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Personal Image of Abdulhamid II in the Turkish Historiography in the 21. Century

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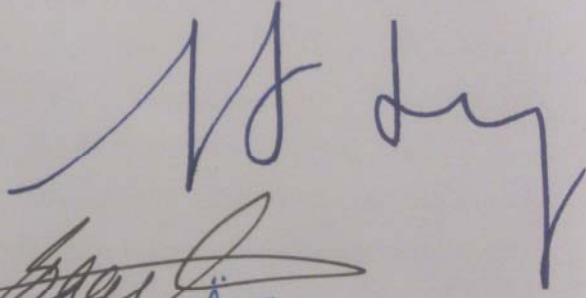
Personal Image of Abdulhamid II in the Turkish Historiography in the 21. Century

21. Yüzyıl Türk Tarihyazımında Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Kişisel İmajı

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Introduction

In the article of Nadir Özbek, where he examines the historiography regarding the period of Abdulhamid by modernity, history and ideology, he expresses that the historiography regarding the period of Abdulhamid II has experienced important changes during the recent period and that the polarization with regards to “Red Sultan, or Almighty Khan?”, developed in the shadow of the ideological division between the Islamic and secular societies, is overcome greatly in the academic historiography. But there is also an emphasis on that, the polarization continues in the non-academic popular historiography. He tells about that in general the political elite of the Republic has excluded the Ottoman Empire until the 1950’s, And the period of Abdulhamid has excluded from the modernization expression , from the apprehension of the past, and links that as the reason for with the ideological need, possible to be defined as the creation of a secular and national identity. It is tried to include the period of Abdulhamid into the basic modernization narration by academic historiography and this is realized by the limited works of the 1970’s and 1980’s and the phd thesis and new monographic works during the recent periods. The period of Abdulhamid is handled as a separate sub-period and the development attempts of this period are handled by the economic history works of the 1970’s and 1980’s. This is a non-ideological, technical narration. A moderate approach shaped for the Abdulhamid regime by the emphasise on that these infrastructure advances realized in the period of Abdulhamid were very important for the success of the National Struggle and the foundation attempts of the Republican Turkey. There is a serious role of the economic historiography seen in defeating the efforts of denial

regarding the period of Abdulhamid. The continuity at the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic came to the foreground by the shaped new historiography. This revisionist historiography sense has included the period of Abdulhamid in to the Ottoman – Turkish modernization narration. The historiography regarding the period of Abdulhamid has realized an important theoretical advance by backing itself with the accretion of the initial revision effort and the Europe centralist approach is overcome by a common global time idea where also the local conditions were included. A midway approach like “he was neither an Almighty Khan nor the Red Sultan” or “he was despotic, but at the same time reformist”, asserting to be objective and scientific has developed regarding Sultan Abdulhamid II by the influence of the academic historiography, too.¹ When we look at the historiography of particularly the 19th century, we see that one of the issues, on which the studies crystallizing by utilizing the Ottoman and Western archives or the primary sources in the western languages focus is Abdulhamid II. The interest for particularly the period of Abdulhamid II increased by the archive collections which came to daylight as of particularly the mid of the 1980’s and it started to begin to yield as of the beginning of the 1990’s. These years were the years when political, administrative and ideological historiography studies on the period of Abdulhamid II started along with studies on the Reformation and Constitutional Period. The issue regarding Abdulhamid II has attracted the most interest along with the Constitutional Period.²

And when we look at the 2000’s, we can clearly see that the interest for Sultan Abdulhamid II, mentioned above, still continues. A person, who performs a short search among the references in order to read about the theme, will be faced with tens of books written or re-printed in Turkey during this period. In this point, we have to mention about the reasons of this increasing interest after the year 2000.

First reason is about the history writing; the critical approach against the decline paradigm. The periodization of the Ottoman history by separating it in some eras like Rise, Expansion, Stagnation, Decline and Dissolution is accepted as the most harmful stereotype. And also it is described as one of the most serious obstacle of understanding of the Ottoman history.³ Erhan

¹ Özbek, Nadir, “Modernite, Tarih ve İdeoloji: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Tarihçiliği Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme”, *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, Cilt 2, Sayı 1, 2004, 71-90

² Özel, Oktay; Çetinsaya, Gökhan, “Türkiye’de Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinin Son Çeyrek Yüzyılı: Bir Bilanço Denemesi”

³ Afyoncu, Erhan, *Sorularla Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, Yeditepe Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2010 p.29-30

Afyoncu points out that, this periodization base on the military successes. Namely, the other factors do not taken into consideration. In the most of the academic studies of the recent years generally accept that, this decline period as an evolution era. Afyoncu mentions about what Suraiya Faroqhi told and he reminds that, today Ottoman historians refuse the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire and they interest with how this empire could continue in a big depression in 300 years. In that point we see some bureaucratic and regional economic successes of the empire, as an example. In that decline issue, we have to mention about Cemal Kafadar's writings.⁴ He clearly says that, he does not sure about the issue of Ottoman decline, as an Ottoman historian. Until recently, historians unquestioningly accepted that, the last 350 years of the empire was a decline period. However, historians started to examine that issue in the last 20 years. Even some historians started to refuse the term of "decline". Kafadar asks that, does a decline process lasts for more than the half of an empire's life? He entitles this era as an "Renewal Process" of the empire and he shows the Abdulhamid II period as the most important turning point of that renewal process. This new approach causes an inclination to the subject of Abdulhamid II.

The second reason is political and related with the political atmosphere of the Turkey. The ground seems proper for increasing interest to the Ottoman Empire, Abdulhamid II, etc. The political atmosphere of the era discuss as neo-Ottomanist.⁵ The book named "Türk Dış Politikası" which prepared by Baskın Oran mentions about this topic like that; this theme firstly rise in the 90's, in the period of Turgut Ozal and it continued with the administration of Necmettin Erbakan. The book says that, finally in the Justice and Development Party era, Turkey's foreign policy discussed as neo-Ottomanist oriented. This book emphasize that, the heads of the government made some eulogistic speeches about the Ottoman Empire. That is to say, the political atmosphere of the Turkey is incentive for the increasing interest of the Ottoman history and Abulhamid II as important name for the transition between the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. The supporters of the politics also interested with this history books as a reader. This relation between the politics and history also can be seen in the book of Mustafa Armağan.⁶ He says that, the history always visible in the development periods of the Turkey. Armağan remarks that, Turkey discovered Manzikert and Mehmed II in the Democrat Party

⁴ Kafadar, Cemal, Osmanlı Tarihinde Gerileme Meselesi, "Osmanlı Tarihini Yeniden Yazmak Gerileme Paradigmasının Sonu", Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011 p.97-150

⁵ Oran, Baskın (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşı'ndan Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar (Cilt III 2001-2012)*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013 p.196-197

⁶ Armağan, Mustafa, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarla Dansı 2*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013 p.11-12

administration (Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes); and neo-Ottomanism discovered in the administration of Turgut Ozal. Mustafa Armagan says that, today we are in a new development period and we can see the history in a full screen so Abdulhamid II seems closer to us. He mentions about the importance of understand to Abdulhamid II. The increasing interest after the year 2000 seems to arise partially from this importance.

The third reason is naturally about the popular culture. We can say that, Abdulhamid II issue takes its share from the increasing interest to the history books. This high relevance can be seen from an article⁷; it says that, today the history books are living their golden age. The interest is increasing day by day and the books of İlber Ortaylı, Mustafa Armagan, Halil İnalçık and Feridun Emecen republishing in a very short time. The books, periodicals, TV serials, movies and some history programs on the television also support this relevance. The interest increased 100% in a five years. Thus, we can say that the subject of Abdulhamid II is also effected from this increasing relevance.

At this point seemed the theme Abdulhamid II in our local historiography of the 21st century to be a suitable and amazing theme to work on. A volume of 59 books comes together when we establish a reading list with the provisions to be printed (initial print or re-print) in the year 2000 and later, that the writer is domestic, that title and theme is Abdulhamid II. This figure constitutes the majority of the historiography of the period mentioned. Even if it is possible that there are sources, which are somehow overseen, printed when our work was formed or completed etc., it is hoped that these will be able to provide sufficient material with respect to see the trends of the 21st century's historiography of Turkey. All in all, the purposed is not to handle all books and utilize these in a consuming manner.

We saw the following when we looked at the printing dates of the sources; there was **1** book printed in **2001**, **1** book printed in **2003**, **2** books in **2004**, **1** book in **2006**, **8** books in **2007**, **8** books in **2008**, **3** books in **2009**, **9** books in **2010**, **6** books in **2011**, **6** books in **2012**, **11** books in **2013**, and **3** books in **2014**. As to be seen, there was a rich print pool available to us as readers. The richness wasn't only in terms of numbers, but there was also a plenitude in terms of theme diversity. Beside many in a general frame written books about Sultan Abdulhamid

⁷ <http://www.aksam.com.tr/guncel/yakin-tarih-kitaplari-altin-cagini-yasiyor/haber-152016>

II, we met a wide range about many issues like censor, family life, internal policy, foreign policy, provincial correspondences, the Yıldız courts, palace ceremonials, the Armenian issue, the cross policy, masonry, memories, the petrol issue, the education advance, social aid policies, public buildings, the Young Turks and Thessaloniki, heritage, property issues etc. We had a popular subject, a satisfactory list of sources in terms of numbers, theme diversity and a history student who longed to work. But it was impossible to write a postgraduate thesis by looking through such a wide frame on the wide area. It was necessary to narrow our perspective somehow and that it intensively focuses on the determined point.

When the sources in the list were acquired and read, we see that, there was a theme diversity in the books, but in some points, most of our sources progressing on definite headings and issues. Some subjects like “Meanness”, “Apprehension”, “Belief”, “Education” were common in most of our books. A subject I met when I was thinking about these issues influenced the formation of the perspective.

The word “history” means the science, which tells the events arising from movements which influence societies, nations, establishments by indicating time and location, examines the relations between these events, their links to previous or later events, their interactions, the civilization established by every nation.⁸ This science records, explains and interprets the events in the past; it is a science branch within the human sciences. This science branch is written, told and learned with words. And the words are always bearing a meaning and this meaning may vary depending on the emphasis, punctuation, formation of the sentence, establishment of the paragraph. At this point shows the usage of words as the tool clearly the existence of the subjectivity factor. That’s why not the historical events, but only the interpretation way of history is subjective. Historians use words in order to reveal their history knowledge, lean on documents. And the historian feels the necessity to express his own opinion when the documents contain contrary information. And this results in that the achieved results may vary from one historian to another. In some cases resembles the situation of historian the reconstruction of a pot, split into hundreds of pieces, by the available ten-twenty pieces of it and he has to benefit from his personal or subjective judgement at this point. Briefly, history is made by human and human are creatures with a psychology.⁹

⁸ www.tdk.gov.tr

⁹ Çelikkol, Ahmet, *Tarih Psikiyatrisi Divanında*, Stüdyo İmge, İstanbul, 2002 p.11-16

As of the expression of his opinion regarding the importance of history and culture in human psychology in the 1920's by Lev Vygotsky became "cultural historical psychology" one of the basic psychology schools under names like "socio-historical psychology", "cultural historical activity theory", "social development theory". Examinations at the scientific work sharing came to the agenda by the developments experienced in the field of psychology as the time passed. At present have the studies performed in the field between history and psychology began to include a perspective on history from psychology and to be called as "psychohistory".¹⁰ The Association For Psychohistory, which states that it is performing studies since 40 years on this issue and has its centre in New York, defines this science as the science of historical motivations, which combines the emotional roots of the past and present behaviours of social and political groups, nations with the studying methodology of social sciences and the knowledge accumulation of psychotherapy.¹¹

The subject of history is events experienced by individuals and societies. Then this means that it is inevitable to examine these events and particularly the subjects of these events and to make psychological statements with regards to them. This means the presentation of the cultures, personalities, beliefs, life philosophies, social environments of these persons, who change the history, who shape the history; therefore it is thought that the historian, who tries to understand also the individuals and groups as much as the societies in the past, should benefit from the science of psychology.¹²

The methodology of psychohistory focuses on four main steps.

1. Primarily, since we approach history from a psychological aspect, it is aimed to reveal the role of the unconscious at human behaviour which are to be seen in the life styles, creativity and elevation, personality attributes, tongue slips.
2. The second is that psychohistory addresses dynamic psychology. According to this approach; the reality in present time always depends on and interacts with the unconscious of the person in his/her personal and social past.

¹⁰ Göka, Erol, "Türkiye'de Tarihyazımı (ed. Vahdettin Engin&Ahmet Şimşek)", Yeditepe Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2011 p.471-472

¹¹ www.psychohistory.com

¹² Karabağ, Gülin, "Tarih Nasıl Yazılır? Tarihyazımı İçin Çağdaş Bir Metodoloji (ed.Ahmet Şimşek), Tarihçi Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2011 p. 241

3. The third feature of psychohistory is the recognition of the personal and subjective experience of the individual and the acceptance of that his inner world is full with aggression and sexuality, passion and fantasies.
4. Psychohistorians need to have the skills to empathize with. Psychohistorians need to use and use their feelings in order to understand, interpret the subject they are working on. Actually, the importance of empathizing by the historian is to be seen in the same way at the approach of a psychoanalyst to his work. We need to fulfil the empathy requirement of psychology when we should approach history psychologically.¹³

When we look at the sources we have, our sources progressing on the common subjects about the personal features of Abdulhamid II. And they are close to the psychohistory's methodological steps. If we follow the steps of psychohistory, this can create an easiness to us for classify our topics from the different books for preparing a project. As we can see in the text, the personal features of the monarch are dealt with by issues like apprehension, belief, meanness and money addiction; many developments of the period and the behaviour of the monarch are explained with his unconscious in his personal and social past; his personal and subjective experience are taken into consideration and our writers were presenting a perspective by empathizing somehow and by using these data. For example is the administration of Sultan Abdulhamid II called the "Autocracy Period" was being linked with his apprehensive attribute, his commercial skills, financial policies, issues like Hazine-i Hassa (the Private Treasury of the Ottoman Sultan) were being explained with his meanness and his addiction to money, and his personal belief was being associated with his regime. According to an opinion for example had Sultan Abdulhamid II filled his environment with spies and even assigned spies after the prime minister of the period. Beside this, it can be alleged that the Sultan was forced to handle like this due to the unsafe conditions of those times. This discussion can be and is being conducted in every situation. Sultan Abdulhamid II is a person, who became as part of history with his sins and good deeds. When a claim is made, those who don't share this opinion will make their own claims, too. Actually, this happens and as a result of this becomes Sultan Abdulhamid II, defined as the "Red Sultan" by the opinion close to the Reforms of the Republic, "Abdulhamid Khan, Rest in Peace" by the opinion with a greater weight to religious attributes.¹⁴ This means that our sources, which use the

¹³ Çelikkol, *Tarih Psikiyatri Divanında.*, p.25

¹⁴ Çelikkol, *Tarih Psikiyatri Divanında.*, p.18

common methodology with psychohistory and present their analysis on the personality of Abdulhamid II, were presenting different historical interpretations by also mixing their own world view into the mortar. Many issues during the reign of the monarch were explained by referring to the developments of the principedom period or the policies he applied as a political figure were interpreted by the personal attributes of the monarch. We had at this point narrowed our perspective on the 21st century local Abdulhamid II historiography products greatly and determined our target clearer; we would look at the person of Abdulhamid II in our sources. The personal attributes of Sultan Abdulhamid II... But via which tool did we have to approach this subject? Meaning, what transmitted us these analysis?

Since history is something which can be negotiated on when historians imagine it in form of a narration, it seems to be not possible to establish a text without narration in historiography. History without a link to narration, even if very thin, is not possible and history is handled within the scope of narration by setting off from this pre-acceptance.¹⁵ No matter how much history leans on documents and information, it will always be a construction fictionalized by the historian in his mind. Fahri Sakal mentions that who perform scientific historiography on this issue, allege that they only depend on documents and that they are hundred percent neutral but Hayden White asserted that the historians are not that objective as thought of them. According to White, historians as poets, writers or scriptwriters, they fictionalizing the documents they found about the past pursuant to their own perspective. No matter how much they stick to the documents, at the end it is about an imaginal presentation. The historian plans and fictionalizes things in his mind and presents a fictional text by utilizing interpretations, descriptions, selected taken or not taken statistical values in order to proof it. Barraclough thinks that the history we learn is not constituted by factual but accepted judgements. The historian interprets the documents and residuals available to him and re-established the information in his mind since the facts in history are in fact events and fictions which the historian sees, interprets and shapes in his mind. This means that history is the work of human which has a spirit and emotions. This results in that people carry us to the past on the path drawn by their feelings and we call this history.¹⁶

¹⁵ Safran, Mustafa; Şimşek, Ahmet, “Anlatı Bağlamında Tarihyazımının Sorunları”

¹⁶ Sakal, Fahri, “Tarihyazımında Temel Kavramlar”, Tarih Nasıl Yazılır? Tarihyazımı İçin Çağdaş Bir Metodoloji (ed.Ahmet Şimşek) p.86-87

It was shaped with which tools we would approach the books dealing with the personality of Sultan Abdulhamid II in the light of the information mentioned above. We would look at what kind of a personality our local 21st century historiography dealing with Abdulhamid II and his period reveal by taking into consideration that these are all in all works of human with spirit and emotions works, even if they assert to be scientific, by following a methodology similar to the methodology used by psychohistory. Meaning briefly the personal image of Abdulhamid II in the 21st century historiography in Turkey. With other words; the narrations about Sultan Abdulhamid II in our sources.

The work will be constructed in two large parts with regards to its basic skeleton. The first of these parts will be on critical and synthetic reading, principally contain factual information we determined in our sources, examine the principedom and monarch periods of Sultan Abdulhamid II under two main headings because the sultan's complicated personality can not be discussed without his childhood and youth period.¹⁷ And in the second part will the weight be given analysis, and the text will be constructed around comparison and classification of the factual information. Beside this will the determined common features of the narrations about Abdulhamid II in the sources be transmitted in this part. We need to tell briefly why the thesis is constructed on two main parts, being a part constructed on critical and synthetic reading, dealing with factual information, and the second part containing analysis, comparisons and classification. The main purpose of this is to distinguish factual information from analysis. It is aimed that the person, who takes and reads the text, can first see those told in the sources about Abdulhamid II uninterrupted in order to allow him to follow the determinations in the analysis section easier. In addition to this, since the sub-headings examining the personal image of the Sultan are such to be interrelating and contain references from the principedom to sultanate, from the sultanate to principedom (all in all, it is a life of a person and presents a continuity), it is considered to be an advantage to transmit the factual information to the reader uninterrupted at the beginning. On the other side will the separate examination of the principedom and reign periods facilitate transmission of the narration, advancing on the line of the "the reality in present time always depends on and interacts with the unconscious of the person in his/her personal and social past" step of the methodology of

¹⁷ Alkan, Necmettin, *Avrupa Karikatürlerinde II. Abdülhamid ve Osmanlı İmajı*, Selis Kitaplar, İstanbul, 2006, p.18

psychohistory. As mentioned before are many applications of Sultan Abdulhamid II explained by linking these to his character and past. And the analysis part will be a part where the factual information in the first part are compared and interpreted, and beside this, the common narration features of the sources will be handled.

PART I: CRITICAL AND SYNTHETIC READING

Chapter 1: THE PRINCEDOM PERIOD

1.1. His Mother and His Stepmother

The first of the issues we will handle in the first part of our work regarding the personal life of Sultan Abdulhamid II, dealing with his principedom period, is related to the mother/mothers of the sultan. We are talking about his mother/mothers, because the little prince Abdulhamid, who had lost his mother at early ages due to a disease, was given to another lady in the Harem and his relation to his stepmother followed a course close to merely the relation between a real mother and her child. There are narrations related to both ladies existing in the books regarding the life of Sultan Abdulhamid II and there is no doubt that these narrations play the role of a valuable aid regarding what kind of a portrait of the sultan is drawn in our sources.

When we scan the sources available to us, we meet nearly the same short information regarding the birth mother of Prince Abdulhamid. But, even if rarely, we meet comments related to this lady and these comments/stories are in a closer relation to our subject.

Whilst a broad information related to the birth mother of Sultan Abdulhamid II is already nearly not available in any source, some books have reserved more space for the issue, and some have shortly mentioned and concluded. Books, which provide short information on the issue overpass the subject with small notations like; “...his mother is *Tir-i Müjgan Kadın Efendi... Abdulhamid II has lost his mother when he was 11 yars old...*”¹⁸, “*Abdulhamid II, from Tir-i Müjgan Kadın Efendi, the concubine of Abdülmecid with Cherkess origin, was born on September 21st 1842 in Istanbul. Upon the decease of his mother due to tuberculosis...*”¹⁹, “*He is the son of the Ottoman monarch Sultan Abdülmecid and the younger brother of Murad V. He was born on September 21st 1842 in Istanbul. His mother is*

¹⁸ Engin, Vahdettin, *II. Abdülhamid ve Dış Politika*, Yeditepe Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2007 p.15

¹⁹ Hülügü, M. Metin, *Sultan II.Abdülhamid'in Sürgün Günleri Atf Hüseyin Bey*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013 p.23

Tir-i Müjgan Kadın Efendi. Since he lost his mother when he was 11 years old... ”²⁰, “He is the second son of Sultan Abdülmecid and was delivered by mother is Tir-i Müjgan Sultan in 1842. Prince Abdulhamid, who had lost his mother when he was 10 years old... ”²¹, “His father is Sultan Abdülmecid (1839-1861), who had declared the Reformation Edict, and his mother is Tir-i Müjgan Kadın Efendi... Abdulhamid II has lost his mother when he was 11 years old... ”,²² “He is the son of Sultan Abdülmecid born by Tir-i Müjgan Kadın Efendi. Abdulhamid, who was the 34th Ottoman Monarch, was born on September 21st 1842. His mother deceased when he was 6 years old.”²³ When we look at the common aspects of the large majority of these sources for which we gave examples above, we see that these are not publications which focus as the subject not on the life of Sultan Abdulhamid II, but on the different issues during the period of the sultan. In this sense, it would already be inappropriate to request much detailed information from these sources.

And a part of our books, whilst again not providing information related to the details, contribute to the issue by making small additions to the sentences similar to those mentioned above.

