-12 provides a comprehensive—though not exhaustive—list of his endowments.
[14] Semavi Eyice, "Beşir Ağa Camii." *TDVİA*, vol. 6: 1.
[15] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 520.
[16] For his book collections, see İsmail E. Erünsal, *Türk Kütüphaneleri Tarihi*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 1988), 85-7.

endowment deed that the books should not be taken out of the library but used inside[17]—contained the richest among Beshir Agha's library collections, with more than 700 works, some of which had more than one volume or duplicate copies. As a result of a number of losses and additions throughout the years, the collection ended up among the 660 works which have been housed in the Süleymaniye Library since 1918.[18]

A consideration of his entire pious works suggests that Beshir Agha's patronage projects were very much shaped by both his role as the chief black eunuch and the trends of his time. As a builder of many fountains, which outnumbered all his other works,[19] Beshir Agha participated in the great drive for building fountains in the eighteenth century.[20] The *sebil* and the two fountains which adorn the outer façade of his mosque complex were a part of this endeavor. It is also true that especially the reign of Ahmed III was a time when the enthusiasm at the Ottoman court regarding books was particularly great, and this may have positively affected Beshir Agha's interest in founding libraries.[21]

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[17] See the endowment deed, 107b-108a, in Günal, *Beşir Ağa*, 100. The endowment deed of el-Hajj Beshir Agha dated 1158/1745 is found in the same volume with three other *vakfiye*s pertaining to his works of charity; the volume is found in the Süleymaniye Library, "Hacı Beşir Ağa" Section, no. 682. The endowment deed exists in another copy in the *Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü* in Ankara, which, according to Günal, contained exactly the same information as the Süleymaniye copy; see ibid., 3-4.

[18] See ibid., 40-1; Erünsal, *Türk Kütüphaneleri*, 87; Hathaway, *Beshir Agha*, 88.

[19] He built fountains in the Covered Bazaar, Fındıklı, Kocamustafapaşa, Eyüp, Fatih, the vicinity of Hagia Sophia, Tophane, and Sarıyer; see İbrahim Hilmi Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1943-45), vol. 1: 132, 154, 156, 158, 160, 172, vol. 2: 72, 107-8, 332; Şebnem Akalın, "Hacı Beşir Ağa Çeşmesi [Fındıklı]," *DBİA* 3: 468; H. Örcün Barışta, "Hacı Beşir Ağa Çeşmesi [Kapalıçarşı]," *DBİA* 3: 468; idem., "Hacı Beşir Ağa Sebili [Kapalıçarşı]," *DBİA* 3: 473.

[20] Shirine Hamadeh, "Splash and Spectacle: The Obsession with Fountains in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul," *Muqarnas* 19 (2002): 123-4.

[21] Hathaway, *Beshir Agha*, 86-7.

Yet, as Jane Hathaway points out, what seems to have been a crucial agenda informing his patronage was to promote Hanafism and Sunni values as a necessity of his role as the chief black eunuch. As the overseer of the imperial foundations that supported the holy cities of Mecca and Medina (*nâzır-ı evkaf-ı haremeyn*), as the organizer of the important imperial rite of sending gifts with annual processions to the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina (*surre-i hümayun*), and as the supervisor of the early education of crown princes in the imperial palace, the chief black eunuch was performing an essential religious and educational role in the Ottoman Empire since the late sixteenth century when he rose to prominence. It should not be a coincidence then that chief black eunuchs displayed such an interest in creating book collections that centered on theological studies. Being the most prominent among them, Beshir Agha apparently saw it fit for his role and image to found libraries, theological colleges, and schools in different parts of the empire in order to enforce the Ottoman brand of Islam; it was even more significant to do this in provinces such as Egypt where Hanafism was not the dominant rite.[22] In the case of the rich library located in his mosque complex in the vicinity of the Topkapı Palace, however, Beshir Agha may have had slightly different concerns. Considering the proximity of the complex to the imperial court and elite households (as will be explained below), his aim seems to lie in promoting his position within the ruling class as a major authority who left his mark on the intellectual formation of the elite, in associating his name with a collection of knowledge

[22] Ibid., xiii-xv.

on religious matters, and in displaying his wealth by means of this treasure of precious books.

Just as he seems to have surpassed other eunuchs as a book collector, Beshir Agha also left many of his eunuch predecessors behind as a patron of architecture. In this respect, it is worth comparing Beshir Agha's architectural patronage with that of *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha, the starter of the tradition of chief black eunuchs and a major patron among eunuchs, to whom Beshir Agha paid homage by donating the minbar of his Yeniçeşme *mescid*.[23] As noted in Chapter IV, Mehmed Agha's mosque complex in Çarşamba strikes the viewer not only with its monumentality but also with its ambitious emulation of the plans of the contemporary vizierial mosques. The mosque's smaller scale and less precious building material moderate this impression. In the case of Beshir Agha's mosque complex, it is also possible to speak of the interplay of ambition—which was manifest this time in the novelty of design, in accordance with the changing architectural discourse[24]—and a similar prudence that did not allow him to build structures equally monumental to those of grand viziers, even though in terms of power and wealth, the chief black eunuch did rival those people of rank.

Mehmed Agha's architectural patronage was also marked by a self-confidence that was apparent in his attempts at transforming urban spaces: Islamizing a non-Muslim

[23] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 505; Kolağası Mehmed Râ'if, *Mir'ât-ı İstanbul, I. Cild (Asya Yakası)*, ed. Günay Kut and Hatice Aynur (Istanbul: Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), 136.
[24] See Hamadeh, "Ottoman Expressions," 32-51.

neighborhood by means of his mosque complex and founding a town bearing his name in the Balkans. One suspects that this boldness was pushed back by the discontent among some segments of the elite regarding the activities and influence of Murad III's confidants, and never really repeated. Beshir Agha's mosque complex, on the other hand, belonging to a different era, represents a different sort of urban conquest, which is more directly related to the intra-elite struggles in which he was involved and his grip on the grand viziers. At the same time, his ambitions to shape the religious affiliations of the elite were manifest in his allocation of his *tekke* to the Naqshbandis and in his installation of this brotherhood in such proximity to the empire's administrative center.[25]

VI.b. The El-Hajj Beshir Agha Mosque Complex in Cağaloğlu

A short walk from the Pavilion of Processions (*Alay Köşkü*) of the Topkapı Palace towards the Cağaloğlu district of Istanbul, right behind the building complex which was once the Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı Âli*), is the mosque complex built in 1744-46 under the patronage of el-Hajj Beshir Agha (Fig. 48, see Map 1). A structure of modest proportions, the complex combines classical forms with incipient elements of the "Ottoman baroque" in its remarkably compact architecture. Giving the impression to have been designed in order to fit as much as possible into a limited space, the Beshir Agha complex consists of a mosque, a theological college (*medrese*), a library, an elementary school (*sıbyan mektebi*),

[25] It was explicitly stated in his endowment deed that the convent should be used by the Naqshbandis; 109a and 112a, in Günal, *Beşir Ağa*, 101-2.

a water dispenser (*sebil*), and two fountains. All of these are packed into a rectangular walled precinct separated by a narrow passage from the convent (*tekke*) which stands behind and forms part of the complex (Fig. 49). Due to the slope on which the complex was built, the mosque, the library, and the school rest on a lower storey where the shops that provided income for the *waqf* were located.

The economy of space which characterizes this edifice was achieved by means of some unusual solutions (Fig. 50): the only entrance to the library is located inside the prayer hall of the mosque; the porticoes of the mosque and the *medrese* are juxtaposed in such a way that each can be seen through from the other; the relatively small minaret stands independent of the mosque, being placed rather oddly at the intersection of the mosque's portico (*son cemaat yeri*) and the *medrese*, and therefore, narrowing the space in front of the latter's entrance (Fig. 52).

Never examined to date from the perspective of eunuch patronage, the mosque complex of el-Hajj Beshir Agha has received some scholarly attention from architectural historians, mostly in the form of passing remarks, and is usually evaluated in terms of its relation to the so-called "Ottoman baroque," a hybrid architectural style mixing Western decorative vocabulary with the classical forms of Ottoman architecture.[26] The complex as a whole is often in traditional Ottoman architectural history referred to as one of those

[26] For the Ottoman baroque, see Stefanos Yerasimos, *İstanbul: İmparatorluklar Başkenti*, tr. Ela Güntekin and Ayşegül Sönmezay (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000), 338-47; and Mustafa Cezar, *Osmanlı Başkenti İstanbul* (Istanbul: Erol Kerim Aksoy Kültür, Eğitim, Spor ve Sağlık Vakfı, 2002), 266-74.

examples which best represents the transition from the old to the new style of architecture,[27] the latter reaching its peak in the Nuruosmaniye Mosque, completed in 1755, about ten years after the Beshir Agha complex. Of particular interest for historians of art and architecture are the *sebil*, the decorations on the ceiling and walls of the library, and the oval window which linked the library with the mosque, all of which are identified as "baroque" elements.[28] Particularly the *sebil*, the most spectacular part of the exterior of the complex, with its five concave bays that constitute five facets of an octagon, its multifoil arches and foliated capitals, has been the single most noted structure in the complex (Figs. 53 and 57).[29] Among the other novelties of the Beshir Agha complex, which do not necessarily have to be associated with the baroque, are its "free organization,"[30] its octagonal minaret,[31] the extension of the *son cemaat yeri* with a second portico, the capitals which divert from the classical form, the placement of the entrance gate at an angle on the

[27] See, for example, Godfrey Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1971), 377-9.
[28] Semavi Eyice, "Beşir Ağa Külliyesi," *TDVİA*, vol. 6: 1-3. Eyice notes that probably the mosque's interior was also originally covered by a baroque decorative program similar to the one in the library.
[29] The *sebil* is assessed by Godfrey Goodwin as falling only slightly short of the "baroqueness" of the Hacı Mehmed Emin Ağa *sebil* built in Dolmabahçe in 1740: Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 379. Ayda Arel, on the other hand, finds it very much in the spirit of the period, the tone of which was set by the Hacı Mehmed Emin Ağa *sebil*, though she notes the Beshir Agha *sebil*'s peculiarity in its sense of movement and in the contrast between its horizontal and vertical elements: Ayda Arel, *Onsekizinci Yüzyıl İstanbul Mimarisinde Batılılaşma Süreci* (Istanbul: İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi, 1975), 52-3. Also see Doğan Kuban, *Türk Barok Mimarisi Hakkında Bir Deneme* (Istanbul: [İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi] Pulhan Matbaası, 1954), 106.
[30] Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 379.
[31] Semavi Eyice, *İstanbul Minareleri I* (Istanbul: Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi, Türk San'atı Tarihi Enstitüsü, 1962) 42.

corner and the conical eave covering it.[32] Clearly, the complex is characterized to some extent by a spirit of experimentation, which was allowed—and, indeed, cherished—by the architectural culture of the eighteenth century.[33] As scholarship on Ottoman architectural history—like Ottoman history in general—is moving more and more away from the "decline" paradigm, which has long led to the understanding of the increasing incorporation of western vocabulary in the Ottoman visual repertoire in the eighteenth century as an indication of subordination to the dominant culture of the West and thus as a sign of decline, there is a necessity to re-evaluate monuments such as the Beshir Agha complex in the context of the changing system of hierarchies in the Ottoman Empire, the reformulation of elite identity, and the search for legitimization.[34]

Today, the complex is located in the Alemdar quarter of the Eminönü district, at the corner where the avenue called *Hükümet Konağı Caddesi* intersects with the *Alay Köşkü Caddesi* (Fig. 49). Walking down *Hükümet Konağı Caddesi*, one notices that the Beshir Agha complex on the right corner is eclipsed by the gigantic vista of Hagia Sophia in the background; descending from *Alay Köşkü Caddesi*, one has a view of the Imperial Wall surrounding the Topkapı Palace.

