

Edible Landscape: Agricultural and Social Gardens in Topkapı Sarayı,  
1453-1800

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**Abstract**

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This paper uses Topkapı Sarayı as a case study to assess how the Ottoman elite transformed built-spaces and green spaces into social and culinary spheres. Topkapı Sarayı was divided into four courtyards, with each courtyard fulfilling a specific function. By examining the layout of Topkapı Sarayı, this paper identifies specific gardens and determines their function based on their proximity to other structures. The gardens of the First Courtyard were the most accessible to the public and were therefore used for receiving officials and as a venue for ceremonies that involved feasting and displaying exotic animals. The Second Courtyard, which contained the Imperial Kitchens, was used for growing edible produce. The Third Courtyard housed the sultan's private chambers as well as gardens for socializing and eating daily meals. The Fourth Courtyard, which extended all the way to the shore, was filled with kiosks used for entertainment, socialization, celebration, and feasting. By utilizing travel accounts, Ottoman book paintings, maps, and an analysis of the existing structures, this paper seeks to define Ottoman gardens as social, culinary spaces.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu lived in Istanbul from 1716 to 1718 as the wife of the English diplomat to the Ottoman Empire. Lady Mary was able to experience pieces of Ottoman Istanbul that were inaccessible to her male counterparts, namely the areas of the house and the garden that were reserved for women. One afternoon she was invited to visit the wife of a lieutenant (*kiaya*). When she entered the house she was escorted to the garden and led to a kiosk. Lady Mary described the kiosk as:

a large room, or rather pavilion, built round with gilded sashes, which were most of them thrown up, and the trees planted near them gave an agreeable shade, which hindered the sun from being troublesome. The jasmines and honeysuckles that twisted round their trunks, shed a soft perfume, increased by a white marble fountain playing sweet water in the lower part of the room, which fell into three or four basins with a pleasing sound. The roof was painted with all sorts of flowers, falling out of gilded baskets, that seemed tumbling down. On a sofa, raised three steps, and covered with fine Persian carpets, sat the kiyàya's lady, leaning on cushions of white satin, embroidered; and at her feet sat two young girls.<sup>1</sup>

After entering the kiosk incensed with flowers, the serving woman performed a dance. Once the dance was over, Lady Mary wrote that “four slaves came into the room with silver censers in their hands, and perfumed the air with amber, aloes-wood, and other rich scents. After this they served me coffee upon their knees in the finest Japan china, with *soucoupes* of silver, gilt.”<sup>2</sup>

Lady Mary’s social visit had three main components: the atmosphere, the activities, and the provisions. In this case, the encounter took place in the garden, was accompanied by dancing and conversation, and the women were given coffee, a social beverage, to drink while they enjoyed each other’s company.

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<sup>1</sup> Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Selected Letters, 1689-1762* (George G. Harrap & Co.: London, 1900), 149.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

Lady Mary's experience in the pleasure garden reveals the setting for Ottoman social affairs. The garden served as an essential component of the women's social sphere. The kiosk was the central aspect of this sphere, where the socialization, dancing, and drinking took place. While the kiosk was a built structure it still reflected the garden atmosphere: it was shaded by large trees, overgrown with fragrant flowers, painted with floral motifs, and perfumed with various floral oils. The kiosk was also adorned with comforts like gilded sashes, a lounging couch, carpets, and satin cushions. Within this ornate and exotic space, the women enjoyed entertainment and lingered while sipping their coffee.

The presence of coffee in this social situation is crucial to the culture of elite entertainment. Turkish coffee was served at a near-boiling temperature and was extremely bitter.<sup>3</sup> This meant that coffee-drinkers had to sip the drink slowly to avoid scalding themselves. Savoring this robust Turkish beverage encouraged garden dwellers to linger in these outdoor spaces and to enjoy the garden's amenities and entertainment.

During the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries social visits in Istanbul's elite circles were often set within the garden and enriched by the space's organic environment. By examining these pleasure gardens, and acknowledging the role of food in outdoor spaces, we can gain a better understanding of the social history of upper-class Istanbul. As the Ottomans took in sustenance they gathered in gardens and ate communally. Food consumption was therefore tied to social cohesion. This study of food consumption and socialization in the pleasure gardens at Topkapı Sarayı aims to contribute an edible perspective to the social landscape of Ottoman Istanbul.

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<sup>3</sup> Ralph S Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 62.

Gülru Necipoğlu, Nurhan Atasoy, and Shirine Hamadeh have conducted significant research on Ottoman pleasure gardens. Gülru Necipoğlu's numerous books and articles, including *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* and "The Suburban Landscape of Sixteenth Century Istanbul as a Mirror of Classical Ottoman Garden Culture," identify the place of gardens in the topography of sixteenth-century Istanbul. Necipoğlu's book on Topkapı Sarayı approaches the relationship between architecture and power, and it is valuable in both its discussion of the historical development of Topkapı Sarayı and the development of palatial gardens.

Nurhan Atasoy's book, *A Garden for the Sultan*, uses visual evidence like book paintings, ceramics, and textiles to uncover the importance of flowers in Ottoman culture. Atasoy begins by identifying the main features of the Ottoman garden: kiosks, garden thrones, cypress trees, fountains, flowers, and stables. The rest of her work is dedicated to the importance of specific flowers, including the tulip, the rose, and the poppy. Her investigation into garden culture is extremely thorough, and she identifies garden and flower themes in a variety of everyday objects including gravestones, crests, jewelry, religious adornments, and candle holders.

Shirine Hamadeh's book, *The City's Pleasures*, examines garden culture and elite socialization beginning in the nineteenth century. Her work focuses on specific parks, such as Kağıthane and Sadabad, and uses literary and pictorial evidence to give insight into the activities that transpired in those spaces. Whereas Atasoy and Necipoğlu focus on garden features, Hamadeh goes a step further to discuss the garden activities of social Ottomans using evidence from literary accounts and book paintings.

While Necipoğlu, Atasoy, and Hamadeh discuss Ottoman gardens and their general importance, all three scholars exclude the fact that the gardens at Topkapı Sarayı were vital spaces

both for growing and consuming food. By omitting the role of edible plants in Ottoman pleasure gardens, these scholars effectively disregarded a significant portion of Istanbul's food production, and by extension Ottoman culinary and social culture. Necipoğlu, Atasoy, and Hamadeh give vivid descriptions of the physical garden spaces, but we are left wondering how the Ottomans interacted with these gardens on a daily basis.

To fill the void in food scholarship, we can turn to scholars who have devoted entire books to Ottoman culinary culture. Suraiya Faroqhi and Christoph K. Neumann's edited volume, *The Illuminated Table, the Prosperous House: Food and Shelter in Ottoman Material Culture* approaches Ottoman culinary culture from very specific time periods and geographical areas. Hedda Reindl-Kiel's chapter, "The Chickens of Paradise: Official Meals in the Mid-Seventeenth Century Ottoman Palace" explores the few published menus for feasts and delegations in Topkapı Sarayı. Christoph K. Neumann's chapter, "Spices in the Ottoman Palace: Courtly Cookery in the Eighteenth Century" builds upon Reindl-Kiel's work on official, palatial meals while identifying the consistency of spices throughout decades of fluctuating Ottoman cuisine.

Amy Singer's edited volume, *Starting with Food: Culinary Approaches to Ottoman History* steps away from the study of 'haute cuisine' to investigate subjects like fasting in the Mawlawi order, boza sellers in Bursa, public kitchens, and Armenian food culture. In terms of food culture at Topkapı Sarayı, Tülay Artan explores the hunting parties of Ahmed I in "Ahmed I's Hunting Parties" and Joanita Vroom describes a Dutch diplomat's experience of feasting in "How an Eighteenth-Century Dutch Diplomat Lunched at Topkapı Palace".

Marianna Yerasimos' *500 Years of Ottoman Cuisine* is the most comprehensive work on prepared food in Topkapı Sarayı. The book is structured like a cookbook with the recipes found in the palace archives. Unfortunately, as revealed in the "Forward", the recipes are not authentic,

and the author admittedly tailored them to modern tastes by tweaking the ingredients. Yerasimos never identifies which ingredients and preparation techniques are modern, leaving the reader to guess about the authenticity of the content. Nevertheless, this work is the only book to focus exclusively on the recipes that chefs at Topkapı Sarayı may have cooked for the sultan and his court. The existence of these recipes certainly creates a basis for further inquiry.

While Ottoman food scholarship has grown in recent years, the research is confined to the celebratory setting. This is due to a lack of evidence concerning what the Ottomans ate outside of festivals. By relying on banquet menus and written accounts of the circumcision and *bayram* festivals, historians are only able to reveal what the Ottomans ate once every few years, which is not indicative of Ottoman culinary habits. In addition, of the banquets that have been studied by Joanita Vroom, all but one of them hosted foreigners. We can therefore postulate that the food served was not entirely ‘Ottoman’ because it was meant to impress a different culinary palate.

In this paper, I seek to fill this gap in the historiography by examining the cross-section of culinary, social, and spatial studies to reveal the social history of Topkapı Sarayı’s gardens. Instead of examining menus for feasts and festivals which reveal food consumption under the most extraordinary circumstances, I am interested in the daily provisions consumed in Topkapı Sarayı. To uncover daily meals and snacks we must look to the gardens of Topkapı Sarayı, which both produced the palace’s food and acted as an outdoor dining space. While it is impossible to say that the sultan ate oranges every morning while sitting in the Revan Kiosk, we can determine the foods that were available to him, where he may have eaten those foods, and other ways in which he used his garden.

This paper argues that there was a strong correlation between architecture, cuisine, and social culture in the gardens at Topkapı Sarayı by giving an in-depth analysis of the layout of the

palace, the location of the gardens, the plants that grew within these gardens, and how the sultan and his court utilized these outdoor spaces. First, I will present evidence that Topkapı Sarayı was filled with gardens, many of which yielded edible plants. Second, I argue that because the Ottomans did not designate a specific space for dining, many meals took place within these gardens. Finally, I propose that the sultan and his court used these gardens for social activities that were inherently connected to the meal.

### *Source Material*

Maps serve as a key resource in uncovering the various gardens of Topkapı Sarayı. Maps were produced mainly by European cartographers who had limited access to the palace. François Kauffer's 1786 map, titled *Carte de Constantinople* is the most valuable contemporary resource that we can use to examine the layout of the palace (Appendix A).<sup>4</sup> While many maps identified Topkapı Sarayı within the greater limits of the city, Kauffer's map provided significant detail of the palace structure and the surrounding gardens. Kauffer's map was also the first scientifically measured map of Istanbul, and is therefore valuable in its measurements and identification of large structures, fountains, natural water features, and gardens.

The spaces identified in Kauffer's map come to life through the use of Ottoman miniatures, which are also known as illuminations or book paintings. These miniatures depict scenes of elite and daily life, and were compiled into books for the pleasure of the sultan. The most pertinent book paintings come from the *Hünernâme* (1523-1524), the *Şehname-i Selim Han* (1581), and the *Katibi Külliyyatı* (1460-1480). While the *Şehname-i Selim Han* and the *Katibi Külliyyatı* are known

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<sup>4</sup> François Kauffer, *Carte de Constantinople* in *Maps of Istanbul 1422-1922* by Ayşe Yetişkin Kubilay, (Denizler Kitabevi, 2010).

for their idealized, imagined scenes, the *Hünername* is thought to give a more realistic interpretation of courtly life.

Finally, the lively writings of European travelers add another dimension to the description of Topkapı Sarayı's gardens. Between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries naturalists, geographers, historians, cartographers, and botanists traveled to Ottoman Istanbul and immortalized the city in their prose.<sup>5</sup> Phillipe du Fresne-Canaye (1573), Thomas Dallam (1599-1600), Ottaviano Bon (1604), Petis de la Croix (1670-1676), and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1716-1718) frequently visited Istanbul's gardens and Topkapı Sarayı, and remarked on both the environment and the presence of food. These European travel diaries offer a glimpse into elite garden culture and the abundance of greenery within the city. Travel diaries are a unique resource because travelers often wrote about subjects that the Ottomans saw as too common to record in detail. Since these subjects were unusual and foreign to travelers they dedicated much of their work to describing and exploring these topics. These writers were particularly interested in Ottoman social habits, which they noted took place in outdoor spaces and were often accompanied by food.

