DAILY LIFE IN THE ENDERUN PALACE DURING THE REIGN OF MURAD IV

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For four centuries, the Enderun, which trained administrators at various levels of the Ottoman Empire, from the vizierate to the Janissary commander, formed the Ottoman ruling class through high-level education provided in the palace and served as one of the cornerstones of the state's bureaucratic structure, being the most fundamental institution in state administration. This study begins by explaining what the Enderun was and then focuses on the structure and sections of Topkapi Palace during the reign of Murad IV. It then examines daily life, educational activities, and the routines of palace officials within the Enderun. To this end, an attempt has been made to reveal the workings of palace education. Daily activities began with morning rituals and preparations, continued with education, classes, sports, physical activities, art and cultural events; and concluded with mealtimes and kitchen activities.

Keywords: Enderun, Inner Chambers, Topkapi Palace, Devshirme (recruited Christian boys), 17th Century

1. INTRODUCTION

The Enderun School, an important institution of the Ottoman Empire that provided palace education and trained high-ranking state administrators, was founded during the reign of Murad II and underwent significant development during the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror (Arslan, 2021). For four centuries, the Enderun, which trained administrators at various levels of the Ottoman Empire, from the vizierate to the Janissary commander, formed the ruling class of the Ottoman Empire and served as one of the cornerstones of the state's bureaucratic structure (Işık & Güneş, 2017, pp. 1–3). The courses offered at the Enderun School were structured to develop both the academic and practical skills of the students. Language instruction, particularly in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish, held a significant place among these courses. In addition, fundamental sciences such as Islamic law (fiqh), literature, history, mathematics, and geography were included in the curriculum. Military training was also of great importance at the Enderun. Military lessons such as archery, horsemanship, swordsmanship, and strategy were given, aiming to improve students' physical abilities and combat skills. Arts and crafts lessons also supported and developed students' manual dexterity and aesthetic sense. The reforms implemented in the Enderun during the reign of Murad IV (1623-1640) are of great importance in terms of strengthening the administrative and military structure of the Ottoman Empire.

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Until the 17th century, it was the most fundamental institution in the Ottoman state administration. Murad IV implemented various reforms to consolidate central authority and increase the effectiveness of the state. Within the scope of these reforms, the aim was to train young people studying in the Enderun in a more disciplined and well-equipped manner (Gündüz, 2021, pp. 64–65). During this educational process, in addition to intelligence and ability, perseverance, loyalty, and honesty were carefully monitored. The reforms implemented at the Enderun aimed to improve the quality of military and administrative training in particular. Murad IV took great care to ensure that the young people educated at the Enderun received a high-level and comprehensive education. The education there was both theoretical and practical. The reforms he implemented in the Enderun contributed to the adoption of a more effective governance approach in the internal and external policies of the Ottoman Empire. These reforms strengthened central authority and allowed the Ottoman bureaucracy to function more efficiently.

2. The Structure of the Palace During the Reign of Murad IV

Topkapi Palace consists of three main gates, Bab-ı Hümayun, Babü's Selam, and Babü's Saade, four courtyards, the Hasbahçe (Gülhane) garden, and various other gardens. Surrounded by the sea on three sides, the palace is enclosed by high walls called Sur-ı Sultani, which are fourteen hundred meters long (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 35).

2.1. Bab-ı Hümayun and the First Courtyard

2.2. Bab-ı Hümayun:

Bab-ı Hümayun is the main entrance gate of Topkapi Palace and opens onto the first courtyard of the palace. This gate is an important structure reflecting the splendor and power of the Ottoman Empire. The gate was opened at morning prayer and closed before evening prayer, and when it was closed, entry and exit to the palace were made through the side gates (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 36).

2.3. First Courtyard (Parade Square)

The palace grounds begin from this gate. The First Courtyard, the largest courtyard of Topkapi Palace, is the first area encountered upon entering through the Bab-ı Hümayun (Imperial Gate). Entering this courtyard is not difficult. Those who have business at the palace or wish to meet with relatives can easily enter after a little inquiry. At the entrance to Bab-ı Hümayun, in the first courtyard, is the Church of Saint Irene, which was originally used as the palace's weapons depot. Also located here are

the old palace workshops, the Mint. These workshops produced fine craftsmanship such as book illumination, bookbinding, carpentry, and leatherwork; Gifts to be sent to other states are prepared here. The place where the firewood is stored in the palace is also here… (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 37).

3. Bab al-Salam and the Second Courtyard

3.1. Babü's Selam:

Babü's Selam is the gate of respect shown to the state. It is the symbol of Topkapı Palace. This two-towered gate, also called 'Orkapı', shows the splendor of the empire. It is the second main gate of Topkapı Palace and separates the First Courtyard (Alay Meydanı) from the Second Courtyard (Divan Meydanı) and provides passage. The only person allowed to enter through this gate on horseback was the Sultan; the palace ladies also passed through in royal carriages (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 39).

