TÛLAY ARIAN

THE KADIRGA PALACE: AN ARCHITECTURAL RECONSTRUCTION

This contribution is part of a larger work which will present evidence for two discoveries. The first is that the Ottoman palace at Kadırğa Limani in Istanbul, long referred to as “Esma Sultan’s palace” and loosely attributed to one or the other of two eighteenth-century princesses of that name, in fact dates back to the sixteenth century. It was built for a much earlier Esmahan (İsmihan) Sultan (1545–85), the daughter of Selim II by Nurbanı Sultan (née Cecilia Venier-Baffo), granddaughter of Süleyman the Magnificent, and wife of Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa. The second discovery is that the architect for this monumental palace was none other than Sinan. This makes Kadırğa the first of Sinan’s numerous palaces for which we have an actual layout.

I have presented evidence for both Esmahan’s patronage and Sinan’s design elsewhere. Here I shall limit myself to the task of architectural reconstruction. A description of what the palace must have been like is in any case necessary before any definitive identification can be made. Since no part of this palace has survived, its reconstruction must be based entirely on other evidence, something that has hitherto never been attempted for an Ottoman palace for which there are no remains. This reconstruction will form the foundation for the second part of my argument, for the results suggest, not a non-classical palace, but, on the contrary, a very traditional and imperial form. The Kadırğa Palace, like the Topkapı and other Ottoman royal palaces, originally consisted of an inner core made up of three successive courtyards corresponding to the hierarchical system of a royal household, which was organized in terms of an outer sphere (birun) that housed service and administrative functions and an inner sphere (enderun) for domestic and recreational activities, terminating in the totally private walled garden. The contrast between outside and inside found expression at Kadırğa Limani in the horizontal layout of three consecutive terraces on which separate but often connected buildings formed subsidiary courts. This procession of walled-in enclosures is also manifested in the only surviving palace from the eighteenth century, the Ishak Paşa palace in northeastern Anatolia. Other, non-imperial antecedents of comparable size in Istanbul are two palaces belonging to sixteenth-century grand viziers, Ibrahim Paşa and Sokollu Mehmed Paşa. But, although Esma Sultan’s palace was organized along hierarchical lines that reflected the organization of the Ottoman regime, its buildings could have been remodeled indefinitely to accommodate changes in fashion. Its structural skeleton would in all probability have remained relatively unchanged, however, which is important to bear in mind in tackling its reconstruction and tracing and dating its origins.

The extensive palace at Kadırğa Limani (the Harbor of the Galleys; so-called because it had been a harbor and arsenal complex in Byzantine times and the harbor for the Ottoman fleet from the conquest until 1515) was the only Ottoman royal palace in Istanbul built to look out over the Marmara Sea, the others faced the Bosphorus. The palace has been known for some time from two plans in the Topkapı Palace archives (figs. 1–2). One of them is for a complex with three courtyards arranged hierarchically in the usual progression from public through semi-public to private buildings and has usually been associated with Esma Sultan the Elder (1726–88), a daughter of Sultan Ahmed III, because the few early Ottoman archival and historical sources that refer to the palace at Kadırğa Limani as “the palace of Esma Sultan” all date from the time when it was first allocated to her. The second, smaller, plan shows a single building with a large audience hall and other rooms, clearly the men’s quarters for the same palace where a pasha, in this case the princess’s husband, held court.

Since only a limited number of Ottoman architectural plans have been preserved through the ages and precious few of these are residential, these two plans are important enough in themselves — whatever the further secrets they hold the key to — all the more because among the handful of residential examples that do remain, none that dates from before the nineteenth century displays such grandeur and is identified with the name of a royal woman. In addition, the two plans are
Fig. 1. Site plan of "Esma Sultan's Palace" at Kadırga Limanı, probably drawn up for the repairs of 1803. Topkapi Palace Archives, D. 9437-2.
supplemented by additional evidence in the form of two account books, both dated 1767, which record the expenses of extensive repairs and renovations carried out in the harem quarters, the garden, and the palace walls following a severe earthquake in the same year, and an inventory register dated 1803, to which the plans were originally attached. The register tells us that the plans were made for restoration work undertaken in 1803 in preparation for the coming marriage of Hibetullah Sultan, who had fallen heir to the properties of Esma Sultan the Elder, including the palace at Kadırğa Limani. This combination of plans, accounts, and inventory make it possible, even in the absence of any contemporary descriptions, to reconstruct the palace.