#### *Byzantine, Islamic, and Anatolian Garden Influences*

In the study of Ottoman gardens, it is imperative to begin with an examination of Byzantine gardens. The Byzantines ruled Istanbul for over one thousand years, and they used this time to cultivate large spaces that reflected both the natural world and the spiritual realm. When the Ottomans took control of Istanbul they inherited these exact spaces and planted their own gardens within them. These Ottoman gardens were inevitably influenced by pre-existing Byzantine structures, which were inspired by Roman garden culture and Biblical concepts of paradise.

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<sup>5</sup> Ayşe Yetişkin Kubilay, *Maps of Istanbul 1422-1922* (Denizler Kitabevi, 2010).

Similar to Islamic gardens, Byzantine gardens took inspiration from religious concepts of the afterlife. Byzantine gardeners were inspired by passages in Genesis and Revelations and incorporated ideas from the Elysian Fields and Homer.<sup>6</sup> The ideal Byzantine garden reflected Heaven by incorporating fruit trees, like the Tree of Knowledge harvested by Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis. Similar to the Islamic tradition, water invoking the four rivers gave shape to the Byzantine paradise garden.<sup>7</sup> These imagined gardens reflected the spiritual realm as described by Biblical passages and Greek literature.

In reality, Byzantine gardens were defined by their use of constructed elements and topographical features. While the imagined, heavenly garden incites a wilder image, actual Byzantine gardens were isolated spaces with clearly defined borders.<sup>8</sup> These secluded spaces were easily differentiated from other structures because they were enclosed by a fence. Thus, the Byzantine garden was a space for retreat and was not necessarily integrated into daily life. Medieval Byzantine gardens looked inward to structures like towers and pavilions.<sup>9</sup> The purpose many gardens was to enjoy the space as a separate entity from the city.

The Byzantine garden historian Henry Maguire identifies several parks and gardens in Byzantine Constantinople that exemplify the Byzantine garden tradition. Mesokepoin, a royal garden, included an atrium, two marble fountains, and a church. Mesokepoin was encircled by a stone wall and ran adjacent to a polo ground, but it was notably separate from the recreational area.<sup>10</sup> Maguire postulates that the purpose of the fence was to prevent polo balls from leaving the

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<sup>6</sup> Anthony Littlewood, Henry Maguire, and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, eds., *Byzantine Garden Culture* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 23-24.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Maguire, *Gardens and Parks in Constantinople*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000), 258.

field and crushing the foliage. Mangana, another royal garden, surrounded the monastery of St. George and included a palace and hospital. The Ottomans repurposed Mangana into a zoo but preserved much of the landscaping and terracing.<sup>11</sup> According to Psellos, Mangana was filled with fruit trees, grass lawns, covered walking paths, meadows, and water features such as a canal, irrigation system, and several pools. Psellos noted that the sheer size of Mangana meant that one could use the space to ride their horse, and could not look upon the whole garden in one gaze because it was so large.<sup>12</sup>

Similar to royal gardens, game gardens were frequented by the wealthy members of society. The Byzantines built many game gardens outside of the city walls and populated them with animals for hunting. In 1147 Odo of Deuil described the Philopation, a garden in Constantinople, as consisting of a variety of man-made topographical features. Philopation included pavilions, canals, ponds, man-made caves, and “furnished lairs for the animals.”<sup>13</sup> Within the park and emperor had built a retreat in order to spend several days in the garden hunting. Hunting outside of the city in truly wild terrain led to unnecessary danger, therefore game parks were preferred by emperors and the elite. Within the game park the animals were small and familiar, and included hooved animals, rabbits, and boars. The animals could be chased across smaller distances, and were ultimately confined by fences and stone walls. In addition, game parks included viewing towers so that the hunt could be observed by multiple onlookers.<sup>14</sup> The Byzantines put a significant amount of effort into recreating wild spaces close to the city in order to emulate the imperial hunt. According to a Byzantine gardening manual, game gardens were to

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<sup>11</sup> Henry Maguire, *Gardens and Parks in Constantinople*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000), 260.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Littlewood, Henry Maguire, and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, eds., *Byzantine Garden Culture* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 70-71.

be furnished with “grass, acorns, and other wild fruits.”<sup>15</sup> In addition to hunting animals, these game parks were also places where animal husbandry, particularly beekeeping, was practiced.<sup>16</sup> Many garden spaces were reserved for imperial hunting and were designed to look natural while remaining enclosed.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century Islamic gardens could be found throughout the Islamic world, extending across three continents, and were adapted to the climate and terrain of various regions. The defining characteristic of the Islamic garden was its reflection of the Quranic passage describing Paradise, or *Jannah*, which translates to ‘garden’ in Arabic. In the Quran, Paradise is the ultimate garden, where devout Muslims live peacefully in a green oasis. According to the Quran, Paradise consisted of four main rivers that flowed with water, milk, wine, and honey. Rachel Lauden proposes that these fluids held a culinary and spiritual significance. Water, milk, wine, and honey reflected the four bodily humors. Water was essential to life, especially for Muslims living in desert regions. Milk symbolized breasts and semen and therefore new life. Wine stood for blood and power. And honey reminded Muslims of sweetness, purity, and morality.<sup>17</sup>

For Muslims, gardens were one of the most important spaces outside of the mosque. Islam grew out of the Arabian Peninsula where water was scarce and therefore revered. The idea of a shady, green space, with plentiful resources reflected Allah’s generosity and love. Thus, when planting their own gardens, Muslims strove to rebuild the Quranic passages as a reflection of Paradise. These gardens in the earthly realm consisted of ample shade, water features, and four main sections ideally divided by flowing water to reflect the four rivers of Paradise. Fruit trees

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<sup>15</sup> Anthony Littlewood, Henry Maguire, and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, eds., *Byzantine Garden Culture* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 71.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Rachel Lauden, *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 136.

grew throughout Paradise gardens, and Muslims built pavilions among these trees in order to stroll through the natural elements and reflect on their relationship with Allah.

John Brookes argued for an even deeper symbolism of the Islamic garden. According to Brookes, the Paradise garden represented a microcosm of the universe. Brookes identifies two main types of Paradise gardens, centrifugal and centripetal. Centrifugal gardens had a built structure in the center, such as a pavilion or tower, which was used to gaze out at the garden. Centrifugal gardens tended to be larger in size, and were therefore better suited for rural environments or large palaces.<sup>18</sup> Centripetal gardens directed the gaze inward. These gardens had a visual feature in the center, such as a fountain, which was meant to be viewed while standing in the garden. Centripetal gardens were more compact and therefore better suited for urban environments.<sup>19</sup>

Throughout the Islamic world, Persian gardens best exemplified the Paradise garden model. Persian gardens were centrifugal *charbaghs*, or quadripartite gardens, which were often divided by constructed water features. Persian gardens were defined by their impeccable landscaping. Persian green spaces were symmetrical, with wide canals, and meticulously pruned plants encompassing reflecting pools. These gardens were generally accompanied by courtyards and served as a thoroughfare between two buildings. Walkways were built in straight lines around the garden and were usually lined with large trees to show the division between green space and built space. Much like Islamic Paradise gardens, Persian gardens were carefully manipulated to show symmetry and balance.

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<sup>18</sup> John Brookes, *Gardens of Paradise: The History of the Great Islamic Gardens* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1987), 22.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

The Turkish garden certainly took inspiration from Persian-Islamic gardens. The plants found within Turkish elite gardens were imported from the East and were found in the gardens of the Safavids and Mughals.<sup>20</sup> However, Nurhan Atasoy argues that it was actually the Turks who brought these plants to Persia during their migration from Central Asia. Within rural Anatolia, which is notably closer to Persia, some gardens were planted in a quadripartite layout, most notably the gardens of the Artuqid Palace, the Diyarbakır Citadel, and the Kubadabad Palace.<sup>21</sup> The Ottomans also employed this structure in a few gardens such as the Karabali and Sultaniye gardens.<sup>22</sup> However, aside from these few occurrences, Ottoman gardens diverged from Islamic gardens in their preservation of natural elements.

Evliya Çelebi noted the patterned elements of palace gardens within Ottoman Istanbul. Çelebi described cypress trees outlining palatial gardens with geometric flower beds bursting with roses, hyacinths, violets, tulips, jasmine, jonquils, narcissi, lilies, stocks, peonies, carnations, and sweet basil.<sup>23</sup> These gardens were also dotted with kiosks overgrown with fragrant honeysuckle and jasmine. Fountains were terraced down gentle slopes and walking paths wove through these outdoor spaces with colored pebbles underfoot.<sup>24</sup> While these palatial gardens, with their built structures and geometric patterns, seem to evoke the Persian model, Ottoman gardens reflected less planning and symmetry. Çelebi noted that the paths meandered like a labyrinth whereas traditional Islamic gardens had straight or angled paths. While Persian gardens, and by extension

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<sup>20</sup> John Brookes, *Gardens of Paradise: The History of the Great Islamic Gardens* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1987), 184.

<sup>21</sup> Nurhan Atasoy, *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayinevi, 2011), 21.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> John Brookes, *Gardens of Paradise: The History of the Great Islamic Gardens* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1987), 187.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 188.

Islamic gardens, were heavily planned and meticulously maintained, Ottoman gardens were more free-form.

Ottoman gardens contrasted from Islamic Paradise gardens in their organization of plants. Because Istanbul was located on the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmara, the coastal climate was ideal for growing a vast number of plants.<sup>25</sup> Thus, irrigation was unnecessary, and plants could grow wherever they seeded. This led to less organization and more of an organic style of gardening. While plants were certainly imported and planted based on the Sultan's preferences, the existing plants grew in a wilder fashion. This style of garden can also be attributed to the Turks' Anatolian roots. The Turks were originally Central Asian nomads. As a roaming people, their gardens reflected movement and harnessed elements of the wild. Thus, the Anatolian Turkish garden did not reflect the same amount of planning as Islamic gardens. Gülru Necipoğlu, in an attempt to separate Turkish gardens from Islamic gardens, argues that:

Like their urban counterparts, these suburban gardens hardly evoke images of oases in deserts or steppes, with inward-looking enclosed gardens providing refuge from heat and dust. Created by a sedentarized ruling elite, these gardens combined elements of the last remnants of the Greco-Roman villa tradition inherited from Byzantium (and the Balkan territories) with Islamic practices already available in Anatolia or imported from the Turkmen-Timurid and Safavid territories in the east.<sup>26</sup>

While the Ottomans were certainly Islamic, their gardens blended Islamic garden culture with pre-existing Byzantine gardens and garden culture from Anatolia.

Anatolian garden history is difficult to discern due to a lack of source material. However, Nicolas Trépanier's *Food and Daily Life in Medieval Anatolia* is an unprecedented and valuable

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<sup>25</sup> John Brookes, *Gardens of Paradise: The History of the Great Islamic Gardens* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1987).

<sup>26</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Suburban Landscape of Sixteenth Century Istanbul as a Mirror of Classical Ottoman Garden Culture", in *Gardens of the Great Muslim Empires: Theory and Design*, ed. Attilio Petruccioli (New York: E.J. Brill, 1997), 32.

resource that can be used to explore Anatolian garden culture. Prior to ruling the largest empire in the world, the Ottoman Turks were nomadic people living in Anatolia. Anatolian gardens were almost exclusively agricultural, with a few elite gardens that were used for pleasure. Anatolian elite gardens consisted of vegetable plots, vineyards, and orchards. However, according to Trépanier, the Turks did not usually socialize in the garden spaces where food was produced.<sup>27</sup> But when they did entertain in the garden, there was a hierarchy of beauty in terms of food production and garden aesthetics. Owning a garden was a sign of wealth, and fruits specifically held this classification. Trépanier contrasts this with the witty remark that “Religious leaders, or ruler’s courtiers, on the other hand, never met to enjoy themselves in a field of wheat, and no one would admire the sight or the taste of a handful of high-quality barley.”<sup>28</sup> Certain fruits, vegetables, and grains were considered more beautiful and therefore created a better space to socialize.