3.2. The Second Courtyard (Divan Square)

Babü's Selam marks the beginning of the palace's state offices. The Second Courtyard, the main courtyard where administrative and official affairs were conducted, was a center where state matters were discussed and important decisions were made (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 39). The Second Courtyard, also known as the Divan Square, served as the second parade ground. Official ceremonies attended by state officials, scholars, and army representatives, such as holiday celebrations and coronation ceremonies, were held here. To the southeast are the palace kitchens (Matbah-ı Âmire). To the northeast is the Kubbealtı (Divanhane), where the Divan (Council) met on certain days of the week, and next to it is the outer treasury (Hazine-i Âmire). Behind the Kubbealtı are the stables (İstabl-ı Âmire), and immediately behind them is the Tower of Justice (Kasr-ı Adl), the most prominent and tallest structure of the palace (Kançal-Ferrari, 2015, pp. 142–143). In the Imperial Council, also known as the Palace of Justice, sherbet or hot drinks were served, depending on the season (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 39). This tower provides a connection to the Harem, located behind the Dome Hall. Originally built as an external treasury and watchtower, this structure, in addition to its functional dimension, also has absolute symbolic importance and, like the dome, is a symbol of the (Kançal-Ferrari, 2015, pp. 142–143).

4. Babü's Saade and the Enderun Courtyard (Third Courtyard)

4.1. Babü's Saade:

Babü's Saade, the third main gate of Topkapi Palace, provides access from the Second Courtyard to the Third Courtyard (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, pp. 23–26). The entrance to the Sultan's private residence, also known as the Gate of Happiness, begins at the Babü's Saade gate (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 39). Reflecting the splendor and power of the Ottoman Empire, this gate is considered the starting point of the Sultan's official life and is one of the most important gates of the palace. To pass through this gate, one must be specially invited by the Sultan, and under strict security measures, be admitted through Babü's Saade and taken to whichever section of the Enderun the Sultan is waiting in (Eyice, 1991, pp. 408–409).

5. The Courtyard (Enderun Courtyard)

Babü's Saade is the third main gate leading to the Enderun section of Topkapi Palace. It forms a whole with the Audience Chamber, which is located immediately behind and adjacent to the gate in the Third Courtyard. When preparing for a military campaign, the Sacred Banner was erected in a special area in front of Babü's Saade, and prayers were offered there. In this courtyard was the Palace School (Enderun School), containing the apartments and dormitories where the aghas and the inner pages, who followed a hierarchical order, resided. Also located in this courtyard is the Ağalar Mosque, one of the first structures dating back to the palace's founding. The Harem-i Hümayun is also located in this courtyard, and it is the section where the Sultan's family resided. The harem is the most private and secure part of the palace (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, pp. 23–26).

5.1. Rose Garden (Has Bahçe)

During the reign of Murad IV, the Has Bahçe (Rose Garden), an important part of Topkapi Palace, was known as Gülhane. This extensive garden was used by the sultans as a place of rest and entertainment. The Has Bahçe stands out as an important place reflecting the splendor of the Ottoman Empire and its love of nature (Garipağaoğlu, 2013, pp. 157–183). Behind the third courtyard, the Sultan's private garden was built on various terraces. Also known as the Tulip Garden because tulips are grown there, this area, located just behind the Has Oda (Private Chamber) built by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, is called the Fourth Place, or Sofa-i HümayunLocated on this marble terrace with a pool, where the sultans spent their private lives, are the Baghdad and Revan pavilions, built in commemoration of successful campaigns during the reign of Murad IV (1623-1640). These two pavilions are among the finest examples of 17th-century Ottoman civil architecture (Kançal-Ferrari, 2015, pp. 142–143).

5.2. Life in the Enderun

From the mid-15th century onwards, the Enderun School, considered the most important official educational institution in the Ottoman Empire outside of the madrasas, functioned primarily as a school for training civil and military administrators. This institution was established to provide the necessary human resources for the Ottoman central and provincial bureaucracy and played a significant role in determining administrative and political goals and in the functioning of the state's main institutions. The Enderun, as we call it, was not a school with classrooms; rather, it provided in-service training, with students being promoted from one ward to another (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 39).

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Children, usually those who had lost all ties with their families and were recruited through the devshirme system, were required to undergo a certain basic education before being accepted into the Enderun. These children, recruited from Christian families, primarily learned Turkish, Islamic principles, and etiquette while living with Muslim Turkish families (İpşirli, 1995, p. 186). This system is a way of life; it involves a preparatory phase called "being given to the Turk." They are sent to villages around Istanbul, Bursa, and Edirne (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 100).

"*Contrary to what some believe, the devshirme system wasn't enforced; in fact, some poor villages willingly gave their children to the Ottomans, believing it would lead to their salvation and advancement. Of course, fate included dying in battle as a soldier, but also becoming the second-in-command in the imperial administration, the Grand Vizier.…*" (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 101).

Later, they would receive lessons and training in the palaces of Edirne, Galatasaray, and İbrahim Paşa (and for a time, İskender Çelebi) to develop their physical and mental abilities. These children were called "acemi oğlanları" (novice boys). After receiving specific training and education here, the acemi oğlanları were distributed to various military units through a process called "çıkma" (exit), and those with exceptional talent were accepted into the Enderun for more advanced training (İpşirli, 1995, p. 186) In palace jargon, the term "çıkma" refers to the assignment of young pages and apprentices, called "Çeleb," serving in the Yenisaray, Edirne, Galata, and İbrahim Paşa palaces, to duties both inside and outside the palace (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, p. 296).