While the location of the complex follows a pattern among eunuch patrons to build in the vicinity of the palace where they worked, it also had the advantage of proximity to

[32] Arel, *Batılılaşma Süreci*, 53.
[33] See Shirine Hamadeh, "Ottoman Expressions of Early Modernity and the 'Inevitable' Question of Westernization," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63, no. 1 (2004): 32-51.
[34] See ibid., 33-4.

vizierial palaces and processional routes. One of the most important monuments in the vicinity is the Pavilion of Processions (*Alay Köşkü*) (Fig. 51). Being the only building of the Topkapı Palace that had direct contact with the city, it was a pavilion from where the sultan used to watch the processions through the avenue below it.[35] Also, from the seventeenth century onwards, the sources begin to speak of the existence of grand-vizierial palaces in this area, and it became known as the *Paşa Kapısı* (the Porte of Pasha) after the residences of pashas.[36] Particularly from 1740 onwards the palace opposite the pavilion had a fixed function as the office of the grand vizier; and despite being burnt and rebuilt many times, it developed into a complex housing the increasingly more sophisticated Ottoman bureaucracy and expanding towards Cağaloğlu along the *Hükümet Konağı Caddesi*.[37]

Beshir Agha's endowment deed indicates that he had begun to acquire properties in this area prior to the construction of the complex. By the time he finished the construction, he owned six houses located in the vicinity, the revenues of which he assigned to his mosque complex. Five of these were next to the grand vizier's palace (*sadr-ı âli sarayı*), and two neighbored the residence earmarked for the imam of Beshir Agha's mosque,[38]

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[35] The structure, rebuilt several times after Mehmed II, was given its present shape during the reign of Mahmud II, probably in 1819-20. After the transferal of the court to the Dolmabahçe Palace, the avenue in front of it lost its significance as a processional route; Semavi Eyice, "Alay Köşkü," *TDVİA*, vol. 2: 349-350.
[36] Among the viziers who had their palaces in the vicinity were Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, Halil Pasha (d. 1629), and *Kemankeş* Mustafa Pasha; Uğur Tanyeli, "Bâbıâli: Mimari," *DBİA* 1: 520-1. Haskan and Gülersoy convincingly argue that the Halil Pasha palace used to stand where the Beshir Agha complex is located today; Mehmet Nermi Haskan and Çelik Gülersoy, *Bâb-ı Âli: Hükümet Kapısı* (Istanbul: Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı Yayınları, 2000), 19-20.
[37] Tanyeli, "Bâbıâli: Mimari," 521-2.
[38] The endowment deed, 103b-104b, Günal, *Beşir Ağa*, 98-99.

which no longer exists. Therefore, Beshir Agha assigned some importance to his presence in this area, which was perhaps related to his wish to expand his control over the office of the grand vizier. At the same time, by situating his mosque complex in such proximity to the Pavilion of Processions and the *Bâb-ı Âli*, which represented the sultan and the grand vizier respectively, he might have wished to claim his position as one of the three most powerful men in the empire.[39]

A consideration of the inscriptions of the complex, their location and their content may provide clues as to the major concerns behind Beshir Agha's patronage and management of his public image. Arguably the most significant among the nine inscriptions of the complex—comprising seven poems and two Qur'anic quotations—are those placed on the outer façade of the walled precinct, along the *Hükümet Konağı Caddesi* (Fig. 48). Here a poetic inscription is displayed on each of the following: the entrance gate, the two fountains, and the *sebil* (Figs. 53, 54, and 56). This façade, therefore, epitomizes two eighteenth-century phenomena: the popularity of poetic epigraphy on exterior walls of buildings, and the proliferation of fountains and *sebil*s.[40] As a public monument representing its patron's wealth and status, this façade not only constitutes the public "face"

[39] Along the slope that constitutes *Hükümet Konağı Caddesi* are situated the Department of Revenues of Istanbul (*İstanbul Defterdarlığı*), which is adjacent to the Beshir Agha complex on the north, and also the Istanbul Governorate and the Police Department of Eminönü, which are on the other side of the road. The area, thus, retains the administrative and bureaucratic significance it had acquired during the Ottoman period, beginning with the vizierial palaces that were traditionally located there.
[40] For both phenomena, see Hamadeh, "Splash," 123-48.

of the complex but also, positioned to face the vizierial and the imperial palaces, it presumably reveals the chief black eunuch's message most explicitly.

To start with, the inscription above the entrance of the courtyard[41] begins with praise of the sultan and then describes Beshir Agha as "the only favorite and truly appreciated slave" of Mahmud I (*yegâne bende-i mergub hassü'l-hass makbûli*)—a proud, but as far as our knowledge of Beshir Agha is concerned, more or less truthful designation. The agha's subordinate position under the sultan is emphasized repeatedly in the inscriptions on the *sebil*, the mosque, the *medrese*, and the two fountains. As usual, the eunuch's encomium always comes after that of the sultan, thus implying a crucial bond between the two. The inscription on the fountain next to the *sebil*[42] (Fig. 54) suggests that Beshir Agha built this structure for the sake of Mahmud I: "He made this pure spring gush in his heyday / The illustrious Agha [made it] for the sake of that shah of shahs" (*Devletinde itdi bu 'ayn-ı musaffâyı revân / hazret-i ağa-yı zîşân ol şehinşâh 'aşkına*). The one on the *sebil*,[43] on the other hand, draws a parallel between the pious works of the two patrons and claims that in building this structure Beshir Agha followed Mahmud I's example of creating generous foundations (*anın de'b-i şerîf ü mesleğin der-pîş idüb*). Expressions of a similar nature are found also in the inscriptions on Beshir Agha's fountains in various parts of Istanbul. These portray Beshir Agha as a loyal servant who

[41] See Günal, *Beşir Ağa*, 28-9.
[42] See ibid., 38.
[43] See ibid., 36-7; Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, *Su Güzeli: İstanbul Sebilleri* (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Yayınları, 1995), 64.

follows in the footsteps of his master, the sultan, and who is as lavish as the sultan with his pious works; the inscriptions proclaim Beshir Agha's aim to "provoke prayers" for the sultan through his own munificence.[44]

It is noteworthy that the praise of the sultan occupies a greater place in these inscriptions than in those found on the structures of earlier chief black eunuchs. In fact, the ornate praise of the sultan that appears on the most visible inscriptions of the complex may have been due to some sort of attention to propriety on the part of Beshir Agha, who perhaps wished to mask his exceeding power in state affairs with a display of loyalty and subordination.[45] Yet, at the same time, the constant appearance of Beshir Agha's name next to the sultan's in these inscriptions publicly acknowledges the agha's exalted status, which was clearly more elevated than that of any other eunuch. It is also interesting to note that this manner of exaltation is markedly different from the content of the inscription employed by the poet Nedim in his ode to the agha's waterfront palace at Bahariye in Eyüp. The inscriptions of the mosque complex contain none of the "the symbolic implications of universal sovereignty and world dominion" that Shirine Hamadeh has recognized in

[44] See Nedim's poem for a fountain built in 1140/1727-8 in Hatice Aynur and Hakan T. Karateke, *III. Ahmed Devri İstanbul Çeşmeleri: 1703-1730* (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 1995), 173, footnote 197; also see two poems by Şâkir for a fountain built in 1141/1728-9 in ibid., 198; and the inscriptions of the fountains Beshir Agha built in 1142/1729-30, 1145/1732-3, and 1157/1744-5 in Affan Egemen, *İstanbul'un Çeşme ve Sebilleri: Resimleri ve Kitabeleri ile 1165 Çeşme ve Sebil* (Istanbul: Arıtan Yayınevi, [1993]), 192-5, and 199.

[45] The inscription of the *tekke*, which was rather concealed from the public eye, does not mention Mahmud I at all.

Nedim's poem.[46] The different architectural types and purposes of the mosque complex and the residence may be part of the explanation.

In addition to the clichéd emphasis on his generosity as a patron, the inscription on the entrance to the complex also presents Beshir Agha as a "most perfect and wise person" (*zât-ı ekmel ü dânâ*). This designation finds an echo in the inscription of the *sebil*, where the chief eunuch is described as "knowledgeable and aware" (*ârif ü âgâh*),[47] and in the description on his now ruined fountain in Fındıklı (1145/1732-3), where Beshir Agha is described as a wise man (*dânâ*) who "adorns the highest degrees of cultivation with his generosity" (*o zât-ı mekremet-pîrây-ı vâlâ-kadri 'irfânın*).[48] It also resonates with a fuller depiction of Beshir Agha found in a poem that Nedim wrote for the eunuch's fountain in the Covered Bazaar (1140/1727-8): "Rightly guided, capable, and able-minded! A possessor of dignity! / A cultivator of virtues, a distinguisher of the perfect! Clever and wise!"[49] All these accolades serve to evoke an image of the builder of these works as a wise and respectable man—a quality which, along with being an "appreciated and worthy slave," seems to be a major part of the persona that Beshir Agha was trying to build for himself.

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[46] Hamadeh, "Splash," 125.
[47] See the transcription in Günal, *Beşir Ağa*, 36-7.
[48] Egemen, *Çeşme ve Sebiller*, 192.
[49] *Reşîd ü kârdân u hûş-merd* [this must be *hûş-mend*] *ü sâhib-i temkîn* / *Fezâ'il-perver ü kâmil-pesend ü 'âkil ü dânâ*, Aynur and Karateke, *III. Ahmed Devri*, 173, footnote 197.