Esma Sultan the Elder, the daughter of a sultan famous for his pleasure-loving life, was seventeen years old when she became mistress of Kadırğa Palace, which happened, according to the most commonly cited works, when she was married there in 1748 to her first husband Yakup Paşa, who was at that time governor of Adana. The same sources also say that the palace was given to her at her marriage. A year later Yakup Paşa died, and she was soon again married at Kadırğa, this time to a certain Yusuf Paşa, another governor of Adana. By 1755, however, Esma must have been living elsewhere, for her palace was being used by the grand vizier as a paşa kapısı after a fire that swept the area had burned down the Sublime Porte, but had left this palace untouched. By 1758 she was once more in residence and once more getting married; her third husband was Muhsinzade Mehmed Paşa, the governor of Rumelia, who was to become grand vizier in 1765. When the palace was restored in 1767 after an earthquake and fire, she was forty-one years old, a wealthy and powerful woman who had gained influence during the reigns of her step-brother Mustafa III and her natural brother Abdülhamid I, and in a position to take charge of the rebuilding program.

Esma died in 1788 and her numerous properties were distributed among the three daughters of Sultan Abdülhamid I (1774–89). Emine Sultan, then ten years old, was the first to receive the palace; when she died in 1791 at the age of thirteen, however, the palace passed to her step-sister Hibetullah Sultan, who was three years old at the time. She probably moved there in 1803, after the
completion of some extensive restoration work, at the
time of her marriage to esseyid Alaeddin Paşa, the gover-
nor of Anatolia.16 She was widowed two years later and
did not remarry. Although she, like her contemporaries,
built many yalıs on the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus,
she possibly continued to live at Kadırga until her death
in 1841. The absence of references to the palace in docu-
ments of the second half of the nineteenth century sug-
gests that the palace then fell into disuse; it probably
burned down in 1864 when the final disastrous “Hoca-
paşa fire” swept through the area, and its ruins gradually
disappeared.

One might well ask why the palace continued to bear
the name of Esma Sultan if it was Hibetullah Sultan who
last lived there. The answer is that, even after Reşat
Ekrem Koçu noted in 1971 that Esma Sultan the Elder
had had a palace at Kadırga, architectural historians had
never clearly associated the building with her at all; one
historian called it the Paşa Sarayı, two others, as well as
some late-nineteenth-century maps, referred to it as the
Esma Sultan Sarayı but did not specify the Esma in ques-
tion. Since the “first” Esma is a relatively unfamiliar fig-
ure, while Esma Sultan the Younger (1778–1848; the
third of Abdülhamid I’s daughters and the only Esma
then in the royal family) dominates eighteenth-century
history, it may well be that everyone assumed the second
Esma was meant when Esma Sultan’s palace was men-
tioned.17 But, although Esma the Younger did inherit
some of Esma the Elder’s properties, there is no docu-
mental evidence that the palace was among them. Fur-
thermore, though many nineteenth-century travelers
give vivid descriptions of the Younger’s yalıs, none men-
tion a palace at Kadırga Limani, and neither do Otto-
mans sources of the period. This second omission is par-
ticularly significant since the second Esma was otherwise
much written about. She was famous for her independ-
ent spirit and often the object of scandalous gossip in the
chronicles of Pera, which reported the goings-on at the
Eyüp and Ortaköy waterfront palaces.

THE PALACE

The survey plan of the Kadırga Palace was first published
by Behçet Ünsal and later reconstructed by Sedat Hakki
Eldem, who also plotted it on a modern cadastral map.
This map, made by Jacques Pervititch in 1923, shows part
of the eastern walls of the palace as being still extant at
that time, and also records some street names — Sarayiçi
Sokagi, Akar Çeşme Sokagi, Bali Paşa Yokuşu — that
allude to the palace.18 The Bali Paşa Yokuşu ran parallel
to the western boundary of the palace in a north-south
direction; the Akar Çeşme Sokagi ran along the eastern
wall; and the Sarayiçi Sokagi cut straight through the
middle of the palace from north to south. The roughly
trapezoidal palace grounds reached from 210 to 270
meters along its east-west axis. On the north-south axis,
its length varied from 100 to 160 meters. The site was
therefore a large terraced area; it looked out on an
immense square that had been created by filling in the
harbor. Akar Çeşme Street and the fountain on Kadırga
Square, also constructed by Esma Sultan the Elder and
untouched by the fire in 1865, are mentioned in both the
accounts and the inventory, and have survived to this
day.19 The twin baths of Gëdik Paşa built in 1482 some
250 meters north of the square were seriously damaged
in the fires of 1515, 1588, 1652, 1655, 1660, 1725, and
1864,20 but they still stand today, as does the public bath
built in 1741 by Hatipzade Yahiya Paşa, the governor of
Egypt, which used to adjoin the southeast corner of the
palace. Further to the east is the religious school (sâbiyân
mekâhi) of Bali Paşa, a member of the military aristocracy
during the reign of Suleyman I.