5.3. Structure and Sections of the Enderun

The young boys of Topkapi Palace, known as Gılmanan-ı Enderun, received training in separate rooms based on their services and achievements. These rooms were divided into seven levels: the Great and Small Rooms, the Falconer's Ward, the Expeditionary Ward, the Storeroom, the Treasury Room, and the Private Room (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, pp. 297). Those who failed to complete their education or demonstrate success in these rooms were assigned to military units. Students in both the large and small rooms received a very small salary and annual uniforms. Because they wrapped their skirts around their waists, these Enderun students were called "dolama" (those who wrap their skirts). Those from Dolama will become "kaftan-wearing" (referring to those who wear a kaftan) after achieving a certain level of success and service, through the positive encouragement of their chamberlains and with the intervention of the Sultan (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 94).

5.4. Large and Small Rooms

Upon entering through the Babüssaade gate, you will find the large room on the right and the small room on the left, located between the private chamber and the aviary. These two rooms are also called the Hane-i Kebir and Hane-i Sağir (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, pp. 298). Discipline is paramount in the education provided here. Those admitted to these chambers are selected from the palaces of Edirne, Galata, and İbrahim Paşa, and receive instruction from numerous teachers, being raised in accordance with Turkish culture and Islamic beliefs. Religious studies and Quranic studies were taught, along with courses in Islamic sciences such as hadith, creed, jurisprudence, inheritance law, and rhetoric. Languages such as Turkish, Arabic, and Persian were taught, along with subjects like history, geography, geometry, poetry, composition, music, and astronomy. It is known that special teachers were brought from places like Baghdad, Shiraz, and Khorasan to teach these subjects (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 94).

Besides these lessons, I also received training in sports movements such as wrestling, jumping, running, archery, and wrestling.

Those born in Dolama who were fourteen years of age and older were naturally more adept at sports training; they were more successful in activities such as using weapons and riding horses. Senior inner boys aged fifteen and over were transferred from the Great and Small Chambers to the Campaign Ward. There were about a hundred in the large room and about sixty in the small room. The pages who could not be transferred to the campaign, that is, those who could not wear the kaftan, were taken into the silahdar or sipahi units for eight to twenty akçe (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, pp. 298).

The Doğancı ward, known as Hane-i Bazyan, housed the Enderun students, referred to as those wearing caftans; their number was around forty, and it was abolished by Sultan Mehmed the

Hunter. There is no further mention of it afterward. However, it is said that there was a ward called Doğancı under the command of Doğancıbaşı Just as every Turkic tribe placed great importance on hunting organizations, the Ottoman Turks also attached great importance to this organization; they were engaged in training birds of prey such as falcons, eagles, and hawks (Akkutay, 2014, p. 1502).

The Seferli ward, also known as Hane-i Seferli, emerged as a result of Sultan Murad IV taking some of his young pages on military campaigns. The primary duties of the pages here were previously to wash, organize, and maintain cleanliness for the Enderun household. Later, this ward was supported in vocational fields and became an organized arts school, training musicians, singers, archers, wrestlers, barbers, bathhouse attendants, and masseurs. The mute and dwarf individuals we called jesters were kept in this ward. Many successful scholars and poets emerged from this place (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, pp. 300). Sultan's turban, called Destar-ı Hümayın, and his ablution towel were washed twice a week by the chief servant, who was experienced in this room. The Sultan's prayer rug was also laid out by the head of this ward (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 105).

The young boys housed in the pantry received training not only in academic subjects but also in how to present and serve a wide variety of food and drinks (Akkutay, 2014, p. 1502). The most important duty of this ward is to place the food in front of the sultan when it is time for him to eat. The person who opens the food container is the chief cellarman, also known as the serkilari-i hassa, who is the head of this ward. The preparation of jams and various syrups was the responsibility of this ward. They also prepared and stored food, drinks, and sweets within the Imperial Harem. In this ward, the Head Peşkirbaşı (Head of the Towels) keeps the ruler's bread, and the Head Mumbaşı (Head of the Candles) keeps his water. The towel-bearer was responsible for collecting the golden tray and spoons and clearing the table; the pickle-maker was responsible for preparing pickles and yogurt, while the fruit-seller was responsible for storing the fruits reserved for the sultan (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, pp. 301). They also supplied and lit the candles in the large candelabra in the Chamber of the Blessed Mantle, as well as in the rooms and mosques throughout the palace. The preparation of medicines was also the responsibility of the storekeepers; the Chief Physician's Room was located at the head of the storeroom ward (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 105).

The Treasury Ward, known as Gilman-i Hazine, (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, pp. 305) is responsible for the protection, safekeeping, and safekeeping of the palace's valuable items and jewels (Ortaylı, 2008, p. 106). This treasury contains gold and silver vessels, precious stones such as diamonds and rubies, furs, various elegant shawls, carpets, valuable garment fabrics, gold and silver plated saddle sets, rings of precious stones, wide-collared fur coats adorned with diamonds and gold, worn by the sultan and high-ranking state officials, and a portrait and a suit belonging to each sultan, all kept and preserved here (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, pp. 305).

The private chamber is an important section where the sultan's closest servants reside. This chamber is where the sultan's daily life takes place and where state affairs are conducted. It represented the highest echelon of the Ottoman palace organization, and those serving there were chosen from among the Sultan's most trusted individuals, who could carry a knife by his side and enjoyed great privileges (Ağca Diker, 2019, p. 54).