In medieval Anatolia, gardeners and garden owners were not the same people. Garden owners were wealthy and could therefore afford to enter the garden only to entertain other elite members of society. In contrast, the gardeners merely entered the garden to complete their work. Gardeners were also responsible for protecting the garden from pests, wild animals, and thieves.<sup>29</sup> Produce was also sold in the garden, therefore the garden owners were in charge of selling their own crops.<sup>30</sup>

The focus on food production sets Ottoman gardens apart from Byzantine and Islamic gardens. The Ottomans were certainly influenced by the Byzantine gardens abandoned after the

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<sup>27</sup> Nicolas Trépanier, *Foodways & Daily Life in Medieval Anatolia: A New Social History* (University of Texas Press, 2014), 22.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

siege of 1453. The Ottomans incorporated pools and fountains from the Islamic tradition. However, the purpose of the Ottoman garden was more practical than the Byzantine and Islamic gardens, and was inherently tied to the production of food, which grew out of the Turks' nomadic heritage.

### *The First Court, Bostancis, and Exotic Animals*

Ottoman gardens, specifically the gardens of Ottoman Istanbul, differed from Byzantines and Anatolian gardens in that they focused on food production. The Ottomans used their gardens for pleasure, socialization, food production, and food consumption. By using Topkapı Sarayı as a case study we can assess how the Ottoman elite used built-space and green space to transform gardens into social and culinary spheres.

The gardens at Topkapı Sarayı were tended by an army of skilled gardeners. These men were responsible for maintaining the foliage in and around Topkapı Sarayı for hundreds of years. There are numerous reports on the number of *bostancis* (gardeners) that tended to Topkapı Sarayı's gardens. In 1534 Daniello de'Ludovisi reported 300 to 400 *bostancis*, in 1550 Bernardo Navagero referred to 800, in 1573 Constantino Garzoni recorded 200, and in the late 1500s Thomas Dallam claimed that 1,000 *bostancis* were employed by the Sultan.<sup>31</sup> Nurhan Atasoy argues that in the year 1600 Topkapı Sarayı employed 5,000 *bostancis* to tend to sixty-one gardens.<sup>32</sup> Evliya Çelebi declared that, by the late 1600s, Topkapı Sarayı employed twelve thousand *bostancis*.<sup>33</sup> This number is quite astonishing when Çelebi counted forty-thousand people living and working within

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<sup>31</sup> Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 212.

<sup>32</sup> Nurhan Atasoy, *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 48.

<sup>33</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Joseph Von Hammer (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1846-1850), 50.

the palace. If Çelebi's numbers are correct, over a quarter of the people employed at the palace worked exclusively in the gardens. While the figures vary widely, it is clear that between the 1500s and 1600s the gardens were cared for by a significant number of people. This reveals both the extensiveness of the gardens and the importance placed on cultivating plants.

In Kauffer's map Topkapı Sarayı is surrounded by multiple gardens. These gardens occupy over twice the amount of space as the built structure of the palace. When the Ottoman court lived in Topkapı Sarayı (1465-1856), the palace grounds covered 592,600 square meters.<sup>34</sup> This green space was occupied by mixed-use gardens used for pleasure, food production, hunting, and food consumption. By examining the layout of Topkapı Sarayı we can identify these gardens, and determine their function and importance based on their proximity to other structures.

Topkapı Sarayı was divided into four courtyards which were surrounded by gardens.<sup>35</sup> The imperial gate (*bab-i hümayun*) opened into the first courtyard (*alay meydanı*), which was a green space occupied by ornamental plants. An engraving by Antoine Melling, in *Voyage Pittoresque de Constantinople*, shows the vast open space of the courtyard, which was studded with trees and walking paths.<sup>36</sup>

An image from the *Hünernâme* (1523-1524) reveals the lively nature of the space (Appendix B).<sup>37</sup> Several horses traverse the courtyard while men gather around various fountains, trees, and auxiliary buildings. These buildings included kitchens, bath houses, and quarters for the

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<sup>34</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: MIT Press, 1991), 4.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Antoine Melling in *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* by Gülru Necipoğlu, (New York: MIT Press, 1991), 41.

<sup>37</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 24.

servants.<sup>38</sup> Several gates led to various gardens outside of the courtyard, including a lemon grove.<sup>39</sup> This courtyard served as a multi-purpose space that was large enough to hold official ceremonies and served as a waiting area for horses and visitors to the palace.<sup>40</sup>

Tülay Artan, in her chapter on “Aspects of the Ottoman Elite’s Food Consumption”, in the edited volume *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire* argues that tomatoes may have also grown in the First Courtyard. Artan points to Antoine Melling’s engraving of the space, and notices:

On the right, directly in front of the row of kitchens with their characteristic domes and chimneys, a few solitary servants are busily picking some round, lumpy kind of produce from low, stubby plants laid out, in a startling mixture of the solemn and mundane, in the form of two gigantic garden beds on both sides of the pathway leading right up to the Gate of Felicity. They do look like tomatoes.<sup>41</sup>

While this European engraving is the only evidence of tomatoes growing in the First Court, it seems plausible. The tomatoes, or some other “round, lumpy” produce were planted directly outside the kitchens. Perhaps these were separate from other plants because tomatoes need a significant amount of sunlight, or because they grow best in front of brick or stone, which holds the sun’s warmth at night. Artan also argues that tomatoes, while only appearing in Ottoman cuisine beginning in the late fifteenth century, became a quick favorite, and were used in salads,

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<sup>38</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: MIT Press, 1991), 41.

<sup>39</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 25.

<sup>40</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: MIT Press, 1991), 41.

<sup>41</sup> Tülay Artan in *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922* (SUNY Press, 2000), 113.

stews, and meat dishes.<sup>42</sup> There is ample evidence to suggest that within this receiving space, Topkapı's *bostancis* grew lemons and tomato plants.

The First Courtyard was also populated by exotic animals during official occasions. During imperial ceremonies, elephants and giraffes were known to accompany Sultan Süleyman. On days when feasts were given, visitors noted that elephants and giraffes were escorted to the courtyard with the many fanciful dishes.<sup>43</sup> And when ambassadors, such as Johann Hoberdanacz of the court of Ferdinand I came to visit Sultan Süleyman I he noted elephants adorned in rich fabrics roaming the court.<sup>44</sup>

A miniature from the *Hünername*, titled “Bayezid huzurunda Tunus Sultanının hediye ettiği bir arslan ile susığırının mücadelesi ve Bayezid’in susığırını öldürmesi” reveals the presence of exotic animals within the First Courtyard.<sup>45</sup> (Appendix C) Sultan Bayezid is seated on a garden throne while a crowd of spectators form a ring around the courtyard. In the middle of the ring stands a lion, who was a gift from the Tunisian Sultan, and an ox. The ox lays bleeding on the ground from a head wound and the lion is advancing toward a man who appears to be the lion tamer. This miniature reveals that the First Courtyard could be converted into a kind of fighting ring where the Sultan staged fights between animals for his viewing pleasure.

The First Courtyard was a transitional, green space used for many activities, which included royal ceremonies that utilized the open space and exotic animals which communicated power and prestige. When an official ceremony was not taking place, the first courtyard was a

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<sup>42</sup> Tülay Artan in *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922* (SUNY Press, 2000), 112.

<sup>43</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: MIT Press, 1991), 41.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> “Bayezid huzurunda Tunus Sultanının hediye ettiği bir arslan ile susığırının mücadelesi ve Bayezid’in susığırını öldürmesi”, *Hünername*, 1523-1524.

lively space where palace workers and officials gathered and conducted business and city-dwellers communicated their petitions to the court.

### *The Second Court and the Kitchen Gardens*

The Middle Gate connected the First Courtyard to the Second Courtyard, which opened into a pleasure garden. “Bab-1 Saadet, İkinci Avlu ve Kubbealtı”, a miniature from the *Hünernâme*, shows an Ottoman depiction of the Second Courtyard.<sup>46</sup> (Appendix D) This miniature spans two pages and reveals the bustling activities that unfolded in this space. In the miniature, men walk in large groups around clusters of cypress trees and larger trees grown in individual plots. Several deer also roam around the courtyard. Fountains are scattered throughout the space, attracting visitors to wash their hands and drink. The Sultan is shown several times in the miniature. In the upper-left corner of the book painting he is shown inside a throne room, likely awaiting guests. In the lower-right corner of the miniature he is also receiving guests, but this time outside near the deer and trees. Other men are shown conducting business or resting near the trees and fountains.

The Second Courtyard was filled with lawns, trees, rose bushes, and creatures including ostriches, peacocks, songbirds, deer, and gazelles.<sup>47</sup> According to Ottaviano Bon, writing in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Second Court was filled with “green grass plots in which the gazelles (roe deer) do feed, and bring forth young.”<sup>48</sup> In addition to the gazelles, deer, foxes, goats, sheep, Indian

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<sup>46</sup> “Bab-1 Saadet, İkinci Avlu ve Kubbealtı”, *Hünernâme*, 1523-1524.

<sup>47</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: MIT Press, 1991), 53.

<sup>48</sup> Ottaviano Bon in *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* by Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 212.

cows, wild geese, and ducks populated these gardens.<sup>49</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Phillipe du Fresne-Canaye wrote:

In all his gardens he [the sultan] keeps dogs, horses, and hunting birds. His greyhounds are controlled with great care; each is tied at the ankle and has over him a white [cover]. They have long ears and fur, most of them have their tails, ears, and paws painted which produces a pretty effect.”<sup>50</sup>

A variety of animals, from deer to horses, birds, and dogs, roamed in harmony within the Second Courtyard. Despite being enclosed by high walls, the garden felt more organic with the addition of these animals. The Second Courtyard, therefore, was planned as a peaceful, natural space that mimicked the pleasures of the countryside.

In addition to the animals, soothing fountains dotted the courtyard, each equipped with golden goblets for drinking the refreshing water.<sup>51</sup> According to Kritoboulos:

Around the palace were constructed very large and lovely gardens abounding in various sorts of plants and trees, producing beautiful fruit. And there were abundant supplies of water flowing everywhere, cold and clear and drinkable, and conspicuous and beautiful groves and meadows. Besides that, there were flocks of birds, both domesticated fowls and song-birds, twittering and chattering all around, and many other sorts of animals, tame and wild feeding there. Also there were many other fine sorts ornaments and embellishments of various sorts such as he [Mehmed II] thought would bring beauty and pleasure and happiness and enjoyment. The Sultan worked all this out with magnificence and profusion.<sup>52</sup>

This tranquil space marked a transition from the official First Courtyard to a peaceful inner sanctum. The Second Courtyard connected the royal kitchens and royal stables, reinforcing the idea that this space was more private and meant for pleasure. The stables housed twenty-five to

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<sup>49</sup> Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 212.

<sup>50</sup> Phillipe du Fresne-Canaye in *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* by Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 213.

<sup>51</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: MIT Press, 1991), 53.

<sup>52</sup> Kritoboulos in *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* by Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 211.

thirty horses, all of which were available to the sultan for pleasure riding with his subjects.<sup>53</sup> The stable was managed by the *Imrahor*, or Master of Stables, who employed three thousand grooms, stable hands, and apprentices to care for the horses.<sup>54</sup>

To the east of the First Courtyard, Kauffer's map identified the 'Gul Hane' (Turkish: Gülhane, English: Rose House) and the 'Gul Hane Backtche' (Turkish: Gülhane Bahçesi, English: Rose Garden).<sup>55</sup> From the map, it appears that this garden occupied more space than any other garden on the palace grounds. In the middle of the garden was a structure called the Gülhane, which we can postulate was either a greenhouse, a storage facility, a preparation area, or some combination of the three.<sup>56</sup> The surrounding space was dotted with many shrubs and overlooked the Sea of Marmara. The fact that the space offered such a remarkable view of the Sea suggests that this area was also used as a pleasure garden. In the rose garden, the sultan could walk through the roses and linger at the vista.