According to the main site plan, one of the two side
gates of the palace complex opened on the west toward a
neighboring palace which again bore the name of Bali
Paşa (44). The other opened toward the fountain of Akar
Çeşme on the east (25). The third and main entrance to
the palatial complex from the square was through a gate
to the south (1). Within these boundaries the buildings
that made up the complex, some of them connected to
one another, extending laterally from east to west to form
three successive rows separated by terraces. On each level
buildings surrounded two fragmented terraced court-
yards retained by continuous walls.

The first level. The main, southern, gateway opened
inwards to a building which is unidentified on the plan.
It was located at the center of the side that overlooked
the square at Kadırga Limani (1). It probably did not
really form a unified façade with the rest of the row of
buildings on the first terrace, but perhaps from the out-
side the row could be seen peeking over the perimeter
wall. A stairway to the right of the gate led to the upper
story of this centrally located building, which was prob-
ably the living quarters of the gate guards (2). To the left
were the living quarters of the halberdiers, the handymen
who, furnished with axe, hook, and bucket, kept up
the palace and did other odd jobs. The register locates
the stables underneath these quarters (3); further to the
right of the gate was the site of a building that had appar-
ently been torn down at the time the plan was drawn. Underneath it were more stables (4). The inventory register’s reference to “side street” quarters with toilets and ablution rooms for the horse grooms and other servants probably belongs to this location: it adds that a larder, stables, and a barn for straw were also located on the ground floor.

Continuing to the right from the gate, next to the vacant site, were the private quarters of the palace steward (5), whose duties included managing the finances of the princess and following up on any transactions in government offices. Next to the halberdiers’ quarters to the left of the gate was another unidentified building (6), probably a dormitory for kitchen workers or perhaps a soup kitchen for the district’s poor. The inventory locates a small bakery and a cookshop next to the guardhouse. Annexed to this unidentified building were a woodshed (7) and a kitchen (8). The kitchen was part masonry and part wood; the soup kitchen and the bakery were entirely of stone. Above them were a corridor and rooms for guards. Next to the kitchen were the quarters and offices of the comptroller of expenses (9).

Whatever the specific functions of each building might have been, the salient feature of this layout is that it was characteristic of Ottoman palaces: they all had service buildings such as the kitchen, the guard house, and the stables in an outer ring so they could interact directly with the public square outside. The first courtyard at the Topkapi, for example, was probably originally surrounded only by an open colonnade that provided unobstructed vistas of the gardens beyond.23 At the Edirne Palace there was no forecourt, so a great crowd of attendants and horses had to wait outside the first gate.24 Like these first royal courtyards, as well as palaces of leading central and provincial dignitaries like Ibrahim Paşa and Ishak Paşa, the square at Kadirga Limanı must also have functioned as a waiting area for horses and attendants, since visitors were required to dismount before entering the palace25 and passing through wings formed by the service buildings in the first courtyard.

The second level. A pathway (10) running laterally in an east-west direction behind the first-level buildings separated the first and second levels. A flight of stairs crossed this pathway and led from the quarters of the gatekeepers to a small court or passage linking the first and second levels (21); onto this small court the mehaber quarters opened, controlled by three gates. The size and location of this stairway suggest that it might have allowed mounted men to enter the palace and proceed to the inner courtyards. In Ibrahim Paşa’s palace, for example, the most important visitors, the sultan, and his princes, followed by their entourages would have entered the palace on horseback. To the west, the pathway continued behind the halberdiers’ quarters and opened onto the courtyard reserved for male guests and servants on the second level (11). Marked on the plan as overlooking this spacious, regularly shaped courtyard was the site of the vizier’s audience hall (12); the building that had once housed the hall of petitions and the vizier’s council was probably already in disrepair when the renovations were planned in 1803.

For this cleared area a separate plan was made to show the interior organization of the audience hall in detail. The brief description on the plan says that it covered 1,161 square zīvas and was a two-story building. The ground floor was allocated to the attendants. The upper floor, says the inventory register, contained the private apartments of the grand viziers who lived in the palace, a comment that tell us that the palace had always functioned as a residence for grand viziers.

The plan of the palace complex as a whole is characteristic of pre-eighteenth-century residences in the haphazard way its sub-units are arranged. The 1803 plan of the audience hall was, in contrast, more typical of what residential architecture would become in the course of the eighteenth century: symmetrical, centralized, and horizontal. The inventory also suggests that its decoration was updated to eighteenth-century taste by the integration of European-style architectural elements. Large rooms had hollow or domical vaulting with wood lathework ribs emanating like rays from the center; the sections in between were embellished with plaster decorations; and the whole ceiling was grooved along its side borders. It also mentions that the interior arches were European in style, and inscription panels and niches inside the palace were colorfully decorated.