For example, Ziya Nur Aksun transmits from Ayşe Sultan, the daughter of Sultan Abdulhamid II, that Tir-i Müjgan Kadın-Efendi was a member of the Cherkessian Şapsıg Clan, famous for her elegance, kindness and beauty, had green hazel eyes, a lady with light brown and rather long hair, a white transparent skin, thin stature, a very beautiful lady.²⁴ And we learn from the book of Levon Panos Dabagyan that this lady sultan with a short life had give birth two princes and a princess, that she had lost her first child Naime Sultan in March 1843 when she was 1 ½ years old due to variola, that her second child was Abdulhamid II and that her third child was Prince Abid Efendi, who deceased in May 1848 when he was nearly one months old.²⁵ Though also this book of Dabagyan is not a book directly related to the life story of Sultan Abdulhamid II, it provides, even with a couple of sentences, more information regarding the mother of the sultan. Another book writes that the mother of Prince Abdulhamid, who was two years younger than Murad V, who became one of the women of

²⁰ Nazif, Süleyman, *Bir Sultan Abdülhamid Müdafaaanamesi Hatırat-ı Sultan Abdülhamid-i Sani*, Lotus Yayinevi, Ankara, 2007 p.49

²¹ Ayyıldız, Nigar, *II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Saray Merasimleri*, Doğu Kütüphanesi, İstanbul, 2008 p.17

²² Engin, Vahdettin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul’u*, Yeditepe Yayinevi, İstanbul, 2008 p.1

²³ Çabuk, Vahid, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid*, Paraf Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010 p.13

²⁴ Aksun, Ziya Nur, *II. Abdülhamid Han*, Ötüken Neşriyat A.Ş., İstanbul, 2010 p. 13-14

²⁵ Dabağyan, Levon Panos, *Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler*, Kum Saati Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001 p.14

Abdülmeçid when she was the head of the female servants, who was trained in the palace, and achieved until the title of the Second Kadın Efendi, deceased on October 3rd 1852 due to tuberculosis and was buried in the sepulchre in the New Mosque.²⁶ Another information regarding the past of Tirimüjgan Kadın Efendi in the palace and how she married Sultan Abdülmeçid is provided in Süleyman Kani İrtem's book "Bilinmeyen Abdulhamid". İrtem states that the personality of Tirimüjgan Kadın was not one of those who gained education and importance in the palace and that she incidentally attracted the attention of Sultan Abdülmeçid while she was used for the services in the palace and achieved his familiarity. And as her age of decease, he indicates that she died at the age of twenty five or twenty six.²⁷ And in another source available to us, we meet the information, in addition to the common information, that the mother of Sultan Abdulhamid became one of the women of Sultan Abdülmeçid in 1839.²⁸ In this point we have to add a couple of small sentences about those written about the past of Tirümüjgan Kadın. As we mentioned before, the common point in the books is that, this lady is a lady of Cherkess origin educated in the palace. But the difference develops at the following point: whilst Süleyman Kani İrtem states that this lady was a women without much importance in the palace, Recep Babacan mentions in his book that, Ayşe Osmanoğlu transmitted that Tirümüjgan Kadın Efendi was a famous woman among the old heads of the female servants of the palace with her elegance, kindness and beauty.²⁹ And we meet again general information in the work of Yılmaz Öztuna which we benefited from in our study. Öztuna emphasizes in addition that the spouses of the most monarchs of the last period were of Cherkess origin as Tir-i Müjgan Kadın Efendi and this lady gave birth to Sultan Abdulhamid II when she was 23 years old and that she was 33 years old when she died due to tuberculosis.³⁰

The book among our boks, which deals the most with Tirimüjgan Kadın, the mother of Sultan Abdulhamid II, and the son of this lady, Prince Abdulhamid and the details of the mother-son relation between them, the words of Ayşe Osmanoğlu, the daughter of Sultan Abdulhamid II:

²⁶ Kazıcı, Ziya, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti*, Kayıhan Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013 p.19

²⁷ İrtem, Süleyman Kani, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, Temel Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003 p.37

²⁸ Yılmaz, Ömer Faruk, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Aile Hayatı*, Çamlıca Basım Yayın, İstanbul, 2013 p.21

²⁹ Babacan, Recep, *İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi Ulu Hakan Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han*, Next&Nextstar, 2013 p.18

³⁰ Öztuna, Yılmaz, *II. Abdülhamid Zamani ve Şahsiyeti*, Ötüken Neşriyat, İstanbul, 2013 p.17

“Tirimüjgan Kadın, our real grandmother, was loving his son, meaning my father, with the utmost level of the compassion and love of a mother. The unfortunate mother, who had experienced the sorrow for his daughter, was doing anything she could in order to make his son happy, though she was longing for her son, since she knew that she had an incurable disease and that she wouldn’t be able to see the marriage of her beloved son. She has been purchasing rather valuable gifts, preparing things for him as of his early ages for the case that he might accede to the throne one day... My father went every day to the Beylerbeyi Palace and visited his mother during her disease and turned back to the Dolmabahce Palace. Tirimüjgan Kadın was placing one purse with quarter liras and one purse of silver pennies under the red velvet pillows in front of her bed during the visits of her son and was saying “My lion, look what you will find under these pillows. My father got very happy when he had found these monies, and the unfortunate mother, knowing that she will not get enough of her son, was relieving the suffer of her heart by seeing the happiness of her son since she was considering on how she could entertain her son. At that times had all princess each a midget from the white eunuchs. And my father had a midget named İbrahim Efendi. He was both entertaining my father and paying much attention to him. The unfortunate mother never forgot to charge this man “Care on my child, he is entrusted to you...”. Finally the fatal day came. They had hidden a little that his mother had died, but my father, who slowly felt this, experienced his first pain with all its depth (1853)...”³¹

Ayşe Osmanoğlu, beside the details of the relations of Sultan Abdulhamid II with his mother above, transmits that her father had said “my poor mother, she has left us at a very young age; her vision is always in front of me; I never forgot her; she loved me very much; she made me sit in front of her and was contented with looking at my face during her disease; she spared to kiss me; may God rest her soul” when he was talking about his mother³², and adds that Sultan Abdulhamid II took the golden coffee tray and the golden salt shaker, which he used both during his regency period and later until his decease with him until Thessaloniki.³³

Tirimüjgan Kadın Efendi deceased while she was for air change in Beylerbeyi Palace due to her tuberculosis disease in early ages. It is stated that she was defeated by this disease due to having a weak body and having born three children and due to that some of her children had

³¹ Osmanoğlu, Ayşe, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013 p.24-25

³² Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.17

³³ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.24

died. It is clear that the treatment conditions of the period weren't such suitable like at present, too.³⁴ The decease date of Tirimüjgan Kadın Efendi are indicated different in the books we used in our work. We see in the book of Ömer Faruk Yılmaz the date 1852³⁵, at Süleyman Kani İrtem 1849³⁶, at Yılmaz Öztuna 3.10.1852³⁷, and at Ayse Osmanoglu 1853³⁸. Our books differentiate not only in terms of the birth date of Tirimüjgan Kadın Efendi, but also in terms of the age of Prince Abdulhamid when the lady deceased. To give an example; the age of the prince is stated as 6 in Vahid Çabuk's book³⁹, as 7 in Süleyman Kani İrtem's book⁴⁰, as 10 at Yılmaz Öztuna⁴¹; and as at Orhan Koloğlu⁴², Vahdettin Engin⁴³, Levon Panos Dabağyan⁴⁴, Süleyman Nazif⁴⁵ and Ziya Nur Aksun⁴⁶. Even if the age of the prince when he had lost his mother differentiates in our sourced, that Sultan Abdulhamid II was a little child during this decease and naturally felt a deep sorrow is fact on which all our books agree. Prince Abdulhamid, from whom the death of his mother was hidden for a while, slowly sensed the situation and felt a deep sorrow. Sultan Abdülmecid ordered his prince to him and hugged him tried to console him by kissing his eyes, cheek and saying "Don't cry my son! The will of Allah cannot be objected. I am both your mother and your father." It is stated that Sultan Abdülmecid called Prince Abdulhamid as "my emotional child".⁴⁷

The children of the sultan at little ages, of which the mother decease, are given to the adoptive mothership of preferably not baby delivered wives of the sultan or those who have lost their child even if they had delivered a baby. The first favourite Perestu (in some sources Piristu; means swallow in Persian) Hanımefendi was the 5th wife of Sultan Abdülmecid and couldn't deliver a child. This lady, who became later the 4th kadınefendi in 1861 was as it is transmitted by the expressions of Ayşe Sultan and her mother Müşfika Kadınefendi, a petty, little bitty lady of the Cherkessian Ubuhan Clan with blue eyes, golden blond hair, a transparent

³⁴ Babacan, *İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi Ulu Hakan Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.18

³⁵ Yılmaz, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Aile Hayatı*, p.23

³⁶ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.37

³⁷ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.17

³⁸ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.25

³⁹ Çabuk, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid*, p.13

⁴⁰ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.37

⁴¹ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.17

⁴² Koloğlu, Orhan, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, Pozitif Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010, s.17

⁴³ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul'u*, p.1,

"", *II. Abdülhamid ve Dış Politika*, p.15

⁴⁴ Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamid ve Ermeniler*, p.14

⁴⁵ Nazif, *Bir Sultan Abdülhamid Müdafaaanesi Hatırat-ı Sultan Abdülhamid-i Sani*, p.49

⁴⁶ Aksun, *II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.14

⁴⁷ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.25

skin.⁴⁸ Books dealing with the issue that Prince Abdulhamid was given to a stepmother after the death of his mother provide the name of the stepmother of the prince but don't provide any detailed information about this lady. The source providing the most detailed information among the books available to us about the stepmother of Prince Abdulhamid are the memories of her daughter Ayşe Osmanoğlu. Whilst again not providing any details, the only source which differentiates from the others among the books available to us with a small detail is the book of Süleyman Kani İrtem. İrtem states in his book "*Bilinmeyen Abdulhamid*" that Prince Abdulhamid was first given to the old Nevekmisal Hanım after the death of his mother by the order of his father and after the death of this lady he given to the education of the 4th Woman Perestu Hanım, who was respected and had an influence in the palace.⁴⁹ But, as mentioned before, we don't meet such information even in the memories of Ayşe Osmanoğlu, who has the most detailed narration on this issue. Ayşe Osmanoğlu states that Sultan Abdülmecid recognized that his prince, having lost his mother, was not at an age to manage his goods and property and gave him as a fosterling to Perestu Kadınefendi, who was the most valuable among his women and named for her piety, dignity and worldly-wisdom in order to avoid that he remains neglected and unattended.⁵⁰ Though some of our other books, which content with brief information about the stepmother of Prince Abdulhamid, provide shallow information about Perestu Kadınefendi, they indicate that this lady was a women with a good reputation, a favourite lady in the palace. In the book "Sultan Abdulhamid II'in Sürgün Günleri" (Exile Days of Sultan Abdulhamid II) of Metin Hülagü, he notes that Perestu Kadınefendi was one of the most influential women of the palace.⁵¹ In the book named "Sultan Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti" it is told that this lady was a very polite and kind lady and that she saw in Prince Abdulhamid her own son and had opened her arms full of compassion widely for him.⁵² In another book, it is noted that this honourable lady of the Cherkess Ubuhan Clan filled every heart with respect and fondness by her shining face, her politeness, her grace, elegance, that she was a lady who was extremely loved by the whole inhabitants of the palace, who was speaking with a rather melodious voice, slowly and less, who had devoted her whole life to her stepson Prince Abdulhamid and Cemile Sultan.⁵³ Levon Panos Dabagyan mentions this lady as a valuable woman respected by Sultan Abdülmecid, who had always preserved

⁴⁸ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.17-18

⁴⁹ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.37-38

⁵⁰ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.25

⁵¹ Hülagü, *Sultan II.Abdülhamid'in Sürgün Günleri Atıf Hüseyin Bey*, p.23

⁵² Kazıcı, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti*, p.20

⁵³ Yılmaz, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Aile Hayatı*, p.24

her beauty during her youth and agedness⁵⁴; and Yılmaz Öztuna transmits some details regarding the past of Perestu Kadınefendi and notes that this lady (1830?-1904), whose name means in Persian Swallow, was the adoptive daughter of Kucuk Esmâ Sultan, the famous elder sister of Mahmud II. It is stated that this lady, who was only 12 years elder than her adoptive son, was also the adoptive mother of her 11 months younger sister Cemile Sultan and that this child was given her 7 years before Prince Abdulhamid. It is therefore noted that Cemile Sultan was the most deary sibling of Sultan Abdulhamid II.⁵⁵ In brief, the relation between Prince Abdulhamid and his stepmother is narrated based on that Perestu Kadınefendi, who is praised in different forms, appropriated and grew the prince with compassion. Whilst all among our books, dealing with this issue, approach the issue from this point, an indirect negative effect of Perestu Kadınefendi on Prince Abdulhamid is mentioned only in the book of Orhan Koloğlu. He states that Prince Abdulhamid, who had a shy character, felt the absence of a strong mother in the world of internal struggles in the Harem, where the father never concerned about his children; that the kind, love generating, silent speaking character of Perestu Kadın, selected as the stepmother for him by his father, resulted in that the Abdulhamid team could not make their voice heard that much at the struggles in the harem.⁵⁶

Of course are those written about the relation between Sultan Abdulhamid II and his stepmother Perestu Kadınefendi not limited to these. Those written about this lady continue by including also the term after the coronation of Prince Abdulhamid. But we will continue with these sections in the part of our work which covers the sultanate period of Sultan II. Abdulhamid. Let's set a comma to the part of the issue, which includes the principedom period, by those written by Ayşe Osmanoglu, who tranmits us the most information about this issue; Ayşe Osmanoglu, the daughter of Sultan Abdulhamid II, states that one day her grandfather Sultan Abdülmecid ordered Prince Abdulhamid to his room and sat him in front of him, took him under the mantle he wore after he gave him many advises and took him to the apartement of the Forth Woman and introduced Perestu Kadınefendi as his new mother by saying "Look my woman! What a nice child I brought to you" and made him kiss her hand. It is noted that this prince, commended to Perestu Kadınefendi by Sultan Abdülmecid with the words "He is commended to you after Allah", and he also advised to Prince Abdulhamid to obey his mother. The determinations of Ayşe Osmanoglu at this point match with the

⁵⁴ Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler*, p.14

⁵⁵ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.18

⁵⁶ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.18

narrations in the books we mentioned before, in other words, those stated with regards to that this lady grew the prince commended to her with the compassion of a birth mother and that the prince was committed to his stepmother merely with the love to a birth mother follow the same line as the other books. This perfection of the mother-son relation is strengthened by the statement that Sultan Abdulhamid II said “When my mother would not have died, this were how far she would have been able to care on me” when he was talking about his stepmother. Let’s close the paragraph with a last contribution from the memories of Ayse Osmanoglu while we set a comma to the subject here; Osmanoglu says that her grandmother Tirimüjgan Kadın loved the most and always respected Perestu Kadınefendi among her fellows. At this point, that she did not know that her beloved son would be given as an adoptive son to this woman she liked one day is explained with the words “what to say to the judgement”.⁵⁷ Ayşe Osmanoglu provides with this detail a feature of a different coincidence and a nice meaning to the linkage of the fates of Sultan Abdulhamid II and his stepmother.

As we mentioned, we will handle the sections of the relation of Sultan Abdulhamid II with his stepmother, falling on in his sultanate period, later. But, even if not that much dealt with like the narrations regarding the mothers of the prince, in this point we need to touch on the relations between Prince Abdulhamid with the other members of his family, meaning his siblings and his father Sultan Abdülmecid. In any case, setting off from this subject, we will go over to the discussion whether Sultan Abdulhamid was loved/not loved by his father or not. But we will briefly handle a hearsay brought forward about Sultan Abdulhamid II. The reason why we will handle the issue under this heading is that this issue is an assertion brought forward about the mother of Sultan Abdulhamid II. Four of the books we used in our work deal with this issue. There is no information in the other books regarding this issue. The issue is the following; the assertion that Sultan Abdulhamid II were born of an Armenian lady named “Candır” or “Canbert” is being mentioned.⁵⁸ The attention is attracted in all four books dealing with this assertion on that this assertion is unfounded. Süleyman Kani İrtem states that this assertion was brought forward by the enemies of Sultan Abdulhamid II. The assertions regarding that Sultan Abdulhamid II was born by a concubine named “Gulnihal” is mentioned in the book of Levon Panos Dabagyan in addition to this assertion regarding the Armenian mother, too.⁵⁹ And Dabagyan says that these are wrong and purposed, and reacts very hard

⁵⁷ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.25-26

⁵⁸ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.37

⁵⁹ Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler*, p.14

like “Particularly the record that he was born of an Armenian is a specially written, very characterless lie”. Another book, which approaches the issue from the same point, is the book in which the daughter of the sultan, Ayse Osmanoglu, transmits her memories. Ayse Osmanoglu says; “All harems of my grandfather are Cherkessian. It is neither seen nor heard that a Greek and Armenian woman entered the palace. Though this is the case, the personal enemies of my father said that his mother were an Armenian woman named Candir. The person who made this assertion for the first time is Ahmed Saib, the writer of “Abdülhamid’in Evail-i Saltanati”. He attempted to create hostility against my father by convincing with this the pure people who do not know the life in the palace. Those who deem all harems of Sultan Abdülmecid noble due to their being the women of the sultan and even if they held on this lie, spinned by the idea that the Turkish nation would disparage a Sultan Hamid born of an Armenian, they did not refrain from telling it as a rumour. But those, who know the last era of the Ottoman palace with its procedures, customs and traditions, will very well recognize that this is impossible and this can only be a product of the fiction”.⁶⁰ And our fourth book states that some rumours developed afterwards about the birth of Sultan Abdulhamid and that these caused some turbulence on the political stage. It writes that the first of these was the assertion that, Prince Abdulhamid has not a legitimate son of his father, that his father or mother was an Armenian among the palace servants. It links the reasons for these hearsays and rumours with the physiognomy of Sultan Abdulhamid II, which does not resemble any of the Ottoman sultans and the scandals of the Abdülmecid and Abdulaziz palaces, which could not be swept under the carpet. The book, which mentions the womenizing adventures of Sultan Abdülmecid, states that situations, which reached such extreme levels, of course did not happen. All in all, it writes that Sultan Abdulhamid II got very angry about the spread of this rumour as an evidence for that the regency and caliphate cannot be deemed legal by the libertarians in Europe and that he routinized to place every year a copy of the Imperial Letter, sent by his father to Bab-ı Ali when he was born, to the beginning of the “Salname-i Devleti Aliye”.⁶¹

Now, let’s set over to the section, where we will look at those written about the father and siblings of Prince Abdulhamid.

⁶⁰ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.19

⁶¹ Uğurlu, Nurer, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid’in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, Örgün Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2009 s.80-81

1.2. His Father Sultan Abdülmecid and His Siblings

When we look at the personal life of Sultan Abdulhamid II during his principedom period, we see his relations with his father Sultan Abdülmecid and his siblings as a family issue which requires a second heading. Just like it was the case in the issue regarding his mother and stepmother, there are analyses made on this heading in order to extract the portrait of Sultan Abdulhamid. The attitude of his father against him and the relations of Prince Abdulhamid with his siblings are basicly dealt with on the lines “he was loved” and “he was not loved”. It will be good to look at our books at this point.

We face the narration which advancing via the affirmation and negation, as of the beginning of the birth of the prince. One of our books writes that his father ordered daily 5 times canoon shots for seven days when Prince Abdulhamid was born and that he notified his vizier this way about the birth; “My vizier, a prince is born from our pure lineage on the sixteenth Wednesday of this month of the Supreme Being around eleven o’clock (this information regarding the time of the birth differentiates from that written by Yılmaz Öztuna), thanks for his great mercy and blessing, and I gave him the name Abdulhamid. May the Surpreme Being give him a long life and make him favourable for us and the Muslims.”⁶² Whilst one of our sources transmits the birth of Prince Abdulhamid in this way, another book states that the birth of Abdulhamid Efendi was notified to Sultan Abdülmecid when he was in the Hamam, that the sultan, who could not gift and reply to the good news at that moment foresaw that the “regency of this child will be ill-omened”.⁶³ Of course, we need to open the following brackets; that one of these situations is lived, does not mean that another cannot be lived. That the sultan, who has received the birth news of his prince, makes a forecast regarding that the regency of his son would be “ill-omened” does not hinder the notification of his vizier by him about the birth of his son as indicated above; in the same manner, that the news is made public this way isn’t a hindrance for that in private Sultan Abdülmecid has such an opinion about the possible regency of his son in the future. One or both of those told after the birth of the prince may have happened at the same time. All in all is our goal not to find an answer for the

⁶² Yılmaz, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han’ın Aile Hayatı*, p.23

⁶³ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.38

question “Which is true?”. The important issue here with regards to our work is that whilst one source prefers to include one of the narration, that the other refers to another.

Sultan Abdulhamid II is the second son of Sultan Abdülmecid, born after Murad V. He is exactly two years younger than Murad V. Abdulhamid, who was born on September 22nd 1842 at 5am in the old imperial courts of Cıragan Palace, was born as the third crown prince and remained as the third crown prince during the regency of his father. Yılmaz Oztuna, who provides us these concrete information, defines Prince Abdulhamid as “the beloved son of his father”.⁶⁴ It would be good to add at this point; we had mentioned before that the Abdulhamid Efendi was given to a stepmother after the decease of Tirimujgan, the mother of the prince. The story known at this point is that Sultan Abdülmecid ordered the prince to him and hugged him, and told him that he should not cry and that he would as of then be both his mother and father and then kissed him on his cheek. And Sultan Abdülmecid, who thought nearly one month after this event that it would be correct to find a stepmother in order to manage the goods and property of this little prince, to avoid that he is left neglected and unattended, brought Abdulhamid Efendi under his own mantle after having sermonized him a lot to the apartment of the Fourth Woman and commended the prince to Perestu Kadınefendi by saying her “Look my woman! What a nice child I brought to you”.⁶⁵ In the frame of those experienced events and before, as a result of that Tirimüjgan Kadın, the birth mother of the prince, lied long time due to tuberculosis and that she sat her son in front of her and just looked at his face without having the heart to kiss him during this disease and finally deceased due to this disease, had Sultan Abdülmecid ascribed to the little prince the attribute of “an emotional child”.⁶⁶ Our above mentioned books, which deal with the relation between the father and son in the sections regarding the disease period of the mother of Prince Abdulhamid and than his delivery to his stepmother Perestu Kadınefendi, handle the relations between the prince, who was in deep sorrow during the disease of his mother and was consequently frayed in our minds, within this frame. We might think that the relations between the father and son followed a compassion line as we mentioned when we would be contended with this, but the emphasis we see in some books indicate that the relations between these two characters were not always bearing this attribute. Orhan Kologlu notes the significant disinterest of his father when he tells about the situations which had influenced the

⁶⁴ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.17-20

⁶⁵ Osmanoglu *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.25

⁶⁶ Kologlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.17

development of the personality of the prince after having pointed on the source of the ascription “an emotional child” and emphasizes the effect of this disinterest on the prince. Kologlu quotes the following statement of Sultan Abdulhamid; “Every person is the product of the events and the most of the education with regards to the direction of his life. It is being forgotten under which condition I grew up. My sisters and brother had been spoiled. And me – due to any reason I don’t know – was mainly being treated bad by my father...”⁶⁷ Even if this should not bear the feature to be a full evidence of this issue, an event told in another source gives us an opinion on the differences, contradictions between the father and the son and that they did not have such a good relation to each other; Lord Stratford Canning, General Consul of England that time, comes one day to the palace and father Abdulmecid requests from Abdulhamid to kiss the hand of the consul in order to show that he is a respectful prince. But the prince does not kiss the hand of the diplomat of England, the super power of that time, though all insistence of his father.⁶⁸ The two situations we mentioned above gives the impression that both the prince did not receive a good and close treatment from his father and that the prince did not obey his father exactly and that there were situations which they had disputes.

Vahdettin Engin links the disinterestedness issue of Sultan Abdulmecid for Prince Abdulhamid with that the father Abdulmecid had many children and that he couldn't show sufficient interest for him. But Engin has a further determination at this point; we had mentioned that; Prince Abdulhamid, who was shy with regards to his character, felt the absence of the protection of a strong mother in the world of internal disputes within the Harem, where the father never cared on his children; that the kind, love generating, silent speaking character of Pestu Kadın, selected as the stepmother for him by his father, resulted in that the Abdulhamid team could not make their voice heard. In short, there were comments related to that attributes, possible to be accepted as positive for a stepmother, generated negative results which caused that the prince remained passive at the disputes within the Harem. A similar counter-effect regarding the disinterestedness of Sultan Abdulmecid for the prince is stated by Vahdettin Engin. Engin states that in fact, that Prince Abdulhamid, who was an introverted child, was deprived from the support of his mother and father, gained him the skills to be selfsufficient and to face the events bravely.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.18

⁶⁸ Armağan, Mustafa, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarda Dansı*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013 s.50

⁶⁹ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul'u*, p.2,

It is stated that, though after his dethronement there are many information provided about the childhood of the Prince Abdulhamid he spent among concubines, teachers and eunuchs in the Harem of the palace, that the most of these are products of imagination. The rumours regarding he was lonely, he was weak, he was silent, he liked to be alone, can be accepted to be true. Further to that, his father's words about the prince's immorality, deceit and some estimations like his regency period would cause a bad luck for the Ottoman Empire evolved afterwards, but that it is definite that he was not loved by his siblings and that this is natural due to the entity of the Ottoman palace.⁷⁰ It will be good to mention briefly at this point the relations of Prince Abdulhamid with his siblings.