The Has Oda, the highest rank and position within the Enderun-i Hümayun (Imperial Palace School), represented the highest level of education and training given to the inner pages (i.e., young boys). Those who entered this room represented the elite of the Enderun School. The main goal of the education given in the Private Chamber was not limited to training students in administrative skills; the education provided was both theoretical and practical. Turkish reading and writing, Arabic, Quran and Religious Studies are among the common courses. Training is also provided in areas such as combat skills and body language. The young boys accepted into the palace were trained from day one to be good orators, polite, virtuous, and combative statesmen, and they were required to learn the Islamic faith and Turkish customs and traditions in the best possible way. Those who would serve in palace affairs received the following titles in order: Gılman, İç Ağası, İç Oğlanı, and finally Enderun Ağası. They rose to important positions in the palace according to their seniority and qualifications. However, all internal and external appointments were the responsibility of the Sultan. The chambers are subordinate to a Chamber Head and a Steward. Each chamber has a librarian, a clerk, an imam, a treasurer, and three muezzins. There are twelve promotion exams in the Private Chamber. This structure is divided into ten groups, with a Lala serving in each group. The Ak Ağalar (White Lords) played a significant role in educational matters. The Enderun School understood the importance of administration and gave it the necessary attention, providing opportunities for talented young people in administrative roles. These talented young people have had the opportunity to rise to the highest positions in the state (Akkutay, 2014, p. 1502).

5.5. Dormitory System and Life in the Enderun

In the Enderun ward, the daily routine began as follows: Approximately two hours before morning prayer, the night watchmen of the wards would wake the bath attendants to ensure the baths were lit, and then they would wake the ward officer. The ward officer would first recite a Fatiha prayer for the souls of the deceased Muslims, especially those who had served in the palace, and then, taking the iron object hanging on the wall, resembling a door knocker, he would strike it forcefully three times against a nail. This act was considered a signal of awakening in the ward. The officer would then walk from one end of the ward to the other, loudly calling out the names of the officers lying in their beds, trying to wake them up. Those who needed to perform ritual ablution would quickly go to the bathhouse.

After half an hour, the officer would walk around the ward a third time, and this time, he would pull back the blankets of those who were still asleep and, using a special rosary, would strike their backs until they woke up. This rosary was made specifically for this purpose and was typically a wooden device consisting of ninety-nine beads, each about the size of a hazelnut. As a result of this process, no one would remain awake. By the time of the morning prayer, all the inmates in the ward would be awake. Those returning from the bathhouse and those who had performed their ablutions would make their beds and sit on them (Koçu, 1972, p. 34). The beds where the young boys slept consisted of a thick blanket that was half mattress and half cover, a thinner sheet for use in cold weather, and a small pillow for their heads. When they woke up, they would quickly fold their mattresses and hang them on a hook behind each sleeping area. They would bring their small drawers, which they used as tables, and after propping their pillow against the wall, whoever's turn it was to sweep the room would sweep it and light a lamp. This is a mandatory task that everyone must perform in turn; those who are not involved in this task go to wash together (Bobovius, 2012, pp. 46–47). After completing their ablutions, they return to their places, and a hafiz (one who has memorized the Quran) with a beautiful voice, chosen from among them, begins to recite the Holy Quran aloud. The "Adhan Announcer," one of the doorkeepers at the Middle Gate, would announce the sound of the morning call to prayer at the Hagia Sophia Mosque by striking a large iron ring.

Upon receiving this signal, the Enderun muezzin would climb the steps of the Library of Ahmed III (before the library was built, this duty was performed in front of the Audience Chamber) and recite the morning call to prayer. After the call to prayer, the Zülüflü Ağas would emerge from their quarters in an orderly fashion and head towards the Zülüflü Ağas Mosque next to the library, where they would await the Sultan. It was a palace tradition for Ottoman sultans, starting from the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror, to perform the morning prayer together with the Zülüflü Ağas (a group of eunuchs). It was a tradition for the Sultan's sons older than seven to also come to the mosque with their father for the morning prayer. After the morning prayer, the Zülüflü Ağas, who were not on duty, would be occupied with lessons, discussions, writing, or music lessons until midday. The time between the noon and afternoon prayers was also spent on similar activities; horsemanship and archery training were also conducted during this period (Koçu, 1972, pp. 34-35).

Strong and powerful pages called archers would receive training in archery, progressing through all stages of this training to become experts. To improve their skills during training, they would use a pulley to which they would tie a sack containing ten okka (approximately 250 kg) of stones. With their right hand, they would pull it back as far as their strength allowed, while their left hand was pressed against a wall. They would repeat this exercise every day, adding new stones until their nerves were strained and they gained strength, until the sack eventually weighed forty okka.