Toward the front of the building, on one side of the selâmlık courtyard was a pool (13). A walled structure next to the pool is not identified on the plan, but behind it was a coachshed (14). Another unidentified auxiliary space stood next to the vizier’s audience hall. Across from the audience hall, two buildings at one corner of the selâmlık courtyard rounded out the official administrative functions located on the second level: one had the quarters of an under steward, probably the comptroller of expenses; the other housed the treasury, the quarters for the comptroller of expenses, and the chief cook’s rooms next to the palace kitchen. All these buildings — the vizier’s council, the audience hall, and the
treasury — were walled in and inward-looking, as are those in the second courtyard of the Topkapi Palace. On this corner next to Kadırga Square, this administrative courtyard dedicated to the ceremonial functions of the princess’s husbands was visible from the outside, but enclosed by buildings which permitted no view of what lay beyond. The solemn splendor of the buildings was probably enhanced by the long pathway, restrained by buildings on both sides, along which one had to pass to reach the courtyard.

Still on the second level and to the left of the northsouth axis through the main gate was another group of three buildings ranged along the western section of the pathway. These comprised the mabeyn quarter of the palace. In the traditional houses of the Ottoman elite the mabeyn (lit. “between”) quarters were always linked with the outer service areas and served as an intervening space between the quasi-private and the private part of the house; they were occupied by the male head of the family. In the Topkapi Palace, where the mabeyn made its appearance in the eighteenth century, it consisted of a number of rooms between the men’s and women’s quarters which made up the private quarters of the sultan. At Kadırga, the mabeyn consisted of a private apartment (15), a domed kiosk (16), and an aviary (17) arranged around two small transitional courtyards called the mabeyn passage (18a–b) which finally opened onto a large, open, L-shaped courtyard (19) behind the audience hall. The mabeyn passage between the two kiosks overlooked the men’s courtyard (soldamık meydani) from which it was separated by a terrace; it was separated from the much larger mabeyn courtyard behind the men’s quarters by a wall.

A bath described as “ruined” was attached to these apartments (20). On the plan, on one side of the larger of the transitional courtyards (18a), is what appears to be an open loggia or arcade, for the inventory mentions the mabeyn and a loggia or platform with two kiosks in the same phrase. The most likely explanation is that the “two kiosks” in the inventory correspond to the domed kiosk and aviary on the plan, and the mabeyn was above the loggia. The loggia appears on the plan as a long, narrow, tripartite rectangle that stretches north-south between the domed kiosk (19) and the smaller section of the mabeyn passage (18b). A gate led from the second section of this loggia and mabeyn to the third section, which directly overlooked the harem courtyard (26); this gate could only have connected the men’s quarters to the harem.

The position and grandeur of the second gate of the palace, in the mabeyn courtyard “toward the Bali Paşa” (i.e., the neighboring palace), indicate that this courtyard must have functioned as the private entrance for the grand vizier who probably used the interior stairway to reach the upper story of his apartments. In the far corner of the courtyard was a small unidentified structure which might have been the richly decorated water chamber mentioned in the inventory as belonging to the apartments overlooking the mabeyn courtyard where the female attendants of the harem lived. This courtyard, however, seems to have been completely walled off from the harem buildings.

On the eastern side of the north-south axis through the public entrance and on the far side of the mabeyn quarters, the pathway behind the first row of buildings was intersected at one point by the wide stairs crossing from the first to the second level that allowed important people to enter without dismounting. This flight of stairs led to the passage between the public entrance gate and the entrance to the harem courtyard. Flanking this passage were the mabeyn quarters on one side and the apartments of the male attendants (white and black eunuchs) of the harem, on the other.

For centuries it was the custom for high-born ladies to be attended by black eunuchs. They both served and protected them, acting simultaneously as chaperones and guards of honor. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote of Hafsa Sultan, Mustafa II’s widow (who had been remarried to the secretary of state by order of the next sultan), that “she had no black eunuchs for her guard, her husband being obliged to respect her as a queen, and not to inquire at all into what is done in her apartments.” By the nineteenth century, Ottoman women were, to the surprise of Westerners, strolling freely along the waterfronts and streets and in the bazaars of Istanbul, and it was not uncommon to have even royal women attended only by their female servants.