Proceeding from the sultan/master to the slave/eunuch, and then to the complex itself, the inscription above the entrance of the complex continues:

> The most certain proof of his pure and sincere nature
> Is this ornamented work of new design, this distinguished one among the newly appearing works:
> The exalted *medrese*, the capturing *sebil*, the new convent,
> The illuminated school, and the library—truly matchless indeed!
> Nothing similar has ever appeared [before] in the mirror of the world,
> As each of them is without a parallel.
> In short, it became a peerless, pure work of piety in its place.
> May God give its builder uncountable rewards in the afterlife!
> Sparing this generous person from calamities,
> May He keep him firmly in his high office![50]

Thus, in these lines, there is a notable emphasis on the novelty of this complex, which is congruent with Shirine Hamadeh's observation that the celebration of novelty was a prominent *leitmotif* in the architectural discourse of this century.[51] Beshir Agha no doubt wished to claim among his accomplishments the building of a religious complex with an innovative design, a complex which—as the phrase *nev tertîb* suggests—had a novel arrangement and new decorative elements.[52]

An important lacuna in this inscription is its conspicuous omission of the mosque in its list of the components of the complex. This seems strange at first, given the mosque's

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[50] *O zâtın âyet-i ihlâsına burhân-ı kātı'dır / Bu nev tertîb-i zîba bu bihîn-i âsâr-ı nev-peydâ*
Muallâ medrese dil-cû sebil ü tekyegâh-ı nev / Münevver mekteb ve dârü'l-küttâb bî-bedel hakkâ
Nümû-dar olmamış emsâli mir'ât-ı cihân içre / Ki eşbâh-ı nezâirden mugarrâ herbiri zîrâ
Mahallinde hülâsa hayr-i pâk-ı bî-nazîr oldu / Vire bânisine Feyyâz-ı Mutlak ecr-i lâ yuhsâ
Vikaye eyleyüb âfâtdan zât-ı keremkârın / Müeyyed eyleye sadr-ı ref'inde anı Mevlâ
A slightly modified version of the transcription in Günal, *Beşir Ağa*, 28-29. Translation mine.

[51] Hamadeh, "Ottoman Expressions," 32-33.

[52] Nevertheless, compared to the poems composed later in that century for other buildings, this poem is rather reticent about the specific features of the complex which were found new and original; see ibid.

centrality to the *külliye*. However, considering the fact that the chronogram gives the date for the completion of the complex as 1157 (1744/45),[53] whereas the chronogram on the entrance to the mosque (Fig. 55) gives the year 1158 (1745/46),[54] it turns out that the mosque was a later addition to the complex, after the completion of the other structures. The absence of the mosque in the initial plan also explains the unusual way in which the mosque, the library, and the *medrese* were assembled: apparently, the mosque was inserted into a once more spacious *medrese*-centered complex as the result of a later decision, and the construction of the mosque in the largest possible dimensions resulted in the peculiar arrangement that is seen today.

This information sheds light on the contrast between the spatial limitations in one half of the rectangular precinct and the spaciousness of the *medrese*, which occupies almost all the remaining area. This *medrese*, the spaciousness and size of which are indeed acknowledged in its inscription,[55] was built on a plot which initially belonged to the *waqf* of the Holy Cities. This fact most certainly facilitated Beshir Agha's access to it. Archival

[53] Günal, *Beşir Ağa*, 29: *Bu dârü'l-ilm-i bâlâ tarhı lillâh eyleyüb bünyâd* / *Hele bu bâbda ihyâ-i 'ulûm itdi Beşir Ağa*. All the other chronograms in different parts of the complex, except for that of the mosque, give the date 1157.
[54] Ibid., 24: *Eser bir câmiü'l-envâr yapdırdı Beşir Ağa*.
[55] *Burûc-ı çarh ile yeksân semân hücreleri* / *Zevi'l-maârif-i ilm-i hisâb kavlince* / *Müferrih oldu hele hey'et-i dil-ârâsı* / *Mühendisân-ı hazâkat-menât kavlince*; ibid., 33.

records reveal that he wished to exchange this plot with a house he owned in Üsküdar; for this he was given permission in October 1745.[56]

While Beshir Agha's intention to commission a *medrese*-centered complex in the beginning was to "bring the sciences to life" (*ihyâ-i 'ulûm*) by "constructing this abode of science made of a lofty design" (*bu dârü'l-ilm-i bâlâ tarhı lillâh eyleyüb bünyâd*), his decision to build a mosque inside the complex related to his desire to restore a previous building—probably a mosque—which had existed on the site but fallen into disrepair. The patron's intention is suggested by the statement in the original foundation inscription of the mosque that Beshir Agha "brought to life anew this pure place of worship."[57] One may

[56] The document dated 17-26 October 1745, in Ahmet Tabakoğlu, Salih Aynural, Ahmet Kal'a, İsmail Kara, and Eyüp Sabri Kal'a, *İstanbul Ahkâm Defterleri: İstanbul Vakıf Tarihi I (1742-1764)*, İstanbul Külliyatı V (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür A.Ş., 1998), 66-7. It does not mention the mosque.

[57] *Yeniden bu ibādetgāh-ı pāki eyledi ihyā*; Hâfız Hüseyin Ayvansarâyî, *The Garden of the Mosques: Hafiz Hüseyin al-Ayvansarayî's Guide to the Muslim Monuments of Ottoman Istanbul*, ed. and tr. Howard Crane (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 55. This sentence is not seen anymore in the inscription, because in the first half of the nineteenth century, when Mahmud II was making renovations in the building, he also had this inscription re-written. Five lines of it were cut—even a sentence was cut in the middle—and five new lines acknowledging Mahmud II as the renovator of the complex, were inserted into the poem:

Muvaffak oldu Hân Mahmud-ı Sânî şimdi tecdîde / O şâhın vasfına Hıfzî bu târihi dimiş gûyâ
Değildir bu tesâdüf mahz-ı tevfîk u kerâmetdir / Çırağ-ı nâmdâşın kıldı kendi abdi-veş ihyâ
Beşir Ağa'nın Allah eyledikçe rahmetin müzdâd

(A modified version of the transcription in Günal, *Beşir Ağa*, 24). The omitted lines included the reference to an earlier structure which stood on the site of the mosque, as explained above. Apart from omitting this information, the new inscription acknowledges Mahmud II, instead of Beshir Agha, as the restorer of the mosque, thus replacing the information regarding one act of restoration (*i.e.*, Beshir Agha's rebuilding of this place of worship) with the information regarding another (*i.e.*, Mahmud II's renovation of the mosque), though, for sure, these acts were not identical in nature or scope. The inserted verses also refer in a puzzling manner to a certain miraculous coincidence and to somebody's namesake, which might suggest that a namesake of Beshir Agha, who was a contemporary of Mahmud II, was somehow involved in this nineteenth-century renovation. In this way, the work of el-Hajj Beshir Agha under the authority of Mahmud I might have been restored by another Beshir Agha under the authority of Mahmud II, producing thus a miraculous coincidence of namesakes. There indeed was a *Küçük* ("Small" or "Young") Beshir Agha at the court of Mahmud II (Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmânî*, vol. 2, 371); nevertheless, the meaning of the poem is very

conjecture that Beshir Agha perhaps had whatever remained of the previous building removed before he had his *medrese*, library, and *sebil* built on the site, but then came to be convinced that it would be appropriate to erect a new mosque in its place. Whatever the case, Beshir Agha's building project clearly involved some rebuilding on the site, as it is indicated not only by the mosque's chronogram but also by the chronogram on the fountain next to the entrance gate, which suggests that the fountain was an older one repaired by Beshir: "While this fountain was in ruins just like the lover's heart / By repairing it, he made every thirsty lip rejoice."[58]

This classical-style fountain (Fig. 56) is also significant in terms of Beshir Agha's patronage of other black eunuchs, since its *thuluth* inscription—just like that of the *medrese*—was written by *Moralı* Beshir Agha, the successor of el-Hajj Beshir Agha and a renowned calligrapher who excelled in *thuluth*.[59] By that time, *Moralı* had been appointed by el-Hajj Beshir Agha himself to the post of harem treasurer—an office which implied future promotion to the rank of chief black eunuch. The elder eunuch was probably led to do so by the intimacy that his younger namesake had developed with Mahmud I since the latter's princehood.[60] It is possible that both Beshir Aghas saw some benefit in the

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unclear, and this hypothesis is far from being established with certainty given the lack of any other document that might support it.

[58] *Dil-i 'âşık gibi bu çeşme harâb olmuş iken / İtdi ta'mir ile her teşne lebânı şâdân*. This is a slightly modified version of the transcription in Günal, *Beşir Ağa*, 40.

[59] The signature on the fountain reads *El-Fakîr Beşir*, and the on the madrasa *Ketebehû'l-fakîr ilâ rahmeti Rabbihi'l-Kadîr / Beşir hâzin-i şehriyârî*; ibid., 40 and 33 respectively. See Necdet Sakaoğlu, "Beşir Ağa," *DBİA* 2: 174.

[60] Hathaway, *Beshir Agha*, 36-37.

conflation of patronage of the elder with the younger as we see a second architectural manifestation of the bond between the two eunuchs in 1750-1, when *Moralı* had a *sebil-küttab* built in Cairo directly across from the one built by his predecessor el-Hajj Beshir Agha.[61]

Inside the mosque, there are two inscriptions, which were probably placed there in Beshir Agha's time. Both of these are quotations from the Qur'an. One of them is in a cartouche above the entrance to the library and quotes a phrase from *sura* 98:3: *Kale'l-lâhu Teâlâ: "Fīhā kutubun ḳayyimatun."*[62] Taken literally, *Fīhā kutubun ḳayyimatun* means "there are books inside it,"[63] and therefore, it indicated that there was a library behind the door. Yet, considered within its Qur'anic context, the phrase also refers to what is inside the Qur'an, suggesting that "there are ordinances of ever-true soundness and clarity [in it]." Therefore, the inscription draws a parallel between the contents of the room and the contents of the Qur'an, and implies that just as the Qur'an encapsulates ordinances of ever-true soundness and clarity, the mosque encapsulates this valuable core, *i.e.*, the book collection, which is equated with the essence of the Qur'an. Therefore, it appears that this phrase is actually a statement underlining the religious value of Beshir Agha's book collection, affirming that they are religiously correct books and represent something of the essence of the Qur'an.

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[61] Ibid., 100.
[62] Günal, *Beşir Ağa*, 42.
[63] Hathaway, *Beshir Agha*, 96.