To the north of the rose gardens, but still surrounded by the fragrant shrubs, was a building called the 'Infermerie'.<sup>57</sup> The small satellite building may have been the medical space mentioned in Menavino's travel writing, which has never been officially identified.<sup>58</sup> If this is the hospital, this is significant, because the healing institution was not built within the main palace, but purposefully placed within the garden. This suggests that the rose garden was a placid, private area that provided the ideal space for healing. This supports the idea that the Ottomans considered

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<sup>53</sup> Kritoboulos in *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* by Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 211.

<sup>54</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 49.

<sup>55</sup> François Kauffer, *Carte de Constantinople in Maps of Istanbul 1422-1922* by Ayşe Yetişkin Kubilay, (Denizler Kitabevi, 2010).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: MIT Press, 1991), 49.

outdoor spaces with a variety of plants to be healthful. Atasoy supports this conclusion in her analysis of Sultan Bayezid's mental hospital in Edirne which cultivated gardens of herbs, roses, carnations, tulips, and hyacinths to be used in medical treatments.<sup>59</sup>

The rose, which was beloved by the Ottomans, was the ideal plant to cultivate in this multi-purpose area. Although the rose may appear to be an ornamental flower, it was functional in addition to being beautiful. Roses were fragrant and filled gardens with swatches of color. In addition, the Ottomans ate roses in their desserts. Topkapı Sarayı produced its own rose jam and rose sherbet, and crafted rosewater for cooking and perfume. The elite were also known to bathe in rose petals.<sup>60</sup> When greeting guests, hosts would offer them rosewater to wash their face and hands, and a drink of rose sherbet or rose liqueur.<sup>61</sup> Roses were the quintessential, multiuse flower in Ottoman pleasure gardens. Roses could be enjoyed for their aesthetic beauty, for their taste, and for their scent. The rose exemplifies the many uses of Ottoman gardens and the plants that grew within them.

The space Kauffer identified as the Rose Garden is adjacent to the Second Courtyard, where the Helvahane (dessert kitchen) and Chemistry Laboratory were located.<sup>62</sup> Palace chefs had seamless access to this space, where roses were cultivated for use in *lokum* and *sherbet*. The Chemistry Laboratory could also use the rose petals to distill into rosewater, which could then be delivered to the Helvahane, to the sultan to use in his baths, or to the women of the Harem.

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<sup>59</sup> Nurhan Atasoy, *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 119.

<sup>60</sup> John Brookes, *Gardens of Paradise: The History of the Great Islamic Gardens* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1987), 190.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Kauffer, François, *Carte de Constantinople*, in Ayşe Yetişkin Kubilay, *Maps of Istanbul 1422-1922* (Denizler Kitabevi, 2010).

Topkapı's Rose Garden served as a pleasure space and a space for cultivating roses for aesthetics and consumption.

Next to the Rose Garden and above the Infirmary was a fenced plot of land called 'Kenck Bachtche' (Turkish: Küçük Bahçesi, English: Small Garden).<sup>63</sup> This large, fenced area with its orderly rows suggests that this space was meant for cultivating edible plants. This is further supported by the fact that the garden ran along the second courtyard, and was planted directly outside the Imperial Kitchens. This meant that cooks had access to fresh produce grown within the palace. From the map, this area is the only garden that appears to be separated with a fence or wall. Although the garden was physically separated with a partition, it occupied the same view-space as the Rose Garden. This garden may have resembled agricultural land, but it is likely that the sultan or members of the court walked through this space to catch a glimpse of the sea. In addition, there are references to an edible plant garden outside the kitchens where the sultan preferred to dine.<sup>64</sup> This space was used practically for growing food, for pleasant walks, and as a dining area.

Traveler's accounts give us insight into the types of fruits and vegetables grown in Topkapı Sarayı's gardens. During his visit to Topkapı Sarayı, Petis de La Croix noted:

The extensive palace gardens are indiscriminately planted with trees such as cypresses, boxwoods, bays, and myrtles that form paths on their own. These trees are never pruned. Along the paths one finds flowers together with scattered beds of cabbage, cucumbers, spinach, and melons as well as every sort of herb and vegetable in season.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Kauffer, François, *Carte de Constantinople*, in Ayşe Yetişkin Kubilay, *Maps of Istanbul 1422-1922* (Denizler Kitabevi, 2010).

<sup>64</sup> Father Stephan Gerlach in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* by Nurhan Atasoy, (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 48.

<sup>65</sup> Petis de La Croix in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* by Nurhan Atasoy, (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 48.

Topkapı's gardens were blanketed in edible ground cover. La Croix mentioned specific plants, such as leafy green cabbage and spinach, cucumber, and melons. While cabbage and spinach would have densely packed the flowerbeds with shades of green, cucumbers and melons spiraled their way through the garden with long vines and plump fruit.<sup>66</sup> La Croix also wrote that the garden brimmed with every vegetable in season and every herb he could identify. Although the garden, with its large trees and paths, did not appear to be a designated vegetable plot, it apparently produced a wide variety of vegetables.

In 1576 Father Stephan Gerlach visited Topkapı Sarayı. Around the palace, he wrote “there are many woods, vineyards, and orchards of every kind of fruit tree. Also in this area are kitchen gardens in which there exists every kind of fruit tree and every sort of flower and herb.”<sup>67</sup> Gerlach did not identify specific fruits, vegetables, or herbs. Instead, he argued that every type of fruit, vegetable, and herb was grown within these gardens. While we can consider this statement an exaggeration, Gerlach's account does suggest an overwhelming variety of edible plants growing in these gardens. It is interesting to note that he calls these ‘kitchen gardens’, assuming that the purpose of the space was to supply the kitchen with raw ingredients. Perhaps he is referring to Küçük Bahçesi, the vegetable plot that was planted directly outside the Imperial Kitchens.

Courmenin also wrote that in lieu of flowerbeds, the palace's outermost gardens produced vegetables and herbs.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, Tavernier identified vegetable plots, orchards, strawberries, raspberries, melons, and cucumbers growing between the buildings in Topkapı Sarayı.<sup>69</sup> From

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<sup>66</sup> Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 223.

<sup>67</sup> Father Stephan Gerlach in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* by Nurhan Atasoy, (Kitap Yayinevi, 2011), 48.

<sup>68</sup> Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 223.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

these accounts it appears that all spaces within the palace gardens were utilized for food production. The outer-gardens, alleyways, and spaces around the kiosks were tilled and sowed to yield seasonable fruit. Boyar and Fleet note that Topkapı Sarayı produced such a large quantity of fruits and vegetables that the surplus was sold back to the public.<sup>70</sup>

Eating outdoors allowed the elite to linger in their gardens and eat amongst food that was ripening into their next meal. The types of foods that Ottomans consumed in outdoor spaces shaped their experiences in the gardens. In the palace and upper-class households, meals were complex and extravagant. A typical aristocratic meal consisted of cold appetizers, rice dishes (pilav), dough-based dishes, meats, fruit dishes, soups, sweets, and various beverages.<sup>71</sup> These were delivered one by one to the table and eaten communally. According to Seyyid Hasan, middle and upper-class diners ate seventeen dishes for dinner each night.<sup>72</sup>

In Topkapı Sarayı dishes were prepared by specialty chefs in a designated culinary space called the Matbah-i Amire, or Prince's Kitchen.<sup>73</sup> This space spanned 5,250 meters and included kitchens, pantries, and barracks for the cooks, assistants, and other kitchen staff.<sup>74</sup> The kitchen was connected to the Lower Kitchen, Royal Kitchen, and Helvahane, and opened to the Small Garden where outdoor dining took place.<sup>75</sup> The kitchen complexes were built close to the gardens to facilitate easy transport from the kitchen to the outdoor dining area.

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<sup>70</sup> Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 225.

<sup>71</sup> Marianna Yerasimos, *500 Years of Ottoman Cuisine*, trans. Sally Bradbrook (Boyut, 2015).

<sup>72</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire: A Short History*, trans. Shelley Frisch (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2009), 214.

<sup>73</sup> Marianna Yerasimos, *500 Years of Ottoman Cuisine*, trans. Sally Bradbrook (Boyut, 2015), 26.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Topkapı Sarayı employed 60 specialty chefs, which included chefs that exclusively prepared pastry, bread, rice, kebabs, vegetables, and desserts. These chefs were assisted by 200 workers and overseen by a head chef.<sup>76</sup> The sultan was fed by his own kitchen, which employed 17 specialty chefs and 12 apprentices in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>77</sup> The Sultan's mother, sisters, and daughters also had their own kitchen, called the Sultan Valide Kitchen. In addition to the numerous kitchens, Topkapı Sarayı included a Helvahane where desserts like helva, jams, sherbet, pickles, and aphrodisiac pastes were crafted.

The Ottomans ate very simply: seated on a rug on the floor around a *sofra*, or low table. For all of the ornate rooms in Topkapı Sarayı, not a single room was set aside as a dining room. Thus, food was generally consumed in the garden; either in the grass or in a kiosk. For this purpose, Ottoman dining wear was portable and simple. Servants brought dishes and set them on folding tables.<sup>78</sup> The main dish was delivered to the middle of the *sofra* and the Ottomans ate communally with their hands, sometimes wiping their fingers on a cloth draped over their shoulder. This meant that there were no plates, forks, or knives. Meat was cut into small pieces prior to being served and diners sopped up excess sauce with torn bread. When soup was served the Ottomans ate it with a long spoon out of a communal dish.<sup>79</sup>

Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq was invited to dine with the Ottoman court in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He recorded that “The banquet was given in the garden, and the pasha and the ambassador sat under an awning... Some hundred servants dressed in identical outfits were lined up, all equally

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<sup>76</sup> Marianna Yerasimos, *500 Years of Ottoman Cuisine*, trans. Sally Bradbrook (Boyut, 2015), 27.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

spaced out.”<sup>80</sup> These servants delivered each dish quickly and the “Meals were eaten at great speed. The courses arrived at the *sofra* with no interval between them.”<sup>81</sup> There was no talking at the *sofra*, only eating. This meant that after the meal the Ottoman elite enjoyed entertainment. Singers and dancers would perform for the diners while they sipped coffee and sherbet.<sup>82</sup> Exotic animals were also used as entertainment during meals. When Ahmet I entertained a German delegation in 1608, he served them dinner alongside two chained lions and a group of musicians.<sup>83</sup> Ahmet I likely included these animals in the dinner entertainment in order to inspire awe and anxiety in his guests.

### *The Third Courtyard and the Sultan’s Private Gardens*

The Third Courtyard housed the sultan’s residence, which included his private chambers, quarters for his family members, and the Harem. The sultan’s chambers opened onto a marble landing, often called the Fourth Courtyard, which featured a garden terrace, kiosks, and a pond filled with fish.<sup>84</sup> The grand marble terrace overlooked the channel where the Sea of Marmara met the Bosphorus. Wide marble stairs descended into two gardens, the Fig Garden and the Elephant Garden, that offered equally impressive views. These terraced gardens were dotted with kiosks, which served as resting points and viewing areas.<sup>85</sup> These kiosks merged the garden atmosphere with the comforts of built structures.

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<sup>80</sup> Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq in *500 Years of Ottoman Cuisine*, by Marianna Yerasimos, trans. Sally Bradbrook (Boyut, 2015), 37.

<sup>81</sup> Marianna Yerasimos, *500 Years of Ottoman Cuisine*, trans. Sally Bradbrook (Boyut, 2015), 37.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>84</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: MIT Press, 1991), 91.

<sup>85</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 171.