Although we have no information on the size of Esma Sultan the Elder’s retinue, the quarters for her male attendants must have been crowded. Their dormitories occupied three separate buildings on the far eastern side of the palace; they were approached through a short path that separated the second and third levels, and ran parallel to the path between the first and second levels which led into the apartments of the steward. The apartments are described in notes on the plan as being “for the male attendants of the harem and requiring repair” (22), for “male attendants and requiring renovation” (23), and as constituting “the new apartments for the male attendants of the harem, also requiring repair” (24).
The inventory register says that one second-level pathway was later made into a corridor on the second story of the first building which joined numerous rooms, halls, and a smaller corridor together. These rooms were for the chief eunuch, for the gatekeeper, latrines, an ablution room, larder, and a space for miscellaneous uses; there was also a room for making coffee and a hallway. A large gate, another gatekeeper’s room, carriage stables, a mounting stone, and several fountains were in the same area on the ground floor. These belonged either to the “new” apartments mentioned on the plan or to the “old” apartments of the male attendants opposite the gate.

At the far end of the second-level courtyard between two apartments was the eastern gate (25) of the palace which led to the street named after the Akar Çeşme fountain. This gate was the third largest at the palace and the private entrance to the harem. It was located on the same axis as the grand vizier’s private entrance on the western side that opened into the mabeyn courtyard. The inventory register indicates that all three gateways were richly embellished with European plaster decoration and painted various colors.

No hammams seem to have been provided for the palace guards, handymen, or male attendants, probably because Hatipzade Yahya Paşa’s Kadırga Hamami, which was next to the eastern wall of the palace behind the eunuchs’ quarters and south of the gate, served not only the people of the district but of the palace as well.

Like the second courtyard of the Topkapı Palace, where official and administrative buildings intermingled with service buildings around subsidiary courtyards, the private quarters of the husband and the male attendants of the princess formed two second-level courtyards on either side of the public entrance. They functioned as a forecourt for the inner palace where the women lived.

**The third level.** Retaining walls separated the mabeyn and harem courtyards from the official and administrative buildings of the second level. The harem courtyard (26) adjoining the mabeyn courtyard on one short side was blocked on two sides by harem buildings and on the fourth, the south, side by a retaining wall. The whole area of the harem lying to the north beyond this point was accessible only to the vizier himself, the chief eunuch, the steward of the princess who managed her business affairs, and the sultan, who probably visited his royal kinswoman on special occasions (in some palaces — but not at Kadırga — a special apartment would be set apart for this purpose). A vizier married to a lady of royal blood would probably have lived in the mabeyn most of the time and slept only occasionally in the harem. Where he entered the harem is not easy to determine. In her rare account of harem life from the inside, Melek Hamam, wife of the nineteenth-century grand vizier Kürşad Mehmed Paşa, remarks that “the husbands of Sultanas are almost the slaves of their wives. They cannot enter their presence uninvited. If a wife does not send for her husband, he must remain in the selâmlik and not venture into the harem. He may spend the night for a fortnight or more, sleeping on a divan in the men’s apartment.” At Kadırga the plan barely hints at a link between the mabeyn passage and the harem courtyard. There is no indication of a covered private passage connecting the apartments of the vizier to the harem courtyard, as, for example, the privy chamber at the Topkapı Palace was connected to the harem; hence the mabeyn, the room and loggia, seems to be the only place from where one could have entered the harem.

The harem courtyard was entered directly from the gate in the passageway between the mabeyn and the harem attendants’ quarters. Guests must have arrived in their carriages through the eastern gate next to the eunuchs’ quarters. In his memoirs, Baron de Tott describes how his wife and mother-in-law entered the princess’s apartment through these very gates.

Being arrived at the Scarraglio of that Princess (the same to which the Vizier removed after the fire, as has already been mentioned), their conductress caused the first and second iron gates to be opened; these gates were kept by different porters, not unlike the ordinary species of men; but when the keeper of the third gate had opened it, in the manner to the orders of the Intendant, several black eunuchs presented themselves, who with each a white stuff in his hand, preceded the visitors and led them across an interior court, into a spacious apartment, called the Chamber of Strangers. The Kâya [kahya] Kadın or the governor of the Seraglio came to wait on, and pay her respects to, the two ladies.

Like the palace itself, the harem quarter also had three gates, according to the inventory: the main one (A) which seemed to have opened directly into the harem courtyard and to have led into what the inventory calls a reception hall, was in the middle of the long façade formed by the harem apartments. It was off the axis of the main entrance as was customary in Ottoman palaces. The only harem door (B) indicated on the plan and cited in the inventory is an entrance to the garden next to the female attendants’ quarters. It was at the far end of a long corridor and opened onto a subsidiary courtyard. Here, according to the register, a laundry house,
latrines, fountain, and a water chamber were located. On the plan the harem courtyard was closed off from this subsidiary service courtyard, probably by an iron gate. The only possible location left for the third door (C) — not indicated on the plan but referred to in the register — is in the middle, between the other two gates and opposite the old hammam.