Those who excel in this training are, after sufficient practice, given a bow with a chain-linked string instead of a soft and easily bendable string to develop their right or left arm; this bow is not for shooting arrows but for training to develop the arms. Then, each was given a bow, either softer or harder, according to their range. Among them, the strong, sturdy young boys would draw the bowstring only until the tip of the arrow touched the hilt, without actually releasing it, and they would bet on who could draw it back the furthest and then release it. The young boys are so strong that some of those who can do it two hundred times are called archers, a title given to those who can use an iron bow. The second training involves carrying heavy pieces of wood and logs. They train to lift the heaviest logs, starting with the lightest, until they gain strength. The third exercise is lifting iron weights, pulling forty, fifty, sixty, or one hundred pound iron weights on the back of their right hand; those who develop their wrists in this exercise change the weight according to their strength and skill. The fourth training is saber training; they perform this training by holding a small pillow in their left hand instead of a shield and a stick in their right hand that they use as a sword. It is a pleasure to watch their skillful, measured and careful advances, retreats, clashes, and the various maneuvers they make against each other. In the palace, the skilled pages practice with the saber; for training, they would cut off the leg of a dead camel whose skin had become very tough, or use a sheep. Sultan Murad, rather than practicing on admirers, enjoyed beheading criminals, especially those with thick, greasy necks; since this kind of training was unbecoming of a sultan, he would disguise himself. The fifth discipline is wrestling. Those who practice it are called wrestlers. When they want to wrestle, they wear a kispet, a narrow-legged leather breeches extending from the waist to the thighs, used for oil wrestling, and they oil their entire bodies from head to toe; to win, one must throw their opponent to the ground with their back and get on top of them. Sometimes, in their eagerness to win, they attack each other so fiercely that they bite, tear, and scratch without a care in the world. The sixth training is spear training. In this training, to get used to hitting a target, they use a heavy iron stake and throw it as far as they can with all their might; they become so accustomed to throwing spears, so perfect and skilled at it, that they can shoot with an accuracy that rivals that of our rifles. The seventh training is horsemanship; those who enjoy this noble training are called cündi, and they ride and train the horses in the royal stables. Sultan Murad IV, who was fond of war and weapons, was also fond of horses and brought forty of the most skilled cündi from Cairo during his reign. When training the horses, they especially focus on teaching them to gallop well and to withstand great fatigue. They do not use any of the other training techniques such as wheeling, rearing, half-wheeling, or other methods. They carefully care for these horses; they give them dry hay in small amounts, and provide them with barley twice a day, and sometimes chopped straw. They never fed their horses straw; these well-cared-for horses had strong jaws, were very fast, and despite their slender legs, were extraordinarily powerful (Bobovius, 2012, pp. 57-62). After these trainings, there was a long break between the afternoon and evening prayers.

During this period, games like ball games or stick games were played in the square with permission from the Chief of the Armory (Koçu, 1972, p. 35).

It was customary for the pages to be allowed to play ball in the courtyard when the Sultan went out for a walk, provided they did not interact with those from other chambers. Besides playing ball, they entertain themselves with games like "tura," which involves wrapping handkerchiefs around their hands and fist-pumping each other. More serious people play strategy and intelligence games such as chess, atlas, backgammon, and nine-stone games like “dokurcun” and “minkale” (Bobovius, 2012, pp. 108). The Sultan usually performed the noon, afternoon, and evening prayers in the Enderun (the inner palace school) with a small congregation of those in his service that day. However, the Sultan preferred to perform the night prayer in the Harem (the inner harem). The Zülüflü Ağas, on the other hand, would perform their evening prayers in their cells with their cellmates. The imam of each cell was chosen from among the oldest and most learned and virtuous individuals. After the evening prayer, breakfast was served, and the adults would stroll and chat in the courtyard until they felt sleepy. The children, on the other hand, would return to their quarters immediately after breakfast to rest (Koçu, 1972, p. 35).

This system offers an important perspective on the fundamental rules that determined the rhythm of daily life in the Enderun-ı Hümayun (Imperial Palace School) and the functioning of the hierarchical order within the palace.

5.6. Matbah-ı Amire

Matbah-ı Amire, which held an important place in the Ottoman palace organization, is formed from the combination of the word "matbah," derived from the Arabic verb "tabh," meaning to cook, and the word "amire," which denotes an official title. The kitchens of Topkapi Palace, built after the conquest of Istanbul, are located on the right side of the palace's second courtyard, and this area is entirely dedicated to kitchen units. These kitchens, originally built with four domes during the reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmed, have undergone various changes over time. The first of these changes took place during the reign of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, and the kitchens were expanded through renovations. To reach the kitchen area from the Parade Ground, one must pass through three main gates: the Imperial Storeroom, the Royal Kitchen, and the Confectionery gates. The pantry and oil storage units are located directly opposite the kitchens. The Imperial Kitchen (Matbah-ı Amire), responsible for the catering of the Ottoman palaces, was particularly prominent for its organization within the Topkapı Palace. This institution encompassed various kitchens, a confectionery, a pantry, bakeries, workshops, and other production units, developing into a vast administrative structure. The Matbah-ı Hâs, the most

prestigious and elite of the Ottoman palace kitchens, stands out as the unit where the palace inhabitants' meals were prepared. Although it is mostly described as a kitchen where only the sultan's meals were cooked, an examination of the accounting records reveals that the function of this kitchen was not limited to the sultan's meals. In the palace kitchen, the sultan's meals were prepared in a special section within the Matbah-ı Hâs (Private Kitchen) called the "Kuşhane" (Bird House) (Bilgin, 2003, p. 115). It was called the Kuşhane because the meals prepared for the sultan were cooked in small, single-serving pots (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, p. 442).