We don't meet in our sources any detailed information and comments about Prince Abdulhamid Efendi and his siblings. One of the limited information we read about his childhood is that the cold treatment of his father and that he did not receive that much care like Prince Murad in the Palace due to that the possibility that he would ascend the throne was far, caused that he secluded himself more; that he did not participate to the games of the other princes and princesses, even at early ages.⁷¹ And the daughter of Abdulhamid II, Ayşe Osmanoglu, transmits that Prince Abdulhamid Efendi was welcomed by the milk dish maker Mehmed Aga on the dock with his white turban and apron when he came back from visiting his diseased mother and the prince had let the huge tray distribute to the servants and ate together with his siblings.⁷²

Prince Abdulhamid got lessons like Turkish, Persian, Arabic, French, Ottoman History, Music together with his elder brother Prince Murad Efendi.⁷³ One of our sources compares at this point the two princes and the others in terms of education and knowledge and even when it is, contrary to Murad Efendi, asserted that he was not much devoted to education, it is stated that the four princes did not show much differences from each other in terms of knowledge.⁷⁴ Meaning that beyond putting forward an opinion with a view from present, we cannot see any information with regards to any solidation or dispute. But in Süleyman Kani İrtem's book regarding the existence of a knowledge difference between the two princes for the following

" , " , II. Abdülhamid ve Dış Politika, p.16

⁷⁰ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.81

⁷¹ Yeğen, Erdoğan, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, Sentez Yayıncılık, 2014 p.28

⁷² Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.25

⁷³ Aksun, II. Abdülhamid Han, p.14

⁷⁴ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.82

periods; it is transmitted that the knowledge difference between to brothers attracted the attention of even Napoleo III when they went on a trip to Europe with Sultan Abdulaziz and that he said to Fuat Pasha “What a difference between two brothers!” .⁷⁵

It is said that as a result of that his uncle Sultan Abdulaziz became the sultan instead of his father Sultan Abdülmecid in 1861, Prince Murat rose as the crown prince and that his brother would take over the throne caused that Abdulhamid II remained in the background.⁷⁶ On the other side, except the distance brought by this remaining in the background, it is possible to see that Abdulhamid Efendi followed a different course. For instance, he became different from his siblings by avoiding new type European nonsenses, which entered the palace by the influence of his father, and extravagance such that it reached meanness.⁷⁷ It is expressed that particularly the modest and simple life style he lived; beside this, that he did not resemble his siblings in terms of worship and moral. It is told that Sultan Abdülaziz preferred Prince Abdulhamid Efendi against his sibling when he felt that that the public favour for crown prince Murat Efendi had increased; and that Abdulhamid Efendi played the role of a spy for his uncle in order to control that this favour is in safe merit and that Abdulhamid Efendi had lost reputation among his sibling due to that. As an additional difference is his monetary thinking character pointed on; it is noted that Abdulhamid Efendi did not like debts like the other Efendis.⁷⁸

1.3. Education of Prince Abdulhamid Efendi

The education issue is no doubt one of the most important subjects when it is about a prince. Since this is the case, our sources, which provide information about Prince Abdulhamid, open a heading for this subject, too. It is even so that the most of our books, which deal with the private life of Sultan Abdulhamid II during his principedom period, deal with the names of the

⁷⁵ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.42

⁷⁶ Engin, *II. Abdülhamid ve Dış Politika*, p.16

⁷⁷ Kazıcı, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti*, p.21

⁷⁸ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.41-42

teachers of Abdulhamid Efendi.⁷⁹ The book, which deals the most in details with this issue is the work of Yılmaz Oztuna. Oztuna transmits us the details regarding the education of the prince; *Western Music and Piano from Brigadier Guatelli Pasha, Brigadier Dussep Pasha, Colonel Lombardi Bey, Piano from Aleksan Efendi, Calligraphy from Celaledin Efendi and as of 1850 from Qadi'asker Mustafa Izzet Efendi of Tosya, Violin from the violinist Hidayet Bey, Persian from the Qadi'asker of Rumeli Acem Ali Mahvi Efendi and Grand Vizier Safvet Pasha, Arabic from Qadi'asker Sherif Efendi, Ferid Efendi, Shirin Hafiz Efendi, Ömer Hulusi Efendi, French from Müşir Namık Pasha and Monsieur Gardet, Turkish, Ottoman Literature and Islamic Sciences and particularly Hadith (Buhari) from Gerdankıran Ömer Hulusi Efendi of Gümüşhane, in 1876 economic policy from the Minister for Education Vizier Mehmed Tahir Münif Pasha, Ottoman History from the State Chronicler Qadi'asker Lutfi Efendi, Sports, Riding from his teachers Mehmed Sadık Aga and after his decease in 1857 from Mabeynci Osman Bey, French Literature from Grand Vizier Ibrahim Edhem Pasha, Morals of the Şazeli Order from his Sheikh Mehmed Zafir Efendi of Trablusgarb, after the decease of this person Morals of the Kadiri Order from his Abdullah Efendi, Sufism from Qadi'asker of Rumeli (Han Seyhun) Sayyadzade Elu'l Hüda Efendi of Aleppo as of 1879, Military from different officers, who were adjutants of the monarch. The acquisition of and examination in all these lessons were observed by Vizier Ahmed Kemal Pasha (1808-1887), wherby he became 6 times Minister for Education and 2 times Minister for Foundations.⁸⁰ Even if this concrete information group is extremely important, these remain fruitless with regards to providing material for our study. We continue to scan our sources since we need more comments than information and meet the discussion subject we need; whilst a part of our sources provide positive comments on the education received by Prince Abdulhamid and his interest for and predisposition to eduction, is another group asserting the contrary. Now it will be useful to progress a little bit on these comments;*

⁷⁹ Ayyıldız II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Saray Merasimleri, p.17,
Öztuna, II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti, p.19,
Babacan, İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi Ulu Hakan Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han, p.27,
İrtem, Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı, Temel Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003 p.38,
Aksun, II. Abdülhamid Han, p.14,
Uğurlu, Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı, p.23,
Dabağyan, Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler, p.18,
Çabuk, Sultan II. Abdülhamid, p.13

⁸⁰ Öztuna, II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti, p.19

Prince Abdulhamid Efendi got the education, traditionally provided to princes in the Palace, too.⁸¹ Beside the traditional education, he also got the modern education by the influence of the European culture, which reached until the palace.⁸² Our books provide some positive and negative comments on at which level and quality this acquired education was, what the level and ability of the prince was. Some works have only noted that Prince Abdulhamid Efendi got a good education and concluded by indicating the names of some of his teachers and the lessons he took.⁸³ And some others transmit more details and comments and provide us the opportunity to play with the pen on the paper. One of our sources states that Prince Abdulhamid Efendi was subjected to a good education, that Prince Abdulhamid II, who had a rather intelligent and researcher character, sometimes asked questions like mature, not expected from his age, and that even his teachers remained helpless against these questions. It states that the prince, who had a more advanced maturity than his coevals and an extreme hunger for science, did not leave his teacher until he fully understood an issue whilst all others wanted to leave when the lessons ended. In notes that he had begun to speak French thanks to the French education he got more perfect and and fluent than a French, and that he also learned the French dictionary and literature.⁸⁴ The expression that Abdulhamid II has approved the knowledge of French, which was the valid language in his period and which he learned too, and other western languages as an important attribute, and that it was even so that the knowledge of French was leading the attributes mentioned by him when he was talking about someone.⁸⁵ It adds that whilst the prince was learning French in order to reach the science, technique and industry of the West, that he perceives the Islamic culture complete, and that he was thinking of that magnificent days of his ancestors as of early ages by the Ottoman history lessons. It says that the prince, who took lessons in order to achieve high levels in Sufism, endeavoured at the same time to become a good calligrapher, he even made such perfect calligraphies that those, who see them, got enraptured.⁸⁶ Another book, after having stated the lessons taken by Prince Abdulhamid, who got a private education in the palace together with his elder brother Murad like all princes, and his teachers, notes that the interest of the prince for science reached a level of passion.⁸⁷ It is emphasized that Abdulhamid II, of whom it is stated that he had a broad knowledge in the fields of history, politics and law, was particularly

⁸¹ Engin, *II. Abdülhamid ve Dış Politika*, p.16

⁸² Ayyıldız, *II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Saray Merasimleri*, p.17

⁸³ Nazif, *Bir Sultan Abdülhamid Müdafaaanamesi Hatırat-ı Sultan Abdülhamid-i Sani*, p.49

⁸⁴ Babacan, *İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi Ulu Hakan Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.27-28

⁸⁵ Hülagü, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Sürgün Günleri Atıf Hüseyin Bey*, p.23

⁸⁶ Babacan, *İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi Ulu Hakan Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.28-30

⁸⁷ Kazıcı, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti*, p.20-21

interested in history, and that he told the events of the past, which he particularly had read and investigated from different sources of the Ottoman history in a detail as not known by anybody. It is expressed that the reason for this is the history lessons he got from the chronicler Luffi Efendi in his youth.⁸⁸ Another books noting about his interest for history indicates after dealing with the teachers he was educated by and the courses that Prince Abdulhamid, who got a very good education, was particularly interested in recent history and that he believed that history is a mirror of lessons.⁸⁹

One of the opinions we face when we leaf through the pages related to the education of the prince is that Abdulhamid Efendi had strong intelligence and memory. It is noted that the first who noticed that he had a bright intelligence and political skills was his uncle Sultan Abdulaziz, with whom he took a Europe trip.⁹⁰ And the reason for why the Europe trip is handled under the heading “The Education of the Prince” is that this existence of the idea that this trip seriously contributed to the knowledge and manner of Abdulhamid II. It is said; that the intelligence and memory of Prince Abdulhamid was extreme high and his political skills attracts the attention of Sultan Abdulaziz. Sultan Abdulaziz takes Abdulhamid II with him on his trips to Egypt and Europe. Prince Abdulhamid continuously follows the foreign press and studies the methods applied by foreign countries in order to achieve their intentions, aims and goals well.⁹¹ In fact, not only Abdulhamid Efendi among the princes attends these trips. Prince Abdulhamid joined the trip of Sultan Abdülaziz to Egypt in 1864 together with his siblings Murad and Resad. This trip is the first time that Prince Abdulhamid went outside Istanbul. As recently mentioned, the Europe trip, realized three years later in 1867 was an opportunity for Abdulhamid Efendi to increase his knowledge and experience. The French Emperor Napoleon invited Sultan Abdulaziz to France due to the International Exhibition in Paris. Sultan Abdulaziz, who accepted the invitation, took his son Yusuf Izzeddin and his nephews Murad and Abdulhamid Efendi with him and went to Paris. The Ottoman delegation visited in two weeks France, England, Belgium, Germany, Austria-Hungary. And the special importance of the trip for Prince Abdulhamid is that he had found by this occasion the opportunity to see the life style, traditions and customs, protocol methods of the Western with all their details. Along with this, he saw the most advanced techniques, inventions of the

⁸⁸ Çolak, İsmail, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, Nesil Yayınları, 2010 p.16-17

⁸⁹ Yılmaz, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Aile Hayatı*, p.26

⁹⁰ Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler*, p.18

⁹¹ Ayyıldız, *II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Saray Merasimleri*, p.17

world on site, and understood which level Europe had achieved by these. Beside this, he got an idea on how international diplomacy was being conducted. All these observations are deemed to be valuable with regards to the education of Prince Abdulhamid and it is stated that they have a value to be very useful when he should undertake the responsibility of the state.⁹² It is also understood from the information in another book that these acquired experiences were very important. The following is noted in Orhan Kologlu's book when he notes the education issue; two siblings, who were at the second and third place in terms of the regency, Prince Murad and Prince Abdulhamid, got the education, traditionally provided to princes, together from private teachers. Even if the program differentiated from the traditional prince education, it cannot be told that it had a scope such to include the knowledge required by the change purposed with the Reformation. It cannot be said that the two siblings, who will later be confronted with providing solutions to problems due to civilization changes and modernization and making decisions, could obtain the answers they need to give with this education. They took their place in the history by their own skills, their interest for research, learning and the experiences they gained by facing the events personally.⁹³ Whilst this opinion both proofs how important the experience and knowledge acquired by Prince Abdulhamid during the trips indicated in the sources are in terms of his personal education, and notes on that in fact the positive and negative opinions in the sources regarding the education of Abdulhamid II are not that much important. All in all, it is pointed on that the prints they left of the history stage were gained by skills, interests and experiences. Besides, with his own character and facilities, the talent of judge and magnificent observation attracts attention. And these abilities do not related with his education. There is an idea that, the preparation period has not been a waste of time as can be seen at his stable behaviors after he became a sultan.⁹⁴ But we will surely not conclude the issue in this way. That's because we mentioned above sources with positive opinions regarding the education of the prince. Therefore we need to take a look at the books with negative opinions, too.

Even if one of our sources does not contain anything negative with regards to the education of Prince Abdulhamid Efendi, it notes that he complaints about having got less education⁹⁵, and achieves thus the interpretation that even Abdulhamid II considered the education he got to be deficient and complained about this. In another book, it is noted that the Prince was not much

⁹² Engin, *II. Abdülhamid ve Dış Politika*, p.17-18

⁹³ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.17

⁹⁴ Koloğlu, Orhan, *Abdülhamit ve Masonlar*, Positif Yayınları, İstanbul, 2004, s.14

⁹⁵ Mümtaz, Ahmet Semih, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Zamanı*, Kapı Yayınları, 2008 s.11

interested in education and that his teachers had complained about him and states that Abdulhamid II had used in his memories with regards to this issue the expression “days passed in recklessness”. It is said that it is understood that the princes, being educated by many local and foreign teachers, could not acquire properly knowledge even in the fields of foreign language, Turkish and exclusive knowledges. Whilst Abdulhamid Efendi was educated together with his siblings by the leading persons of the era, even if, contrary to Murat Efendi, it is asserted that he was not much devoted to education, it is expressed that the four princes of Abdülmeçid were not at a much different level in terms of knowledge. It is noted that Abdulhamid Efendi and Murat Efendi did not have even later a proper gramer knowledge. It is noted that both princes could not advance their foreign language skills in the French lessons, which was mandatory to be taught to the princes in the palace after the Reformation, and could not achieve a level such to correspond without a translator.⁹⁶ Ziya Nur Aksun provides similar information with regards to education and gives some samples for the negative comments on this issue. It is told that Abdulhamid II did not receive a serious education during his principedom, it is stated that his power with regards to reading and writing was rather less according to İbnülemin. Ali Emiri Efendi says that the prince condescended to write poems like his supreme and great anchestors, and that he gave the strophe he wrote due to the disease of his teacher Lutfi Efendi, but İbnülemin says that this strophe is written for Ali Mahvi Efendi, that the original copy is at him and that it is suspicious that the sultan himself has written it. Aksun states that the discussion about that whether this strophe, which does not bear that great poetical and literary value, belongs to Sultan Abdulhamid or not is because of the suspicion on that he would have the power to write it due to the conducted negative propaganda. Her expresses that Abdulhamid II has a character, which would disdain from setting his signature under something he did not write, and that the undersigned copy in the hands of Ayse Sultan, his daughter, is an evidence which shows that this strophe belongs to the sultan. This section also includes information about the French knowledge of Abdulhamid II; it states that Kececizade Mehmed Fuad Pasha said in his memories, “Abdulhamid understood French well; but he never spoke due to the unique arrogance and hauteur, better to say in order to avoid any antithesis and critics”, and that Tahsin Pasha wrote “that he understood French, but did not speak since he was not used to speak”.⁹⁷ Finally, another source states that also Prince Abdulhamid was subjected to the education of the teachers in the palace at the age of seven, eight years after the teachers assigned to him as to

⁹⁶ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.82

⁹⁷ Aksun, *II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.14-15

the other princes, that Abdulhamid Efendi did not have lust for learning a foreign language. It writes that Mehmed Resad said “Gerdankiran Omer Efendi was assigned as teacher to my brothers Murad and Abdulhamid Efendi and me. Murat Efendi and I continued with the lessons; but Abdulhamid Efendi never visited these lessons; he remained illiterate” and that all teachers complained about the prince.⁹⁸

Even if those written about the education of Prince Abdulhamid Efendi contain expressions similar to each other as it is the case in many issues, they include fully contrary interpretations. Now we will try to read out of our sources the general frame regarding the principedom period of Abdulhamid II.

1.4. The General Frame of His Principedom Period

There are similar information in our books with regards to the general frame regarding how the youth period of Abdulhamid Efendi had passed. The environment he lived in, that what he did, the developments in his environment and similar information are such that they are nearly the same in all of our books. But we see that our books differentiate in terms of issues like the private life of the prince, his customs, life style within the general frame of the period. For instance, whilst that the prince grew in a free environment is a situation stated by many of our sources, they state different things regarding issue like which influence this freedom had, and how it was used.

Sultan Abdulaziz ordered his three nephews to him after the coronation ceremony and told them that he will grant them as much freedom as granted to him during the reign of Sultan Abdulmecid, that they need to handle the dynasty worthily in their behaviour, that they can freely pray in the mosque they desire to on Fridays, that they may read and write as much as they want on the other days and then turned to Prince Murad Efendi and advised him to increase his experience and knowledge since he would ascend the throne after him. Abdulhamid, who left the palace, has started a free life between his farm in Kagıthane, his summer cottage in Tarabya and the Maslak Mansion he had let construct by the aid of his

⁹⁸ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.38

stepmother.⁹⁹ In fact, he had an apartment in Dolmabahce Palace during his principedom, but he did not stay there much since the palace of the sultan was subjected to much protocol.¹⁰⁰ Vahdettin Engin expresses in his lines, in which he tells about the period as of the principedom to sultanate of Abdulhamid II, that the childhood and youth years of Abdulhamid Efendi passed during the adaptation process of the western institutions, brought by the Reformation Period, into the Ottoman State. A pompous life was being lived in the palace during these years within the frame of a development, also due to the personality of Sultan Abdulmecid. But Prince Abdulhamid kept himself as far as possible except this environment. He became the second successor of the throne when his uncle ascended the throne in 1861 and his elder brother Prince Murad became the crown prince. That his elder brother would asceed the throne after his uncle caused that Prince Abdulhamid Efendi remained in the background and was not considered important that much. Social climbers accumulated always around Sultan Abdulaziz or the Crown Prince Murad since many considered the possibility that he might asceed the throne as weak.¹⁰¹ That he was a far candidate for the throne resulted in that the palace environment did not show much interest for him.¹⁰² Also the public did not know this prince.¹⁰³ Even if this situation is stated in some of our sources as a “dull” principedom period¹⁰⁴, Sultan Abdulhamid II is rather free during his principedom. He was fond of going out, touring in the fields. He jumped on horses and rode for hours. He toured on the seas with a boat and steamboat. He even wore off his clothes in the mid of the Marmara Sea and jumped into the sea and swam. He breded birds, chicken, turkeys in his orchards and spent time with them.¹⁰⁵ He kept many animals due to his interest for animals. He knew the animal diseases merely as much as a veterinary. He had a dog, parrot, horses and pigeons. He had even tried to keep snakes, lions and tigers during his youth, but he disliked this later. His addiction to his gardens was that much that the gates of his mansion in Yeniköy were opened on Fridays and Sundays and the public came promenading there.¹⁰⁶ Not only that, we see that we cannot assess all these activiteis of Prince Abdulhamid as things which were done just for spending time. We read in our sources that the prince, who spent much of his time in the mansion in Maslak, the summer cottage in Tarabya and the farm in Kagıthane, gained a respectable

⁹⁹ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.19

¹⁰⁰ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.20

¹⁰¹ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul'u*, p.1-2

¹⁰² Kazıcı, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti*, p.21

¹⁰³ Çabuk, Vahit, *Hedefteki Sultan II. Abdülhamid Bir Siyasi Tarih Denemesi*, Truva Yayınları, İstanbul, 2004, p.16

¹⁰⁴ Çabuk, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid*, p.14

¹⁰⁵ Mümtaz, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Zamanı*, p.10

¹⁰⁶ Babacan, *İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi Ulu Hakan Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.4

amount of money by operating the farm, with agriculture, sheep breeding and white lead mine operating.¹⁰⁷ These activities do not remain limited to agriculture and stock breeding. Abdulhamid Efendi also dealt with trade and stock exchange and accumulated funds.¹⁰⁸

That what we see from these brief information is that they indicate that Prince Abdulhamid lived a innocuous, simple life. And the reasons, which forced the prince to live such a life within this frame is one one of the points where our sources play with the pen. Now we will search in our books for the atmosphere, which forced the prince to live such a life.

1.5. Formation of the Character and Nature of Prince Abdulhamid Efendi

We had already mentioned in the sections above that the childhood of Abdulhamid Efendi had passed problematic due to the disease of his birth mother. I therefore deem it unnecessary to repeat the same things again and again. But in order to be able to see the infrastructure of some of his aspects, falling on the youth period of the prince, we need to go back to some time before the youth period of the prince in the books we used in our work and read a little bit.

We find a satisfactory section on this issue in the book of Orhan Kologlu. It is possible that the little prince, of whom it is estimated that he had a shy character, felt the absence of a strong mother in the world of internal struggles in the harem, where the father never concerned about his children. It is thought that the calm character of Perestu Kadın, selected as the mother for him by his father, resulted in that the voice of Abdulhamid's team was heard less at the struggles in the harem. It is possible that also the disinterested father figure we recently mentioned at this point was influential at the development of the personality of the little prince. Abdulhamid II states this with the words "Every person is the product of the events and the most of the education with regards to the direction of his life. My brothers and sisters had been spoiled. And me, due to any reason I do not know, mainly being treaten bad by my father. My character is serious since my childhood, I did not like playing that much and was thinking about the serious problems of the human being. I began to become introverted as

¹⁰⁷ Kazıcı, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti*, p.21

¹⁰⁸ Nazif, *Bir Sultan Abdülhamid Müdafaaamesi Hatırat-ı Sultan Abdülhamid-i Sani*, p.49

I saw that those around me did not understand me...” The younger brother of Prince Abdulhamid, Mehmed Resat, preferred to forget this isolation, but Abdulhamid Efendi made his preference in favour for struggling. He learned Cherkessian and Albanian in order to be able to understand that what was spoken around him; tended towards different branches of sports in order to preserve his health and channelize his energy; became a person who speaks less but listens much in order to avoid being held for an unwanted person. Not only that, there is the opinion that he did not do all these by considering the possibility that he would ascend the throne one day since it was neither possible for the prince to take such a possibility into consideration whilst there was a young sultan father and two crown princes between them nor was it logic that someone else would invest in him in this sense. Thus, none has shown political interest for him until he became the crown prince. All in all, it is considered that such a personality has developed as a requirement of his character.¹⁰⁹ This situation is consolidated by that Prince Abdulhamid, of whom it is thought that he was pushed into a loneliness as of early ages due to both being deprived from the love of a mother and that he did not experience any closeness from his father, did not draw the interest of the environment since he was a far candidate for the throne as recently mentioned. The relations between the palace community and the state notables with this clever but his thoughts and opinions never expressing prince were not that good. In brief, nearly everybody was staying away from Abdulhamid Efendi.¹¹⁰ Even if situations like the deprivedness from the interest of his father and mother, not drawing the attention of the environment seem to be extremely negative at first instance, there are opinions regarding that these situations resulted in positive effects with regards to the prince. The prince, who had lost his father with the age of just 19 years whose mother had already deceased, thus remained deprived from his mother and father at very young ages. Of course had this situation an important influence on the development of his personality, but, whilst being principally an introverted child, the attention is drawn on that his deprivedness from his mother and father provided him the ability to be self-sufficient and to face the events bravely. In the same manner, social climbers have always accumulated around options which were much likelier to take over the administration since many saw the possibility that he would ascend the throne weak. It is stated that also this loneliness situation constituted an advantage for Abdulhamid Efendi. He found the opportunity to observe the events without

¹⁰⁹ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.18-19

¹¹⁰ Kazıcı, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti*, p.21

being influenced by his environment and that he has shaped in his mind how he would behave in case of which event when it is time for due to that none showed much care on him.¹¹¹

It is understood that the situations we mentioned gave the prince the possibility of an innocuous life. But this does not result in the image of a person, who sits in his corner and passive, because Sultan Abdulhamid has lived as a rather active member of the dynasty with occupations during his youth as we noted in the parts before thanks to the possibility of a liberal life provided by Sultan Abdulaziz to the princes. It is said that Prince Abdulhamid Efendi'nin came closer to the sultan thanks to the mother of Sultan Abdülaziz, Pertevnihal Hanım, and that he has spent a free principedom period thanks to this this closeness.¹¹² There are also opinions regarding that the only reason for this closeness to the sultan were the superior attributes of Abdulhamid Efendi'. It is told that the prince was very intelligent and had a strong memory and his political skills attracted the attention of Sultan Abdülaziz.¹¹³ Thus, he spent a comfortable principedom due to his personal attributes of thanks to Pertevnihal Hanım (whereby the establishment of that link may be the result of a personal ability beyond a coincidence) and he had a quit, comfortable life as mentioned recently, was able to conduct commercial activities. But we need to make an addition here; we need to try to track briefly in a part where we try to read about the formation of the character and personality of Abdulhamid Efendi in our sources how this period, which allowed him to construct himself in this free life, was used by him in positive and negative terms.