The harem apartments consisted of separate units lined up along a single lateral axis: the apartments of the female attendants (27), an adjoining apartment with a reception hall (28) and a hammam, and the “old” (29) and “new” apartments (30) of the princess with her private hammam. The so-called new apartments consisted of two rooms, one of which was decorated with gilded plane-tree wood (31) and the other with gilded walnut (32); next to them was the private hammam for the princess (33) and a hallway with two stairs on one side, one leading to the marble garden terrace and the other to the old apartments. All these areas were slated for extensive renovation in 1803.

The inventory mentions that the new apartments were three stories high. In the two rooms on the third floor the gilding, plaster decorations, painted decoration, inscription panels, and woodwork were all to be renovated. There were also a reception hall, a hallway and more rooms, larders, an ablution room, laundry, latrines, a pathway, and marble fountains on the same floor. Part of the harem was connected to these new apartments; the inventory says that part was two and part three stories high. According to the register, another gilded room in its three-story section was also colorfully painted and decorated with inscription panels. The entire floor was apparently a belvedere. In this section, again, a reception hall, a hallway and more rooms, larders, an ablution room, laundry, latrines, a pathway plus marble fireplaces and fountains are listed; they were probably on the ground floor. In another entry, the register indicates four more gilded rooms in the lower story of the old apartments, which were also three stories high. Its hallway, too, needed gilding; its plaster decorations, inscription panels, and wooden elements were also to be renovated. These rooms were probably reserved for guests and high-ranking members of the princess’s household. Under the main floor, again a hallway, larders, an ablution room, laundry, latrines, a pathway, marble fireplaces, and fountains are listed.

The reception hall was probably the formal assembly room of the harem, corresponding to the vizier’s audience hall, where official ceremonies and festivities took place in the presence of the princess and, on occasion, the sultan, for during this period sultans often visited their female relatives. During the two main bayrams, the kandils (secondary religious festivals held four times a year), and when they received other female members of the royal family, the members of the princess’s harem probably gathered there to give and receive gifts and hear the mevlüt (a traditional verse description of Muhammad’s birth) chanted. Rosewater was sprinkled on the hands of the guests, and sweets were offered to everyone. During Ramadan, far more time would be devoted to religious observances: everyone would fast and those who could would recite the Qur’an; the princess would invite other royal women to iftar (the fast-breaking meal taken at sundown) and, after the meal, present each guest with a gift appropriate to her status. They would then pass the time until sakin (the last meal taken before dawn) with conversation and entertainment. It must also have been in this reception room that the princess received her steward, who probably visited her each morning to pay his respects and to report on the state of her finances. While the princess was sometimes entertained by buffoons, dancers, and singers in this hall, her private rooms were probably used for those intimate amusements that are so frequently treated in Orientalist painting: favorites sang songs, played musical instruments, danced, and recited poems, read chapters from the Qur’an or from histories, while the attendants occupied themselves with embroidery, gossiped, played games, or just lay about.

The apartments of the female attendants of the harem as shown on the site plan (27) were composed of two rows of rooms along a long corridor plus service areas. The inventory register refers to the apartments of the “senior stewardesses” and of “the girls.” The latter lived on the ground floor: they were the slave girls who were educated by old matrons, whose chief was called hâkîya kadin. These girls were sometimes presented as gifts to the sultan or to other important men. The “senior stewardesses,” who held master rank as in a guild, were all called usta; their superiors were the saray usta, the mistress of the palace; the hazinekâr usta, a woman in charge of the princess’s treasury; the baş hatibo, who read her books and served as head scribe, and others with specific functions. The apartments of all these people opened onto a subsidiary courtyard (41) through a door (B) at one end of a long corridor, beyond which a laundry house (42) is marked on the plan. The structure next to it is a latrine (43). At the opposite end of the corridor, the apartments opened onto a hallway where there were three latrines, an ablution room, a hammam (34) re-
ferred to as the "old hammam," and a disrobing room. From the register we know that on both floors latrines and ablution rooms adjoined hammams, but of these, only the "old hammam" is identified on the plan.