The inside of the kiosk resembled a coffeehouse with an open floor plan and seating around the perimeter. This solidifies the idea that kiosks were meant for gathering, entertaining, and feasting. The divans, or perimeter seating, were furnished with embroidered pillows to allow for comfort while gazing at the garden.<sup>86</sup> Kiosks essentially brought the comforts of the palace and the home into the garden setting so that the outdoors could be enjoyed for extended periods of time. Kiosks were permanently open to the garden to capture views, reveal ornate decorations, and provide a setting for eating and socializing.<sup>87</sup>

Deshayes de Courmenin gave a beautiful description of the privy chamber in 1621 which points to the design and the lavish features of the kiosk. He wrote:

One among the other [kiosks] is built on the edge of a small pool; the floor below it is vaulted and enriched with marble incrustations of many colors. Above is a room whose ceiling is supported on eight marble columns; the rest is completely open to daylight, for it is enclosed only by panes of very fine crystal. Around the room, there is a grand corridor, five feet wide and decorated with marble balustrades, from which thirty-two jets of clear water can be seen falling into the pool, making an agreeable murmur. The ceiling of this room is enriched with mother-of-pearl and with fine gems set in compartments [of wood]: the top is faced with plates of gilt silver and is so filled with turquoises, rubies, and other precious stones that never has anyone seen anything more dazzling.<sup>88</sup>

Topkapı's garden kiosks were designed with fireplaces and flanked by smaller rooms that often contained a toilet and a *wudu* fountain for ritual ablution.<sup>89</sup> The alcoves were fitted with sofas that were decorated with textiles and carpets. The interior walls were adorned in intricate Iznik tiles that echoed the garden with intertwining floral patterns. The tiles in Süleyman's New Kiosk were decorated with birds, *ch'ilins* (a mythical Chinese beast), *saz* leaves, lotus flowers, and rosettes.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Nurhan Atasoy, "Ottoman Garden Pavilions and Tents", *Muqarnas*, vol. 21, 2004, 19.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-17.

<sup>88</sup> Deshayes de Courmenin in *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* by Gülru Necipoğlu, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 192.

<sup>89</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 192.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

Niches displayed various objects and supplies were stored in cabinets inlaid with pearls. The wooden ceilings were carved with ornamental detail and the walls were often decorated with paintings.<sup>91</sup> Tall, long windows, often crafted with colored glass, looked out into the surrounding garden. These kiosks were not simply garden pavilions, but ornate rooms where the sultan could spend hours or days immersed in his garden.

While much of our information about these kiosks comes from Ottoman book paintings or visiting the remains of these buildings, a few travel writers were able to enter these structures at the height of their use. Bobovi described a kiosk as:

...the most agreeable building the Turks have. They are sometimes elevated on a number of columns; they have octagonal or dodecagonal shape and are open on all sides. They are closed off with great canvases, which are lowered on pulleys on the side where the sun shines, so as to provide coolness in the summer [...] All the rich families in the Empire have köşks in their gardens, where they sleep after dinner in the summer, or entertain their friends in their hours of leisure.<sup>92</sup>

Bobovi connected the interior of the kiosk with its function. The heavy drapes blocked the sun from heating the space so that it could be enjoyed in the summer heat, specifically after a meal. This was reiterated by Menavino in 1504, who wrote that “The king frequently used to go there [to the kiosk] in the summertime to sleep during the day, to the cool and sweet murmur of the resounding waters.”<sup>93</sup>

Topkapı Sarayı’s gardens were filled with dozens of kiosks of varying sizes, including the Revan Kiosk, the Tile Kiosk, the Kiosk of Mustafa Pasha, the Double Kiosk, the Kiosk of Ahmed

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<sup>91</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 190.

<sup>92</sup> Bobovi in *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* by Gülru Necipoğlu, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 192.

<sup>93</sup> Menavino in *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* by Gülru Necipoğlu, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 192.

I, the Kiosk of Osman III, and the Baghdad Kiosk.<sup>94</sup> When the sultan wished to spend time in a kiosk, the paths leading to the space were cleaned thoroughly and all of the fountains were made to spout water. If Harem women were also invited the gardeners had to evacuate the garden and the Harem eunuchs were strategically placed throughout the garden to watch for trespassers.<sup>95</sup> This pomp and circumstance suggests that sultans did not retire to their kiosks on a whim, but rather announced their intentions which were met with ceremonial preparation.

A miniature from the *Hünername*, titled “Yavuz Sultan Selim’in bir aynaya ok atışı” reveals some of the activities that took place in the garden kiosks.<sup>96</sup> In this miniature, Sultan Selim is seated in the Marble Kiosk. A servant holds up a target while the Sultan shoots a quill of arrows, all of which expertly hit the target. A large group of men stand by, offering him more arrows, a sword, and applause. This miniature shows that Sultan Selim enjoyed archery, particularly within the structure of the kiosk. Indeed, Boyar and Fleet argue that in general, the Ottoman Sultans used their gardens for archery, watching birds of prey, sitting with courtiers, and listening to music and poetry.<sup>97</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu also adds that sultans used their kiosks for socializing with Harem women, pages, and dignitaries or scholars to discuss politics, philosophy, and religion.<sup>98</sup>

The Baghdad Kiosk was by far the largest kiosk in the Fourth Courtyard.<sup>99</sup> This kiosk offered the best view of Istanbul’s waterways and passage into the Elephant and Fig Gardens. The inside of the Kiosk was festooned with colorful Iznik tiles in floral patterns. The Kiosk was also

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<sup>94</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 32-33.

<sup>95</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 218.

<sup>96</sup> “Yavuz Sultan Selim’in bir aynaya ok atışı”, *Hünername*, 1523-1524.

<sup>97</sup> Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 219.

<sup>98</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 218.

<sup>99</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 181.

equipped with divans, cabinets for storage, a chimney to provide warmth in the winter months, and windows to display the surrounding gardens.<sup>100</sup> All of these amenities brought comfort to the kiosk, so that the sultan and his courtiers could gather in the garden in any season.

The Baghdad Kiosk's balcony was named the *Iftariye*, where the sultan was known to break his fast during Ramazan. The tradition was started by Sultan Ibrahim who broke his fast on the balcony while his musicians played music.<sup>101</sup> This space, within the gardens and overlooking the Ottoman waterways and far-off lands, had both a religious and culinary significance. During Ramazan, the holiest Islamic month, this space was crucial for beginning a night of prayer and feasting.

The Revan Kiosk, built for Murad IV, housed a portion of the royal library.<sup>102</sup> Embellished with blue and green Iznik tiles, the Revan Kiosk included three niches furnished with cushions and pillows for lounging and reading. The kiosk was also surrounded by a pool connected to the Baghdad Kiosk's marble terrace. The sheer number of kiosks and their proximity to one another raises the question of why the Ottoman sultans built so many kiosks. One answer might be that prominent sultans had kiosks built in their name, either to leave their mark on the garden and the palace structure or to commemorate a specific event. The Baghdad and Revan Kiosks were built between 1635 and 1638 to celebrate Murad IV's victory over those cities.<sup>103</sup> Another likely explanation is that specific kiosks were used for different activities. While the Baghdad Kiosk, being the grandest, was used for breaking the Ramazan fast, the Revan Kiosk was used for reading.

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<sup>100</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 181.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>102</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 186.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

The features of specific kiosks and their location within the gardens determined their primary function.

Some sultans used their kiosks for enjoying a light meal. According to Thomas Dallam, Sultan Murad III visited the Pearl Kiosk twice a week. Here he would watch sporting events, socialize with women from the Harem, and watch the ships pull in and out of port, all while sipping on his coffee and listening to music.<sup>104</sup> Although the Pearl Kiosk was located on the shore, far from the central kitchens of the Second Courtyard, it was equipped with its own kitchen in order to provide visitors with refreshments while they lounged in the kiosk.<sup>105</sup> The kitchen must have also had the capacity to cook an entire feast, as the opening of the Pearl Kiosk was celebrated by a week-long festival that included a royal feast. During this feast, Murad III ate alone inside the kiosk while his guests feasted in the garden atop ornate carpets or in tents.<sup>106</sup>

Ottoman book paintings reveal that elites ate and drank primarily in their gardens. A miniature from the *Şehname-i Selim Han* illustrates a kiosk in the garden (Appendix E).<sup>107</sup> The elaborate arches of the structure reveal a dining scene with ten individuals. The Sultan is clearly marked by his stature and throne. His servants are shown fanning him under tiled arches decorated with red curtains. It appears that the men entering the kiosk are visiting the Sultan. The foreground of the miniature shows two large, golden vessels, presumably filled with wine or sherbet. There is also a large tray of eight distinct pomegranates and another tray of six distinguishable loaves of bread. Under these trays, six vases holding sprigs of red flowers connect the inside of the kiosk to

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<sup>104</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 230.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> "One of the Kiosks in the Garden of Silivri Palace", *Şehname-I Selim Han*, in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* by Nurhan Atasoy, (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 31.

the outside garden. The kiosk is surrounded by a lattice fence, which shows that the Sultan is physically separate from the garden but also within sight of members of the court. This scene does not depict a feast, but rather a sultan conducting business in the garden while snacking on fruit and bread. We can conclude from the miniature that state affairs were conducted in outdoor spaces and that food was present in these daily events.

A book painting from *Katibi Külliyyatı* shows Mehmed II dining in a palace garden (Appendix F).<sup>108</sup> The miniature is dominated by moody blue and green tones, which are contrasted by the Sultan's orange caftan. The tiled kiosk occupies the top half of the miniature, and the eye is drawn to the kiosk by diagonal lines, possibly indicating a carpet, decorated in shades of deep blue and gold leaf. Sultan Mehmed is looking to his right while a servant presents him with a dark-colored dish. Another servant waits behind him with the next course; a deep dish that appears to hold rice. In front of the Sultan a small *sofra* is set with two carafes and a blue and white bowl of meat or rice. As the Sultan dines alone, musicians are playing flutes, tambourines, and a harp. The foreground reveals a table with three more vessels of liquid. Behind the kiosk, cherry and peach trees blossom. This miniature presents a lively scene in which the Sultan, from his elevated kiosk, enjoys his garden's bounty while feasting to the tune of an Ottoman song.

A miniature of rich reds, greens, and golds from the *Murakka* depicts Sultan Murad IV feasting in a garden setting (Appendix G).<sup>109</sup> Sultan Murad is placed in the middle of the folio on a golden throne. The Sultan is holding a jewel-encrusted goblet in one hand and a cloth in the other. Servants to his right present him with food and drink on lavish trays. The eye is directed

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<sup>108</sup> "Raised Kiosk for a Single Person Covered with Hexagonal Wall Tiles", *Katibi Külliyyatı*, in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* by Nurhan Atasoy, (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 28.

<sup>109</sup> Nurhan Atasoy, *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 71.

counterclockwise to a musician playing a *bağlama*, or Turkish guitar, seated amongst the grass and flowers. A large *sofra* is placed directly below the Sultan, and takes up as much space in the miniature as Sultan Murad and his throne. The *sofra* is symmetrically set, with vases overflowing with tulips and carnations. On either side of the floral arrangements are two bowls with three pomegranates each. The flowers are flanked by two bowls of pears, with seven fruits in each bowl. The center of the *sofra* is dominated by a large bowl of thirteen apples. In front of the apples is a large bowl of rice. Below the *sofra* sit two whole roasted deer with their antlers attached and a bowl between them. On the ground near the musician is a small bowl, filled with yellow fruits or nuts.

At first glance the scene feels very private – a sultan dining on his throne in his garden. However, the bottom left corner of the miniature reveals a woman and a child kneeling in the grass. The child is playing while the woman sniffs a carnation she has recently picked from the lawn. Though close to the *sofra*, they do not appear to be taking part in the meal. Perhaps this is a woman from the Harem and one of Murad's children who are merely enjoying time in the garden.

#### *The Fourth Courtyard, the Garden Kiosks, and Game Reserves*

Gülru Necipoğlu mentions that the Third and Fourth Courtyards were designed to be part of the same space. Yet the Fourth Court's gardens were more elaborate, and included more diverse topography, with hanging gardens planted all the way to the shore.<sup>110</sup> These gardens were also connected with several palace courtyards, including the Privy Chamber and the Harem.<sup>111</sup> The interconnected nature of these gardens meant that they could be reached from various places within

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<sup>110</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 184.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

the palace, yet they were secluded enough within the Fourth Court to afford the sultan and his closest subjects a certain amount of privacy. In fact, Ottoman poetry used the garden as a metaphor for a sacred inner space “where one was free to allow the private, emotional part of one’s nature, suppressed by the public, to emerge.”<sup>112</sup> This is certainly true of the gardens in the Fourth Courtyard. Whereas the gardens of other courts were often used to conduct business, the Fourth Court’s gardens offered the most privacy and a recreational atmosphere.