The other inscription inside the mosque, the one above the prayer niche, quotes a phrase from the *sura* of the House of 'Imran, a part of the verse 3:37: *Kullimā daḫala 'alayhā Zakariyyā al-mihrāba* ("Whenever Zachariah visited her in the sanctuary"). In its entirety, the verse is about the placement of Maryam in the care of Zachariah, who in each of his regular visits in a sanctuary—which is what *mihrāb* means here—finds out that God has provided the girl with food. This verse is a quite common Qur'anic quotation found in various Ottoman and non-Ottoman mosques,[64] obviously due to its inclusion of the word *mihrāb*, which makes the verse appropriate for prayer niche inscriptions. Placed in the mosque of a eunuch, however, this commonplace quotation, which recalled the grievances of Zachariah as an ancient man without progeny, might have served to remind the worshippers of the similar grievances of the childless ninety-year-old eunuch Beshir Agha, who, just like the Qur'anic figure, was a guardian of secluded women.[65]

In the light of the discussion so far, it is possible to conclude that the mosque complex may have represented, above all, the old agha's claim to an honorable place for himself—and perhaps also for his symbolic "progeny": all his protégés including the black eunuchs whom he patronized—within the ruling elite. This claim was manifested by the

[64] For a list of some earlier Ottoman mosques with this quotation, see the index of Necipoğlu, *Sinan*, 586. It also appears, for example, around the *mihrab*s of the mausoleum of al-Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir Faraj in Cairo (1405) and the Muradiye Mosque in Edirne (1435); see Erica Cruikshank Dodd and Shereen Khairallah, *The Image of the Word: A Study of Quranic Verses in Islamic Architecture*, Vol. 2, (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981), 28. These, however, do not single out this phrase but give it together with the verses that come before or after.

[65] For Zachariah and the verses of this sura which revolve around crises and miracles of reproduction, see Loren D. Lybarger, "Gender and Prophetic Authority in the Qur'anic story of Maryam: A Literary Approach," *The Journal of Religion* 80, no. 2 (2000): 240-70.

symbolic occupation of a plot in the heart of an area traditionally identified with vizierial palaces. There is an apparent boldness in undertaking a construction which surpassed the works of many earlier eunuchs in such a politically meaningful site. Beshir Agha's desire to use this site as efficiently as possible resulted in the unique arrangement and compactness of the complex, which, together with its non-commanding position in the cityscape, gives the impression of modesty to the modern viewer in the midst of the monumental structures that mark the neighborhood.

Further, the inscriptions of the agha's architectural works provide several clues about his self-fashioned image, which also resonate with the cases of other court eunuchs. The major themes which are relevant for the public image that Beshir Agha was trying to construct for himself include, in the first place, his subordination to his master, the sultan, as a loyal and worthy servant, and that his devotion is appreciated by this master. This aspect of the agha's image was intended to convey the desired appearance of a modest person who knew his limits, and to assert, at the same time, Beshir Agha's privileged proximity to the sultan. The chief black eunuch also wished to project an image of himself as a respectable and wise man, and a person who could give appropriate advice. Additionally, the important place of the *medrese* and the library in the complex may have served to convey an image of Beshir Agha as a promoter of education and religious studies as well as a champion of the Sunna. The favor he showed towards the Naqshbandis also underlines his orthodoxy. The composite picture that emerges from these various choices

that he made as a patron of his mosque complex helped el-Hajj Beshir Agha to establish and promote his image as a grandee of power and prestige.

CONCLUSION

Tracing the history of Ottoman court eunuch patrons from their first architectural projects in the fifteenth century to the last great eunuch patron el-Hajj Beshir Agha in the eighteenth, this thesis has provided a general overview over the architectural patronage of this peculiar elite group in the early modern era. Having its own ups and downs, periods of intense construction and periods of inactivity, this history differs from the traditional paradigm of Ottoman architectural history that centers on royal patronage. By not complying with any simple explanation that neatly connects the patronage of eunuchs to the patronage of sultans, it forces us to understand it in its own terms, for which the present study provides only tentative suggestions. At the same time, it calls us to appreciate the diversity both within Ottoman architectural history and within the history of eunuch patrons.

In this thesis, I suggest to construe the history of Ottoman court eunuchs and of their patronage on the basis of two broad categories of eunuch identity. One of these, traced back to the beginning of Ottoman history and possibly related to a Byzantine precedent, had its focus on the eunuchs working in the male zone of the palace, who had the prospects of entering a military-administrative career. Dominated by white eunuchs and headed primarily by the *kapı ağası*, the vein of patronage associated with this category of eunuchs extends throughout the early modern era. The second one, which emerged after the annexation of the vast Arab lands, including the Holy Cities and Egypt, centers on African eunuchs, who were transported to the Ottoman lands through the age-old slave trade routes extending from sub-Saharan Africa to Muslim territories. The office of *darüssaade ağası*, being redefined as chief black eunuch in the late sixteenth century and linked to the *waqf*s supporting the Holy Cities, had associations

with Egypt, the Hijaz, and quite possibly the earlier Islamic eunuch institution refined by the Mamluks. The patronage of this category of eunuchs naturally began from the late sixteenth century onwards. It is, however, important to emphasize that these two eunuch identities that flourished at the Ottoman court did not differ from one another simply on the basis of race; they were also differentiated on the basis of their cultural affinity with the rest of the elite, employment patterns, career prospects, and probably gender identities. Compared to the eunuchs of African origin, white eunuchs had a less clear ethnic distinction from the Ottoman ruling elite. Even if they were not recruited as *devşirme*, it is likely that at least some of them had the same ethnocultural identity with the palace pages that they trained and monitored. Until the seventeenth century, white eunuchs enjoyed the possibility of being promoted to military-administrative posts, which provided them with another common ground with the *devşirme*. Their affinity with and proximity to the bulk of the ruling elite arguably ascribed to the white eunuch identity a relatively more pronounced masculine overtone, which is hinted at by rare references in written sources.[1] The emergence of a distinct black eunuch identity, on the other hand, took shape within the segregated space of the imperial harem and was inextricably linked to the concentration and establishment of the royal family within these quarters. From the late sixteenth century onwards if not from the very beginning, careers of African eunuchs remained invariably courtly and associated with the female zone of the palace. Having been radically uprooted from their native lands beyond the Ottoman boundaries, black eunuchs arguably had less opportunity to maintain contact with their families, compared to white eunuchs, and therefore, probably conformed more easily with the image of an ideal slave who had no bond other than that to his master. This set of differences between the two eunuch groups suggests the existence of at least two distinct identities within

[1] See Chapter V, fn. 39.

the Ottoman eunuch institution that were distinguished from one another on the basis of a number of factors including, but not limited to, race.

Proceeding from this view of Ottoman eunuchs, in the present study the patronage activities of different eunuch groups have been considered in comparison with one another. A major area of focus has been the white eunuch patrons who dominated the period before institutional change in the late sixteenth century allowed the chief black eunuch to emerge as an important figure in court politics. The reign of Bayezid is particularly emphasized as a prolific period for eunuch patronage. Indeed, the scale and scope of the constructions of such eunuch patrons as Hüseyin Agha and Firuz Agha in this period in Istanbul, Amasya, and other provincial centers are quite comparable to those of various chief black eunuchs of the post-1574/5 era. The period is also worth comparison with the late sixteenth century for the variety of office-holders within the eunuch hierarchy who participated in patronage activities. This hitherto poorly studied part of the history of Ottoman court eunuchs, therefore, deserves further investigation.

The building efforts of court eunuchs during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, when there was a second wave of eunuch patronage, seem to have decreased in volume compared to the age of Bayezid II and begun to concentrate in Istanbul rather than in the provinces. By the time *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha began his lavish constructions in the late sixteenth century, the norms that had been established for court eunuch patrons of all sorts allowed only for humble neighborhood mosques, elementary schools, and fountains. While Mehmed Agha's enhanced position in the power configuration marked a new period for court eunuchs, his extraordinary licence as an architectural patron was echoed by few among them. The patronage of chief black eunuchs varied greatly in scope in the seventeenth century due to their different lengths of tenure and personal relations with the royal family. In fact, it was

only from the mid-seventeenth century onwards that the number of the architectural works commissioned by black eunuchs began to surpass those of the white eunuchs, even though the individual buildings of both groups adhered very much to the same norms of decorum. This trend culminated in the prolific patronage of el-Hajj Beshir Agha in the eighteenth century. A closer look into the mosque complex constructed by this prominent *darüssaade ağası* suggests that the agha's relationship with the sultan, his power struggle with other members of the ruling elite, and his need to fashion a public image of himself as a learned, wise, and loyal servant of the sultan informed his patronage activities.

The often discontinuous and sporadic nature of eunuchs' building activity throughout the early modern period calls for a consideration of the relation of a given individual's patronage to his actual place within the power configuration. While the architecture-related norms of decorum generally had a restricting effect on eunuchs' building projects, the extraordinary scope of commissions by patrons such as *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha, Abbas Agha, and el-Hajj Beshir Agha are indicative of their immensely powerful position among the ruling elite. Even though these individuals acquired an iconic status in historiography as representatives of the power of chief black eunuchs at its apex, in terms of architectural output they stand out as exceptions among their peers. If we assume that political power is the foremost determinant of patronage, the discrepancy among the patronage activities of eunuchs of any given rank over time implies that the holders of an office varied greatly in terms of power and influence. However, as patronage behavior is dependent on a number of other factors, such as the patron's personal preferences and the general patronage activities of the elite at the time, it is hard to regard patronage performance as a sensitive measure of power.

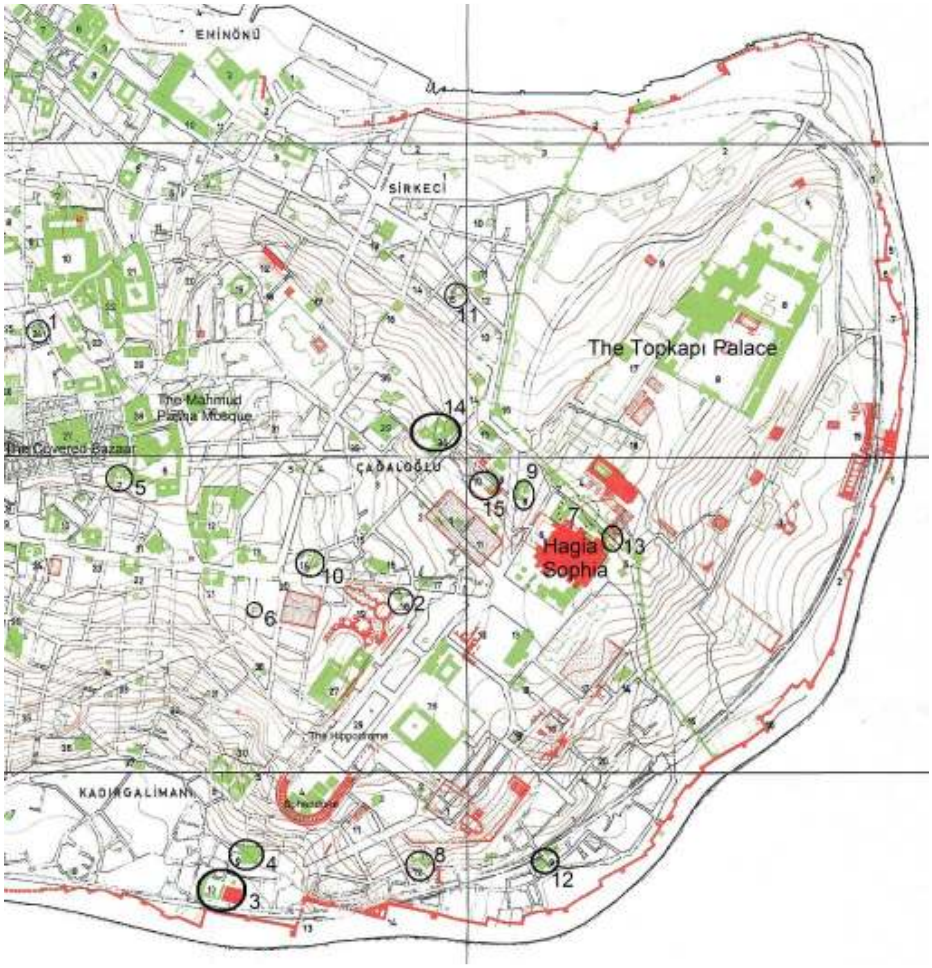
Being a court eunuch, on the other hand, seems to have allowed for a different sort of patronage as well. The role of eunuchs in the realization of royal projects, such as the Atik