Both the register and the account books suggest that among the most elaborate rooms in the harem were its hammams. Of the four in the palace, three were in the harem, and one adjoined the mabeyn apartments. The one on the ground floor was used by the low-ranking female attendants; of the two on the upper floor the "old" one (34) was probably used by the high-ranking members of the princess's retinue and her guests; the other (33) next to the hallway in the new apartments by the princess herself. Both had domes in which thick glass portholes or bull's eyes were embedded, and the adjoining chambers were vaulted. The account book of 1767 says they were covered by polished marble including the door frames, the lantern, and the grating on the floor. The register says that the walls and floors of both the upper-story hammams in the harem were stone and marble, and they were to be renovated together with the marble basins. The account books, however, also list 4,000 Spanish tiles which seem to have been used for the renovation of the hammams. The disrobing room was brilliantly decorated with mirrors, glass, and gilding; its doors were covered with felt and decorative textiles. The care and attention lavished on the repair of the plumbing, redecoration of the spouts, and replacement of some missing bull's eyes point to the central role of the hammams in the daily rituals of the palace.

Some sections of the harem quarters do not appear on the plan at all. The inventory mentions a kitchen and stables on the ground floor for the horses and carriages of the princess. The register refers to the kitchen in the harem quarters, the middle gate, and the rooms around it. Another reference locates the kitchen under the apartments in front of the old quarters of the harem. A further reference to a fireplace that was once next to the stone stairway adjoining a fountain with a basin helps locate the kitchen itself as being under the hammam and next to the entrance to the reception hall in the area between the two gates (A and C) in the harem courtyard. The rest of the ground floor was occupied by the latrines, another hammam, and possibly other attendants' rooms.

According to the register there were stables (4) both near the main entrance and near "the large palace gate" on the ground floor of the harem apartments that overlooked a street. Which street and gate is not clear, but it is quite likely the Akar Çeşme Sokagi and the east gate. Adjoining this place and overlooking the harem courtyard were the apartments for the female attendants; they are later mentioned in the register as having still more stables underneath them. Although this is rather curious—for it must not have been exactly agreeable to have stables located underneath women's apartments, even if the apartments were three stories up—the large area they appear to have covered shows how extensive the household of the princess was and also suggests that excursions on horseback or by carriage were important diversions in her daily life.

The garden. By juxtaposing the inventory and the account books with the plan, it is also possible to reconstruct auxiliary structures such as pavilions and pools, since in both the 1767 and the 1803 restorations as great an importance was placed on the gardens as on the buildings.

The garden extended along the entire rear of the palace. In the middle was a marble pavement (35), with a stairway next to the princess's hammam, a large pool (36), and a kiosk to be restored (37). The inventory records two kiosks in this area, a large one overlooking the pool and a smaller one. The large kiosk, crowned by a cupola, was apparently formed by square pieces of rock crystal joined together with wooden rods; the 1767 account book records glass panes used in the walls of the kiosk. Both this glass pavilion and the smaller one were decorated with European plasterwork and inscription panels, and were colorfully painted; inside the large kiosk fountains flowed continuously. The kiosk was paved with polished marble. The small kiosk is not shown on the plan; it might have been either a domical structure resting on columns at the center of the large pool or an ephemeral structure set on grass, or a paved platform in a garden reached by a narrow bridge.

The account books of 1767 mention two such small kiosks in the large outer garden which were colorfully painted. Their absence from the other documents suggests that they were temporary structures. Another entry in the account book mentions a tiled platform decorated with pebbles, which had marble paving, flower beds, and a pool. These platforms were surrounded by colorfully painted railings. On one side, next to the garden wall, was a greenhouse which the inventory said had a temporary roof (38). The garden extended from there in two directions (39–40). The wide projecting eaves of these kiosks were also colorfully painted. Baron de Tott describes the garden, to which "the Intendant" of Esma Sultan conducted guests after they had dined.
with vines on a trellis, a gardener's room with a stone hearth, and a henhouse; none are on the plan. Among the constantly flowing fountains in the gardens were likely to be found pigeons, peacocks, parakeets (called lovebirds in Turkish), and parrots. The aviary kiosk in the **malabyın** quarters probably housed the vizier's hunting birds — falcons, hawks, and hunting owls.

**A CONTEXT FOR KADIRGA LIMANI**

These walls, gardens, and apartments all belong to yesteryear, as do ninety-nine percent of the houses in which the Ottoman elite once lived: only three Ottoman palaces built before 1800 — the Topkapı, the Ibrahim Paşa, and the Ishak Paşa — still survive, and it is on the extant forms of the first two that reconstructions of what the rest looked like have been based.