The Fourth Courtyard’s uppermost garden was called the Tulip Garden.<sup>113</sup> This garden afforded a spectacular view of Istanbul’s waterways and the kiosks and gardens below. A two-page folio from the *Hünername*, titled “Arz Divanhanesi Bab-1 Ali, Sur-1 Sultanı, deniz ve bazı köşkler” gives insight into the sultan’s leisure activities in the Tulip Garden.<sup>114</sup> (Appendix H) The miniature shows Topkapı Sarayı from a birds-eye view, complete with various courtyards and structures. The miniature also gives detail to the gardens surrounding the palace, which mostly consist of cypress trees. Then, outside of these gardens, special attention is given to the sultan and the men accompanying him. The sultan is seated on a garden throne in front of a fountain between two blossoming fruit trees. A large kiosk, presumably the Shore Kiosk, looms behind them, next to the Sea. Several attendants or courtiers are also placed throughout the garden. Two men are carrying falcons and another smaller man, perhaps even a woman or a child, is flying a kite. This would have been the optimal place to fly a kite within the palace, with breezes coming across the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmara.

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<sup>112</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 186.

<sup>113</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 176.

<sup>114</sup> “Arz Divanhanesi Bab-1 Ali, Sur-1 Sultanı, deniz ve bazı köşkler”, *Hünername*, 1523-1524.

Ottoman sources refer to these spaces as *teferrüc*, or “recreation”. As spaces of pleasure, these gardens could be used for moments of solitude or filled with activities. Here the sultan could eat, read, write, listen to music, watch activities such as polo, wrestling, and archery, or participate in these activities himself.<sup>115</sup>

The Tulip Garden was also a popular venue for the sultan’s private celebrations. During these celebrations, the garden was lit with glass orbs filled with colorful liquids.<sup>116</sup> The Harem women were invited to frolic among the tulips and to find hidden sweets in the flowerbeds. Jean-Claude Flachat, the French ambassador during Ahmed III’s reign, described a party in which Ahmed III closed off the garden to men and invited a woman of his choice to his bed. But instead of retiring to their chambers, Flachat claims that Ahmed III led the girl to a kiosk, closed the curtains, and made love to her in the garden.<sup>117</sup> The gardens around the sultan’s chamber and the Harem were important spaces for courting and consummating relationships.

The idea of the garden space being used for flirtation and sexual encounters is supported by a colorful miniature from the *Hamse of Nevai*, which reveals a private moment between an anonymous man and woman (Appendix I).<sup>118</sup> The couple is speaking over a red, flowering bush, with blooms that resemble carnations. To the right of the couple is a kiosk raised by six steps and adorned in purple, blue, green, and yellow tiles. Beside the kiosk is a pool of standing water, crowned in green and yellow marble. A natural stream runs through the scene, creating a sense of continuity and organic form. One arm of the stream has been redirected to a multi-tiered marble

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<sup>115</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 186.

<sup>116</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 176.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> “A Garden Kiosk”, *Hamse of Nevai*, in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* by Nurhan Atasoy, (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 29.

fountain. Flowers bloom throughout the miniature, around the feet of the couple and along the banks of the river. This miniature shows the crucial forms of the Ottoman pleasure garden: the abundance of flowers, a tiled kiosk, a pool of water, and a fountain fed by the natural stream. It also reveals the social nature of the garden, as a young couple gathers in the natural space to converse or even consummate their love.

The Harem gardens occupied the western side of the palace.<sup>119</sup> This designated space served the women of the court, mostly courtesans and the sultan's female family members. Evliya Çelebi documented that the Harem gardens were "planted with cypresses, planes, willows, limes, and ashes."<sup>120</sup> These shade trees were contrasted with the limes that could be eaten by the women when they lounged in the garden.

The Harem gardens were used for numerous activities, including playing games. Thomas Dallam caught a rare glimpse of the Harem women when he was working on some of the sultan's musical instruments. He claimed that "Through the grate I did see thirty of the Grand Senor's concubines that were playing with a ball in another court."<sup>121</sup> When the women were not romancing the sultan, or learning how to embroider and sing, they could be found playing games in the gardens. Harem women were known for their many talents, such as dancing and singing. While many of the musical performances took place inside the Harem Hall, other activities like

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<sup>119</sup> François Kauffer, *Carte de Constantinople* in *Maps of Istanbul 1422-1922* by Ayşe Yetişkin Kubilay, (Denizler Kitabevi, 2010).

<sup>120</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Joseph Von Hammer (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1846-1850), 79.

<sup>121</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 220.

reading poetry and storytelling unfolded in the garden.<sup>122</sup> When the weather permitted, the Harem women were allowed to tour the outer gardens by carriage.<sup>123</sup>

While the sultan generally ate alone, the harem dined as a collective. A folio from Ahmed I's album shows a gathering in the Harem garden (Appendix J).<sup>124</sup> The women are not eating a complete meal, rather, they seem to be enjoying entertainment and drinks after the meal. The women on the right side of the miniature are seated on wooden chairs facing a fountain with two ducks and a group of female musicians. The musicians are playing a guitar, harp, tambourine, and a hand-held instrument while seated on a floral carpet. The background is defined by fruit trees with large, pink blooms interspersed among the cypress. Songbirds rest on the branches and offer a sweet melody. While the women recline and listen to the music and birdsongs, servants offer them golden vessels and cups of wine or sherbet.

Further down the slopes of Topkapı Burnı the lower terraces were also filled with kiosks.<sup>125</sup> These pavilions were built right on the water's edge, and clearly offered the best view of Istanbul's waterways. These kiosks were so far from the main courtyards of the palace that they must have felt like a completely different space devoted to repose. The fact that these kiosks occupied a defensive position proves that the palace was less of a military fortress and more of a space that could be used for relaxation. These shore kiosks were generally two stories tall. The first story was used as a summer home and the upper story was used to admire the view.<sup>126</sup> In the 1800s the historian Şefer wrote of the Topkapı shore, where he identified the Shore Kiosk, Seraglio Point,

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<sup>122</sup> Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 235.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

<sup>124</sup> "Party in the Harem Garden", *Ahmet I Album*, in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* by Nurhan Atasoy, (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 157.

<sup>125</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 198.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

the Royal Garden, the Rose Garden, and the Arsenal.<sup>127</sup> These gardens were connected to various parts of the palace, including the Third Court and the Harem, through a network of passages and gates.

The shores near the kiosks were also used for fishing. In 1550 Gyllius recorded the sultan's fishermen resting their tackle in a designated space. This is supported by an 1580 account book which details repairs to the fishery including the stairs and the "sultan's dock".<sup>128</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Eremya wrote "further along the shore, inside the sea is the kiosk of the chief fisherman. In front of stretched fishing nets watchmen sit at the fishgarth. Here delicious fish are caught for the sultan."<sup>129</sup> This adds another dimension to Topkapı's gardens, which were also used for gathering fresh fish from the Sea of Marmara. Necipoğlu also argues that some sultans liked to sit in their kiosk and watch the fishing.<sup>130</sup>

While the Shore Kiosk and other structures were far removed from the main palace they still produced fruits. As early as 1465, Kritovoulos described the outer garden as "abounding in various sorts of plants and trees, producing beautiful fruit."<sup>131</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Angiolello recorded, "here in this garden there are many kinds of fruit trees planted in order, and similarly pergolas with grapevines or many kinds, roses, lilacs, saffron, flowers of every sort..."<sup>132</sup> An

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>128</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 205.

<sup>129</sup> Eremya in *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* by Gülru Necipoğlu, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 205.

<sup>130</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 205.

<sup>131</sup> Kritovoulos in *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* by Gülru Necipoğlu, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 201.

<sup>132</sup> Angiolello in *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* by Gülru Necipoğlu, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 200.

account book from 1564 mentions an orange grove within the hanging gardens.<sup>133</sup> Another account book from 1621 mentions orange and lemon trees.<sup>134</sup> These citrus trees would have produced fruit that could have been plucked and eaten directly in the garden. Orange and lemon trees were also known for their delicate, fragrant flowers, that filled the gardens and kiosks with a sweet scent.

More account books record vineyards, which was corroborated by Thomas Dallam, who wrote of eating grapes for every meal during his stay at Topkapı Sarayı. Dallam also mentioned that “every oda [kiosk] or corner hath some excellent fruit tree or trees growing in them. Also, there is a great abundance of sweet grapes, and of diverse sorts, that a man may gather grapes every day of the year.”<sup>135</sup> From account books and descriptions it is clear that fruit trees and other productive, edible plants were dispersed throughout the garden.

In addition to producing fruit, the gardens of the Fourth Courtyard were also home to animals, which were both preserved in zoo-like conditions and hunted. Animals were kept in an enclosure near the Rose Garden and the Sea of Marmara.<sup>136</sup> Called the *Tokat Havlısı*, or Animal Keep, this space housed all types of animals from deer, foxes, hares, sheep, and goats to more exotic beings like those kept in the Lion House outside of the palace.<sup>137</sup> This space was also used for sacrificing sheep during *bayram*, thus beginning celebrations and feasts.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 200.

<sup>134</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 200.

<sup>135</sup> Thomas Dallam in *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* by Gülru Necipoğlu, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 200.

<sup>136</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 203.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

In addition to raising animals, both wild and domesticated, these outer gardens were used for hunting. Historians Tülay Artan, Ebru Boyar, and Kate Fleet have identified the Tokat Gardens as the sultan’s preferred hunting ground over several decades. However, Gülru Necipoğlu argues:

Besides the fields, vineyards, pastures, woods, and flower beds, the outer garden contained several pens and game preserves, filled with a variety of wild and domestic animals. The sultan’s private menagerie (complementing the one in the Hippodrome) was kept in a walled enclosure near the rose garden, by the Sea of Marmara. It is mentioned in an account book of 1564-1565 as the “animal keep” and was probably installed in Mehmed II’s time. He had similar ones at the Old Palace and in the Tokat Garden on the Bosphorus, where he and his successors went hunting.<sup>139</sup>

There is visual and anecdotal evidence to suggest that the sultan may have hunted at Topkapı Sarayı, even if the hunt was scaled down and resembled target practice. Before exploring these hunts in Topkapı Sarayı, it is important to look at full-scale imperial hunts in the *Hünername* to compare the styles of hunt.

The first image, titled “Yıldırım Bayezid’in Yenişehir’de avlanması” depicts a typical imperial hunt in Yenişehir (present-day Bursa).<sup>140</sup> (Appendix K) Sultan Beyazid is placed directly in the middle of the miniature shooting at three deer, a rabbit, a wolf, and a jaguar. Three servants stand behind him to offer more arrows. A group of seven men stand by in the foreground holding horses outfitted with provisions, dogs on leashes, and falcons. The hunt takes place in a rural setting complete with hills, bunches of trees, and a stream lined with flowers. The imperial hunt therefore seems to have three main elements: Sultan Bayezid successfully shooting at a variety of animals, a rural setting, and a hunting party to aid in his effort. While the hunting party is present, they seem to be included in the miniature to applaud the Sultan’s efforts rather than help him with

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<sup>139</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 203.

<sup>140</sup> “Yıldırım Bayezid’in Yenişehir’de avlanması”, *Hünername*, 1523-1524.

the hunt. Although they are outfitted with various hunting animals and weapons they merely stand by to watch the Sultan slaughter wild animals.

The next image in the *Hünername*, titled “Çelebi Sultan Mehmet’in Karaman Seferine niyet ettiği sırada Kızılırmak kenarında avlanması” commemorates Sultan Mehmet hunting in Kızılırmak, a river in Turkey.<sup>141</sup> (Appendix L) This miniature shows a significant amount of movement. Sultan Mehmet is mounted on a horse with his hand similarly positioned as he has just shot an arrow. A flock of large birds flees in front of them, one having been struck down by his weapon. Three servants are again positioned behind him, offering arrows, but this time on horseback. The men in the foreground are riding horses and walking on foot and holding hunting falcons. The background appears remarkably similar, with rocky hills, scattered trees, and a river lined with rocks and flowers. Once again, this miniature captures the imperial hunt in a rural setting with the Sultan shooting at wild animals and a hunting party standing by with supplies.