Valide, Yeni Cami, and Sultanahmed mosque complexes, is in need of further clarification and acknowledgement. To the extent that they were involved in various patronage decisions, it may perhaps be possible to speak of a "hidden" or "embedded" sort of patronage on the part of the eunuchs who actively participated in such projects. I believe that eunuchs' relationship with architecture should also be assessed by taking this notion of patronage into consideration.

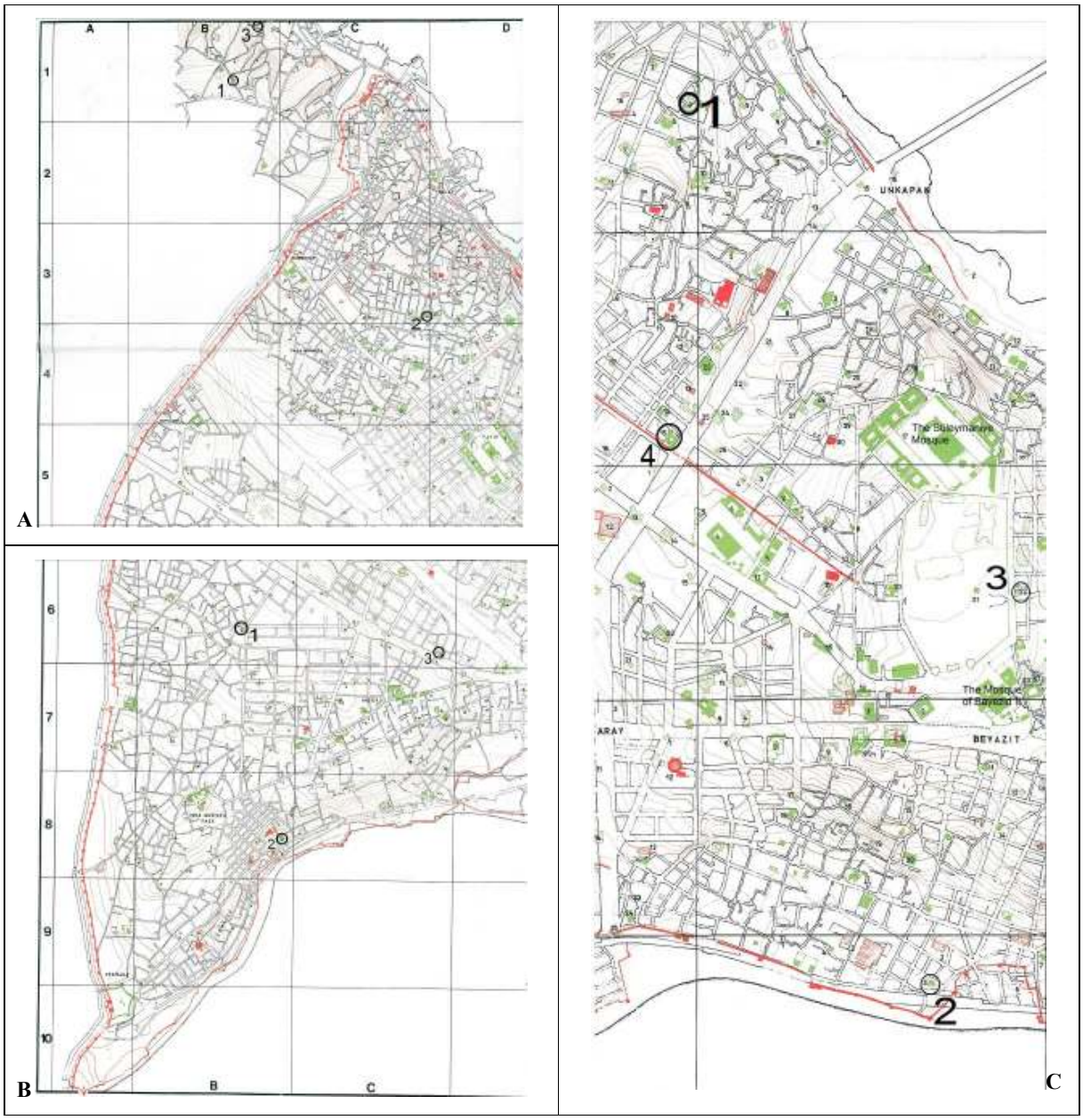
It is important to note that not only their role in royal projects but also some of the patronage choices that eunuchs made in their own undertakings were directly related to their being court eunuchs. It is not accidental that many of the socio-religious foundations built by eunuchs were in the vicinity of the palaces where their patrons worked; that the first *sebil-mekteb* of Istanbul was built by a chief black eunuch; or that Cairo became the site where various black eunuchs commissioned buildings long before their dismissal from the imperial court. Also, by repairing, rebuilding, and upgrading buildings constructed by other eunuchs, by building their own works in the vicinity of these, or by assigning the task of overseeing their endowments to the future holders of their office, the castrated servants of the imperial household cherished an ethos of solidarity within their (sub)group. Perhaps it was in this way that, as members of a non-hereditary elite, they were able to make themselves part of a eunuch "genealogy"—a line of illustrious servants who served the House of Osman with loyalty throughout generations.

MAPS

The maps are adapted from fragments of the map in W. Müller-Wiener, *İstanbul'un Tarihsel Topografyası: 17. yüzyıl başlarına kadar Byzantion-Konstantinopolis-İstanbul*, tr. Ülker Sayın (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007). In the legend of each map, the numbers in brackets refer to the location in the Müller-Wiener map.



Map 1.	1. The Mercan Agha Mosque [F6 24] 2. The Firuz Agha Mosque [F7 18] 3. The Küçük Ayasofya Mosque [F8 10] 4. The Çardaklı Hamam [F8 9] 5. Hüseyin Agha's mosque [F7 7] 6. The Sinan Agha Mosque 7. Mustafa Agha's *tekke* (uncertain location) 8. Mahmud Agha's mosque in Ahırkapı [F8 12]	9. The Cafer Agha *Medrese* [G7 8] 10. *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha's *sebil-mekteb* and *medrese* complex [F7 14] 11. Chief Treasurer Mustafa Agha's *medrese* [F6 15] 12. The Akbıyık Mosque [G8 2] 13. *Malatyalı* Ismail Agha's *tekke* 14. The Beshir Agha Mosque Complex [F6 34] 15. The Acem Ağa Mosque [G7 10]



Map 2. A.

1. Davud Agha's mosque [B1 7]
2. *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha's mosque [C3 19]
3. El-Hajj Beshir Agha's *darülhadis* [B1 2]

B.

1. *Odabaşı* Behruz Agha's mosque [B6 6]
2. Yakub Agha's bath [B8 3]
3. Selçuk H./Abbas Agha Mosque [C6 5]

C.

1. The Âşık Pasha Mosque [D4 3]
2. The Süleyman Agha Mosque [E8 5]
3. The Yakub Agha Mosque [E6 22]
4. The Gazanfer Agha *Medrese* [D5 15]

FIGURES

Fig. 1. The west side of the Hüseyin Agha *bedestan* in Amasya. The main portal and the foundation inscription are seen in the middle. One third of the *bedestan*, corresponding to its northern side, fell victim to destruction attempts.

Fig. 2. Satellite image of Amasya showing (1) the Hüseyin Agha *bedestan*, (2) the *Kilârî* Süleyman Agha Mosque, (3) the socio-religious complex of Bayezid II.

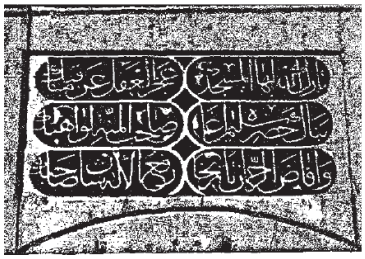


Fig. 3. (left) The *Kilârî* Süleyman Agha Mosque

Fig. 4. (above) The inscription and

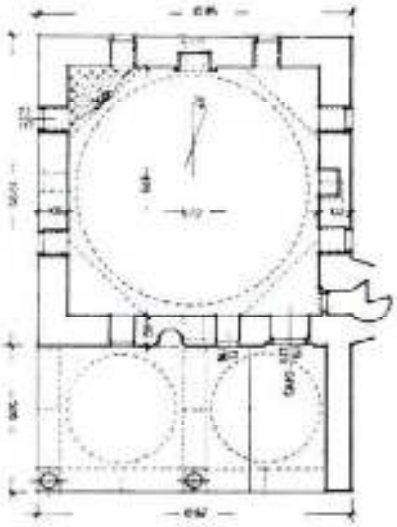


Fig. 5. (right) the plan of the *Kilârî* Süleyman Agha Mosque

Fig. 6. The still standing architectural projects of eunuchs in Amasya: (a) the *bedestan* and (b) the *medrese* of Hüseyin Agha; (c) the complex and (d) the Komacık hamam of Ayas Agha; (e) the mosque of *Kilârî* Süleyman Agha

Fig. 7. The foundation inscription of Hüseyin Agha's *bedestan* in Amasya

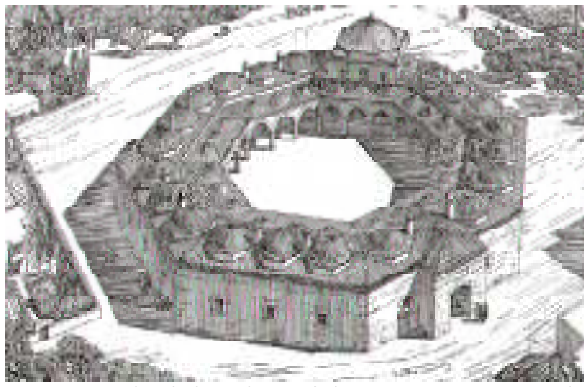


Fig. 8. Perspectival drawing of the Kapu Ağası Medresesi in Amasya

Fig. 9. Detail from Matrakçı Nasuh's miniature of Istanbul (1537-38) showing (1) the Firuz Agha Mosque, (2) the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque, (3) the royal menagerie, (4) a votive column, (5) the obelisk of Theodosius II, (6) the serpent column, (7) the built obelisk, (8) a votive column, (9) the Sphendone, (10) a commercial building, (11) the Atik Ali Pasha Mosque, (12) the column of Constantine, (13) the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, (14) the namazgâh (open air prayer platform) of Irakizade Hasan Efendi, and (15) a fountain.