1.5.1. Issue Regarding the Lifestyle and Jollification of Prince Abdulhamid Efendi

As mentioned in the lines above and the previous pages, there are opinions, which place against Abdulhamid Efendi, who spent this comfortable period by conducting commercial activities and was busy with his own interests in a composed life, a prince character, which cannot be deemed as much calm, who lives in different vagrancies and jollifications. The

¹¹¹ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul'u*, p.2-3

¹¹² Nazif, *Bir Sultan Abdülhamid Müdafaaamesi Hatırat-ı Sultan Abdülhamid-i Sani*, p.49

¹¹³ Ayyıldız, *II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Saray Merasimleri*, p.17

opinions regarding that the prince had a quiet life, is expressed in one of our books as follows. “Whilst the other sultans swam in debts due to they could not manage their monthly incomes for their jollification, was Abdulhamid, due to that he was economic and skilled and due to that he did not like entertainment, alcohol and other extreme pleasures, able to make his living easily and rather increased his personal wealth beside this.”¹¹⁴ Actually, that fact that the financial status of the prince was well is linked in these lines writted about the financial status of Abdulhamid Efendi largely to that he did not like entertainment, alcohol and other extreme pleasures. And in a step further after this interpretation that Abdulhamid II has lived a quiet life during his princedom period states another source as follows; it is transmitted that the prince tried to find his pleasures at home instead of searching for them outside, that he did not have extreme fond for alcohol and women, better to say, even if he should have such fonds, that he preferred not to show it, and that his physician Mavroyeni contributed to that he began a regulated life by making him quit with alcohol in early stages.¹¹⁵ This opinion states that, even if Abdulhamid Efendi was interested in jollifications, that he did not show this and controlled it. Beside this, he points on that he used alcohol for a time with the statement that his pysician had made him quit drinking early. The opinion in this jollification issue again one step further is as follows; it is said that among the princes, who entered the womenizing assemblies with the courage they got from the tolerance of the father in the strayed environment of the Ottoman palace by the extreme libation and jollification of Sultan Abdulmecid and the womanizing meeting which spread until the outer suburbs of Istanbul, was also Abdulhamid Efendi after his older brother Murad Efendi and added that there was a alcohol addiction and some adventures he had such to threaten his health during his youth ages. We see the information regarding that the fact, that the possibility that he would asceed the throne was very far, allowed him to live freely during his princedom, provided him the opportunity trip, tour arround without fear and free in his youth, that he even was not interested in education due to this, that he joined until he was twenty four years old entertainment and jollification assemblies in Uskudar, Beylerbeyi and Fenerbahce with his friends, sons of pashas. It is stated that Mavroyeni Pasha, his private physician, has brought him away from this path since, considering the fact that his father and his mother had died due to tuberculosis, his end would of course be the same when he would continue a dissolute life in young ages. This section of our source continues by saying that the prince suddenly had

¹¹⁴ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul'u*, p.3

¹¹⁵ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.20

quit alcohol and womanizing, drank nothing else than water, veiled himself to his wives and children.¹¹⁶

And the last book we will refer to with regards to this issue does not use lesser statements than our previous source regarding the jollification fond of Prince Abdulhamid, it has even more to say; “The location, where now the German consulate is located in the Bosphorus, belonged that times to Abdulhamid Efendi; there was a sea hamam at the shore. The entertainments of the prince in this sea hamam were such that they even left the palace community, who had seen and experienced many oddities, open mouthed with astonishment. Prince Abdulhamid Efendi lived for years with his fellows, sons of pashas, the gentlemen around him in such a pleasure that the community of Usküdar, Beylerbeyi, Fenerbahce did not forget this for a long time. Abdulhamid Efendi was in contact with A... Hatun, the Harem of ... Pasha in the Bosphorus. Hamid Efendi corresponded with this lady, he came with a boat along with his slave Salim, entered the waterfront residence though the window, spent the night there and left close to the morning. And Salim sat up all night outside the residence and waited for his master. It is said that the son of ... Pasha is the son of Abdulhamid. H. Pasha and M... Bey were also among the friends of this lady. These baceme fellows with Hamid Efendi with this way. Abdulhamid Efendi converted during these days of joy and pleasure the Belgian Maestra Mademoiselle Flora Kordiyeye with the promise to marry her and naming her Fatma and then left her. But finally his health deteriorated due to this life of joy and pleasure. This situation resulted in that Abdulhamid Efendi changed his life style suddenly when he was 30 years old. The influence of his private pysician and friend Mevroyeni is seen at that.”¹¹⁷

As to be seen takes this source the life of pleasure it asserts to be lived by Abdulhamid Efendi one more step forward than our previous books and tries to ground its assertions by transmitting some samples, rumours. All in all is also here the life of pleasure asserted to be lived by Abdulhamid Efendi ended at a point. This terminating is taken 5 years forward compared with our previous source and, beside this, it asserts that he did not quit this life of pleasure by the prompting of Mavroyeni Pasha, as indicated in the previous ones, but by the advise of this pashe when his health was harmed. But Süleyman Kani İrtem continues with his comments he deems to be negative by saying that Prince Abdulhamid, who waived from his

¹¹⁶ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.88-89

¹¹⁷ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.40-41

old entertainment and womenizing habits by living a composed life after this point, again set over to extremeness in his life. He states that the character of Abdulhamid Efendi tended to the extreme in every thing, and that he suddenly retained this time from joy, wine, Raki, strong spirits, the daily libation assemblies, womenizing; that he accepted the old Turkish abstemiousness, austerity, a serious and pure life; that he started accustoming with only the serious and respected persons and hodjas and sheikhs of Istanbul; that he was peevish, secluded and quiet; that he converted unlike his siblings with regards to worshipping and moral.¹¹⁸

That what we see is that, even the book, where the assertion that Abdulhamid Efendi was addicted to enjoyment and womenizing parties in mentioned in the most concentrated manner, states that the prince set finally over to a composed life. Of course, without retaining from criticizing by noting that he went to the extreme in this issue...

The common accepted point regarding this period of the prince, no matter if a period was previously active and then calm or always composed, is the life he lived as possible away from the palace. As we noted before, Prince Abdulhamid was active with some businesses during his prinedom period. He particularly tracked the stock exchange and gained and saved much money from this business. It is stated that Abdulhamid Efendi, who also gained Money by breeding sheep in the farm in Maslak, operated white lead mines at the same time. Thusly, it is told that he had a serious accumulation this way prior to having asceeded the throne.¹¹⁹ Whilst we read this narration in near to all our books, it to be seen that these are books which deal with the “meanness” issue, discussed the most about Abdulhamid II when the issue comes to this materiality part. Now we will try to say a couple of sentences regarding this issue.

¹¹⁸ Irtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.41

¹¹⁹ Çabuk, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid*, Paraf Yayınları, p.14

1.5.2. Parts of the Assertion of His Meanness Handling with his Princedom Period; the “Meanness Hamid” Imputation

It was inevitable to open a part regarding one of the most popular of the assertions brought forward in this part, where we compile our readings regarding the characteristic attributes of Prince Abdulhamid. In fact, this is impossible since our source books handle this issue. As we mentioned recently, when it is about the financial status of the prince, are some of our books bringing the word to the assertions regarding his being meanness. Now let's, as far as we can, try to look at these written.

The opinion, which passes over the financial status and the livelihood of Prince Abdulhamid Efendi before he became the sultan without dealing with the meanness issue, states that Abdulhamid Efendi, who started to live a quite life with his family between his mansion in Maslak, his summer residence in Tarabya and the farm in Kagıthane, was a sparing person with regards to his character. He sustained this attribute of him during both his princedom period and his sultanate period. The wage allocated to him was easily sufficient for the livelihood of his family thanks to his sparingness. Except the wage, he gained income by operating the farm he owned and meanwhile gained money by participating to stock exchange activities. It is know that he had a respectable fortune thanks to his attribute. Whilst the other princes and sultans lived in debts due to they could not manage their monthly incomes for their jollification, was Abdulhamid, due to that he was economic and skilled and due to that he did not like entertainment, alcohol and other extreme pleasures, able to make his living easily and rather increased his personal wealth beside this. Moreover, it is stated that he paid the enthronement gratuity of 60 thousand gold liras from his own pocket when he became the regent.¹²⁰ It is told that one of his important advantages in material terms was his stepmother Perestu Kadın. Perestu Kadın was one of the rare members of the family who did not cause monetary problems due to her sparingness and had left Abdulhamid Efendi a huge heritage. She recognized as a result of both the conditions and her personality that the sustainment of a happy life depends on a calculated life in terms of money. It might be that Prince Murad would borrow money by hypothecating a potency he would obtain and there would be persons who would borrow him, but this was not possible for Abdulhamid Efendi. Beside this, he also

¹²⁰ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul'u*, p.3,
" , " , *II. Abdülhamid ve Dış Politika*, p.17

knows that the greatest problems in the palace develop because of money. That's why the only one who lived without debts but without pomposity was Abdulhamid Efendi.¹²¹ It is stated that he was not deprived from generosity, but that he was economic and differentiates, as recently mentioned, from his siblings in this sense since he has an understanding for monetary affairs. For instance, let's look at Murad Efendi; Abdulhamid Efendi achieved the position of the richest among the princes towards 1876, when the debts of Murad Efendi reached One Million Gold Liras, and his farms, real-estates, bonds and cash reached a value of One Million Gold Liras.¹²² Shortly, some of our sources point with regards to the financial status of Prince Abdulhamid Efendi on issues like the sparingness of him, the support of his mother, that he has a commercial intelligence and success and lived a modest life as a reason. At this point, there is no mention of an attitude of meanness. Moreover are some of our sources linking that Abdulhamid II is called as meanness due to his being extreme sparing with the "devils of the bad" and provide the following information with regards to his principedom; Prince Abdulhamid has mostly looked at the clear illustration of borders of the Ottoman-Turkish Empire on a large map in his room with a deep pleasure; he has promised himself that he would handle extremely economic during his regency by taking the nuisances and losses experienced due to the wastage of those before him by feeling the grandiosity of the time which reached from the Sea of Azov in the North until the gates of Vienna in the West merely deep in his soul.¹²³

It is said that Abdulhamid Efendi was a person, who loved money, obeyed economy, and who knew to manage it since his principedom. It is stated that the imputation "Meanness Hamid" was spread among the public as an allegory, that these words were known among the people. But also an interesting information attracts the attention; as this name was given to the theatre piece "The Miser" translated by Teodor Kasap from Molliere and when this was presented in the theatre of Gullu Agop, it was eased that this was spread being associated with the name of Prince Abdulhamid, about whom rumours were spread regarding his rapacity among the public, and not forgotten after he became the sultan, too. It is stated that Abdulhamid nursed a grievance against Teodor Kasap when his demand for not to present this theatre piece was rejected, that he pretended after he asceded the throne, the text in the newspaper "Hayal"

¹²¹ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.19-21

¹²² Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.21

¹²³ Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler*, p.19-20

where he says “printing is legal in front of the laws” where he had chained Karagöz and sentenced him to three years imprisonment.¹²⁴

Though all sources agree on that Abdulhamid Efendi let gather and sell the products which grew in the farm around the Maslak Mansion he lived in during his principdom and that he used the money received from there at the stock exchange, that he borrowed money to his siblings, we also see comments which express his tightfistedness he has at a level of meanness.¹²⁵

One of the most interesting comments about this issue attracts the attention in the book of Süleyman Kani İrtem. He says that avoided things like alcohol, gambling; that he lived with diet and modesty, less expenditures; that he told his for secure deemed subjects like the head of the clothes Ismet, his head of the cellar Karagöz Osman, his head of the detectives Ahmet Celaladdin, companion Cherkessian Yusuf, departure director Hacı Mahmud Efendi that he would forbid and revoke these situations from the palaces as long as these do not convert into a wastage and dissoluteness when he should asceed the throne one day, that he would take extreme care on preserving “the treasury of the Islamic state”, confirmed his words with oaths and did not fail to criticize meanwhile the wastage of Sultan Abdulaziz and his palace. He tells about that there were some who had heard from him that he saved 40.000 gold liras until his enthronement, that he played at the Galata stock exchange by gathering information via his brokers, that he handled very carefully in order to avoid losses and the existence about rumours regarding that Sultan Abdulhamid had all in all millions in European banks after his enthronement. And he notes on the previous mentioned theatre piece issue with regards to the “Meanness” imputation and relates that the fondness of Abdulhamid Efendi, who deemes the value and importance of money, progressively strengthens and that he warned his housekeeper for a couple of eggs, which were taken by the harem of one of his brother from his coop, that he dismissed an old servant due to that some chicken were lost; that he had let beaten up a yoghurt seller due to having requested fifty pennies more.¹²⁶

As to be seen, is the relation of Abdulhamid Efendi with money located on several places on a plane between sparingness and meanness. Moreover, as indicated in the last part, there is an

¹²⁴ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.84-85

¹²⁵ Tosun, Mehmet, *Osmanoğulları ve Aydınların Anlatımıyla İmparatorluğun Yüzük Taşı II. Abdülhamid*, Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2009 s.55

¹²⁶ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.42-43

image of a person drawn, who would let a person beaten for having requested fifty pennies more, who would cause quite a stir for a couple of chicken or eggs.

1.5.3. Reflections of his Mood Known as Scrupulous in his Princedom Period

One of those, again most talked about with regards to the personality of Abdulhamid II is that he was an extreme scrupulous person. Of course is this issue also dealt with in the books we worked with. Now we will examine this scrupulousity during his princedom period.

When we look at our books, we can see that the roots of this issue lean back until very young ages of the prince. We had mentioned about the disease period of Tirimüjgan Kadın, the mother of Abdulhamid Efendi, in the previous parts. It is stated that the warning “do not approach your mother, you might get ill” towards the little prince, who visited his mother every day during this period, might have created an early fear from microbes and death in him. It is noted that his sibling Prince Murad Efendi liked to cause a groundless fear in him by saying “Brother, your face is again pale today, what happened?”. It is told that Prince Abdulhamid started to settle accounts with himself due to these reasons as of early ages.¹²⁷ We had mentioned before about the jollification attributed to Abdulhamid Efendi; we meet the statement that the prince had quit this life of pleasure due to his being inveterate for his health. Spridon Mavroyeni, the private physician of Abdulhamid, whose father and mother died due to tuberculosis, told him that the life he is conducting threatens his health and that he will not live long if he should continue. Abdulhamid Efendi, who was very tied to life, has suddenly changed his life and quit alcohol after the age of 24, left the entertainments outside his home and began to spend his days with his family.¹²⁸

It is also seen that this scrupulous attitude of Abdulhamid Efendi was not only related to health issues. It is said that he had a groundless suspicion in many fields of the life he lived in. It is noted that he was already skilled and curious with regards to asking and learning those he

¹²⁷ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.17-18

¹²⁸ Yeğen, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.29

did not know. It is expressed that though he did not like informers, he listened to the told due to his curiosity.¹²⁹ It is not that difficult to forecast that this attribute of him is possibly due to his scrupulous attitude known by everybody. His words “Suspicion is the beginning of foresight” are mentioned and that, what brought him to this point, is due to that he witnessed that, what happened to his uncle and his siblings during his principedom period and that he became such scrupulous afterwards.¹³⁰ On the other side, it is clear that the period lived in was unrestful and the only person, affected by this atmosphere, was not Prince Abdulhamid. It is stated that also the brother of Abdulhamid Efendi, Murad Efendi, was rather negatively affected by those experienced during this period and got ill, that he could not shake off these effects during his regency period; that Murad V dethroned due to his diseased status and replaced with Abdulhamid II.¹³¹ Whilst the dethronement of Sultan Abdulaziz by a military coup and suspicious death directly after this, pushed Prince Abdulhamid into a great concern; it was about that three months later his elder brother Sultan Murad V had lost his mental abilities due to insomnia and was to be dethroned.¹³² It is understood that the atmosphere of the period was not easy for anyone. Orhan Koloğlu placed the heading “A Dynasty Caught in the Assassination Psychosis” for a part, where he tells about this period in his book. He expresses that there were more rumours within the palace than outside; that it was impossible for a person, who lives in a family, where the members do not like each other and are able to bring forwards the most ugly accusations, no matter how intelligent he/she was, not to get affected by this; that the call that all princes should meet in the Nispetiyye Mansion was interpreted as that “all will be murdered together” due to a warning and incitement within again the palace whilst everything was still quite and that it was not anything to wonder about that Abdulhamid Efendi believed that, too; that this situation was not only applicable to Prince Abdulhamid, but to all princes and that this fear converted into a psychosis they spoke about and expected to incur every day.¹³³ As a matter of fact, Abdulhamid himself said “I owe my life the vigilance of those, who are loyal to me. Those I experienced are enough to affect a person with the strongest nerves. One should not wonder about my carefulness after all these experienced... It is being always forgotten under which conditions I grew up...”. It is expressed that this scrupulousness is partially due to a nature; that the persons surrounding him during both his principedom, crown principedom and sultanate

¹²⁹ Mümtaz, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Zamanı*, p.11

¹³⁰ Tosun, *Osmanoğulları ve Aydınların Anlatımıyla İmparatorluğun Yüzük Taşı II. Abdülhamid*, p.54

¹³¹ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul'u*, p.6

¹³² Özdemir, Hakan, *Abdülhamid'I Deviren Kurşun*, Timaş Yayınları, 2014 s.13

¹³³ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, Pozitif Yayınları, p.22-28

were not backward in coming forward to incite and encourage him on this path of scrupulousness, that they always pointed on events which would steam up his scrupulousness, that they induced him to scrupulousness by saying him that there were persons, who were hostiles of his life and sultanate, and that they even often fabricated events which would work up his scrupulousness though there was no reason and occasion.¹³⁴

It is stated that he spoke less and listened much; he was fond of examining the persons and influencing their characters. It is said that it was therefore difficult to mislead him. It is noted that his father Abdülmecid lved him by saying “my suspicious and quite son”. There is the opinion that he joined the New Ottomans society in its foundation year, as his elder brother Prince Murad, but he analyzed the aim of the society within one year, deemed it for bad for the state and kept his hands off though his elder brother stayed until the end. He also met poets, artists, journalists, statemen, foreigners, patronized them. But he did not get reckless like his brother Murad Efendi, he did not establish drinking table and carry tales. He did not forget the tragedy of the disenthronement and assassination of his sincerely beloved and respected uncle until the end of his life.¹³⁵ It is said that Abdulhamid Efendi had an attitude, which abstained from establishing a friendship with everyone, but his elder brother Murad Efendi met libertarian youngsters and negotiated with poet persons during this period and gained supporters.¹³⁶ It is understood that this cautious attitude of Prince Abdulhamid Efendi was negatively influencing him in the competition environment which was in the nature of prinedom.

The parts we mentioned above are expressed as the result of the life lived by Abdulhamid Efendi and the environment he was in general, even if the scrupulous attitude of him was a character feature of him. While closing this part, we will need the transmission of this scrupulous character of the prince with a narration mention a little bit after those stated above; “Anxiety and scrupulousness existed in Abdulhamid yet as of his youth. He went sometimes to his farm in Kagithane and dined there during his prinedom. One time he also took Hodja Ali Efendi, his Persian teacher, along with him. Whilst it was routine that the dinners were eaten early in the palace, the return time to Besiktas delayed somehow on that day. Anxiety started at Abdulhamid when the waters became dark. He offered his teacher to get on his

¹³⁴ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.15

¹³⁵ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.21

¹³⁶ Çabuk, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid*, p.14

prepared gilded carriage. The teacher cursed. Hamid Efendi encouraged him and insisted on by saying: ‘You are a virtuous person. You are a teacher, too. I respect the power of science and the right of education’ and let Ali Efendi get into the carriage. He mixed among his escorting attendants opposing the horses. He followed him distanced to the carriage. The purpose of the prince with the respect shown by him is that he thought that in case of an offense, of course the carriage in the front would be subjected to it.”¹³⁷

The story transmitted in order to be able to express how far Prince Abdulhamid Efendi was scrupulous is like this. But it should not be forgotten that in such narrations, it is important where the told is used in order to tell what. For instance, this behaviour told in another book in order to express the respect of Prince Abdulhamid Efendi for science and scientists.¹³⁸

1.5.4. His Religious Personality and the Issue Regarding his Closeness to Superstition

Abdulhamid Efendi resembles his uncle Sultan Abdülaziz with regards to his life style. It is said that he lived in Eastern, Islamic, Ottoman and Turkish customs. He believed that only the technology and science of Europe can be adapted and also learn its culture, but that it cannot be lived in such a culture. He thought different from his father Sultan Abdülmecid and his elder brother Sultan Murad and did not adopt their European style.¹³⁹ It is stated that it was clear from the explanations he brought to the verses of the Quran he had spread between his speeches that he read Interpretations of the Quran; it is noted that he always read the Buhari-i Şerif.¹⁴⁰ It is expressed that Abdulhamid Efendi tried to fulfil his religious obligations pursuant to the traditions; that one of the he was the most proud of was that always performed his 5 times prayer; that he first joined the Sazeli and later the Kadiri orders.¹⁴¹ It is presumed

¹³⁷ İrtəm, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.40

¹³⁸ Yılmaz, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Aile Hayatı*, p.26

¹³⁹ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.21-22

¹⁴⁰ Babacan, *İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi Ulu Hakan Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.3

¹⁴¹ Yeğen, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.31

that his honourable stepmother had a great share at the highness of the Islamic, religious and human feelings of Prince Abdulhamid.¹⁴²

Along with the thought that Abdulhamid II was a believer in terms of religion and that he handled sensitive in this point, it is stated that he was also addicted to superstition as of his principedom. It is expressed that the person, who loved Prince Abdulhamid the most in the palace and who was the closest to him were the mother of Sultan Abdulaziz, Pertevnihal Hanım; that she was an illiterate woman who believed in fortunetelling and magic; that this lady caused that the young prince Abdulhamid became interested with these issues.¹⁴³

According to some of our sources Abdulhamid Efendi converted under this influence into a believer in superstitions, sorcerers and fortunetellers, astrologers. It is noted, whilst raising an interest for particularly technology, a deep respect for science in him, which he could not acquire in his youth later, it is clear from the persons he accumulated around him that these superstitious influences followed him during his whole life. The expression that the similarity of the insistent statements of the astrologers and fortunetellers regarding that “one day he would asceed the throne” must have woke up his hope towards taking over the sultanate in very young ages (whereby we had transmitted from our sources in the previous subjects that the environment in which the prince was and the political course could not be such to allow him to have such an expectation); the expressions regarding that he accumulated all fortunetellers, who had given him the good news regarding his regency in his youth, in his environment later and joined them among his trustees are to be read. And it is said that the hearsays regarding that Abdulhamid would have conducted spells in order to disthroned his brother after the enthronement of Sultan Murad just consist of rumours.¹⁴⁴

And the most assertive samples regarding the interest of Prince Abdulhamid for superstition are, as it is the case in many issues, again to be seen the book of Suleyman Kani İrtem;

“Abdulhamid Efendi developed an interest for sorcery, fortunetelling and magic. He tried to get into a conversation with him whenever he heard about such a famous sheikh. Necip Pasha, whom Abdulaziz had banished to the Cyprus, had established there a relation to a sheikh named Abdurrahmanus Sin of Sayda. This sheikh gave Necip Pasha the information

¹⁴² Aksun, *II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.14

¹⁴³ Yeğen, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.29

¹⁴⁴ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.84

regarding that he would be relieved from the exile and his goods news came true in a short time.

When Necip Pasha, who knew Abdulhamid, came to Istanbul, he transmitted the issue to Abdulhamid Efendi. Abdulhamid decided to establish a contact with the sheikh upon this and sent him an invitation with the request to leave his lodge in Seyda and to come to Istanbul temporarily. It happened that tears dropped down from the eyes of Abdulhamid due to pleasure and soft heartedness when the sheikh, who followed the invitation, was interpreting verses in front of the prince, reading the Quran with his nice voice and dialect.

One day, the sheikh said to the prince “My Prince! You will one day, so God will, ascend the throne”. Abdulhamid, considering the fact that Abdulaziz did not reach senescence, and that there is not a great difference between him and his brother, answered that the realization of this prayer were very far. (In the quotation we made from another book in the lines above, there was the opinion that prince Abdulhamid might have built high hopes regarding the regency.) But the old sheikh insisted on his discovery. It did not last two years, Abdulhamid ascended the throne. He immediately ordered the sheikh to Istanbul and overwhelmed him with great honorings... Abdulhamid was very much in the influence of superstition”

And beside this, Suleyman Kani İrtem says about the issue that Prince Abdulhamid Efendi had let place spells on his brother Sultan Murad, expressed to be a rumour in the lines above;

“That he attached importance to things like astrology and sorcery, fortunetelling, resulted in that many hearsay developed about Abdulhamid. According to these hearsays, Abdulhamid let make a small statue of wax of Sultan Murad, penetrated personally needles into this, sent it to a sorcerer in İstanbul. The sorcerer sat on the Quran, invited the djin in a mood of mourning by taking a staff of reed into one hand and caused the increase of the disease of Sultan Murad. Again, as it were, has Abdulhamid passed a coat he ordered to the tailor Cimbizyan through the hands of sorcerers and presented this to his brother”.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.43-44

As to be seen, those written about the belief world of Prince Abdulhamid Efendi walk around between a man, who is religious, fulfils his religious duties and who lives pursuant to the Islam and the customs; and a man, who drowned in superstition and setted sorceries to people.

Chapter 2: THE REGENCY PERIOD

2.1. His Harem Life and His Daily Life in Yıldız

No doubt that the daughter of the sultan, Ayse Osmanoglu is one of the closest persons to the daily life of Sultan Abdulhamid II. In this sense are those transmitted by her very valuable since these are information obtained from the first hand. Even if the question “Would Ayse Osmanoglu possibly protect her father” comes into mind at places which require interpretation, are those, not including personal opinions, written in form of the transmission of information, are with a very great possibility excluded from such questions.

Ayse Osmanoglu states that her father had the habit to go early to bed and to wake up early. She expresses that he took his shower, drank his coffee, smoked his cigarette and drank his mineral water with milk after a light breakfast and then first went to the Harem and then to the Selamlık and thus started his daily work. The sultan, who conducts his official works until eleven o'clock, takes his lunch and then lies and rests a little bit and then returns to his works, which will last until the evening. On days, when the pace of the work tires him out or on days with less work sets the monarch over to the Harem and meets his family. He makes a trip in the garden after the dinners, spends times in the carpenter's shop and in his library. He was, except this, busy with activities like theatre presentations, music concerts during convenient times as we will handle in the future sections. According to the statements of his daughter has Sultan Abdulhamid II lived his whole life bound by the time and ordered, conducted a uniform life.¹⁴⁶ We can read similar information not only in the memories of Ayse Hanımefendi, but also in the books of our writers like Mustafa Armagan, Suleyman Kani Irtem, Nurer Uğurlu, Ziya Nur Aksun.