Finally, a third image in the *Hünername* is titled “Yavuz Sultan Selim’in Dulgadır Hükümdarı Âlâüddevle’ye karşı seferi sırasında Küskün deresi kenarında otağ kurduğu yerde kaplan avlaması”.<sup>142</sup> (Appendix M) Here, Sultan Selim is tiger-hunting near the Küskün River. This miniature shows the most action, with Sultan Selim mounted on a galloping horse. The Sultan’s arm is drawn back, slinging an arrow that strikes a large cat through his head. There is a remarkable amount of blood in the miniature, which contrasts to the animal’s white coat. Two men on leaping horses ride behind the Sultan, simply watching his victorious catch. In the background, falconers release their birds into the rocky hills. In the foreground, two of the Sultan’s

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<sup>141</sup> “Çelebi Sultan Mehmet’in Karaman Seferine niyet ettiği sırada Kızılırmak kenarında avlanması”, *Hünername*, 1523-1524.

<sup>142</sup> “Yavuz Sultan Selim’in Dulgadır Hükümdarı Âlâüddevle’ye karşı seferi sırasında Küskün deresi kenarında otağ kurduğu yerde kaplan avlaması”, *Hünername*, 1523-1524.

dogs chase a deer, a gazelle, and a rabbit away from the river. This lively miniature again depicts a successful, rural hunt in which the Sultan shoots the animal and is observed by members of the hunting party.

Two European travelers claim that they witnessed similar hunts within the gardens at Topkapı Sarayı. According to Lorenzo Bernardo, writing in 1592, Sultan Murad II:

...holds hunts in his garden, having had not only deer and goats but also wild board, bears, and lions brought in, and standing at a window he watches his *acemi oğlans* hunt. He also has birds of every kind brought there, and riding a horse through his garden he watches them fly; and in short, all the pleasures of the hunt which the other princes have in the countryside, he has within his palace and enjoys them at his leisure.<sup>143</sup>

Bernardo is very specific in his claim that while some rulers hunted in the countryside, Sultan Murad II was able to hunt within the actual palace. This is supported by his claim that the Sultan watched the hunts from his window, which could have been a garden kiosk. Similar to the rural hunts in the miniatures from the *Hünername*, Sultan Murad II was known to mount his horse and watch the hunting falcons during these events. Bernardo does not give significant detail about how the animals were shot, but he does incorporate these well-known hunting themes, which suggests that the event could have taken place in Topkapı Sarayı. Instead of galloping and jumping over a river to shoot a tiger, the elements of the hunt were broken down and enjoyed leisurely, like riding horses or watching birds.

Bernardo also claimed that it was the Sultan's sons who hunted deer, goats, wild boards, bears, and lions. It is unlikely that bears and lions were hunted in these gardens, as they were

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<sup>143</sup> Lorenzo Bernardo in Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 219.

actually kept in zoo-like conditions outside of the palace.<sup>144</sup> Another traveler, Courmenin, described a tightly-controlled hunt taking place in Topkapı Sarayı. In his *Voiage* he wrote:

He [the sultan] sometimes has hunts in his palace which are very pleasant. He has many live boars caught, which they bring there into a place enclosed by canvas. When he wants to give them the pleasure, he has the Sultanas, eunuchs, and others whom he likes the most brought there. He gives each wild boar the name of one of his enemies, such as the King of Spain, whom he calls the Signor of Spain, the Duke of Florence, the Grand Master of Malta, and others in this manner; and after he has killed them by shooting them with arrows he gives his assistants great trophies...<sup>145</sup>

Courmenin describes another orchestrated hunt within Topkapı Sarayı. He supports Bernardo's claim that these hunts took place in the palace, and that wild boars were the main targets. According to Courmenin, the animals were brought in from elsewhere and confined by canvas, or perhaps a fence, either to separate them from the rest of the garden, or to make them easier to shoot. The sultan also supplied his own hunting party, inviting women from the Harem and their eunuchs to watch the performance. The hunt is a kind of game, with each animal representing an enemy of the Ottoman Sultan. Once they were executed, by the Sultan and no one else, those in the hunting party were rewarded. This account depicts an event similar to an imperial hunt, but scaled-down for use in Topkapı Sarayı.

These hunts in Topkapı Sarayı are supported by a single miniature in the second volume of the *Hünername*. (Appendix N).<sup>146</sup> In this miniature, Sultan Süleyman is positioned in front of a pen with one hand around a bow, the other is drawn back as if he has just shot an arrow. Inside the pen a stag lays dead with an arrow between its eyes, blood spurting from the fatal wound.

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<sup>144</sup> Alan Mikhail, *The Animal in Ottoman Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>145</sup> Courmenin in *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* by Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 219.

<sup>146</sup> *Eski Saray*, *Hünername*, in Nurhan Atasoy, *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 231.

Several onlookers cheer the Sultan's skillful maneuver. Outside the pen, a herd of deer, including bucks, doe, fawns, and rabbits flee between the cypress trees and cherry blossoms.

The scene reveals the nature of hunting in the palace grounds. Süleyman is accompanied by several members of his court who offer him arrows and guns, similar to the rural hunts in the *Hünername*. However, this hunt was clearly different in that the animals were caught and placed in pens prior to be hunting. Other animals were able to roam outside of these pens within the outer gardens. This model reproduced elements of a hunt in the wild: the herd of deer and rabbits, the dense forest, and the hunting party.

This hunt differed from rural hunts in that it was clearly regulated. The Sultan is depicted as standing near a tiled kiosk rather than riding on a horse, with his hunting party similarly positioned. The deer had already been captured and was enclosed in a tall, decorative fence. We can determine from this miniature that gardens were populated with animals purely to be hunted by the sultan and his court. These animals included deer, foxes, goats, sheep, Indian cows, geese, ducks, and other types of birds.<sup>147</sup> It is also worth noting that most of these animals were commonly eaten by the Ottoman elite. This raises the question: what happened to these animals after they were killed? Were they simply hunted for sport or were they actually prepared by the kitchen to feed the Sultan? According to Tülay Artan, the Ottomans hated wasting meat.<sup>148</sup> Perhaps this supports the idea that animals hunted in Topkapı Sarayı were eaten later on.

From this miniature we can conclude that specific areas in the garden were set aside for the purpose of recreating the imperial hunt within the confines of the palace. This meant that gardens

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<sup>147</sup> Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 213.

<sup>148</sup> Tülay Artan, *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922* (SUNY Press, 2000).

were large, multifaceted areas. This miniature also shows that, in addition to fruits and vegetables, fresh meat may have been available in Topkapı Sarayı's gardens.

Animals were an important component of Ottoman gardens, as wild features, as domestic being, and as hunting targets. Gardens therefore served as spaces to practice animal husbandry and to hunt for sport. Although animals may appear as vastly different features from plants, both plants and animals in Ottoman gardens were used as food sources. Whereas *bostancis* nurtured and harvested Topkapı's edible plants, the sultan was actively engaged in hunting the animals that may have been consumed by the court.

### *Conclusion*

By weaving together architectural, visual, and literary evidence, it becomes clear that Topkapı Sarayı's gardens played a significant role in the culture of elite pleasure. These outdoor spaces enriched the senses with colorful flora and richly adorned kiosks filled with soft satin pillows and velvet curtains. Garden dwellers could listen to music and birdsongs which were complemented by the perfume of roses and aloes-wood. The whole experience was enhanced by sweet sips of sherbet imbued with notes of citrus blossoms and rosewater.

Of the sixty-one gardens that enveloped Topkapı Sarayı, many of these verdant spaces nurtured edible plants. According to travel writers, these gardens grew every fruit, vegetable, and herb imaginable. The gardens certainly produced a wide variety of provisions, including cucumbers, spinach, cherries, peaches, lemons, limes, and roses. Within these gardens the Ottomans raised docile creatures such as ostriches, peacocks, and gazelles. Other gardens resembled game parks, where the sultan could hunt deer, goats, cows, and birds, all of which were

eaten by the Ottoman elite. These gardens were productive spaces that yielded much of Topkapı Sarayı's fruits and vegetables.

In addition to their agricultural uses, these green spaces provided an enchanting venue for dining. Topkapı Sarayı's agricultural gardens were planted outside the Imperial Kitchens, the Infirmary, the Helvahane, and the Chemistry Laboratory, suggesting a relationship between agriculture, food preparation, and consumption. While the kitchens were extensive spaces, Topkapı Sarayı did not contain a formal dining area. Instead, the portable nature of Ottoman dining culture allowed for meals to be consumed in the garden. Book paintings show the sultan dining in kiosks, which were used as transitional spaces that incorporated elements of the garden and the luxuries of the palace.

Topkapı's vast gardens were also used for social purposes. The sultan and his subjects used the gardens to admire the flora and fauna. Gardens also provided a backdrop for conversation, storytelling, and reading poetry. The Harem women played games outdoors and the sultan threw extravagant parties in his private gardens. The gardens provided a view-space for the Sea of Marmara and meandering paths for daily walks. The gardens surrounding the Infirmary enhanced the healing abilities of the institution, and various kiosks served as spaces to meet with ambassadors and court officials. The sultan broke his Ramazan fast in a specific garden near the Baghdad Kiosk, which was also used as a space to court women and have sexual encounters. Topkapı Sarayı's gardens served a variety of social purposes, and could be used as a setting for anything from a quiet stroll to a fantastic celebration.

Topkapı Sarayı's gardens provided an organic atmosphere where meals were eaten and courtly socialization took place. An examination of these gardens shows how vital they were to both culinary and social culture. Topkapı Sarayı's gardens were lavish and the food and activities

that took place within them reflected the elite nature of the space. In addition to the royal gardens, the entire city of Istanbul was surrounded by gardens, including private elite gardens, vegetable gardens (bostans), orchards, and public parks. Further research is needed to fully ascertain the importance of food-producing gardens outside of Topkapı Sarayı and their role as social spaces.

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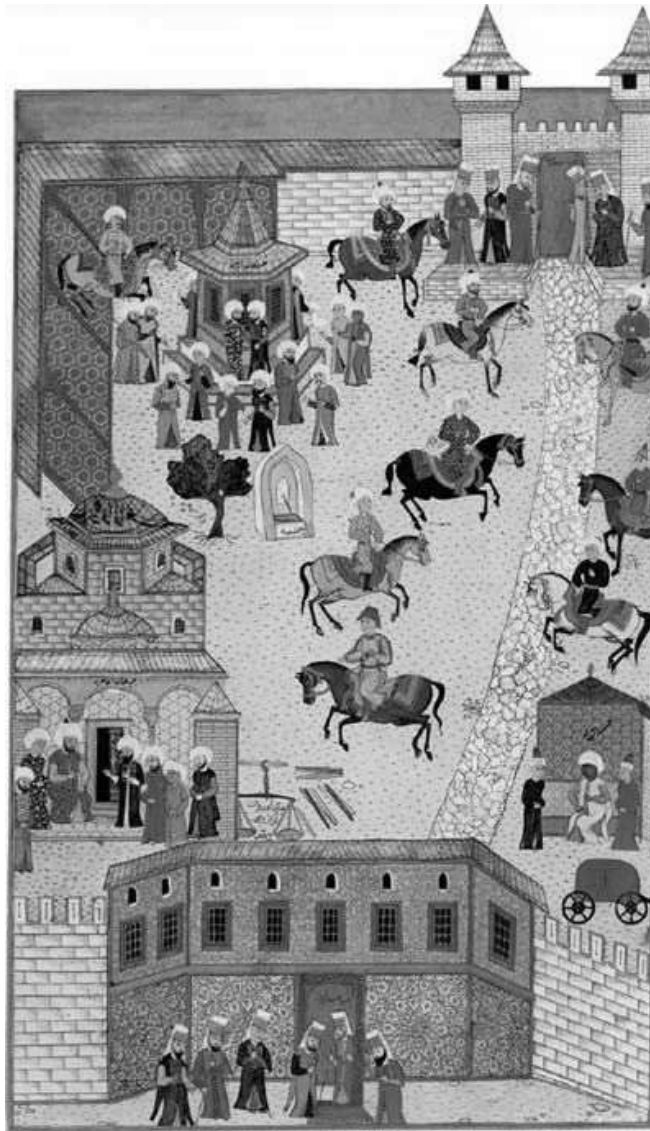
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Appendix B



“The First Court” book painting from the *Hünername I*, printed in *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 24.