Fig. 10a. (above) Procession of Süleyman the Magnificent through the Hippodrome (1533), engraving by Pieter Coeck van Aelst

Fig. 10b. (left) Flipped version of the "Procession of Süleyman" by Pieter Coeck van Aelst. The mosque appearing in the middle-left is presumably the Firuz Agha Mosque.

Fig. 11. The Firuz Agha Mosque

Fig. 12. The foundation inscription of the Firuz Agha Mosque

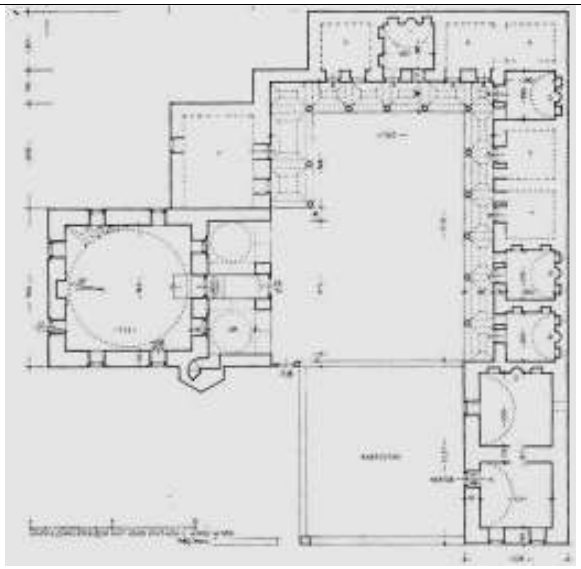


Fig. 14. (above) The Küçük Ayasofya Mosque

Fig. 13. (left) Plan of the Ayas Agha Complex in Amasya

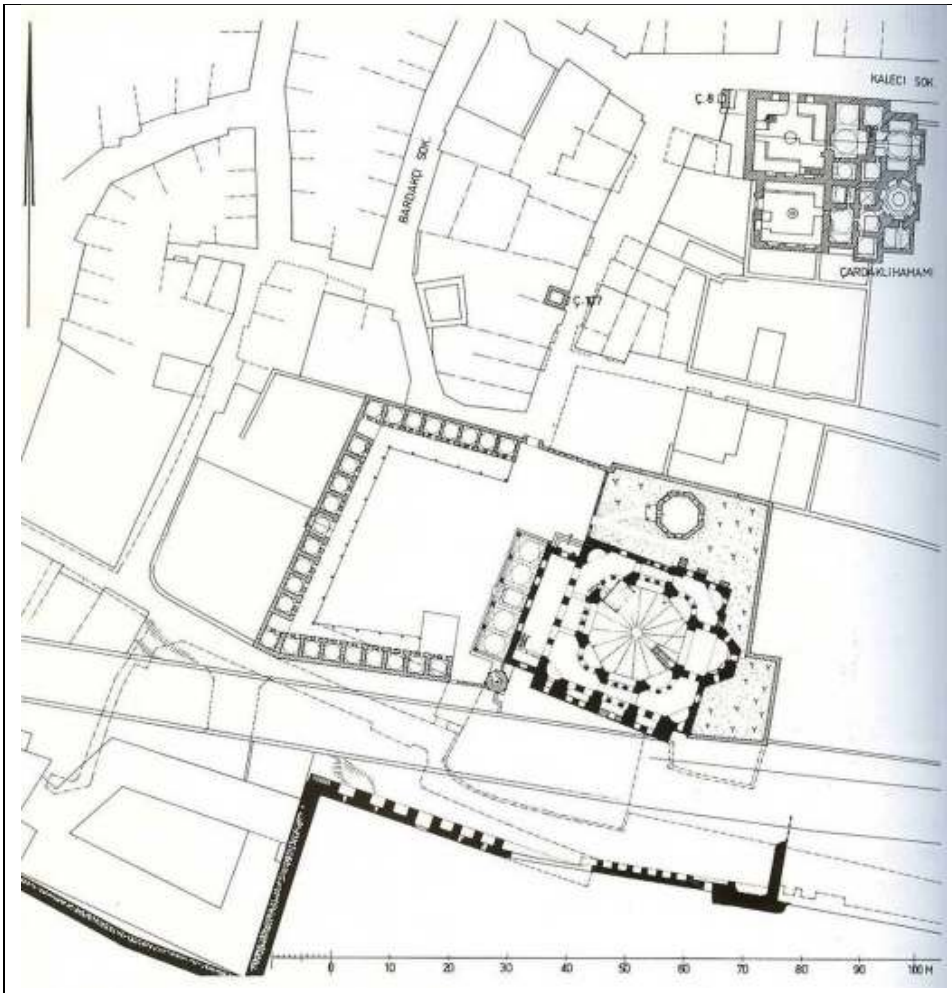


Fig. 15. Plan showing the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque together with the Çardaklı Hamam. The Byzantine remains are black colored; the shaded parts are Ottoman additions.

Fig. 16. (above) Interior of the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque

Fig. 17. (left) The portico (*son cemaat yeri*) of the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque and the passage dividing the complex

Fig. 18. (left) The Çardaklı Hamam

Fig. 19. (below left) The main entrance to the Küçük Ayasofya precinct

Fig. 20. (below right) The hadith inscription on the main entrance to the precinct

Fig. 21. The remodeled northern gate and the portico of the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque

Fig. 22. The hadith inscription on the northern gate of the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque

Fig. 23. The foundation inscription (left) and the hadith inscription (right) on the main portal of the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque

Fig. 24. The western entrance to the Küçük Ayasofya *zâviye*/*medrese*, look from the west

Fig. 25. The mausoleum (*türbe*) of Hüseyin Agha in the cemetery next to the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque

Fig. 26. *Kapı ağası* Mahmud Agha's mosque in Ahırkapı

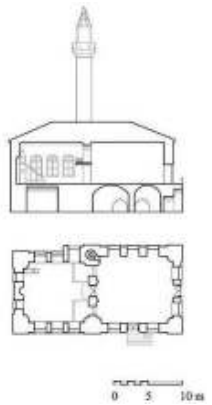


Fig. 27. Plan and cross-section of *kapı ağası* Mahmud Agha's mosque in Ahırkapı

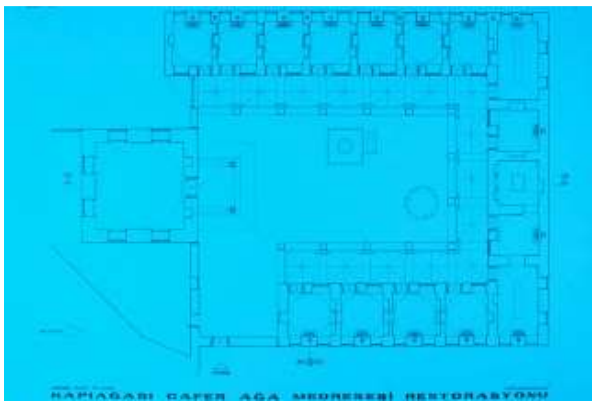


Fig. 28. Plan of the Cafer Agha *medrese*

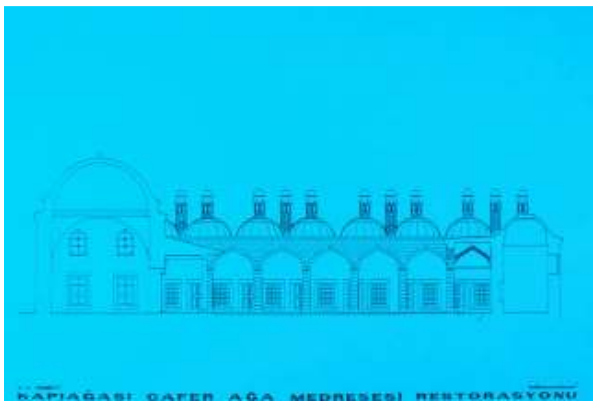


Fig. 29. South-north section of the Cafer Agha *medrese*

Fig. 30. The Cafer Agha *medrese* (Soğukkuyu Medresesi), view from the Alemdar street

Fig. 31. (right) The three inscriptions on the entrance of the classroom at the Cafer Agha *medrese*

Fig. 33. Thomas Allom's engraving of the Samatya bath of Yakub Agha

Fig. 32. (left) Plan and elevation of *Odabaşı* Behruz Agha's mosque

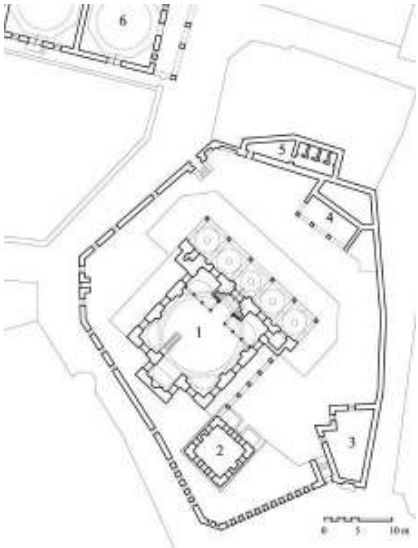


Fig. 34. Plan of the *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha Complex. (1) Mosque, (2) mausoleum, (3) sheikh's house, (4) ablution fountains, (5) latrines, (6) double bath.