The palace at Kadırğa Limani is much more elusive. In the Kadırğa district, several palaces in addition to the Esma Sultan palace are mentioned in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, none of which can be described, located, or reconstructed at this stage. Further back two other palaces identified with historic figures are known; these are the Rüstem Paşa palace and the Sokollu Mehmed Paşa palace, both referred to in sixteenth-century sources and both known to have been built by Sinan on his own admission, as well as that of Evliya Çelebi, in the seventeenth century. Later, however, they seem to have sunk from sight, but at the same time a phantom palace appears more and more frequently to haunt the vicinity: a certain "Kadırğa palace" is mentioned in connection with a wedding, or a fire, or some other event throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries without being connected to any particular patron or patroness, until first Koç in 1761, and then Çagatay Ulucay in 1807 noted that it was from that palace that Esma Sultan the Elder was married in 1743.

Yet for all its immateriality, this phantom cannot entirely evade the imprint of its times. For although it may be gone, it is still possible to give it shape and to find in that shape an archetypical form that can be recognized as belonging, not to the species of eighteenth-century waterfront palaces on the Bosphorus, but to that of the Topkapı Palace.

To solve the mystery of both the "Kadırğa" and the "Esma Sultan" palace, the tradition and architectural language reconstructed here provide the first and fundamental context. Considered in combination with other pieces of hitherto unconnected evidence (including, among other things, the written sources, a set of water-colors made by Johannes Löwenklau that are now in Vienna, and a watercolor from another set by Zacharias Wohme, now in Dresden, we can take the building back through the eighteenth and the seventeenth century to the second half of the sixteenth century and the later years of Sinan.

**Istanbul University**
**Istanbul, Turkey**

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**NOTES**

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2. The palace built along the Tunca River in Edirne for Sultan Murad II and expanded under Mehmed II before the fall of Constantinople made the birun/enderun distinction using only two courtyards; it also lacked an outer walled enclosure.


6. Topkapı Palace Archives, D.9437-1, D.9437-2. Behçet Ünsal published the site plan in 1963 and identified the palace as belonging to the pasha referred to in the caption on the small plan (subsequent numbers in this article refer to the numbers on the site plan). It was probably Orhan Erdenen who, citing an undated label on the plans, which themselves date the palace to A.H. 1168, associated it with Esma Sultan, but without identifying the Esma he meant. He seems to have been misled by some documents from the Rüstem Efriş Unaydin Collection, now in the Topkapı Palace Archives. Later, Sedat Hakkı Eldem plotted the site plan onto the 1927 insurance map of Jacques Pevsner. See B. Ünsal, "Topkapı Sarayı Araşından Buhun Mimari Planlar Üzerine," *Türk Sanat Tarihi Araştırmalar ve İncelemleri* 1 (1963): 168–97; O. Erdenen, "Eski Yapılarımıza Plan Meselesi," *Minârêtk* 12, 26 (1965): 19–23; Eldem, *Türk Evi Osmanlı Döneni II*, pp. 30–35.


8. The caption on the small plan reads, "The plan of the pasha's quarters and the rooms of the servants underneath, which are going to be built anew to replace the chamber of petitions and the audience hall. 1161 square *ziyar." For the ever-changing and ever elusive *ziyaret, see appendix on units and equivalences of weights and measures, in Howard Crane, ed. and trans., *Risale-i Mümânîye: An Early Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture* (Leiden, 1987), p. 113.


10. Topkapı Palace Archives, D. 2223. Surprisingly virtually no
attention has been attached to this document, in spite of its connection to the plans.


12. Topkapi Palace Archives, E. 12081 (1157/1744).


15. There are numerous documents both at the Topkapi Palace Archives and at the Başbakanlık Archives listing transactions and other matters pertaining to Esma Sultan the Elder’s finances.

16. About the repair of Hıbetullah Sultan’s Kadırga Palace, see the Topkapi Palace Archives D. 2223, D. 9103 (a.h. 1217).

17. Most of the early maps of Istanbul, all of them very schematic, do not show a residential building of the size of Esma’s palace in the walled city; however, the palace at Kadırga Limanı is marked on nineteenth-century maps until the 1860’s and still named after Esma Sultan, as in the 1853 map published in London by George Cox (engraved by B. R. Davies), Harvard University Map Collection 2193.1853. Another map from the same collection, apparently a copy of the first and also referring to the palace, is dated 1860, Harvard University Map Collection 2193.1860.

18. Jacques Pervîitch, Harvard University Map Collection.


22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.


27. For a visit Sultan Abdulhamid I paid to his sister Esma Sultan at Kadırga Limanı in 1757 to present gifts to her husband, see the *ruzname* (daybook of the sultan’s activities) of Abdülhamid I, Topkapi Palace Archives, E. 12350; The sultan dined with his sister before returning to the Topkapi Palace.


30. See above, n. 2. I will present a more detailed version of this story with an account of various false leads, in a separate article.