The Kuşhane stands out as a place where the finest ingredients are used and the most exquisite dishes are prepared. These characteristics clearly demonstrate that the Matbah-ı Hâs (Private Kitchen) holds the most privileged place in the hierarchy of palace kitchens (Bilgin, 2003, p. 115). In the palace, fifty to sixty different dishes were prepared daily for an average of five thousand people. This number reached ten thousand during the ceremonies of stipends and coronation. The cooked meals were not only given to the palace staff but also offered to those attending the Imperial Council, regardless of their religion or language. As a precaution against assassination, the food served was first tasted and checked by the cooks and then by the taster. Of course, the Sultan did not eat all of the sixty different dishes placed before him; sometimes he only tasted them, sometimes he just looked at them. It is known that the palace staff, the harem, and the Enderun (inner palace school) also tasted these dishes. A kitchen like the Matbah-ı Amire (Imperial Kitchen) was needed to prepare meals for a large society, and in every century it has been an expression of Ottoman elegance and wealth (Ortaylı, 2008, pp. 40-45). Matbah-ı Ağayan was the kitchen where the meals of the palace eunuchs were prepared. Matbah-ı Gılman-ı Enderun was the other kitchen where the meals for the palace pages were prepared. The meals given to the pages consisted of soup and meat: they were given boiled mutton, called söğüş, which was always prepared in the same way. (Bilgin, 2003, pp. 115-116) Their soups varied; there was wheat soup, rice soup, lentil soup, sometimes a soup called zırva made with flour, currants and saffron, and sour aş soup. They ate twice a day, around nine in the morning and three in the afternoon. Once a week, every Thursday evening, a rice feast was given to all the pages except those in the main chamber (Bobovius, 2012, pp. 42-43)

The Matbah-ı Divan was where the food for the pashas and officials of various ranks serving in the divan was prepared. Following the kitchens attached to the Matbah-ı Âmire, another important unit in the palace was the helvahane (confectionery). Located near the main kitchen, the helvahane was not limited to the production of sweets and sherbet, but had a wide range of services. In this unit, sherbets, jams, halva, pastes, pickles, medicines, essences, and scented soaps were prepared. Flowers such as violets, roses, water lilies, lavender, and tamarind, as well as fruits like mulberries, junipers, quinces, dinari, and sour cherries, were the main ingredients used in making sherbet. The jam-making

facility located within the confectionery workshop produced jams from traditional fruits such as apples, quinces, pears, cherries, bitter oranges, medlars, cranberries, and peaches, while also making jams from different products such as melons, watermelons, unripe almonds, pumpkins, eggplants, walnuts, and lemons. Among the various types of halva, zülbaye halva was the most preferred and popular. Other varieties produced included zerd, chestnut halva, and halva-i halkaçini. Another important function of the confectionery was the preparation of various medicines used for medicinal purposes. In this context, pastes, which were valued both for their nutritional value and their healing properties, were produced here. (Bilgin, 2003, p. 116) Evliya frequently mentions honey in his travelogue, emphasizing that, with the exception of the high-quality and fragrant "naphtha" colored Athenian honey, the finest honeys are white honeys. Another item mentioned in Evliya's texts is sugar, and he also speaks of several sweets; sweets made from honey and molasses such as palude, pestil, and köfter were consumed by almost all the palace elite, but refined white sugar and foods made with this sugar were a luxury reserved only for the Ottoman elite. In the Seyahatname (Book of Travels), "helva," derived from the Arabic word "helv" meaning sweet, describes all kinds of sweets made with flour, starch, oil, honey, or sugar (Yerasimos, 2011, pp. 229–283). Food items for the palace kitchens were stored in two separate pantries located in the Birun and Enderun. Smaller, more valuable items like sugar and spices were stored directly in the inner pantry. The outer pantry was located near the kitchens and operated under the supervision of the pantry master. The expenses of these units were covered by the Matbah-ı Âmire administration. Bread, a staple food in the Ottoman palace, was produced by bakeries, both for its raw materials and its preparation.(Bilgin, 2003, p. 116) Evliya mentions bread in Ottoman dietary habits. Bread, a staple food, is a "blessing," a fundamental source of nutrition, and an indispensable food. (Yerasimos, 2011, p. 85) The royal bakery was responsible for producing bread for the sultan and high-ranking state officials using the finest wheat, while the lower-quality bakery prepared lower-quality bread varieties called “fodula” (Bilgin, 2003, p. 116) It is a soft, "flat and soft-crusted" bread derived from the Greek word pitula, meaning “small pita” (Yerasimos, 2011, p. 86) The traditional bread, called “harcı ekmek” was generally allocated to lower-ranking officials, although it was occasionally distributed to higher-ranking officers. In addition, the palace bakeries produced various types of bread, such as nan-ı pide, nan-ı piç, and nan-ı imam, as well as other baked goods like börek, simit, and çörek. The Has Bakery primarily obtained its flour and wheat from Bursa, and there was a special group called "simidgeran-ı Bursa" responsible for this task. Other workshops operating under the Matbah-ı Âmire’ were named according to the functions they performed. The butcher's slaughterhouse served as a unit that processed and preserved meat, supplying the palace with its meat needs. The most frequently consumed type of meat in the palace kitchen was mutton, and its procurement and organization were managed by the sheep overseer. Due to the

privileged status of the palace kitchens, sheep slaughtering was permitted within the city. (Bilgin, 2003, p. 117)

Refik addressed this issue in his work as follows: “Since it was reported to our high authorities that, despite the prohibition of sheep slaughtering within the boundaries of the Istanbul Fortress (Istanbul Castle) and the fact that this practice is contrary to custom, some butchers, sellers, and other individuals were slaughtering sheep within the city, a decree was issued on this matter. Accordingly, no one, including butchers, Janissaries, and guards, should bring or slaughter sheep, goats, or cattle within the city, except for sheep to be used in the imperial kitchen and slaughtered as sacrificial animals.” (Refik, 1931, pp. 45–46).