¹⁴⁶ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.26-28

2.1.1. Working Style of Sultan Abdulhamid II

Our sources note that Sultan Abdulhamid II worked regularly 15-16 hours per day. Beside the daily work routine we quoted from the expressions of her daughter recently, he had allowed to wake him no matter how late the time should be for an urgent work or when a notification was received. It is expressed that, the note send from the outer door to inside by a permission, that the eunuch, who got the note, notified the Sultan and returned by obtaining his decision. It is noted that the First Secretary Tahsin Pasha transmitted that the sultan, who remained sleepless in such nights, was in his office at his duty on the next morning at the same hour. It is mentioned that he said “Not to sleep, to be always vigilant became mandatory for us”.¹⁴⁷ It is stated that the working place and the home were the same place was an inevitable formula in order to sustain this working pace. It is said that this formula had a great share at that the Yıldız Palace became the centre of the state instead of Bab-ı Ali during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II. Such a working pace of 33 years was only possible with this unity. He would be able to quit working and be busy with him some relaxing entertainment when he wanted to, and then return to his office immediately with a couple of steps.¹⁴⁸ Our books state that he was working rather ordered and continuously, that he sorted and read both the documents brought by the head secretary related to the state businesses and the incoming journals from the spies and gave their answers in a short time. It is written that he wanted to influence all things in the official and private documents he received, that he never undersigned any paper which he did not know or understand. If necessary, he saw the files and requested explanations from the related persons.¹⁴⁹ And the part which is defined as the distorted aspect of his astonishing working skills and energy is indicated to be that he was busy and spent time with details, where no national benefits were in that asultan deals with these. And this issue is explained with his famous groundless suspicion.¹⁵⁰ We will handle this suspicion issue later.

¹⁴⁷ Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarda Dansı*, p.75-76

¹⁴⁸ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.39

¹⁴⁹ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.99

¹⁵⁰ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.218

2.1.2. His Relation to His Stepmother

In the first part of our work, when we were handling the principedom period of Abdulhamid II, we mentioned his stepmother Perestu Kadınefendi. Our sources were providing different information, making different interpretations with regards to the relation between Prince Abdulhamid Efendi and his stepmother. Now we will again deal in the part of work handling the sultanate period of Sultan Abdulhamid II with his stepmother, better to say with the relation between Sultan Abdulhamid and his stepmother Perestu *Valide Sultan*.

Perestu Kadın started to live in her house presented by her brother in law, Sultan Abdulaziz, after the decease of Sultan Abdulmecid in 1861. When Sultan Abdulhamid II asceded the throne after Sultan Abdulaziz and Murad V, he declared his step mother as the “*Valide Sultan*” and our sources emphasize that Perestu Kadın, who would remain the *Valide Sultan* for 28 years, was the only lady who was a *Valide Sultan* though having not give birth a sultan. It is stated that this sweet, tender-minded, solemn and modest lady dedicated her life to the poors, she never concerned on policy, and lived far from a power hunger and deceased with her reputation, honour, respect and fondness.¹⁵¹ Our sources emphasize with regards to the distanced attitude of Perestu *Valide Sultan* from policy was influenced by that Prince Abdulhamid Efendi expressed her with a definite tongue and mentioned about his desire that women should stay out of policy.¹⁵² And they note that what is told by Ayşe Osmanoğlu at this point. But what says Ayse Sultan with regards to this issue? Perestu Kadınefendi, who grew and was a mother for Abdulhamid Efendi, who was a little child when his mother had deceased, received the title “Mehd-i Ulya-yı Saltanat-ı Seniyye” when Sultan Abdulhamid II became the sultan. Since Abdulhamid II kissed the hand of his stepmother on the next day of his enthronement and said “You have not let me feel my motherlessness. You have no difference to my birth mother in my eyes and your position is the position of the *Valide Sultan*. You will have all rights and authorizations of a *Valide Sultan* in the palace, too. But I particularly please you to avoid intervening into state affairs and to undertake the protection

¹⁵¹ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.18

¹⁵² Kazıcı, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti*, p.20

of this or the other one and to speak for those who are struggling for a rank and office.” Since he thought that the mothers of Sultan Abdülaziz and Sultan Murad intervened into state businesses these were never resulted positive for the dynasty. Perestu *Valide Sultan* obeyed this request of the sultan until her death. Ayse Osmanoglu narrates nice information about the relation between the sultan and *Valide Sultan*. The internal affairs of the palace belonged to Perestu *Valide Sultan*. She loved her house in Macka which we mentioned recently. Sometimes she wanted to go there, but the Sultan did not permit to her and sent a message to stay in the palace. Sultan Abdulhamid II requested that also his stepmother attended the greeting ceremony every Friday. Sometimes she went to her home secretly after the greeting ceremony. Adjutants were sent immediately from the palace with a carriage and brought her when the sultan heard of it.¹⁵³ The Friday’s greetings were followed in covered carriages by the women, too, and the carriage of Perestu *Valide Sultan* was standing at the up front. On the other hand, this book states that this lady, who was not the birth mother of the sultan, was raised to this position due to that she grew Prince Abdulhamid with the love of a birth mother.¹⁵⁴

That what we understand from our books is that; Sultan Abdulhamid II, who had a real mother-son relation with his stepmother since his childhood, lived also during his sultanate in a good relations with his step mother in the same love, respect and loyalty relation. And this nice relation seems to have sustained trouble-free until the death of his stepmother. But, as it is the case in many issues, there are books which transmit different information and interpretations on this issue, too.

One of our books states that Sultan Abdulhamid hindered it as Perestu Hanım aimed to have a routine influence in the palace as the *Valide Sultan*, and that he eliminated the influence of the women in the palace until the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz. It is said that *Valide Sultan*, who couldn not endure the very hard discipline of Sultan Abdulhamid, who closely knew the discordances of the palace and harem departments during the reign of Sultan Abdulmecid and Sultan Abdülaziz, which reached the high level scandal, would leave a while later the palace and settle into a mansion in Besiktas. The book mentions some shamefull hearsays about Perestu Hanım. Our source transmits that Perestu Hanım, who left the palace and moved to a mansion in Besiktas, was forced to leave the palace as a result of her struggle in order to

¹⁵³ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.19-21

¹⁵⁴ Yılmaz, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Aile Hayatı*, p.73

acquire the traditional *Valide Sultan* status, that there were hearsays brought forward regarding that she had unlegitimate relations with the servants in the Harem.¹⁵⁵ As it is the case in many issues about Sultan Abdulhamid II, it is not wondering that also such hearsays were brought forward on such type of Harem issues. Moreover, when we read the hearsays in the books, stating that Abdulhamid II did not have any sincere respect against Perestu Kadın, who undertook the role of his mother, even in his principedom period, that he once said Sultan Abdulaziz that his stepmother would have an unlegitimate relation with a person named Osman Bey. Perestu Hanımefendi, who had heard this, declared Sultan Abdülaziz that she did not want to stay together with her stepson¹⁵⁶. It is perceived that as if bringing this type of shamefull hearsays forward was merely a habit.

2.1.3. Relations of Sultan Abdulhamid II with the Ladies in the Harem

According to our sources, Sultan Abdulhamid II addicted to the Ottoman traditions as of his principedom and had several wives and concubines. It is stated that he has honoured many ladies from his Harem with the interest of the sultan since he was very addicted to women but that the number of the ladies, who were officially his wife, not exceeded four. He also paid attention on the number of his children and showed effort to not to increase the number of his concubines. It is stated that these ladies, whom the sultan was interested in, were later married with an husband from the environment of the Yıldız Palace along with an appropriate dowery according to their status. It is expressed that the number of the ladies in the Harem of the sultan were subject to novels according to the hearsays in Europe. Moreover, Wilhelm II, who visited Istanbul in 1898, said “how do you manage eight women while I cannot manage even only one” as he had heard that the sultan had eight wives. He received from the sultan the answer “His Majesty, this is art”. It is noted that the exaggerated hearsays brought forward about the relation of Sultan Abdulhamid II with women has real foundations with regards to his life. Our books has provided also a sample which supports its statement; it is told about that what Bidar Kadın, who gave a prince to sultan and famous for her beauty and jealousy. And what she did to Nevcedid Hanım. It is told that the sultan met secretly with Nevcedid Hadım in a mansion in a far corner of the palace due to the jealousy of Bidar

¹⁵⁵ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.107

¹⁵⁶ İtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.40

Kadın, that Bidar Kadın has got informed about one of these datings and has locked all employees of the mansion into a room and switched off the lights and that the sultan, who came to the mansion, saw Bidar Kadın in front of him and that this lady has thoroughly reprimanded him.¹⁵⁷ Our book indicates an evidence about the foundations of the colourful and attracting hearsays we transmitted recently in the real life and that what we understand from our source is that the Sultan had a colourful Harem life.

The one, who performs a character analysis in a general sense related to this issue is our writer Orhan Kologlu. Our writer states that Sultan Abdulhamid II “is a person who has his Harem under control, a passionate lover, a domestic father, and egocentric”. It is emphasized that he was a husband and father, who tries not to spare the care and love he was deprived from in his relations with women and his family. He has both established a since bound with his family and a tighter control since he spent most of his time at home. Orhan Kologlu deals with deep issues related to the private life of the Sultan. For insatnca, he mentions that Abdulhamid II was a health man who did not forget sexuality in the intense working pace we noted previously. Moreover, it is told that his interest for this issue was not limited to his own life, that he, for example, sent Tefvik Pasha, who conducted his life alone with only one woman of foreign origin, a concubine from the palace along with her dowery. Our writer notes that Abdulhamid II was also a passionate type in his love life as it was the case in his political life. But our book emphasize that, he provided an order to the Harem by pursuing the limits and rules by himself.¹⁵⁸ We also see comments regarding that this new order in the Harem set over to extremeness. One of our books expresses that a very hard treatment to the women during the term of Sultan Abdulhamid II became a rule. It is written that the sultan said “I know it! I know the women of my father, my uncle were! I have them pegged!” and that he wants to restrict the utilization of these “property” only to himself. It is expressed that the sultan extremed this care day by day. According to our book could not even that the ladies, concubines went out of the palace, trip in the garden within the palace and also take air without permission. It is expressed that the Harem of the Sultan was a coop with a single cock, that it seemed like the female monasteries of the medieval ages. That, what is interesting in this source, is that it provides us information on the attitude and behaviour of the sultan in the bedroom; we read extreme advanced details in this source like “one of Abdulhamid’s concubine was next to him as long as he was in the Harem during daytime.

¹⁵⁷ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid’in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.102-107

¹⁵⁸ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.38-40

This concubine stepped aside after the dinner, the sultan asked for another, he asked for another when she had an excuse, this woman stayed until midnight and sometimes longer with the sultan, and than another lady was notified, and she came and lied on the chaise lounge until the morning, and a book was read to the sultan behind a screen...” Beside this, there are also other narrations; it is transmitted that girls have built a swing at the small pool in the garden of the Harem department in front of the eyes of the sultan during his jolly times, and that sometimes the girls established two teams and that each team wore nice and light clothes in different colours and made laughingly flower battles, and the sultan watched them with pleasure and joy.¹⁵⁹

Sadiye Osmanoglu writes that the sultan has replaced the long skirted clothes, ragging on the floor, and their turbaned caps of the Harem girls during the exile in Thessaloniki with normal clothes. And he explained his opinion regarding this issue with “I was not fond of such type of dressing in Yıldız. But I preserved these since I thought that my brothers, who would take my position after me, would disapprove that I cancelled old customs”. (Setting off from that what is told by his daughter; for instance, the hearsay indicated by Irtem regarding the girls who make a flower fight with light clothes seems to be an entertainment difficult to be realized.)¹⁶⁰ On the other side, not only the protection of the customs, but also the issue with accurateness and jealousy of the sultan in his Harem, mentioned in another of our sources, is such to not match with this type of entertainments. The daughter of the sultan, Ayse Sultan, was exiled after the death of Abdulhamid II, and her mother, meaning Müsfika Sultan among the ladies of the sultan, did not come though she had called Müsfika Hanım several times to her. She indicated as a reason that Sultan Abdulhamid II was very jealous, that even the eunuchs were prohibited to raise their heads and look into her face, that foreign men looked into her face when he went to Europe, and that the Sultan would be hurt and suffer torment when he should feel it in his grave.¹⁶¹ This is an information, which indicates both the attitude of the sultan against his Harem and the loyalty of the ladies to him. Also this information contains contradictions to the Harem life, where the entertainments indicated above were realized and where the sultan was comfortably and often busy with the ladies. It does not seem to be easy to understand the life of the sultan with the ladies in detail since Müsfika Hanım we mentioned recently is the only person who is the lady of the sultan and who was

¹⁵⁹ Irtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.101-108

¹⁶⁰ Osmanoğlu, Şadiye, *Babam Abdülhamid Saray ve Sürgün Yılları*, Timaş Yayınları, 2012 s.35

¹⁶¹ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.27

interviewed. But even she did not transmit anything about the sultan. But our sources transmit us the following brief narration; the Sultan feels a weakness, when is about to get off the bed one morning. He can not find even the power at him to wear his socks. Müsfike Hanım takes the socks and knees down in front of the bed and wear the sultan his socks. The sultan, impressed by the sincere and heartly care of his wife, asks Müsfika Hanım to give him her blessing. Even if Müsfika Hanım says that she did not do anything that would require this, the sultan insists and receives the blessing of his wife.¹⁶² And this anecdote is another information, which reveals another dimension of the relation between the sultan and his ladies.

2.2. His Physical Appearance

We start the part of our work including the sultanate period of Abdulhamid II with those told about his physical appearance. The first reason why we deal this issue is of course that we conduct a work related to his image. But the more important reasons are that there are the attention attracting information in our sources. Even the physical appearance of Abdulhamid II is used as a tool to praise him or to revile him and we can meet very positive or extreme negative comments about the physical appearance of the same person in our books in this sense. Even if it can be understood that persons make positive or negative comments on the physical structure of other persons in their private lives (even if this behaviour is considered to be wrong), it is not that necessary to write the lines, which include such comments about the appearance of a historical person. In this sense are the written perceived as a part of the Abdulhamid II image drawn by the books. Now, we will try mention to these narratives.

We had followed a narration type which transits from positive to negative when the issues we have transmitted in the sections above had the feature to differentiate with definite borders from each other. (We had to follow a mixed narration form when there were not such differentiations in some parts.) In this part, we will try to follow a path, setting off from the

¹⁶² Armağan, Mustafa, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarla Dansı 2*, Timaş Yayınları, 2013 s.91-92

most positive and going over to the most negative about the physical features of Abdulhamid II.

Ayse Osmanoğlu, the daughter of Abdulhamid II, writes the following lines about her father;

‘My late father was medium tall. His hair and beard were dark brown. He had lost his hair on the top. The hair around were bushy. His nose was high: it had a form which bears the sign of the Ottoman Dynasty. His eyes were hazel between dark green and blue. The surrounding of his eyes were a little bit circled. His forehead, indicating his strong intelligence, was open and high. His lips were neither thick nor slim. His face was white and tended to pink. And his body was paler than his face and was merely like ivory. There were some bristles on his breast and his arms. His hands were medium large and formed, his feet were neither large nor small. His voice was nice, bass and loud. It was a pleasure to listen when he was talking. He was able to explain his ideas and his thoughts with a perfect expression and kindness. You could see the solemnity and sweetness of the monarch in his behaviour. Shortly: he was fully of the type of the Ottoman Dynasty.’¹⁶³

An expression close to the narration of his daughter Ayse Osmanoglu is to be seen in Ziya Nur Aksun’s book, which does not contain any negative comments but clearly expresses these when there are any physical disproportions;

‘He was medium tall, the upper part of his body was longer than the lower part, his breast was wide, his shoulders were lifted, his neck was a little bit sunk between his shoulders, his head was somehow big and the front was wide; his temple and cheek were some sunk, his nose was the dynasty typical aquiline, his body was free from excess fat but with a stable structure, his voice was strong and loud, his narration was distinctly and calm. Even if he smiled much, it is not heard that he laughed loud. His height was a little bit plumb, his walking was solemn like his character and slow and a statuesqueness was to be seen in every mood and behaviour of him along with the elegancy of his character...’¹⁶⁴

One of our books transmits the comment regarding these physical attributes of Abdulhamid II that the differences in his face and his entity are the observed signed of the Ottoman Dynasty.

¹⁶³ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.15

¹⁶⁴ Aksun, *II. Abdülhamid Han*, p 19-20

It is stated that the lineaments of Abdulhamid which resemble his grandfather can clearly be seen in the portrait of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror drawn by Bellini.¹⁶⁵

And another of our sources writes the following about Abdulhamid II;

‘Abdulhamid was the most ugly among the four princes of his father, and his most ugly part was his large and bridged nose. That’s why one of the nicknames spread among the public was “Big Nose”. It will be seen that all word related to nose in the texts, particularly after his enthronement, will be censored due to that Abdulhamid had a big nose and that this issue become a humor subject such to anger him. He attracted the attention with his eyes, their largeness, brightness and mobility indicated that he has an effective will. His disconcerted, groundless suspicious and nervous nature was clear from the often movement of his slim hands through his beard, and he did not feel much relaxed, particularly except the palace. He seemed to be fully to be hunchbacked, particularly when he wore a cloak since he inclined a little bit forward when he walked, sat and stood. This feature of him became more visible the elder he got. Everbody knows that his voice is bass, nice, slightly thrill and attractive. He spoke smooth, clear and commandingly though he listened much and spoke less.’¹⁶⁶

And the one, who brings forward the most negative comments about the physical attributes of Abdulhamid II is Suleyman Kani Irtem. Irtem transmits the following;

‘It was impossible for those, who had seen the pictures of Abdulhamid of his youth and his status a couple of years after his enthronement, not to wonder about how much the person had changed. He resembled neither his father nor his uncle. A strange, merely scary ugliness incurred at Abdulhamid the elder he got. The large tarboosh he wore closed his slightly protruding forehead and his hairless head. This situation showed his thin face two fold ill. His large nose fell on his bushy moustache. He made it to his custom to colour his beard in a colour between red and brown with a mixture of henna, coffee and gall he had learned from a shekh when white hair began to be seen in his beard. He definitely coloured his beard himself and very bad. He stroke with his hands over his beard, which he cut a little bit short. His height was such to be called short. But he seemed medium tall since he mostly wore shoes and boots with a heel of at least 6 centimetres. Even if he was thin in terms of his body, this

¹⁶⁵ Yılmaz, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Aile Hayatı*, p.29

¹⁶⁶ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.82-83

weak point of him did not attract much attention since he had thick bones. There was no proportion between the lower and upper parts of his body. His shoulders were hunched. His neck seemed to be short due to that his head was inclined forward. His arms were long, his hands were wide and his fingers were thickly. His hands were speckled. His feet were small compared with his hands; his legs were a little bit slanted and crooked. His head was large and oval, the back was protruded. His forehead was wide, his temples were pushed down. His ears were long and bloodless. His left eyebrow was a little higher than the other one. His eyelashes were longly. His nose was big and long and slightly tended to the right. His right ear heard bad, he said that this incurred due to his hunting interest. He had a deep and strong voice. He converted this sweet when he wanted to. Even if he speaks clearly when he had prepared himself before, his words were mixed up when he had left himself arbitrary. He listened careful to those told to him. His lower lip, of which the mid seemed to be slotted, was thick and full, such to close his upper lip immediately. His teeth were missing in his mouth. He preferred to extract the decayed and aching himself with pliers. His dark hazel coloured eyes, of which the holes remained half closed, were protected under this protruding and hanging down eyebrows. These eyes seemed sometimes like a shining light with fast movements in the dark, and sometimes converted such to terrorize those looking in these like the eyes of a mad, which protruded by the effect of fury and fear. Though Abdulhamid could see the far well, he could not read the documents without his glasses. His nature was like all despots, who are very touchy, quick-tempered – bilious; his lower lip and his jaw began to move when he got angry by the domination of his nervous nature. His eyebrows were knitted, the veins in his forehead swelled up when Abdulhamid worried about something. The palace people knew this sign and remained in a rush and curiosity until they learned who would carry the can.’¹⁶⁷

As to be understood from the narrations above, whilst there are each other resembling comments about the physical attributes of Sultan Abdulhamid II, there are also extreme contrary expressions to each other used. For instance, whilst the features of his face are resembled to his ancestor Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror in one book, it is narrated with negative expressions by one of our writers as we mentioned in the last part.

¹⁶⁷ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.52-53

2.3. His Dressing Style

The physical appearance is of course in a unity with clothings. On the other side, it is one of the important features, which constitutes the image of a person. In this part, we will try to track in our books the dressing style of Sultan Abdulhamid II.

Naturally is the most detailed information available in the book of again his daughter, Ayse Osmanoglu;

‘He always dressed simple and did not like pomp in any issue. He wore grey coloured clothes in the Harem and used cloaks in the same colour. This colour was merely reserved for him since he liked grey much. On official days, he wore of course a uniform. He wore black or dark ultramarine clothes and coat and used a tie in the same colour when he accepted ambassadors and pashas in private. He stuck very rarely a single thin needle or a simple platin needle. He worked with brown velvet trousers and a shirt with rolled up sleeves when he worked in his carpenter atelier, painted a picture or was busy with paint. His bedgown was always made of white linen, like a shirt until the knees and with slashes on both sides. When it was necessary, he wore his trousers over this shirt, put on a tie made of white fabric or a light coloured necktie over the bedgown, wore his jacket and accepted the person he would accept this way. Some of his bedgown were like pyjamas made white wool fabric. His handkerchiefs were white and partially coloured linen. His fantasy waistcoats, all his shirts and clothes were ordered and sent by the Ambassador in Paris Munir Pasha. He presented those he deemed to be too youngish among these clothes and waistcoats from Europe to his sons. He had never worn a long shirt and cardigans in his life. He put on his brown sable fur as soon as he stood off and went to the hamam in the morning, and sat having put on this fur over his clothes when it was very cold. He used his handkerchief rather clean. He let cut small muslins and let them burn when he had used these. His bed clothings were also made of white linen. He had a straight walking stick made of yellow wood. He took this only in his hand when he toured in the garden of the palace, and did not use it the other times. The shoes he wore were like boots and had some heels. He let these make by the head shoemaker. These shoes were let made by my brother Mehmed Selim Efendi, the second among our siblings and the oldest of our brothers after we returned from Thessaloniki. A further shoe was slipped over these shoes in order to protect these against mud. He wore longer ones of these boots

when he went out hunting and put on spurs when he rode a horse. He wore patent leather slippers with white leather lining when he went to the hamam after he stood up in the mornings. But nobody saw him with slippers until he went to bed in the night. His socks were made of white wool and silk and had a short stocking. He wore socks made of white cotton during summer... His rosary was always in his pocket. It was made of jadestone. He wore a white agate on gold as a ring on his finger. None had seen that he had worn another ring. This ring and rosary were brought by Seyhülharem Hacı Emin Pasha from Mecca and presented him during his principedom, and he carried the rosary in his pocket and the ring on his finger since then until his death. Now this ring is on the finger of my mother. He made it to his customs to keep a chronometer watch, which he used since his principedom times, always in the pocket of his waistcoat. His Friday's clothes, large uniforms, the medals he would put on and his sword were kept in the department of the head clothmaster. They brought them to the Selamlık room and prepared them when he was to wear them. He was worn by clothmasters.'