Fig. 35. The *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha Mosque, view from the south

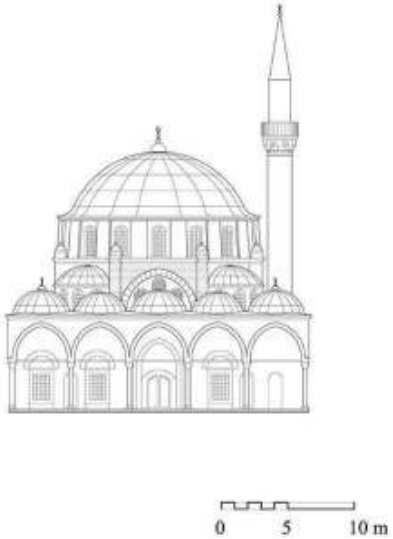


Fig. 36. Elevation of the *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha Mosque

Fig. 37. The mausoleum of *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha next to his mosque

Fig. 38. The muqarnas-galleried stone minaret of the *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha Mosque

Fig. 39. The fountain next to the entrance of the *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha Mosque precinct

Fig. 40. The foundation inscription of the *Habeşî* Mehmed Agha Mosque above the entrance of the precinct

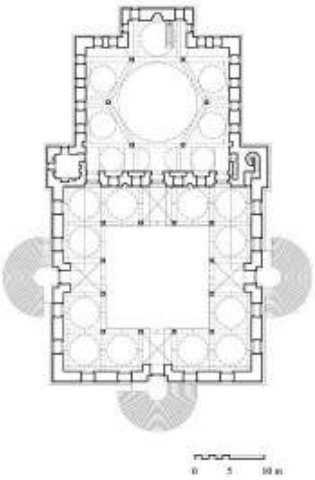


Fig. 41. Plan of the Malika Safiyya Mosque in Cairo

Fig. 42. Interior of the Malika Safiyya Mosque in Cairo

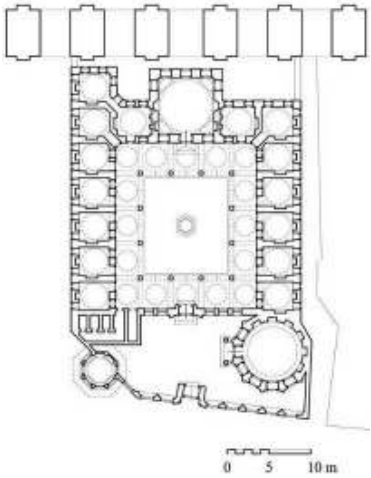


Fig. 43. Plan of the Gazanfer Agha *Medrese* Complex

Fig. 44. The Fountain of Departure (*Ayrılık Çeşmesi*)

Fig. 45. The Osman Agha Mosque in Kadıköy

Fig. 46. The *Mısırlı* Osman Agha fountain in Kadıköy

Fig. 47. The inscription of the fountain next to the Abbas Agha Mosque

Fig. 48. Entrance of the Beshir Agha mosque complex and the view from the slope of *Hükümet Konağı Caddesi* towards Hagia Sophia

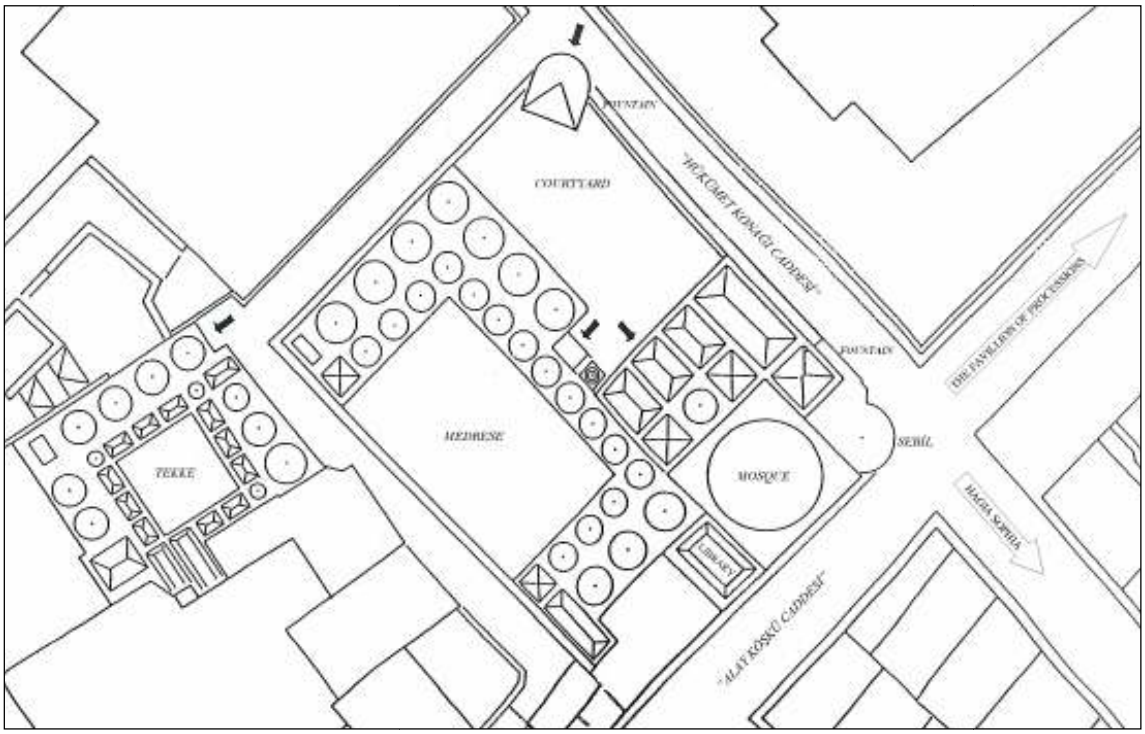


Fig. 49. Plan of the Beshir Agha mosque complex

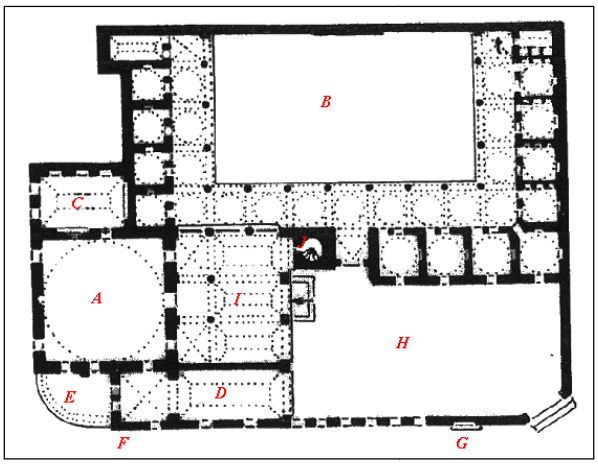


Fig. 50. Plan of the Beshir Agha complex with the exception of the *tekke*. Key: A – prayer hall of the mosque, B – *medrese*, C – library, D – elementary school, E – *sebil*, F and G – fountains, H – courtyard, I – *son cemaat yeri*, J – minaret.

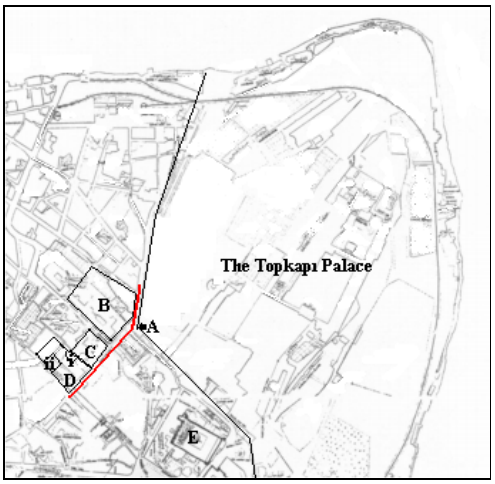


Fig. 51. The Beshir Agha mosque complex and its vicinity. Key: A—The Pavilion of Processions, B—Approximate location of *Paşa Kapısı*, the grand vizierial complex, C—the Beshir Agha complex, D—Approximate location of the Ibrahim Pasha palace, E—Hagia Sophia, i—the Şengül Bath, ii—the Cağaloğlu Bath.

Fig. 52. The minaret and the entrance of the *medrese*

Fig. 53. The Beshir Agha *sebil*

Fig. 54. The fountain next to the *sebil*

Fig. 55. The foundation inscription of the mosque, which was altered after the renovations of Mahmud II in the nineteenth century.

Fig. 56. The fountain and entrance gate

Fig. 57. Detail from the *sebil*

APPENDIX: LIST OF THE OTTOMAN COURT EUNUCHS WHO COMMISSIONED BUILDINGS IN ISTANBUL FROM THE MID-FIFTEENTH TO THE MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

	Name of the eunuch	**Title(s)***	**Reigning sultan***	**Act of patronage (date)**	**Location (*) at the time of the act of patronage**
1	Mercan Agha	*darüssaade ağası* (?)	Mehmed II	mosque (before 868/1463-64)	Mercan, Beyazıt; near the Old Palace (today: Istanbul University)
2	Firuz Agha (d. 918/1512-3)	*hazinedarbaşı*	Bayezid II	[Friday] mosque (896/1490-91) elementary school	At the intersection of the Divan Yolu with the At Meydanı
3	Hüseyin Agha	*Eski Saray ağası*	Bayezid II	mosque [rebuilt?] (898/1492)	The Âşık Pasha Mosque
4	Hüseyin Agha	*kapı ağası*	Bayezid II	Converted the Friday mosque of Küçük Ayasofya (between 1506 and 1513) dervish convent elementary school soup kitchen double bath mausoleum	To the south-west of the Sphendone
	"	"	"	mosque	To south of the Covered Bazaar
5	Mehmed Agha	*kapı ağası* (?)	Bayezid II	fountain (912/1506-07)	Near the İskele Camii in Kadıköy
6	Selman Agha [also known as Süleyman Agha] (d. 914/1508-09)	*darüssaade ağası*	Bayezid II	mosque (912/1506)	Üsküdar
7	Sinan Agha	*kapı ağası*	Mehmed II or Bayezid II	mosque (before 918/1512)	Near the Binbirdirek Cistern
8	Mustafa Agha	*kapı ağası*	Selim I	dervish convent (926/1519-20)	Near Hagia Sophia
9	Süleyman Agha	unknown	Süleyman I	mosque elementary school *han* (endowed in 937/1531)	Kumkapı (*han* in At Pazarı, Fatih)

10	Süleyman Agha (same as above?)	unknown	Süleyman I	elementary school (endowed in 948/1541)	Near the Old Palace
11	Yakub Agha (d. 954/1547-8)	*Eski Saray ağası*	Süleyman I	mosque fountain	Across the gate of the Old Palace (Mercan, Beyazıt)
	"	"	"	mosque elementary school	Beyazıt; near the Divan Yolu
	"	"	"	elementary school	Otakçılar, Eyüp
12	Mahmud Agha	*kapı ağası*	Süleyman I	mosque (961/1553-54) [later: Friday mosque] elementary school fountain theological college	Ahırkapı
13	Davud Agha (d. 962/1554-55)	*saray ağası*	Süleyman I	mosque (962/1554-55) elementary school (near the mosque?)	Nişanca, Eyüp
14	Cafer Agha (d. 964/1557)	*kapı ağası*	Süleyman I	theological college (967/1559-60) [allegedly completed by his brother Gazanfer Agha]	On Alemdar Caddesi in Eminönü; near Haghia Sophia
15	Behruz Agha	*Has Oda başı* (eunuch?)	Süleyman I	Friday mosque (970/1562-63) elementary school fountain	Şehremini
16	[*Atik*] Yakub Agha (d. 974/1566)	*kapı ağası*	Süleyman I	bath	Samatya, Sulu Manastır
	"	"	"	bath	Tophane
	"	"	"	mosque	Harami Deresi
17	*Habeşî* (or *Hacı*) Mehmed Agha (d. 999/1590-91)	*darüssaade ağası*	Murad III	elementary school [upper storey] *sebil* [lower storey] (988/1580-81) theological college (990/1582-3) fountain	On the Divan Yolu