The use of mutton, which shaped the palace cuisine, is reflected in Çelebi's Seyahatname (Travelogue); when "meat" was mentioned, it was understood to mean mutton and lamb, and mutton was preferred because it was softer and tastier than beef The poultry merchants, also known as "makiyaniyan," were responsible for supplying the palace with chicken meat and distributing it to the kitchens (Bilgin, 2003, p. 117). In his travelogue, Evliya said that "meat is a blessing that gives strength to the body and comes first along with bread." Furthermore, in Ottoman culinary culture, meat was a highly valued food item, not only for its nutritional value but also for its social standing. Eating and serving meat was considered a persistent mark of superiority in the Ottoman world (Yerasimos, 2011, p. 103). The Mastgeran processing plant, operating under the supervision of the head yogurt maker, supplied the palace with essential dairy products such as milk, yogurt, cream, and butter. The vegetable storehouse met the palace's vegetable needs, handling their preservation and distribution. Vegetables for the palace were generally sourced from villages surrounding Istanbul. The quality of the food containers used in the Matbah-ı Âmire varied according to the rank and status of the individuals within the palace. While high-ranking officials were allocated containers made of porcelain or precious metals, the majority of the palace staff consumed their meals in copper vessels. Regular tinning of these copper vessels was important both for extending their lifespan and for ensuring hygiene. The tinning process was carried out by water carriers specially appointed for the palace's water supply, who were employed in waterworks located within the palace grounds. The court water carriers were responsible for meeting the water needs of the court members and guests. Over time, new positions such as "snow master" and "ice master" were created for tasks related to snow and ice (Bilgin, 2003, p. 117). This disciplined system reveals that the organization of food production and distribution in the Ottoman palace was extremely comprehensive and systematic. The Ottoman palace's provisions were supplied through purchases both within and outside Istanbul. Purchases within Istanbul were made from markets or public bazaars, while purchases outside Istanbul, especially from the 17th century onwards, were carried out through the ocaklık system (a system of

hereditary fiefdoms). It was emphasized that the palace's provisions had to be of high quality and of the finest standard, and priority was given to officials who procured supplies for the imperial kitchen, both in Istanbul and in the provinces. Given the unfavorable transportation conditions of the time, it was preferred to bring provisions mostly from regions accessible by sea; however, the amount of supplies obtained through long-distance road transport remained quite limited. Wheat was a staple in the Ottoman palace kitchens and was generally sourced from Bursa, the western Black Sea coast, the Danube region, Greece, and the Wallachia-Moldavia region. In cases of shortages in these areas, purchases were made from cities in Anatolia. Rice was largely sourced from Egypt, with the remainder coming from farms such as Plovdiv and Drama. Egyptian rice was considered superior in quality to red rice (Bilgin, 2003, p. 118).

Regarding maritime transportation, Refik stated in his work: "As decreed by the Istanbul Judge and the Muhtesibe (market inspector), it has been determined since ancient times that ships carrying goods from Izmir should dock at the Izmir Pier, wheat ships at the Unkapanı Pier, and rice and barley ships at the İhtisab Pier. However, some ships, contrary to traditional rules, caused confusion by docking at locations other than the designated piers. Therefore, it was ordered that ships carrying wheat, rice, and barley from Izmir should dock at their previously designated piers and not at other piers. Furthermore, it was stated that sailors should be strictly warned to comply with this decision, and that they should be punished if they did not dock at the designated piers." (Refik, 1931, p. 10).

Various types of oil were used in the palace kitchens. Clarified butter, in particular, was mostly sourced from the Kefe region. Olive oil, on the other hand, was obtained from cities in the Aegean region, especially Izmir and Mytilene, as well as from Greece (Bilgin, 2003, p. 118).

In his work, Çelebi provides information about the consumption of butter, apart from clarified butter, and states that it was widely used; very delicious pastries and cakes were made with it; buttered rice dishes smelled like musk and amber; some fish were fried or cooked with butter. He also mentions that it was eaten as a topping for bread (Yerasimos, 2011, pp. 63-64). Sugar was an important commodity in the palace. With the spread of coffee drinking habits in the 17th century, sugar began to be used together with coffee. While most of the sugar was obtained from Egypt via consignment notes, a small portion was obtained from Cyprus as a household supply (Bilgin, 2003, p. 118).

Regarding the prohibition against selling olive oil and other goods to anyone, Refik stated: "The decree given to the Judge of Izmir mentions that there was a letter previously written to Mustafa Çavuş and Murad Çavuş, the Dergâh-ı Muallâm Sergeants, by order of the Sultan. According to this document, red grapes, black grapes, figs, almonds, olive oil, beeswax, and other fruits and foodstuffs destined for Istanbul should not be given to any individual before arriving at the Grand Bazaar.

Instead, they should only be purchased at a predetermined price by ships sent to meet Istanbul's grain needs, and the ships should be loaded and dispatched to Istanbul. These operations will be carried out under the supervision of the sergeants, and the sale of foodstuffs will not be permitted anywhere outside the Grand Bazaar. Furthermore, records of the ships being sent and documents regarding price lists will be created. From this point onwards, it was forbidden to send foodstuffs destined for Istanbul to any other location, and it was ordered that these goods be purchased at the prices determined for Istanbul's grain needs, loaded onto ships, and sent to Istanbul." (Refik, 1931, p. 12).