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Also those written by Ahmet Semih Mumtaz contain important details;

'Another interest of Sultan Abdulhamid II was to dress good and to change his clothes three-four times a day as he did not neglect salaah even once. This had an additional reason. And this was: he mostly climbed on couches and sat on his knees. His trousers got wrinkled. There was another issue which attracted our attention. He wore the galoshes, which he wore when he sat and walked inside the palace, only takes off them when he sat on the couches. His jackets were double-breasted. He buttoned up his jacket, placed a watch into the outer handkerchief pocket with a very thin cord – I do not know whether they paid attention to but – he inserted his handkerchief into the left sleeve of his shirt. He combined his neckties always and definitely with the colours of his socks. The European shirts were always white. "Boter" and "Mir" were the tailors. But, since he insistently preferred clothes made of Hereke fabric, he complained that they were not as soft as he wanted. And when he saw those who appeared in front of him having worn a new cloth: after having said "Enjoy it!", he boasted by saying "Mine is not that chic as yours, but pure Turkish product, made of Hereke fabric". He toured bareheaded in the palace and wore a cap when he performed salaah. His hair was combed divided on the right. He brushed them frequently... His underwear consisted of crescental shirts made of Trabzon fabric and underpants made of the same fabric and thin or

¹⁶⁸ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.15-17

thick undershirts made of camel hair he wore depending on the season. He did not girdle, he did not use hangers. He wore military clothes when he went out to the Friday's prayer greeting and a bonnet in summer and winter with a hood. He did not wear any rank signs on his clothes; he just put on a sword. He wore white gloves and took his sword between his legs in the carriage and held his hand on it. He aired his hair five-ten times with the excuse to correct his tarboosh from the garden gate of Yıldız Pallace until he arrived at Hamidiye Mosque...' ¹⁶⁹ There is a paragraph in another of our books regarding the white gloves, expressed to be used by Sultan Abdülamid II. It is stated that Sultan Abdulhamid II had a board full of white gloves in the palace after he was expelled to Thessaloniki; and it evaluates the usage of white gloves by the Sultan all the times as an obstinance against the words of Machievelli "You can not make politics with white gloves". ¹⁷⁰

We have handled those transmitted in our two books, which provide detailed information about the dressing of Sultan Abdulhamid II. As transmitted above; is that Sultan Abdulhamid II followed an interest attracting simplicity with regards to his clothes and life, that he did not like great ceremonies and assemblies, is a point stated also in our other books. ¹⁷¹ In a book about palace ceremonies, the detail that the sultan came down to his carriage with his plain clothes, even when the Friday's greeting of Abdulhamid II is told about is emphasized. ¹⁷² But it is expressed that the Sultan, who attracts the attention on simplicity in terms of clothes, outlined that the clothing, whilst being simple, has an elegance on its own and as we mentioned recently, that he mostly preferred clothes made of domestic fabric and that he, by boasting with this attribute, encouraged the people to use domestic products. ¹⁷³

2.4. Professions and Fields He Was Interested In

¹⁶⁹ Mümtaz, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Zamanı*, p.8-9

¹⁷⁰ Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarla Dansı 2*, p.44

¹⁷¹ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.84

¹⁷² Ayyıldız, *II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Saray Merasimleri*, p.45

¹⁷³ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.19

2.4.1. Carpentry

It is expressed that the skills of Sultan Abdulhamid II in the field of fine arts was particularly in carpentry. It is emphasized that the furniture ware he made were accepted to be the masterwork of the art of furniture, that these are in museums and that those, open for private property, are purchased and sold for great monies.¹⁷⁴ It is expressed that Sultan Abdulhamid liked the carpentry profession very much and has worked in this field since his principedom. It is noted that he prepared the cornices and other things of a room in the Kagithane mansion himself; that he created from his private carpentry atelier except steam also a mobile carpenter's shop; that foreign and domestic masters produced perfect goods here and that there were ones among these masters who reached the rank of a local military governor by promoting. It is told that it was a German master named Karl Yensen who exacerbated his interest for carpentry and wood carving.¹⁷⁵ There is the information regarding that he had let bring many new system tools in his carpentry atelier from Europe.¹⁷⁶ Another of our books about the start of Sultan Abdulhamid II, who was an extreme skilled carpenter beside his ingenuity in inlaying and ornamentation, with this profession, expresses that the encouragement of an Austrian artist played a role at it. It is written that the sultan, wearing his working clothes and going to the workshop with Lieutenant Mehmed Efendi of the masters of the Tophane plant, lost himself for hours and manufactured products like a writing desk, coffee table, console, table.¹⁷⁷ It is emphasized that the collection and delivery to a museum of nearly three hundred pieces out of his professional hands, and pieces left here and there beyond some shelves and boards in the library of the university, is an arbitrariness to be astonished. It is noted that the Sultan spent most of his time in his carpentry atelier with sixty workers, that he manufactured very nice goods out of very valuable wood and furnished a room with these goods. It is notified that he presented some of these goods he manufactured to persons he liked. For instance, it is stated that he manufactured walking sticks and presented these to the wounded soldiers during the Turkish-Greek War.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.20

¹⁷⁵ İrttem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.76-77

¹⁷⁶ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.19

¹⁷⁷ Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarda Dansı*, p.94

¹⁷⁸ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.94-95

No doubt that the closest witnesses of this personal interest of Sultan Abdulhamid II were his daughters. The daughter of the sultan, Ayşe Osmanoglu, writes the following about this interest of her father;

‘The interest of my father for carpentry began during the time of his father. That’s because Abdulmecid Khan was also busy with carpentry and he had a real master artist beside him named Halil Efendi. My father took courses from this Halil Efendi and worked with him. The signatures of Halil Efendi were engraved on the carpentry tools of my father. These tools were in Yıldız, in the workshop of my father. He worked also with these tools. He had let bring many new system tools from Europe. Many of the furniture he made with mother of pearl, he carved, were in Yıldız. I do not know what happened to these. And an artistic board he manufactured and presented to the last Ottoman vizier Tevfik Pasha is in the grateful hands of İsmail Hakkı Bey, the oldest son Tevfik Pasha, the old adjutant and one of the grooms. My father had also made a chair and a just 35 centimetres high, small, elegant locker with drawers. I took four pieces, dismantled from a large locker he had manufactured, handled with mother of pearl, showing a village panorama, and presented two of them to my late sister Refia Sultan. My late brother Abdurrahim Efendi had presented a writing set, which my father had made in Maslak during his principedom period, to my son Ömer. And now this is us now.’

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And one of those, who witnessed closely this special interest of the sultan, is his daughter Sadiye Osmanoglu. Şadiye Hanım, after having expressed that the interest of her father for carpentry was famous since her childhood, his carpentery atelier, his perfect tools and the types of the furniture he manufactured, comments as follows; ‘He concealed himself into his workshop and spent time in order to relax his nerves, tired due to the heavy and responsibility bearing decisions of the state issues.’¹⁸⁰

Another of our books, which handle this issue, gives place to that what the sultan said himself about the profession of carpentry. The sultan, who continued with his preoccupations without interruption, has asked Fethi Okyar on the next day of his expellation to Thessaloniki when his tools in Yıldız Palace would come and said the following without waiting for his answer;

¹⁷⁹ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.33-34

¹⁸⁰ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Abdülhamid Saray ve Sürgün Yılları*, p.37

‘Procure such habits, preoccupations, pleasures. I got interested in these during my princedom. I continued with these not when I found time for this during my regency, I continued by sparing time for them. Today, it is not only a preoccupation for me, but also a consolation. Nearly all of my grandfathers had great and satisfactory habits. Most of them were busy with writing, poems, literature.’¹⁸¹

As to be seen are the contrary comments we meet in many issues about Sultan Abdulhamid II, which sometimes raise him into the sky and sometimes chastise, progress parallel in when it is about the carpentry issue. It is understood that our books, which handle this issue, remunerate the success of the monarch in this field.

2.4.2. His Interest for Books and His Library

Another issue pointed on by our sources about the personal interests of Sultan Abdulhamid II is his devotion to books. Our books say ‘may be that he did not have much time to read during his sultanate, but he was a person, who always respected the value of books’.¹⁸² It is stated that there were 10.000 books in his private library, that he visited this library. And there were many books written about the Ottoman Empire, many handwritings with copyrights, Turkish and Arabic works and foreign works, too. Most of these books were illustrated and bound.¹⁸³ Following information is transmitted in the book of Mustafa Armağan about the part of this library and the books in it; the library of Sultan Abdulhamid in Yıldız Palace consisted of four sections. 1) Works written in foreign language about Turkey. There were many handwritten books among these. These were books, which were specially translated and paid copyrights for. Thus, it was forbidden to print and distribute these. They were single copies. 2) The library of the sultan subscribed to all important newspapers published in Europe. Thus, he had an extreme rich collection of periodicals. 3) The section of novels and stories. Nearly, total 6.000 books were translated specially for the palace. These novels were read in the Harem and reached from hand to hand and later returned to the library. For instance, all works of Carmen Silva were available here. The library had also a section with Arabic and Persian works, this

¹⁸¹ Yılmaz, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Aile Hayatı*, p.30

¹⁸² Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarda Dansı*, p. 84

¹⁸³ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.76

section was poorer compared with the other sections. 4) The geography and travel books collection... The Yıldız Palace Library was a place, where nearly 30 clerks and librarians had worked and Sultan Abdulhamid liked this place very much and spent two hours of his day here. Sometimes he also accepted statesmen in his library... Miss Max Müller, whose husband was an orientalist, tells about this library in her memories printed in 1897 as follows;

‘The effort shown by the old librarian in order to find any book requested to be seen by my husband was really very impressive. His assistants were helping him seriously. They have brought us first very well illustrated miniatures and bounded amazing Iranian handwritings. When I told them that my husband would like to see what for books were in the library, they brought everything they had available immediately in front of us. But these were works rather related to music. After having brought some superb handwritings of the Quran along with their original and interpretations, they requested us to look around and investigate the available works personally. The bookcases were of the most beautiful manufacture with their mobile shelves. We found a very nice collection of the French, English and German classics in a corner. And in the centre of the room, there were glassed cases, which mostly presented to the Sultan, magnificent illustrated books were available. While my husband was talking with the old librarian with the help of Sadık Bey, his assistant showed me the pictures of some wonderful places within the Ottoman Empire and some public buildings in Istanbul... I learned from the library clerk that the sultan was personally busy with the order of the library and visited it nearly every day. The Sultan had ordered that the books, which my husband had requested for the acceptance, were kept at a special place. We left this place unwillingly.’¹⁸⁴

It is stated that Sultan Abdulhamid II not only established a library, which astonished one, but also was very interested in print and publication works and showed efforts in this sense. It is stated that the sultan had let bring modern press machines from Europe and let print marvellous collected poems, the most healthy print of the most respected hadith book “Sahih-i Buhari”, that he is the establisher of our librarianship in the modern sense.¹⁸⁵

Now let’s handle the personal book preference of Sultan Abdulhamid II. The Sultan was addicted to detective, criminal novels in terms of reading. The translators of the Palace were translating such novels. He was carefully listening, letting repeat some paragraphs frequently

¹⁸⁴ Armağan, *Abdülhamid’in Kurtlarda Dansı*, p. 84-85

¹⁸⁵ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han’ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.18-19

when these novels were read to him. And he did not like love novels and deeming these as “toilet literature”.¹⁸⁶

As mentioned above, it is stated that the sultan let read books for him was one of his interesting habits. Sultan Abdulhamid II had let read him books before falling asleep when he lied down on his bed. A screen was being placed at his foot-end and the Head Clothes-Master Ismet Bey read him books. Later were also Hacı Mahmud Efendi and the Code Secretary Asım Bey assigned by this task.¹⁸⁷ This trusted and selected servant read him a crime novel or itinerary translated in the palace, the reader went out when he got tired and the door of the room was closed from inside.¹⁸⁸

His daughter Ayse Osmanoglu brings such an explanation to this pre-sleep book reading issue which is defined as one of the interesting habits of Sultan Abdulhamid II by our books;

‘There was nothing left unsaid by the opponents of my father for that he had let read books during the night in his room. But this was a preoccupation related fully to his private life and was performed in the most innocent field like reading and listening to a book. And my father explained the issue about reading books as follows: “I let read books in my room during the night in order to relief from the weight of the works that busy me during the day, to direct my mind to other destinations and to eliminate my thoughts and sleep relaxed. I fully loose my sleep when the works I let read are serious. I therefore let translate some novels” and added by laughing: “My grandmother sang me lullabies. Now have the read books the same effect. Actually, I am half listening, and half falling asleep without listening. That’s my sleeping aid.”

These books were also read by the Head Clothes-Master Ismet Bey, who was also the foster brother of my father. After him Hacı Mahmud Efendi had read these. After him, the Private Code Secretary Asım Bey had read these and he cancelled this custom after his death.

¹⁸⁶ Mümtaz, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Zamanı*, p. 3-5

¹⁸⁷ Engin, Vahdettin, *Asayiş Sultan II. Abdülhamid’ in İç Güvenlik Politikası*, Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2013 s.25

¹⁸⁸ Yeğen, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.228

Those, who read books in front of the door of the selamlık, stood slowly up and went out as soon as they sensed that the sultan slept, and the Second Head of the Treasury, lying in front of the Harem's door, entered slowly and locked the door.

My father had let important historical works during the day by Chamberlain Emin Bey. He respected Emin Bey, who was a master in fast and easy translating from French into Turkish. Emin Bey was always beside him when he was ordering and working in his library, sent his greetings and notices to the foreigners with him. Emin Bey escorted my brother Burhaneddin Efendi whom he sent to some ambassadors to bring his greetings when he was in the mosque during every Friday's Greeting. He said he was insightful and knowledgeable.”¹⁸⁹

2.4.3. His Interest for Theatre and the Yıldız Theatre

Sultan Abdulhamid II adapted the way to bring the entertainment world of the Harem into the palace, too. Whilst palace women during the period of Sultan Abdülmecid and Sultan Abdulaziz did not attend the balls given in the consulates, they watched these behind cages specially prepared for them. They watched in the same way the theatre, opera, operetta presentations organized in the palace. Sultan Abdulhamid had prevented the first of these, but continued with the second of these more regularly. It is said that whilst he prevented with his attitude that those in the palace went out, he did not hinder that they meet the Western culture.¹⁹⁰

Sultan Abdulhamid II liked theatre and concerts, a presentation was made or a concert was given in his private theatre of Friday, Wednesday and Sunday evenings.¹⁹¹ A theatre was constructed at the location, where was an old stable. This building consisted of five lodges on both sides of the sultan's lodge and a parterre. It is said that the Italian opera company in Beyoğlu was ordered here a couple of times a month and that the artists in the palace did not like this. He had two theatre teams in his service, of which one consisted of Turkish players and one consisted of foreign artists, presenting operas and varieties. The roles of the women

¹⁸⁹ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.36-37

¹⁹⁰ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.40

¹⁹¹ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.19

were played mostly by men, since there was a female deficit in these groups.¹⁹² It was immediately notified and advised by ambassadors when an ensemble came to Istanbul. These ensembles were thus hosted in the palace. Many artists had come, and played in his front by this way. These were awarded with medals. Moreover, Sultan Abdulhamid II had taken a family of an Italian ensemble, which came to Istanbul, under his protection and assigned them to the “Mızıka-i Humayun”.¹⁹³

The Yıldız Theatre under the Harem department was a place with a very elegant decoration, suitable for any type of piece with its lodges, orchester places, and broad stage. This theatre contained one eulogy, one improvisation and a comedy theatre, and in addition to this, opera and operetta ensembles of the Sultan. All of the artists were members of the “Mızıka-i Hümayun”. And the artists of the opera and the operetta were Italian artists, selected from the foreign ensembles which came to Istanbul and employed in the palace with high wages. Beside this, also famous artists and ensembles, which came to Istanbul, were invited to the palace.¹⁹⁴ When we look at those narrated by the daughter of Sultan Abdulhamid II, Sadiye Osmanoglu, we understand that particularly Friday nights were reserved for entertainment and presentations in the palace. She states that they went to the presentations in the theatre by the invitation of the Treasury Master, which the servants toured from house to house and the invitation was brought them in this way.¹⁹⁵

The sultan invited also the representatives to the presentations. He sat together with the grand vizier; the other representatives were distributed to the windows. And the daughters, ladies of the sultan set over to the Harem side, the cages of the sultan and the representatives were removed and that of the Harem side remained closed. The orchester was below, on the left side, and on the side opposing the stage on the lower floor were for the palace people, pashas and beys. Sometimes, when the ambassadors were there, the piece of music was reserved for the male, the community of the Harem did not attend these. All cages were opened that time, the spouses of the ambassadors came and sat in their own lodges. There were invited ones among the Pashas, and sometimes the sultan invited his brothers and the princes of Sultan Abdulaziz, too. Abdulhamid II accepted his own older princes in his lodge, and his daughters entered it and kissed the hand of the Sultan during this. All princes wore Istanbulin on non-

¹⁹² İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.81

¹⁹³ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.76

¹⁹⁴ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.101

¹⁹⁵ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Abdülhamid Saray ve Sürgün Yılları*, p.23

official days. The mother, sister and daughters of the Khedive sat in their own lodges during these presentations when they attended these and were together with the grandmother and the Head-Woman. The harems of the representatives watched together with the sultans when they were in the palace. A special portable theatre was established in the garden of the Harem on hot days and light pieces like eulogies or comedies were being presented. The public of the Harem was watching these from the window of the palace.¹⁹⁶

Sultan Abdulhamid II requested a presentation from the palace theatre when he worked intensive with regards to state affairs and watched these. The sultan sat in his wide lodge opposite to the stage and also negotiated with persons he wanted to during the course of the play. It is said that he returned to his office before the play ended. The sultan could sometimes change the themes of some plays and operas since he did not like tragic ends. The play to be presented was selected by Ilyas Bey when the sultan did not note any piece to the theatre under the control of the Head Clothes-Master Ilyas Bey.¹⁹⁷ One of the pieces which Abdulhamid II liked the most was the work “The Robbers” of the famous German poet Friedrich Schiller. And “La Traviata”, “Aida”, “Carmen”, “Faust”, “Mascot” were among the operas he liked the most. But it is said that he did not ruminant and called his head secretary or the statesmen and palace dignitaries who were in the theatre at that moment and gave orders for important things he reminded.¹⁹⁸

It cannot be said that Abdulhamid II had selected and let only play the pieces he liked since, as it is to be understood, would be deficient information. An example given by Orhan Kologlu is such to be an indicator for that how the Sultan converted this type of performances interesting by using themes, which would interest the palace community with his contributions. A conversation between Pierre Berton and French stage artists her met in Istanbul is as follows;

- What are you doing in Istanbul?
- We only perform presentations in the palace. Sometimes operettas, and sometimes comedies.

¹⁹⁶ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.77

¹⁹⁷ Yeğen, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.28

¹⁹⁸ Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarda Dansı*, p.95

- What for comedies?
- Comedies written by the Sultan.
- In Turkish?
- No, French.
- How?
- His majesty calls us sometimes. Tells us about the scenario he wrote. He distributes and explains each of us our roles. He even notes the stage roles. Everbody goes back to his room and organizes his clothes and prepares his role. The palace dignitaries take meanwhile their places in the hall and the presentations starts within half an hour... We are accustomed with this special work and we please his majesty, too.
- Well, what is the value of these scenarios?
- They always have a great effect on the special audience they address.
- Can you give an example?
- We were the last time requested to present a palace chamberlain. He should be a loyal, but not a calm person. His lord requests suddenly from him to prepare a banquet for hundred persons. The man gets overwhelmed and begins to give messy orders. The servants collide with each other, dishes get broken, the boiler topples down and the chamberlain falls to his feet when the ruler appears with his guests and confesses his failure and gets forgiven. This comedy had a great success. The real effect is seen in a scene, explained detailed to us by the Sultan. The soda is poured on the face of the poor chamberlain when a servant, running in fear and rush, accidentally presses on the siphon of the bottle. A splendid laughter was heard at that moment.
- I see that the Sultan created stage characters like Aristophanes.
- That's right, each of the comedies is a lesson given to person around him. Whilst we perform the play as far as we can, according to told us, another comedy was being played in the hall and the real entertainment of his majesty is this. High positioned clerks start to look at each other with concern as soon as he gathers the palace dignitaries for such a presentation. None knows what will happen and everybody asks himself and herself whether they will play him or her. It is understood of whom the Sultan makes fun, as soon as the curtain opens. At that moment are the efforts of the poor victim for not to get angry against the mocking looks at him/her to be seen. And, of course, the smiles of the Sultan, having forgotten the Russian protests, German stress, Bulgarian problems for a moment, are to be seen.

- It is understood that there was a significant softening of the traditions of the palace, compared with hundred years ago. There are not strangulation penalties, sent by dumb, anymore.
- The Sultan is very good. His environment admires him and, though he did not determine hard punishments, the concern about doing something which he would not like is enough to keep each of them within the borders of obedience and assignment.

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As to be understood is Sultan Abdulhamid II not only interested in theatre as an audience, but also a person, who was ambitious and skilled in terms of production.

It seems that, Yıldız Theatre hosted interesting events, too. The French operetta assembly was to play “Label Elen” in the palace theatre. A foreign lady, curious to see the Yıldız Theatre, makes an agreement with with the director of the ensemble and its primadonna Jean Sollier; she enters Yıldız instead of a player, looking like her in terms of statute, in a carriage with director of Perapalas, who was bold. Abdulhamid presents the Primadonna a rather nice armring. The sultan receives a notice during the second episode and the foreign lady gets prohibited from entering the stage at the third episode and arrested. The members of the ensemble and the foreign ladys are brought out of the palace in carrages as soon as the play ended. The next day, there was a rumour in Beyoglu about that the intention of this lady was evil. A further interesting detail; it is said that the plays and concerts in Yıldız were not published and announced and the reason for it was not to create the idea in the public that the “sultan kicks up his heels”.²⁰⁰

As to be seen is the interest of Sultan Abdulhamid II for theatre rather much. He spends time for both watching it and creation of it. Setting off from the details we mentioned in the lines above, it is not much difficult to understand that theatre and performance arts play a serious role among the personal interests of the sultan.

¹⁹⁹ Kolođlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeđi*, p.40-41

²⁰⁰ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.82-83

2.4.4. His Interest for Music

The opinion that Sultan Abdulhamid II had a very high musical talent according to the researcher Ziya Şakir Bey is stated in the book of Mustafa Armagan. The sultan did not differentiate between eastern and western music, he liked both. He let perform the operas and operettas of great western composers in the theatre in Yıldız Palace, and he let eastern artists compose local operettas and watched these. The interest of the palace, which directed towards Turkish style music during the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz, tended towards European music with Sultan Abdulhamid and enjoyed credit. Many musicians had composed marches and presented him these when he was enthroned. The sultan liked the composition of Necip Pasha who was the orchestra chief of the palace. The “Hamidiye March” which was played for years during official ceremonies, particularly during the Friday’s Greetings, was created this way. The Commander of the “Mabeyin-i Hümayun Mızıkası”, Süleyman Pasha, was ordered during the reign of Abdulhamid II to establish a Ladies and Harem Brass which considered about during the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz. But this venture remained at a limited level due to war and similar effects.²⁰¹

Beside this importance attached to music by the sultan, as recently mentioned, he had a music loving nature. It is said that the number of the artists of diverse nations, knowing his interest for western music, who dedicated him compositions, reached two thousand.²⁰² This interest of Sultan Abdulhamid II for western music was spread among the princes and princesses, and nearly all of them learned to play an instrument.²⁰³ The detail regarding this issue can be read in the memories of Sadiye Osmanoglu, the daughter of the sultan. She states that they spent their time until midday at school and the time after at home, that a piano teacher came home, that they exercised playing piano with him without being bored, moreover, with a great enthusiasm, that she was also interested in playing the mandolin.²⁰⁴ And in the memories of another of his daughters, Ayşe Osmanoglu, it is said; ‘I was interested in playing the piano during my youth. My father had ordered for each of his princes a piano from Europe. Italian and French music teachers were ordered to the palace. The French Alexander Efendi among these teachers was assigned as the teacher for me. I had studied for a long while. Though I liked music much, the necessary time was unfortunately not allowed to me due to a life full of

²⁰¹ Armağan, *Abdülhamid’in Kurtlarda Dansı*, p.89-93

²⁰² Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han’ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.19

²⁰³ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid’in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.101

²⁰⁴ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Abdülhamid Saray ve Sürgün Yılları*, p.20

struggles. He wanted that his children were busy with music, bought us pianos and diverse music instruments. He let play the piano in front of him, listened, corrected the failures, paid attention to the pace and said “this should not be played this way, please repeat it”. He preferred foreign music to Turkish music, “Turkish music is nice, but it always makes one sad. Foreign music is different. It makes happy.” He did not listen to Turkish music on the piano. She mentions that he said that “It should be played with specific Turkish instruments”.²⁰⁵ We learn from her that the sultan ordered some evenings a chamber orchestra and let them perform on the lawn in front of his office; that he sometimes order a piano, a violin, a cello and a flute and let them perform; that he also ordered Tamburi Cemil Efendi and let him perform and that he liked it very much, that once two French came and played the sitar in front of him, that he kept important works, written for an orchestra and collections written for piano in a bounded manner.²⁰⁶

2.4.5. His Interest for Animals

A white cat, which ate its meals in the Harem with a fork, street dog which wants to get on the carriage of the sultan, a white parrot, which repeats everything it heard with a great loyalty to Sultan Abdulhamid.²⁰⁷ These are the animals, which are mentioned in our books with their attributes and stated to belong to the sultan. Among these animals, a dog named “Cherie”, came to him a strange coincidence. On a Friday, when the sultan was performing salaah in Hamidiye Mosque, a dog came and was rolling on the ground in front of his carriage, waiting at the door, and the Sultan dismisses the dog when he sees it. This situation repeats again the following two weeks. Finally, at third week, the sultan says upon this “don not do anything to it, take it to my office”. Thus, Cherie enters the palace. Cherie is described as a rather ugly, white-blackish dog which astonishes everybody by its loyalty, sensibility and intelligence. The sultan, who loved animals very much, had also a white Ankara cat and a white parrot. The white parrot among these animals repeated those spoken outside the room of the sultan with a good pronunciation and loyalty to its holder. The interesting attributes of the animals of the sultan are not limited to these two animals; it is expressed that the white cat of

²⁰⁵ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.32

²⁰⁶ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.77-78

²⁰⁷ Yılmaz, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Aile Hayatı*, p. 195

Abdulhamid II ate its meal only when a fork was given to it. It is transmitted that these three animals played together, toured together and stayed together aside the sultan and expected his interest.²⁰⁸

It is expressed that one of the issues in which the sultan was a master were horse riding. He came through an important accident happened to him during his sultanate thanks to that he could manage the wildest horses. In the fifth or sixth year of his sultanate, he let performed the Friday's greeting procession at the Ortakoy Mosque. The sultan rode to the greeting on a horse until that day. It is said, whilst it is not know by whom and how this was done, due to that the animal was rubbed with turpentine oil, the sultan came from the palace until the mosque with difficulty and by having faced a danger to fall down a couple of times thanks to being a master horse rider.²⁰⁹ It is expressed that Abdulhamid presented the US President Grant, who visited the Ottoman Empire for the first time, two thoroughbred Arab horses and it is transmitted that the sultan's himself was interested in white steeds.²¹⁰ That this horse named "Ferhan", owned by the leader of a clan around Baghdad, saved his owner's life during a war by pulling him behind him, made him famous, and Sultan Abdulhamid II, who heard about the fame of this horse, sent a message to Baghdad and requested this horse. It is stated about this horse that it immediately bent its waist and raised its ears when the Sultan went towards the stepping stone, turned his head towards the Sultan and snickered. It is emphasized that the monarch loved this horse very much.²¹¹

The sultan had let leave gazelles and other animals to hunt by releasing them to locations he had let separate by fences in the proximity after having moved to Yıldız Palace. He was personally hunting in these hunting areas close to the palace. The German dogs and the big hall dogs of the sultan were very valuable. There was a dog shelter in the large garden of Yıldız Palace for these dogs. Wild animals were less in the palace. There were some lions, tigers and leopards presented by the Abyssinian ruler. The good race cats and birds were perfect. There were twenty bird-keepers under the management of the head of the bird-keepers in the birds' house. The Japanese emperor had sent him a collection of the diversified birds of Japan when he had heard about this interest of the sultan. Abdulhamid preferred among the birds pigeons and parrots. It was the case that he spent hours with a bird he loved.