	"	"	"	*sebil* (appr. 1581) fountain	Irgadpazarı; near Constantine's column
	"	"	"	fountain (989/1581-82)	Üsküdar
	"	"	"	Friday mosque (993/1585) hadith college dervish convent theological college double bath fountain mausoleum	Çarşamba
	"	"	"	mosque (before 1591) (Yeniçeşme Mescidi)	Üsküdar
	"	"	"	fountain (before 1591)	Near Hagia Sophia
	"	"	"	ablution fountains for the Mercan Agha mosque	See #1
	"	"	"	fountain	Near the Old Palace
	"	"	"	fountain open prayer space	Near the Edirnekapı gate
	"	"	"	fountain (995/1586-87)	Debbağlar (Tabaklar), Üsküdar
	"	"	"	three other fountains	Üsküdar
18	Ibrahim Agha	*kapı ağası*	Murad III	mosque (988/1580-81)	Near Haydarpaşa
19	*Tavâşî* Hasan Agha	unknown	Murad III	mosque elementary school (995/1586-87)	İnadiye, Üsküdar
20	*Dilsiz* Süleyman Agha	mute agha (of Safiye Sultan)	Murad III	fountain (995/1586-87)	Nişanca, Eyüp; near the Davud Agha Mosque
	"	"	"	fountain (1001/1592-93)	Etyemez
21	*Cüce* Mehmed Agha	court dwarf (eunuch?)	Murad III	fountain (999/1590-91)	Kumkapı
22	Mustafa Agha	*serhâzin* (later: *saray ağası* and probably	Murad III	theological college fountain (999/1590-91)	Sirkeci

		darüssaade ağası)			
23	Hüseyin Agha	*Galatasaray ağası* (later: *şeyhülharem*)	Murad III	mosque (1005/1596-97)	İstiklâl Caddesi
	"	"	" (?)	fountain	Tophane
24	Gazanfer Agha (d. 1011/1603)	*kapı ağası*	Murad III Mehmed III	fountain (Ayrılık Çeşmesi)	Haydarpaşa
	"	"	"	theological college (1593-96) *türbe* *sebil*	Fatih; next to the Valens Aqueduct
	"	"	"	Rebuilt the Otakçılar Mosque	Eyüp
	"	"	"	*sebil* (1008/1599-1600)	Otakçılar, Eyüp
25	El-Hajj Mustafa Agha (d. 1033/1624)	*darüssaade ağası*	Ahmed I, Mustafa I, Osman II, or Murad IV	minbar	The Akbıyık Mosque [built during the reign of Mehmed II] in Ahırkapı
	"	"	"	minbar	The Haceği Mosque, Fatih
	" (?)	"	"	rebuilt the mosque and installed its minbar	The Tekneciler Mosque, Eminönü
	"	"	Ahmed I	fountain (1022/1613-14)	Efrâziyye yokuşu, Fatih
	"	"	"	fountain *sebil* (1025/1616-17)	Near the Mahmud Pasha Mosque
	"	"	Osman II	fountain (1028/1618-19)	Hasköy
	"	"	Osman II	funerary *sebil* (1033/1624)	Next to the tomb of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Eyüp
26	Osman Agha	*kapı ağası*	Ahmed I	mosque (1021/1612-13)	Kadıköy
27	*Mısırlı* Osman Agha	?	Ahmed I	fountain (1012/1603-04)	In the kitchen of the Topkapı Palace
	"	?	Ahmed I or	repaired(?) the fountain of Mahmud Pasha (1031/1621-	Opposite the *medrese* of Mahmud Pasha, in Eminönü

			Osman II	22)	
	"	*kapı ağası* (?)	Probably Osman II	ablution fountains of the Osman Agha Mosque	See #24
	"	*kapı ağası*	Osman II	fountain (1030/1620-21)	Kadıköy; near the Osman Agha Mosque
28	*Dilsiz* Ali Agha	mute agha (eunuch?)	Osman II	fountain (1029/1619-20)	unknown
29	Mehmed Agha (d. 1048/1638-39)	*kapı ağası* (under Ahmed I?)	Murad IV	fountain (1041/1631-32)	Probably near the Firuz Agha Mosque in Sultanahmet
30	*Malatyalı* Ismail Agha (d. 1050/1640-41)	agha of the inner larder	Ahmed I	mosque (1018/1609-10) double bath dervish convent fountain (1026/1617)	Üsküdar
	"	*kapı ağası* and *darüssaade ağası* (?)	?	dervish convent	Near Hagia Sophia
31	*Çuçu* Ibrahim Ağa	*darüssaade ağası*	Murad IV	The Harab Mosque	Near the Kavak İskelesi
32	Ali Agha (d. ca. 1068/1657-58)	*hazinedarbaşı* and *musahib*	Mehmed IV	fountain (1064/1653-54)	Selimiye
33	Muslı Agha	*darüssaade ağası*	Mehmed IV	fountain (1077/1666-67)	Near the Sultan Ahmed Mosque
34	Abbas Agha	agha of the *valide sultan*, then *darüssaade ağası*	Mehmed IV	mosque (1665-66) elementary school fountain (1084/1673-74)	Beşiktaş
	"	*darüssaade ağası*	"	fountain (1080/1669-70)	Üsküdar; near the mosque of Arakiyeci Cafer Agha/Çelebi
	"	"	"	fountain (1080/1669-70)	Üsküdar; near the mosque of Hayreddin Çavuş
	"	"	"	fountain (1080/1669-70)	Near the Defterdar Kapısı
	"	"	"	double bath (1080/1669-70)	Laleli
	"	"	"	rebuilt the Selçuk Hatun Mosque	Molla Gürani, Taşkasap
	"	"	"	bath elementary school	Hocapaşa, Eminönü

				sebil	
35	*Lala* Beshir Agha (d. 1080/1669-70)	*hazinedar*	Mehmed IV	Mosque (The Kavak İskelesi Mosque) (1077/1666-67)	Üsküdar
36	Yakub Agha	*saray ağası* (later: *kapı ağası*)	Mehmed IV	fountain library elementary school (1089/1678-9)	Near the Atik Valide Complex, Üsküdar
37	Mustafa Agha	agha of the Edirne Palace	Mehmed IV	fountain (1092/1681-82)	Karagümrük
38	*Solak* Nezir Agha	*darüssaade ağası*	Mustafa II	rebuilt the Mercan Agha Mosque (1114/1702-03)	See #1
	"	"	"	fountain (1114 /1702-03)	Kasımpaşa; near the İbâdullah Mosque
39	Eyüp Agha	*hazine emini* or *hazinedar*	Ahmed III	fountain (1118/1706-07)	Hasköy, next to the *Keçeci* Piri Mehmed Agha Mosque
40	*Uzun* Süleyman Agha	*darüssaade ağası*	Ahmed III	mosque (1116/1704-05; repaired by *darüssaade ağası* Anber Agha in 1277/1860) bath elementary school fountain	Beşiktaş
	"	"	"	fountain (1124/1712-13)	Beşiktaş; near the Şenlik Dede Mosque
41	Nezir Agha (d. after 1159/1746-47)	agha of the Old Palace	Ahmed III	repaired the *Sadrazam* Ali Pasha fountain (1124/1712-13)	Kasımpaşa
42	El-Hajj (or *Koca*) Beshir Agha (d. 1159/1746)	*darüssaade ağası*	Ahmed III	minbar and fountain	The Yeniçeşme Mosque of Mehmed Agha
	"	"	"	minbar (1133/1720-21)	The Kavak İskelesi Mosque built by *Lala* Beshir Agha (see #33)
	"	"	"	fountain (1140/1727-28)	In the Covered Bazaar

	"	"	"	fountain (1141/1728-29)	Atpazarı
	"	"	"	fountain (1141/1728-29)	Near the mosque of Mehmed Agha
	"	"	"	fountain (1141/1729-30)	Üsküdar
	"	"	Mahmud I	fountain (1145/1732-33)	Fındıklı; near the Hacı Receb Mosque
	"	"	"	hadith college library elementary school (1147/1734-35)	Eyüp
	"	"	"	fountain (1150/1737-38)	Kocamustafapaşa, near the Ali Fakih Mosque
	"	"	"	fountain (1150/1737-38)	Kocamustafapaşa
	"	"	"	fountain (1150/1737-38)	In the courtyard of the Kocamustafapaşa Mosque
	"	"	"	fountain (1151/1738-39)	Eyüp
	"	"	"	fountain (1151/1738-39) *namazgâh* *sebil*	In the Covered Bazaar
	"	"	"	fountain (1157/1744-45)	Near Hagia Sophia
	"	"	"	mosque theological college library elementary school dervish convent *sebil* two fountains (1157/1744 – 1159/1746)	Near the Alay Köşkü
	"	"	"	fountain (1158/1745-46)	In Fatih, between the Hafızpaşa and Kumrulumescit Mosques
	"	"	"	fountain (1158/1745-46)	Beşiktaş; near the Sinan Pasha Mosque
	"	"	"	fountain (1153/1740-41)	Beyoğlu
43	Firuz Agha	*saray ağası*	unknown	mosque	Firuzağa, Beyoğlu

44	*Hacı* Ferhad Agha	*kilârî*	unknown	elementary school	Beyoğlu[1]
45	Mehmed Agha	*kilârî*	unknown	minbar	The Saraçhanebaşı Mosque of the architect Ayas (892/1486-87), Fatih[2]
46	Ahmed Agha	*acemi ağası* (agha of the janissary recruits), later: *kapı ağası*	unknown	*eczâ-i şerîf*[3]	The Acem Ağa Mosque converted from a church by the barley commissioner (*emin-i cev*) Lala Hayreddin[4] (see Map 1)
47	Hüsrev Agha	*kapı ağası*	unknown	mosque elementary school	Üsküdar[5]

[1] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 391.
[2] Ibid., 136.
[3] Even though it is not an example of architectural patronage, this endowment is added to the list as it led to the renaming of the mosque after Ahmed Agha.
[4] Ayvansarâyî, *Garden*, 165.
[5] Ibid., 504.

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