In Ottoman palace kitchens, meat consumption focused primarily on lamb and chicken, while beef was mainly used for the production of pastrami. Fish consumption was limited in the palace. While approximately 20,000 sheep and lambs were consumed annually in the palace during the first half of the 16th century, this figure rose to 100,000 in the first half of the 17th century. During the same period, chicken and poultry consumption was approximately 150,000. While sheep were sourced from various regions of Rumelia and Anatolia, the curly-haired sheep of Wallachia and Moldavia were in particular demand in the palace kitchen. Chickens were sourced primarily from various cities in Anatolia and Rumelia, including Hüdavendigar, Tekirdağ, Gelibolu, and Bolu. Eggs came from İzmit, a city close to Istanbul that had attained the status of a guild center. Fruit and vegetable supplies were primarily sourced from Istanbul and surrounding villages, or from districts along the Marmara coast, due to the limited transportation conditions of the time. However, special products such as Amasya's fragrant apples and Mardin's plums were delivered to the palace despite the long distances. Dried fruits, especially varieties such as grapes, figs, apricots, plums, unripe almonds, pistachios, pears, and pomegranates, were largely sourced from the Aegean Region. An official was appointed each year to oversee the procurement of these products, and the dried fruits, purchased from producers or markets as needed, were transported to the palace by sea (Bilgin, 2003, p. 118) In his travelogue, Evliya recorded the cities famous for their fruits as follows: the cherries and peaches of Istanbul; the forty or eighty varieties of pears of Bursa and Malatya; the pomegranates of Istanbul, Niksar (present-day Tokat) and Urfa; the melons of Beypazarı, Geyve, and Diyarbakır; the razaki and grapes of Urla; the zeyni of Damascus, the muscat grapes of Bozcaada; the ferik of Izmir, the muscat apples of Kocaeli; the nabika and bananas of Egypt are just a few of the fruits he mentioned in his travelogue (Yerasimos, 2011, p. 189). Spices were primarily sourced from Egypt, but limited quantities from certain regions of Anatolia were also used in the palace kitchens. Tamarind and saffron from Safranbolu, and tin-i mahtum from Limni, are important examples of spices unique to the palace. The most frequently used spices in the palace kitchens included black pepper, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, ammonium chloride, and senna. Salt was consumed in two different qualities; the highest quality salt was sourced from Wallachia, while lower quality Koçhisar salt was obtained via Bursa. The use of snow and ice for cooling purposes was common in the Ottoman palace, and these materials were obtained weekly from

the mountains and lakes of Bursa. While the annual expenditure of the palace kitchens was approximately 1.2-1.5 million akçe at the end of the 15th century, this amount increased to 4.5-5 million akçe in the second half of the 16th century. As a result of price increases at the end of the 16th century, the annual expenses of the palace kitchens increased significantly; this expense reached 17 million akçe at the beginning of the 17th century, 21 million akçe in 1610-1611, and 32 million akçe in 1615-1616. In the second half of the 17th century, this amount reached 46 million akçe (Bilgin, 2003, pp. 118-119).

6. CONCLUSION

The Enderun School was not only a palace school of the Ottoman Empire, but also a multifaceted and systematic institution that trained the state's administrative, military, and cultural personnel. During the reign of Murad IV, the functioning of this institution appears to be directly linked to the efforts to re-strengthen the central authority of the Ottoman Empire. The tightening of discipline within the palace, the more organized conduct of educational activities, and the preservation of the service-based promotion system during this period once again highlighted the importance of the Enderun within the state mechanism.

An examination of the architectural and administrative structure of Topkapi Palace reveals that the Enderun was located in the most private and exclusive area of the palace, which determined the quality of the education and services provided there. This inner world, beginning from Babüssaade, is noteworthy not only for its closeness to the Sultan but also for being an educational and upbringing space where Ottoman political culture was represented. The fact that daily life in the Enderun was conducted within a framework of specific rules, rituals, and hierarchical control demonstrates that palace education was not haphazard but rather highly planned and functional.

As discussed in this study, the education provided at the Enderun was not limited solely to the transfer of theoretical knowledge; a multifaceted training model was implemented, supported by religious sciences, language training, history, geography, and literature, as well as physical training, warfare exercises, music, crafts, and palace service. In this respect, Enderun is a holistic educational institution that shapes the individual mentally, physically, and morally. The daily lives of the pages were structured around worship, studies, service, sports, and discipline; thus, an attempt was made to create a profile of a loyal, resilient, and skillful administrator suitable for state service.

On the other hand, as seen in the example of the Imperial Kitchen, palace life was not limited to education and administrative activities. Dietary regulations, food procurement, kitchen organization, and service organization also formed an integral part of palace life. This structure demonstrates that in

the daily life of the Ottoman palace, splendor and order, ostentation and functionality coexisted. The diversity in the palace cuisine, the extensive supply network in the provisioning system, and the specialized structure of the service units reveal the level of detail and institutional organization within the Ottoman central administration.

Consequently, daily life in the Enderun Palace during the reign of Murad IV was shaped by strict discipline, comprehensive education, service-based promotions, and the holistic functioning of the palace organization. During this period, Enderun, as one of the fundamental institutions that trained the ruling class of the Ottoman Empire, was not only a school that educated individuals, but also a mechanism that reproduced the Ottoman understanding of the state, court etiquette, and the centralized administrative mentality. In this respect, studying the daily life of the Enderun offers an important opportunity to understand not only the routines within the palace but also the underlying logic of the Ottoman state structure.

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