²⁰⁸ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Abdülhamid Saray ve Sürgün Yılları*, p. 38-39

²⁰⁹ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.34-35

²¹⁰ Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarda Dansı*, p.95-96

²¹¹ Mümtaz, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Zamanı*, p.38-42

He had let construct a bird room next to the bath department. The most beautiful birds were flying here over synthetic branches and trees. There was a canary among these birds, which sung the Hamidiye Anthem. The sultan also loved roedeers much in addition to all these animals. He gave them fruits himself when roedeers, antilopes, Scotch goats, wild sheep and mountain goats crossed the way of the sultan during his trips. And the sultan was interested in ram combats. He bred big rams. And it was the case that the animals, which died in the palace, were stuffed and kept. Suleyman Kani Irtem, asks because of this level of interest for animals and the significant collection of animals “Is it the Yıldız Palace, or a zoo?...”²¹²

2.5. Character structure of Sultan Abdulhamid II

It is without doubt that a great part of the general information about the personality of Sultan Abdulhamid consists of the traits covered by this title. The discussions about the Sultan turn around three headings as whether he was apprehensive, stingy, faithful and superstitious or not. We shall now try to have a look at what has been written about these issues in the source books.

²¹² Irtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.67-68

2.5.1. Reflections of his Mood Known as Scrupulous During his Reign

When we review the books that have been written about the subject we see that this subject has been interpreted in three different ways. The first view holds that the Sultan was a very apprehensive person while the second view holds that he was very brave and finally the third view which we have noticed to enjoy a wider acceptance asserts that there is in deed an element of apprehension in his character structure but explains it terms of a cause-effect relation taking into consideration the atmosphere which has given rise to such a situation . Let's begin taking up the first approach. In this context let's first have a look at the view which considered this issue by only stating that he was brave and then have a look at the views of those who only stated that he was an apprehensive person. In this way we shall have an insight into the criticisms and the two opposite views. Finally we take up the view of those who consider the subject in terms of a cause-effect relation and hopefully shall have clarified the subject in this way.

The subject is dealt with in the following manner by the books according to the interpretation of which the Sultan had a brave personality. The Sultan was as brave and agile as one could not imagine. The following examples may be cited as the evidence of his courage: He had once waited without moving and getting into panic during an earthquake until it had disappeared. During the Ottoman Bank bombing incident he showed firmness by participating in the Friday's greeting while everyone else had set the thames in flames with the worry that an assasination had been attempted; he had participated in the Friday's greeting again a week after the bombing incident.²¹³ Moreover, gesture and facial expression did not change in this incident.²¹⁴ Again in another book the Sultan's attitude during that earthquake and his attendance in the Friday greeting while there were turmoils taking place in Istanbul are interpreted as the signs of the Sultan's courage.²¹⁵ These examples which are stated as the evidence of the courage of the sultan are narrated in detailed in the memoirs of the sultan's daughter Ayse Osmanoglu; on the day of the feast of sacrifice that was held on March 31, 1901 a violent eartquake had broken out during the ceremony in Dolmabahce Palace. Everyone had feld as if the palace was being demolished and shouted the words "God" and

²¹³ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.17

²¹⁴ Gündoğdu, Raşit, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'a Yapılan Suikastin Tahkikat Raporu*, Çamlıca Basım Yayın, İstanbul, 2007, s.8

²¹⁵ Çabuk, Vahid, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid*, Paraf Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010 s.210

the chandelier weighing 700 kg in the middle of the ceremony hall had fallen just at this moment. The muezzin Abdullah the Arab has begun to recite the azan. The hall was messy and out-of-order. Nobody was in his/her proper place but Sultan Abdulhamid was standing in front of the throne while he has leaned on his sword and listened to the Azan. On the other hand Ayse Osmanoglu tells the following about the bombing that has taken place on July 21, 1905: “The Sultan came to the Harem after the incident. Ayse Sultan said the following to him “Lord! I came to my senses when I saw you. I admired your firmness very much”. The sultan has replied to her as follows: “I believe in destiny. My heart fears only the God. I do not fear anything else. I worry before an incident happens. But I would not abstain from throwing myself in fire if I feel that I am in the middle of a danger. The God has protected us in this incident. But I would not abstain from throwing myself in fire if I feel that I am in the middle of a danger.” While the mosque courtyard was out of order just a moment ago the sultan was standing in the roughly third step of the stairs and cried out “Do not be afraid! Do not be afraid! Let everybody stay put” with his sonorous voice.²¹⁶ These three sources cite the danger incidents in which only the sultan himself was present in order to show his courage. However the sources in which views have been expressed about whether the sultan had an apprehensive character also touch upon other issues. We shall have a look at them below. In deed the books in which it is asserted that the sultan had an apprehensive attitude also touch upon other matters. Let’s now have a look at the sources which assert that the sultan was very apprehensive.

The book in which the apprehensive character of Sultan Abdulhamid is deal with most extensively and this negative trait is narrated in a very extreme way has been written by Suleyman Kani Irtem. According to Irtem “Sultan Abdulhamid could sometimes not help falling in a terrible fear and despair and closed himself in his Harem during such crisis states and did not want to see anybody. This psychological mood had sometimes continued for many days. He even did not trust his ministers and children. He had doubts about whether one of his children had participated in the bombing incident. According to him, there was nobody who would not do any harm to him and his mind was always busy taking measures against the assasination that even his closest circle of friends could have plotted against himself. He was afraid of being poisoned especially. He was always suspecting of being poisoned by the fruits and beverages presented to him. He used to let first his servants in the palace taste those gifts

²¹⁶ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.60-83

and made investigations about their effect while trying not to let the others feel it. He behaved bravely in peaceful times but fell in worry when there was a little bit motion but tried not to show his true colours. Despite the fact that he had a tender attitude and his natural character was characterized by mental firmness of mind his apprehensive traits was disturbing the measures that he had taken in important as well as insignificant affairs when his mind was overwhelmed by delusions. He always wanted to consider any matter in detail in all respects and reviewed all the possibilities. However he used to reach incorrect results since all these considerations and investigations were based on imaginations and presuppositions most of the time. He had a psychological mood which quickly passed from despair to hope and from exasperation to a forgiving attitude. The free use of electricity and telephone was a factor that had provoked the apprehensive attitude of the sultan. Abdulhamid II used to fear lightning but could not feel secure with a lightning arrestor as well. He had let the lightning arrestor, which was placed on Yıldız watch tower removed. He also disliked balloons since the palace could be blown up together with himself through the bombs thrown from the balloons flying over the Yıldız Palace. Once his mind had been haunted with a balloon flying over Bosphorus. Police forces had followed that balloon and they had finally understood that a teacher was trying to make an experimental course in physics with one of his students.

The Sultanate gate of the Yıldız Palace was used to be opened with the order of the Sultan and was again closed with the same order from at nights. White and black companions, palace sentries, guards who were members of Karakecili tribe stayed in selamlık. Cellarers, keepers of praying rugs, keepers of kettle and keepers of coffee-house were on call during nights while the black companions kept guard. Shaving of the Sultan was also an important matter. The Sultan was shaved by the head barber Mustafa Bey because he was the only person that the Sultan had trusted. But Abdulhamid had not entrusted the safety of his life to anybody else without taking safety measures himself. It was prohibited to insert incisive tools like straight razor or piercing tools like needles in the shaving kit to be brought to the Sultan. While he Sultan was being shaved one of his loyal servants was sitting across him and followed up the alternative the movements of the barber from the mirrors on the walls. When his teeth ached the Sultan had never permitted the hands of another person to stir his mouth and pulled out his aching tooth using a pincer by enduring the exertion and pain that he had suffered. It is stated this measure can be explained by the Sultan's fear that a poisonous substance could have been put by the dentist on the end point of the pincers. The sultan also feared infectious diseases

very much and for that reason had attached great importance to keeping the objects, which are brought to the palace from outside, clean or cleaning them. On the other hand the pockets of the cloths of the sultan were very deep. His three pistols that he carried with himself were kept in these pockets. While in his presence nobody could not make any movement and even was not allowed to button up his clothes. Irtem states that those who had to be near him for any reason were very confused because of not knowing what to do since they had worried about not making any mistake. He had carried a pistol with himself because of the rumours and he had already shot three people because of suspectful behaviour that he had attributed to them. Irtem also cites those rumors even if he had stated that they were not true. He adds the following comments about the bombing incident and the earthquake which we had mentioned before: “Abdulhamid was in deep hurry during the earthquake in Istanbul and his feeling of fear and distrust had increased as he had got older. But there was also times when he was very bold. When everybody had gotten to a big flap and was seized by fear after the bombing incident, the sultan had driven his phaeton himself standing inside it with presence of mind, although turning a little bit pale and returned to the palace. On the other hand he had bawled out, prohibited the Azan, and said prayers during the earthquake that has taken place on the day of the feast of sacrifice. Spies who knew foreign languages were placed among the foreigners who had come to watch the Friday’s greetings of the sultan, for the purpose of listening to what they were talking about. It was forbidden to use cameras during those greetings. Abdulhamid always used open phaetons in order to save his life by throwing himself out of the phaeton in case of an accident or assassination attempt and he never get on closed phaetons. There was a rumor according to which a layer of steel armour plate was placed between the leather coating of the half closed bellows of his phaeton and the haircloth lining inside it. Police supervision, the activities of the spies and the police measures has increased as the days during which the room, where the coat of the Prophet of Islam is kept, was visited had approached. The households located in the regions through which the greeting would pass were examined, the names of the inhabitants of those households were taken and they were instructed about how to stand at their windows during the greetings. On the day of the greetings, the gun shops in the city were closed and pharmacy warehouses and pharmacies were ordered to remove the explosive and inflammable drugs. Watchmen were placed in the minarets of Aya Sofya and extraordinary measures were taken in the surrounding area. The Sultan was very scared by the idea that bombs would be placed under the bridges.²¹⁷

²¹⁷ Irtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.52-96

We have tried to summarize those parts of the book of Suleyman Kani in which the apprehensive character of the sultan had been described. As has been seen this source represents the negative views about the Sultan as in many other matters. Irtem is not alone in his view that the sultan was very apprehensive despite the fact his book reflects a very extreme example in this regard. For instance, in another book it is claimed that Abdulhamid disliked mason and that the reason for this was the fact that Ali Sualvi and Lelanti Skalieri who had instigated the first and second turmoils in Ciragan Palace were masons. The sultan had considered them as a handful of individuals who has a European upbringing and were trying to disseminate all kinds of ideas of liberty into the Ottoman territories. It is further claimed that he believed that the people did not understand anything about what freedom is and that the masons were active to overthrow him and remove the empire together with England in cooperation with the Armenian and Greeks. Besides the sultan did not want women to veil themselves because the conspirators could engage in various actions by going anywhere they wanted under the disguise of a woman. It is further claimed that he had issued a decree that has ordered women to veil themselves after having been informed that the conservative families were complaining about the ban on the right of women to cover themselves. Another claim is that he had a dislike for telephone, electricity and electrical tramcar with the fear that these technological means could be used against himself and that he had made use of mail and telegram extensively in order to maintain his political power, that the newly bought arms were locked up in the storehouses and were rendered out of use since the sultan did not want the soldiers to make wing shooting and that when new guns were bought they were handled in the same way as well. Another claim is that the farms named Cavusbasi and Hekimbasi which were located in the Anatoian side of Bosphorus just across Yıldız palace were bought by the sultan from their owner Yusuf İzzettin Efendi and the sale of these farms to a third person was prevented in this way because the sultan had thought that the palace could have been pounded from that region. Still another claim is that the sultan was opposed to the right of people to travel to Europe freely because he had feared that those who went to Europe could learn malicious ideas there and establish relations with the Young Turks who were engaged in political activities against himself and consequently disseminate these ideas inside the country when they have returned from Europe. So it is claimed that he

did not permit people to go to Europe unless there was an obviously justifiable reason for that.²¹⁸

With regard to the dispute whether sultan Abdulhamid had an apprehensive character, the group with the highest number of adherents was the one which had accepted that the sultan had an apprehensive personality to a certain extent but also pointed out to the necessity of explaining the reasons of such an attitude. According to this group of commentators apprehensive character is one of the generally accepted character traits of Abdulhamid II but it is impossible to say that these characteristic features are at an excessive degree.²¹⁹ He did not trust anything or anybody without precaution.²²⁰ In this context he is reported to say “They believe that I am an apprehensive person. No! The truth is that I am not an unwary person. That’s the whole story!”²²¹ This statement may be considered as an expression of the fact that he had taken all the measures, which were interpreted as signs of his apprehensiveness and delusiveness, for the purpose of protection against the attempts at overthrowing him etc. There were two words which the sultan could not endure hearing: dethronement and freedom. Thinking of what his uncle and brother had suffered, he had once said: “They dethrone the sultans by coming up with such concepts as freedom. Those who demand freedom shall absolutely want to dethrone me too.” It is asserted that the delusions of the sultan had increased because those who wanted to make use of his weakness provoked his delusions through fabricated denouncements 80 % of which were fabricated. .²²² Dethronement of his uncle Sultan Abdulaziz through a coup d’etat and his being murdered in a tragic manner and later the internment of his brother Sutan Murat the 5th in Ciragan Palace after having lost his psychological health at the end of his sultanate period of 3 months had deeply influenced the Sultan Abdulhamid II’s psychological mood and caused him to assume an extremely dubious state of mind. For that reason he had set up a sleuthing organization and denouncement mechanism for the purpose of monitoring all the important and unimportant developments in all the cities of the empire closely.²²³ The verification of these denouncements were very important for him.²²⁴ According to Sultan Abdulhamid II

²¹⁸ Yeğen, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.230-231

²¹⁹ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul’u*, p.19

²²⁰ Saygılı, Sefa, “Sultan II. Abdülhamid’in Kişilik Yapısı” Sultan II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Paneli, Bilge Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2000 p.66

²²¹ Armağan, *Abdülhamid’in Kurtlarda Dansı*, p.18

²²² Mümtaz, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Zamanı*, p.1

²²³ Özdemir, *Abdülhamid’I Deviren Kurşun*, p.42

²²⁴ Gündoğdu, Reşit&Temiz, Ahmet&Erkan, Kemal, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han’a Takdim Edilen Journallerin Tahkik Raporları (1891-1893)*, Çamlıca Basım Yayın, 2008 p.VII

denouncement was in deed a shameful and malicious phenomenon but it was also impossible to give it up because the political intrigues have never reached the level observed in the Ottoman state in any part of the world. Everybody was doing something with a high hand and even the low-level idle civil servants of the state had believed that the state could be rescued only by himself.²²⁵ It is for this reason, it is claimed, that he had never trusted anybody in political terms. For that reason he had deeply examined the political developments and incidents and even had found out the truth in many cases but there had also been many cases in which he had been taken hold of by unfounded doubts and consequently had to confront harmful consequences. As a result of this he had wasted time by being involved in many details which a ruler must normally not be interested in from the point of view of national interests. This situation is accounted for by his famous apprehensiveness and delusions.²²⁶ However it is not only his delusions which had induced the Sultan to get involved in such matters. As we had just mentioned the Sultan was surrounded by an atmosphere which had let him loose confidence. In this sense there is also an approach which sets up a correlation between the incidents that may be quickly accounted for by the apprehensiveness and delusions of the Sultan, with the environmental factors, within the context of a cause- effect relationship. To give an example, this approach accounts for the censure practices which have been in place between the closing of the chamber of deputies in 1878 and the year 1908 by the dubious character of the Sultan and his fear which have reached the level of paranoia and his regime which was shaped on the basis of this character and fears, but it further asserts that this phenomenon may be understood with reference to an analysis of the policy that has been produced within the framework of the relation of Ottoman society with modernity as much as with reference to the character and psychology of the sultan. It is emphasized that it would not be very meaningful to explain the censure applied during the reign of Abdulhamid with reference to his caprices and as a policy which aimed at nothing more than prohibiting everything.²²⁷ Besides we observe that the publications made during this period had a quite severely critical and harsh character. For instance, the Young Turks had criticized Abdulhamid II whom they had named the red Sultan and considered to be the mother of all mischiefs and his tyrannic rule in their newspapers and countless brochures. These newspapers which advocated the ideas of the Young Turks could only be brought to the empire and distributed clandestinely. Some of the expressions used to describe

²²⁵ Nazif, *Bir Sultan Abdülhamid Müdafaaamesi Hatırat-ı Sultan Abdülhamid-i Sani*, p.52

²²⁶ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.218

²²⁷ Demirel, Fatmagül, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Sansür*, Bağlam Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2007 s.13-15

Abdulhamid in these publications were as follows: “The demon itself who had ascended the throne” , “the world history has never witnessed a more demonic, greedier and more disgusting ruler than this man”, “he is the new devil”, “he is not the Sultan but black snake”, he is not the sultan of the world but the yellow scorpion”. Besides these, we see that Abdulhamid II was described in a very shameful and negative manner in the caricatures about him which were published in the same period.²²⁸ Our sources make the following statement in this context: Instead of accepting Abdulhamid as a delusive person by nature, it would be a more reasonable explanation to say that the courses of incidents have made him an apprehensive personality . At this point, we may say that Abdulhamid II who departed from the motto “Suspicion is the beginning point of prudence” had taken measures to protect both himself and his throne like all monarches and in deed all rulers in the world whose life and throne were under danger had the same kind of delusions. The sufferings of Sultan Abdulaziz and Sultan Murat the 5th and subsequently the incidents like the riot of Ali Suavi had induced the Sultan to take various measures and become increasngly apprehensive. It might be said that the measures taken by the Sultan were sometimes excessive but it is also said that extremeness becomes prudence at the point where suspicion begins as a result of the disappearance of safety. Taking into consideration the fact that it was always the ministers who did harm to his uncle and older brother and then enthroned himself under heavy conditions and with a reckless attitude, it might be said that his lack of trust for the Bab-ı Ali was a reasonable attitude. It is also stated this distrust was not one-sided. The ministers themselves did not respect and trust Abdulhamid and consequently Abdulhamid himself could not trust the perpetrators of dethronement and murders. (For instance, one of our source mentions about Abdulhamid II’s lack of confidence to the political atmosphere of the empire²²⁹ . On the other hand an another source explains that the Young Turks could not accept Abdulhamid II’s reign and saw him as a threat.²³⁰) There was also no assurance that those who were later appointed as ministers would not look like their precedessors. As an example of this fact it is stated that the Sultan himself had brought up Said Pasha but he was the leader of the coup d’etat which had dethroned him.²³¹ Consequently it seems that our sources has adopted the view that despite the fact that the Sultan had an apprehensive

²²⁸ Alkan, Necmettin, *Selanik’in Yükselişi Jön Türkler Abdülhamid’e Karşı 1908 İhtilali*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2012 s.53

²²⁹ Balcı, Ramazan, *Çetelerin Hedefindeki Abdülhamid: Asrın Yalnız Adamı Abdülhamid Han’a Yapılan Süikastlar*”, Babıali Kültür Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2011, s.15

²³⁰ Alkan, Necmettin, *Selanik İstanbul’a Karşı 31 Mart Vak’ası ve II. Abdülhamid’in Tahttan İndirilmesi*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011, s.98,

²³¹ Ogan, M.Raif, *Sultan Abdülhamid İftiralara Cevaplar*, Kaknüs Yayınları, İstanbul, 2008 s.59-62

character, this was not the outcome of natural traits alone but his social environment had also a serious impact thereon and consequently considers his apprehensiveness as a natural outcome of these factors. There are even sources which had considered this as the most outstanding trait of Abdulhamid II; Abdulhamid II who had taken over the steer of the state ship in the last quarter of the 19th century has become aware of the bad state of affairs at an early stage. The characteristic features of the Sultan which had come to the fore was his political genius, justified dubiousness and vigilance. The Sultan who was denigrated both at home and abroad just because of behaving in this way has not been deterred by any despisement and what mattered for him was only to keep the state alive. Some commenters focus all their attention and judgement on a single point, namely the period of tyranny by ignoring the fine politics that the Sultan has followed for tens of years.²³² One of our source on early 20th century determines that the Ottoman Empire was an ill man and expected to collapse. And Abdulhamid II was an alone emperor. He was covered from inside and outside with a hostility.²³³ During the war at the years 1877-1878 in the center and rural, the incapable and irresponsible behaviours of the governors pushed the sultan to an authoritarian and central perspective. At the pact between England and Cyprus the unstable and blind actions of administration increased the sultan's concern. And Abdulhamid II has started to control the empire from Yıldız palace with his trusted officers.²³⁴ We may conclude that the books which may be classified under the "group 3" that we had mentioned before can not be said to be trying to whitewashing this apprehensive character of the Sultan in any manner whatsoever. While accepting that Abdulhamid II had such a character they also try seeing the environmental factors that have instigated influenced and caused this situation. For instance Cemal Kutay writes as follows: "He feared very much of being dethroned and murdered because he was very dubious and self-indulgent. Although he knew that most of the denouncements forwarded to him were fabricated and made out of grudge he nonetheless gave orders for investigations to be made about them, thinking that they could be true, albeit with a very little probability. He used to say that prudence is the father of security. He worked tirelessly about the matters in which he was interested and ordered those who were subordinated to him ceaselessly. His close circle of subordinates and pashas who worked under his command knew how to provoke the doubts of Abdulhamid and had always let him

²³² Tuncer, Harun, *Sultan Abdülhamid Han'a Yapılan Suikastin Perde Arkası*, Çamlıca Basım Yayın, İstanbul, 2010 s.9

²³³ Çev. Göze, Ergun, *Siyonizm'in ve İsrail'in Kurucusu Theodor Herzl Hatıralar*, Boğaziçi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2007, s.1

²³⁴ Demirel, Muammer, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid ile Erzurum Vilayeti Arasındaki Yazışmalar (1894-1904)*, Çamlıca Basım Yayın, İstanbul, 2007, s. VII

live in worry and anxiety. Despite his doubts and fear about life security Abdulhamid could maintain his presence of mind against any important and vital incident and showed no signs of worry and anxiety.” Referring to the dethronement incident in the pre-Abdulhamid period and the riots during his own sultanate, Kutay points out to the reasons of this apprehensiveness of the Sultan.²³⁵ However while Kutay interprets this apprehensive character as an important feature of the Sultan in the form of foresightedness and prudence, it is interpreted as a feature which induces the Sultan to make mistakes in some situations in some other books. After having touched upon the negative aspects of the period in which he had taken over the throne and the conditions of the later periods he concluded that the sultan had lost his trust to the people as a result of what he had seen in his environment and the incidents that he had experienced while he was a prince, and he tried to stand on his two feet as a result of his lack of confidence to anybody during his rule as a Sultan. It is stated that the Sultan who had a quite dubious character as a result of his style of upbringing had imposed special measures and distanced himself from the people for that reason. Courts of Yıldız and the denouncement mechanism is reminded as well as the fact that especially the denouncement mechanism has reached an excessive level.²³⁶

The views and observations of Damat Serif Pasha which are included in one of our books may be said to be a summary of our books which are classified under this last group: “He was brave, well-chosen and dignified. Although he had an apprehensive and delusive temperament, he showed an extraordinary firmness in the face of danger. He worried about dangerous incidents even before they had actually occurred. He had solid views and ideas. His views about foreign policy issues were very accurate. He was able to determine the most reasonable measures regarding the domestic issues as long as he did not let his mind blurred by malicious people and hatemongers. Although he did not have a proper education he had a rapidly thinking extraordinary intelligence and power of comprehension and he was apprehensive and delusive by nature.”²³⁷

Most of what is said about the character of Abdulhamid II is not consistent with each other. What his close friends, enemies, servants, and individuals who had a chance to observe his

²³⁵ Kutay, Cemal, *Son Cuma Yıldız Sarayı'nda Sönen Kandil: Sultan Abdülhamid Han*, Acar Bilgi Merkezi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2012 s.180-181

²³⁶ Törel, Türkmen, *İttihat Terakki'nin Gizli Propaganda Faaliyetleri ve Abdülhamid*, Kripto, Ankara, 2012 s.138

²³⁷ Aksun, Ziya Nur, *II. Abdülhamid Han*, Ötüken Neşriyat A.Ş., İstanbul, 2010 s.20

behaviour in various occasions said about him conflicted with each other most of the time. Because of this it becomes even difficult to make a definite judgement about whether he was brave or coward. Against the cowardice of the Sultan which was quite widely rumoured among people (For instance, Abdulhamid II's closed life in Yıldız Palace became a legend among the people)²³⁸ there are also incidents that witness his courage.²³⁹ However we see that the sources which describe the character of the Sultan as a personality who is very brave are based on his several personal memories to a great extent and does not mention anything else. On the other hand, however, we see that the books which make negative evaluations about him as an extremely apprehensive person do not give any reason for this situation and does not give a single example of the cases in which he was brave. Finally we may cite a statement of Yilmaz Oztuna which asserts that, the analysis that are made without any reference to cause-effect relation would be incomplete. Abdulhamid II was severely criticized for having neglected the navy. Some naval historians have begun considering these criticisms as very extreme in the recent times. After the defeat in the war of 93, it was financially impossible to keep the third biggest navy of the world alive by renewing it continuously. (Also in another source we can see that; two new ships has bought to Ottoman navy which called "Abdulhamid" and "Abdulmecid". Besides, more than 20 ships constructed and modernized in the same period. Some English, German and American officers employed in Ottoman navy for reform. This source highlights the thousands of documents in the archives that deny the sultan's neglect on navy.²⁴⁰ In another memorandum of Sultan Abdulhamid II mentions about improvements on navy.²⁴¹) However it is also true that this navy which is the result of the efforts of his uncle had fallen from the grace of Abdulhamid because of the role that it had played in the dethronment of his uncle.²⁴² As shall be understood from this fact, we may reach a much more balanced and accurate conclusion if we evaluate the apprehensive character structure of Abdulhamid which has formed under the influence of various factors, within the context of its causes, consequences and rights and wrongs. We think that this is the reason that accounts for the fact that our historiography has predominantly chosen this method for investigating this subject matter in the 21st century.