Appendix C



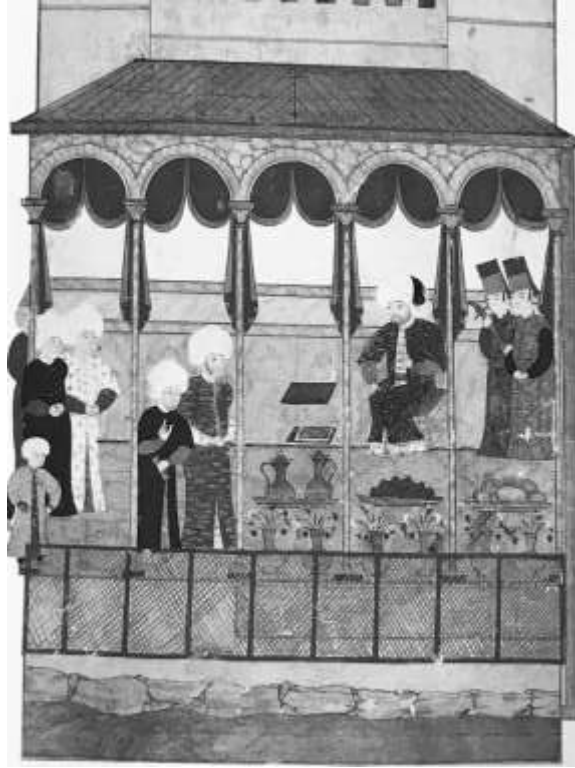
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Appendix D



“Bab-ı Saadet, İkinci Avlu ve Kubbealtı”, *Hünernâme*, 1523-1524.

## Appendix E



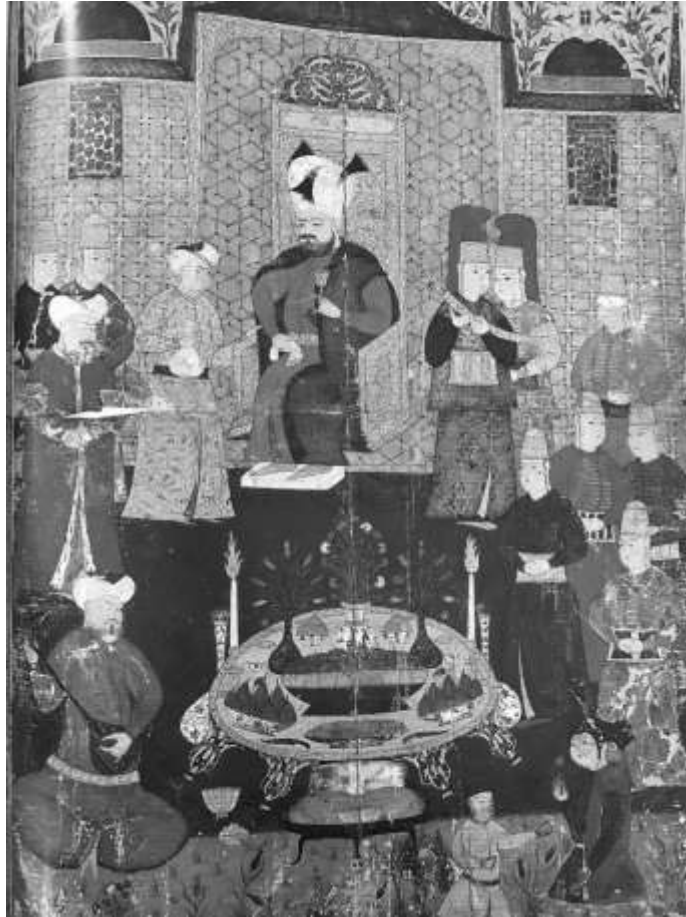
“One of the Kiosks in the Garden of the Silivri Palace” book painting in the Şehname-i Selim Han, printed in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 31.

Appendix F



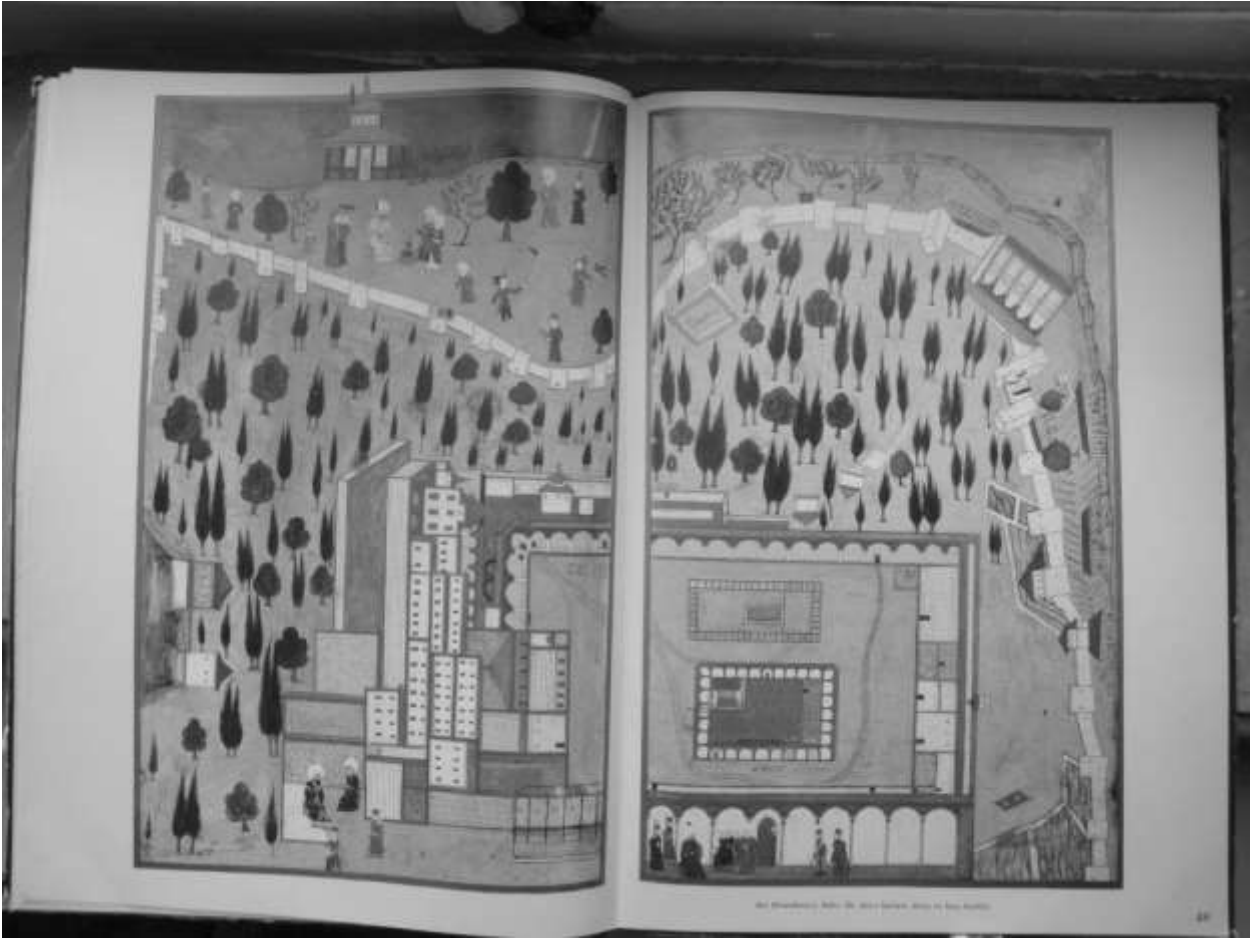
“Raised Garden Kiosk for a Single Person Covered with Hexagonal Wall Tiles, from Mehmed II’s Reign” book painting in the *Katibi Külliyyatı*, printed in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 28.

Appendix G



“A Gathering Presided Over by Sultan Murad IV” book painting in the Murakka, printed in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayinevi, 2011), 70.

Appendix H



“Arz Divanhanesi Bab-ı Ali, Sur-ı Sultanı, deniz ve bazı köşkler”, *Hünername*, 1523-1524

Appendix I



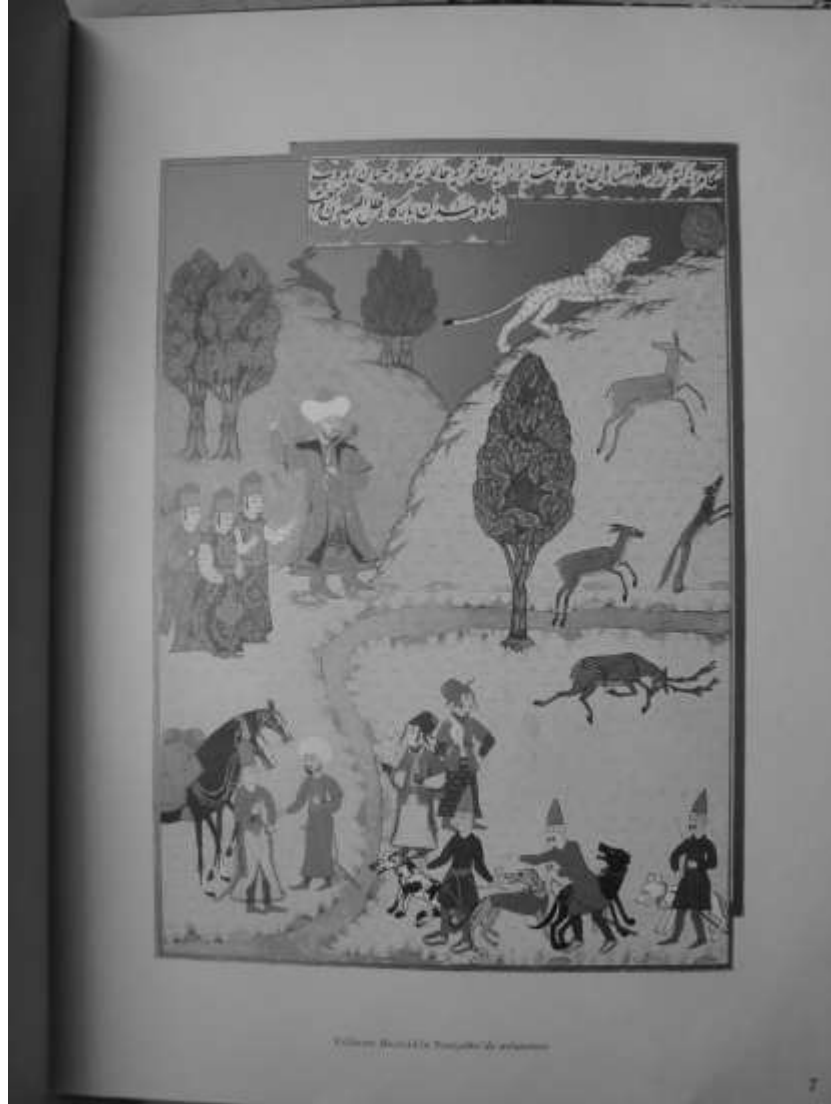
“A Garden Kiosk Constructed High to Allow a Better View of the Garden” book painting in the Hamse of Nevai, printed in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayinevi, 2011), 29.

Appendix J



“Party in the Harem Garden” book painting in the Ahmed I Album, printed in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 157.

Appendix K



“Yıldırım Bayezid’in Yenişehir’de avlanması”, *Hünernâme*, 1523-1524.

Appendix L



“Çelebi Sultan Mehmet’in Karaman Seferine niyet ettiği sırada Kızılırmak kenarında avlanması”, *Hünernâme*, 1523-1524

Appendix M



“Yavuz Sultan Selim’in Dalgadır Hükümdarı Âlâüddevle’ye karşı seferi sırasında Küskün deresi kenarında otağ kurduğu yerde kaplan avlaması”, *Hünername*, 1523-1524

Appendix M



“Eski Saray” book painting from the Hünername II, printed in *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 231.