²³⁸ Deringil, Selim, *Simgeden Millete II. Abdülhamid'den Mustafa Kemal'e Devlet ve Millet*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2007, p.54

²³⁹ Uğurlu, Nurer, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, Örgün Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2009 s.89

²⁴⁰ Ed. Doğan, Osman; Kılınc, Selman, *Uzakları Görebilen Hükümdar Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han*, Çamlıca Basım Yayın, İstanbul, 2010, s.83

²⁴¹ Çetin, A. Atilla, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han Devlet ve Memleket Görüşlerim 2*, Çamlıca Basım Yayın, İstanbul, 2011, s. 202

²⁴² Öztuna, II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti, p.219

2.5.2. His Religious Personality, the Persuasion Issue and Superstition

According to some of our sources Abdulhamid II was not a bigoted but a religious person. Contrary to his predecessors in the recent past, Abdulhamid was performing his Friday prayers not in the small mosque in the palace but together with people. He vehemently opposed to superstition. In our book, Avni Özgürel states that, we might even say that it is quite saddening to mention the name of man of enlightenment with the word “religious fanatic” in the same sentence.²⁴³ Sultan Abdulhamid II was a true Muslim with full religious faith. He used to perform the ritual prayers for five times a day and read Koran. He had entered the sect of Sazel in his youth. It has always been told that he regularly went to mosques for praying, performed the ritual prayers in the Suleimaniye Mosque during the Ramadan month and made shopping in the exhibitions which had been opened in the mosque during that period.²⁴⁴ According to Erdoğan Yeğen’s book, Abdulhamid II was sincere in his religious belief. He made the best efforts to fulfill his religious duties. He had let repaired various mosques with his own funds.²⁴⁵ He was an unrivalled sultan on charity organizations.²⁴⁶ Loyalty of the God and Islam were the center of his personality.²⁴⁷ The quarter of Osmanbey in the district of Sisli in Istanbul has been founded by the printer Osman Bey with the encouragement of Sultan Abdulhamid, by using the money gained through the printing of Koran. The Sultan was so sensitive about the printing of Koran that he had let a separate water way built for the waste waters of the printing house of Osman Bey in Cemberlitas. He had aimed not to let the dust of the Koran to mix with the sewage together with other waste waters.²⁴⁸ During the month of fasting, the Yıldız Palace showed the sacred path of Islam with its special splendor. During the period of Hıdrellez (which is the day of celebration of spring) he used to let food like stuffed and roasted lamb and halva distributed to all the soldiers of the empire who were in Istanbul and he covered the related expenses out of his pocket. Boilers were placed in the Yıldız Square for cooking ashoura which was

²⁴³ Tosun, *Osmanoğulları ve Aydınların Anlatımıyla İmparatorluğun Yüzük Taşı II. Abdülhamid*, p.57

²⁴⁴ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.28

²⁴⁵ Yeğen, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.230

²⁴⁶ Erkan, Kemal, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Hamidiye Memba Suları ve Çeşmeleri*, Çamlıca Basım Yayın, İstanbul, 2008 , p.9

²⁴⁷ Talay, Aydın, *Eserleri ve Hizmetleriyle II. Abdülhamid*, Armoni Yayınları, İstanbul, 2007, s.34

²⁴⁸ Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarla Dansı 2*, p.66-67

distributed to everybody until late in the evening during the day of ashoura. As a person who was used to carry out all his actions in accordance with the rules of the Islamic sharia, Abdulhamid has consulted the religious scholars, in the wisdom of whom he had believed, about the issues about which he had hesitations. He did not only rely upon a single person but rather asked the recommendations of several scholars. Even his opponents who have written articles against him have accepted that he had sincerely devoted himself to Islamic religion. As an example of this, we may cite the article of Ahmet Refik titled “In front of the corps of Abdulhamid “from which the following citation has been made: “Sultan Abdulhamid has not lost his consciousness until the last minute. He had even bequeathed the prayer of “ahitname” to be put on his chest and his face to be covered by the cover of Kaaba and “destimal”. This bequeath has been exactly fulfilled.”²⁴⁹ After having given similar information about the spiritual traits of the Sultan, another source mentions interesting incidents about Abdulhamid II and describes him as a Saint which the eyes of the heart of are very open. Ismail Colak writes that, religiousness and conservativeness were the most prominent features of the personality of Abdulhamid II. Colak states that, the sultan had a quite strong fatalistic belief. He felt an endless love, respect and loyalty for Mohammad the prophet and his sacred site and also fulfilled many services for him. (Not only services, he was also very interested in these lands. There was a dangerous cholera disease at there in 1890 and Abdulhamid II ordered a report about the general atmosphere and the precautions.)²⁵⁰ Although he couldn’t go on pilgrimage personally, he was so deeply religious and pious that there were rumours that he had been seen in the pilgrimage site by many people in a spiritual form and was qualified as one of the Saint sultans of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore according to the rumours he always had a clean piece of brick placed at his bedside. He used to use that piece of brick for the purpose of performing ablution in order not to put his feet on the ground without ablution when he was going to the fountain after having waken up. One night his chamberlain Mr. Esad had knocked the Sultan’s door for asking him to sign a document but the door was not opened. He had knocked the door again after having waited for a while but it was not opened again. The door was opened when it was knocked for the third time and the Sultan who had opened the door was drying his face. He smiled to the chamberlain and said the following: “Son, I had understood that you had come for a very important matter at this time of the night. I was awakened when you had first knocked the door. I am sorry for that. I had never signed

²⁴⁹ Aksun, *II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.19-20

²⁵⁰ Sarıyıldız, Gülden&Kavak, Ayşe, *Halife II. Abdülhamid’in Hac Siyaseti Dr. M.Şakir Bey’in Hicaz Hatıraları*. Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2009, p.14

a document belonging to my nation without ablution. Now bring it to me and let me sign”. He then undersigned the document by reciting “bismillah”. Another incident which is cited by the sources is as following: A poor man who was in charge of maintaining the tomb of Yavuz Sultan Selim during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II had financial difficulties as a result of difficult conditions of making a living. This poor man has hit the tomb with his feet and complained about his poverty. Sultan Abdulhamid called him to his presence and met all his needs because Sultan Abdulhamid had seen Yavuz Sultan Selim in his dream during that night and has been informed by him about the poor man. Another incident which is cited by the sources is as follows: An old neighbor of a man who had an eight years old mute son has said to him the following : “Sultan Abdulhamid shall pass through the road over there tomorrow. You must absolutely take your son to him and let him pray for your son.” The day after, man listens to those words and begins waiting with hope on the road. Something unexpected happens and the Sultan’s phaeton stops suddenly when it comes across them. The Sultan looks at the man and his mute child and calls out to him saying: “Hey. the old man: Bring the child to me”. Sultan takes the child to his phaeton, caresses his cheeks and reads some prayers into his ears: “Do you recognize me, who am I?” he asks after a while. The mute child suddenly feels something and finds his tongue and says “You are our Sultan.”²⁵¹

Another view which we had found among our sources considers what the religiousness of Sultan Abdulhamid is as a subject which is worth examining. Sultan had a spiritual mood in which he had a great fear from death and this fear has caused him to look at everything with doubt and a delusion to settle in his mind that he could incur a danger at any moment. When looked from this point of view, it is stated that sultan contradicts with the principles of the religion which he is a member of in respect of some basic matters. Our books state that Abdulhamid had been educated by some teachers about religious sciences during his youth. However contrary to what is believed his religious knowledge is very superficial, is not compatible with the title that he bears and the policies that he implements and are not based on sound guidelines as expressed in the idiom which says “The sheikh himself does not fly, his disciples let him fly”. For example, he says that he had startled and thought a for a while against the following question of an American ambassador with whom he used to converse frequently, “Muslims marry girls from our religion, why do not let their daughters marry the men from our religion?” This shows that when he is asked even an ordinary question he

²⁵¹ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.38-43

startles and can answer only after having thought for a while. It is also stated that the sultan did not consider about some hadiths and their possibility of being real or not; or he did not make any observations about them. On the other hand Sultan's connection with and membership to a religious sect is evaluated as an extension of his Islamist policy and a means of ensuring peace in the country rather as a sign of religious sensitivity and excitement.²⁵² Abdulhamid II had attached a special importance to sects, he had covered their needs like eating and lighting out of his own funds, he had let repaired the dervish lodges which were in ruins as well as the tombs of the leading figures of the sects. The sultan who had put the influential sheikhs of the sects in the Arabian provinces and Africa to salary besides granting those medals and degrees, had used the influence of the scheichs like Ebu'l Huda Efendi and Zafir Efendi by keeping them besides himself. He had paid attention to let the religious books to be printed and published in a correct manner and had sent Koran to the remotest corners of the country as well as to the Muslims living in the colonies. The unity of religion is at the top of the most important facts which ensure the cohesion and consistency of the nation with the state in social life. Abdulhamid II had tried to ensure that unity by bringing the various sects, to which the Muslims were members and the representatives of those sects, to the forefront. It is claimed that it was a widespread belief that the sultan was a member of all the sects which existed during that period. The sultan was closely interested in and provided material support for all the branches of the sects which existed in the Ottoman geography and exempted those sects from many of their obligations against the state.²⁵³ As can be seen these views of our sources consider the knowledge of the sultan about the religious sciences to be rather superficial. His attitudes and practices focused on religious matters and institutions are considered as a part of his policy. (An another source explains that; the life was the most important thing for Abdulhamid II. and other issues like the God, the Prophet, the state, the nation and etc. All of them came from behind. The sultan worked for his life and his sultanate constantly.)²⁵⁴

Another view put forward by our books about Sultan Abdulhamid II in terms of belief is related to his closeness to supersition. It is stated that he had recourse to fortune tellers, magicians and sorceres. Fortune telling and witchcraft were in high demand and had great

²⁵² Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.55-56

²⁵³ Özzorluoğlu, Süleyman Tevfik, *Abdülhamid'in Cinci Hocası Ebü'l-Hüda*, Yeditepe Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2011 s.V-VI

²⁵⁴ Mayakon, İsmail Müştaki *Mabeyn Katibinin Kaleminden Abdülhamid ve Çevresi Yıřdız'da Neler Gördüm*, Dün Bugün Yarın Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010

prestige in Istanbul towards the middle of the period of Abdulhamid. Many people occupied with these activities came to Istanbul even from foreign countries. They were engaged in fortune telling and witchcraft activities either by opening shops or at their homes in many quarters of the city. It is reported that the sultan had sent gifts to the famous ones of the practitioners of those occupations and asked questions to them about his own intentions.²⁵⁵ It seems that these rumours were quite intensive since the daughter of the sultan, Ayşe Osmanoglu had felt the need to make an explanation about these matters in her memoirs: She writes the following in this context: “One of the blames against my father is the one according to which he believes in witchcraft and supersition. Why should my father, who had absolute power, need to practice sorcery? For what purpose and against whom should he practice sorcery?”²⁵⁶

2.5.3. Meanness and Generosity

In the section about the Sultan Abdulhamid’s period of pryncedom we had dealt with the allegations about stinginess which had been attributed to him and the different views and information found in our sources about this issue. We shall now, under the same title, examine what is told about his stinginess during his period of sultanate. However the title of stinginess shall be united with the title of generosity and these terms shall not be dealt with as the description of an attitude which reflects the vocabulary meanings of such terms but in such a manner that they cover the whole economic understanding and style of living of Abdulhamid II. Let’s now return to our sources.

Sultan Abdulhamid II had tried to avoid extravagance both in his private life and state administration and followed a balanced policy of expenditures. In other words he was not stingy but thrifty. He used to ask his servants, who were doing the shopping for him, the prices of the goods that they bought one by one and controlled the kitchen expenses of the palace personally. It is stated that he was called stingy because of this reason. He had taken over the administration of the state with a serious burden of public debts and the first measure he had taken was to restrict the expenses of the palace which had increased excessively. He

²⁵⁵ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.56

²⁵⁶ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.28

had put the procedures of the harem and protocol into a more plain order.²⁵⁷ Abdulhamid had obeyed the rule of saving first of all with his own deeds and reduced the salaries of the princes and sultans by half during a period of time of his sultanate when the financial crisis had continued. In this way he was giving a good message to the people by practicing economy personally.²⁵⁸ The expenses of the palace were restricted and excessive staff was reduced to the normal level up to the harem and extravagance had been prevented by introducing improvements in many areas. According to our source, people who made a living by making use of the means provided by the state have taken a hostile attitude against the sultan and have called him “Hamid, the stingy”.²⁵⁹ Was practicing economy all that the sultan had done? Abdulhamid II’s court was very large together with the high officials and servants. The salaries as well as the cloths and foodstooft were supplied by the palace to these people and the homes of most of them were granted by the sultan. Abdulhamid II who considered the kitchen expenses of his precedessor Sultan Abdulaziz quite excessive and thought about the measures to be taken against this situation during the first years of his enthronment later began to feed thousands of his servants. Those parts of the foodstuff which was prepared in the kitchen of the palace and exceeded the needs of the inhabitants of the palace were sold to the poor people in Besiktas and Ortakoy. Annual expenses of the palace exceeded seven million Liras. The annual allowance given to the sultan from the state treasury was six hundred Liras. The sultan had covered the difference between those amounts out of his own fortune. It is stated that this attitude of Abdulhamid showed that he was the most generous sultan towards his servants but he himself did not adopt an extravagant attitude and did not live in debauchery and pursued an orderly and thrifty style of life.²⁶⁰

The sultan who used to make moderate expenses for himself and his family avoided extravagance but disitributed plenty amount of gifts when intelligence activities were in question. He had set up a network of intelligence which had spread all over the country beginning from the palace and fed the members of that network and distributed them plenty amount of gifts out of his own fortune. It is that these expenses were not dispended but aimed at being informed about the activities directed at subverting the Ottoman State which had incurred attacks from all sides.²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han’ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.20

²⁵⁸ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul’u*, p.12

²⁵⁹ Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler*, p.20

²⁶⁰ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid’in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.97-98

²⁶¹ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul’u*, p.20

Our sources state that the sultan behaved generously not only by using his fortune for covering the expenses of the palace and the intelligence network but also in the sense of presenting gifts. As a sultan who had warmer relations with people Sultan Mahmut II used to be very generous regarding the distribution of coins to the poor people during his travels. On the other hand, the symbolic representation of the image and power of the sultan had been quite differentiated during the reign of sultan Abdulhamid II in comparison to the periods of his predecessors like Sultan Mahmut II, Abdulmecid and Abdulaziz. Sultan Abdulhamid had attached great importance to presenting gifts. The practices of the sultan regarding this issue may be said to be quite generous in comparison to his predecessors. It is stated that his generosity has been raised to an even higher level by giving examples like the one below.²⁶² Dervish Pasa has been granted a sac of thousand golds while leaving the presence of the Sultan and when he came to his presence for expressing his thanks he was granted a second sac of thousand golds. A sac of thousand golds sealed with a seal on which a miniature picture of Saint Sophia mosque has been engraved has been granted to Hasan Fehmi Pasha. The sultan used to allocate palaces and kiosks for all princesses when they have married to ensure them to live in welfare and pomposity. He used to pay the price of the diamond jewelry of which he was informed that they were seen and liked by some women from the high-ranking families and granted them to those women.²⁶³ This generosity of the sultan has been accounted for by the fact that he had a bigger personal fortune in comparison to the sultans whom we had mentioned above.²⁶⁴ The source of and the manner in which the fortune of the sultan has been gained is another disputed matter. It is claimed that Sultan Abdulhamid has been engaged in excessive efforts and was very passionate for acquiring real estate and gaining special incomes. It is further stated that he had let numerous pieces of real estate and privileges transferred to him and set up farms and founded a special treasury to administer all his fortune. Throughout his sultanate Abdulhamid has taken his grandfather Mahmud II as an example for himself and collected the whole power in his hands at the Yıldız palace and administered the empire together with his consultants at the palace rather than sharing the political power with the bureaucrats or the parliament. The allowance received by the sultan in order to maintain the continuity of administration was not sufficient to cover the related expenses. Sultan Abdulhamid who was engaged in trade and knew how to manage Money

²⁶² Özbayrak, İzi Karakaş, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Uygulanan Sosyal Yardım Politikaları*, Libra Kitap, İstanbul, 2011 s.73

²⁶³ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.137-138

²⁶⁴ Özbayrak, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Uygulanan Sosyal Yardım Politikaları*, p.73

beginning from his years of princedom formed the administration of the private treasury which is one of the requirements of the Reform movement again and made a great fortune by using the methods that the sultans before him had never thought.²⁶⁵ Another book about the acquisition of a huge amount of property by the sultan and the resulting fortune accounts for this fact together with its causes. It is stated that the practice of the acquisition of personal property which has been introduced during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II and was not applied during the reign of the previous and subsequent sultans is a very disputed matter. The sultan's efforts to acquire a personal fortune can be accounted for by the fact that it is more difficult to lose private property than to lose state property in the Ottoman state which incurred struggles among the foreign states for sharing its territories. Consequently, in his decree he had said that he tried to make a personal fortune in order to prevent the transfer of the state property to the administration of the foreigners. During this period there was a process through which the foreigners have made great efforts to buy pieces of land and real estate and obtain the privileges to operate the mines. On the other hand the degree of the intervention of the foreign states in the domestic and foreign policies of the Ottoman state was known by everybody. The architect of this political and economic policy which was followed only during the reign of Sultan approval was the financier Agop Pasha in all probability. The foreign states had begun to capture the sources which can generate revenue along with the transfer of significant part of the state revenues to the administration of public debts and have begun to transfer those revenues to Europe against the debts of the Ottoman State. The capture of the mines, ports and railways by the foreigners as a result of the pressures of the foreign states had rendered the Ottoman fiscal administration dependent on foreign sources. Consequently a new objective has been introduced against this economic profile. Since it was prohibited to use the state sources, they had been transferred to personal property and given an autonomous status which was exempt from the interventions of the foreigners. The allegation that, this practice is a result of the passion of the sultan for acquisition of property and being a state within the state is considered as a simple explanation made by the foreign forces which were very bothered by that practice. His policy would ensure the pieces of land and enterprises alternative over the country, which had a strategic importance and generated a revenue, to be made a property belonging to the sultan and transferred to the administration of

²⁶⁵ Şensözen, Vasfi, *Osmanoğulları'nın Varlıkları ve II. Abdülhamid'in Emlaki*, Okuyan Us, İstanbul, 2013 s.9-12

the private treasury and in this way the foreigners who had wanted to establish operation rights on the pieces of land and mines would be forced to apply directly to the sultan.²⁶⁶

As has been understood the issue of the private treasury has been interpreted by various views contradicting with each other just as in the dispute about whether he was stingy or generous.

²⁶⁶ Terzi, Arzu Tozduman, *Bağdat-Musul'da Abdülhamid'in Mirası Petrol ve Arazi*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2014 s.253-254

PART II: ANALYSIS, COMPARISON and CLASSIFICATION

Chapter 3: PERSONAL IMAGE OF ABDULHAMID II IN THE TURKISH HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE 21. CENTURY

3.1. Regarding the Primary Issues Mentioned in the Referances

When we research about the events and the practices of Abdulhamid II period, we come across with “Which Abdulhamid?” question.²⁶⁷ Apparently, this question is also valid for his private life and personal image. On the other hand, the informations about Abdulhamid II’s personal life are generally come from the same sources and they are rigid. Besides, it is hard to examine them.²⁶⁸ Because of that, when we look from today to 1900’s, we can say that, Abdulhamid II is one of the most debated and the most glorified and criticized character of the history.²⁶⁹ In the first two chapters of our study, we touched upon Sultan Abdulhamid II’s princedom and sultanate periods as well as his personal image mentioned in the literature, respectively. As can be understood from these two chapters, our books form their texts manly with the same or similar topic titles, regarding the matters that can be described as personal image. To give an example, when we read these sources, we can see that most of them touch upon some common points such as parsimony, hypochondria, and religious life. This situation enables us to take the required parts from such sources to a common pool, and then carry out studies on them. In the following sections, we will express our opinions about looking at the issues on the basis of certain topic titles. However, the fact that Abdulhamid II constitutes the center of our subject means reading the personal characteristics, which we mentioned earlier in the example, on a human’s life. Under these circumstances, the main and common titles used when depicting the personal image show continuity in both his princedom and sultanate periods. At this point, it is possible to discuss the sultan's life under two titles, as in our study, for ensuring the subject to be discusses more easily.

²⁶⁷ Demirel, Fatmagül, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid’in Mirası İstanbul’da Kamu Binaları*, İstanbul Ticaret Odası, İstanbul, 2011, p.13

²⁶⁸ Kabacalı, Alpay, *Tanzimat’tan II. Meşrutiyet’e İmparatorluk ve Nesnel Tarihin Prizmasından Abdülhamid*, Deniz Kültür Yayınları, 2005 p.262

²⁶⁹ Çevik, Adem, *Jön Türklerden Cumhuriyet’e II. Abdülhamid’de Yanılanlar*, Ufuk Kitap, İstanbul, 2006, p.221

We will later express our humble inferences about the sources. The subject we touched upon in this section will consist of the expression of our own opinions about how the subjects that we read in the previous sections are discussed in our books. Let us start telling as best as we can.

In the modest study in your hand at the moment, it is understood—by reading adequately—that the writings about Sultan Abdulhamid II definitely touch upon his relations with the world of women. When it comes to the world of women, mothers of sultans (*valide*) are the ones who immediately come to mind. In the classical period, one of the most important political connections was the relation between a prince and his mother. It is incorrect to think that, the necessity of the princes was decrease in the following eras. The princes needed to protect by his mothers because there was a lack of confidence between the brothers. The mothers had to protect their sons from the internal and external threats. On the other hand, a part of the political education of the prince's was under the responsibility of the mother. Not only in the prince period, but also mothers undertook an institutional role in the sultanate periods.²⁷⁰ A great deal of opinions and information about the birth mother and stepmother of Sultan Abdulhamid II are presented, sometimes only gives information and sometimes are tried to be used nearly as a key intended for clarifying the matters about the sultan. The superficial information about Tirimüjgan, the birth mother of Sultan Abdulhamid II, consists of her age, her homeland etc. as we see nearly in each sultan's life story. Such material data are the same in some books, while in some books they differ from each other due to minor differences. Of course, this information is not important for us. Our sources use the mother of Abdulhamid II as a part of the content, when forming a certain sultan image. This is the part that we need. In general, our sources are classified as the ones expressing a positive opinion and the ones expressing a negative opinion about the main character. And sometimes, there are some sources trying to achieve an objective line. Regarding the subject of Tirimujgan that we are putting emphasis on, this issue is used as a means intended for making the personality of Abdulhamid II positive or negative. Let us base our statement on an example. Some of our sources praise that lady's physical features²⁷¹, and state that she, who has been trained in the

²⁷⁰ Pierce, Leslie P., *Harem-, Hümayun Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Hükğmranlık ve Kadınlar*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, 2012 p.318-327

²⁷¹ Aksun, II. *Abdülhamid Han*, p. 13-14

palace, reached up to the level of the position of second *kadin efendi*²⁷²; while some of our sources state that she was a simple women in the palace, who had no particular importance.²⁷³ Undoubtedly, the most important driving force in making this determination is the fact that generally the same books use different subjects in order to both praise and vilify the personal image of Sultan Abdulhamid II, as in the matters that we will touch upon later on. As mentioned a little earlier, Suleyman Kani Irtem differing from other sources creates a little perception by saying that the mother of Abdulhamid II was not an important woman. Of course, this situation takes place in books which negatively criticizing the sultan, also exists in books using positive statements about him. For example, the information quoted by his daughter Ayse Osmanoglu from her memories depicts a sad as well as perfect mother-son relationship, of course with the effect of being the daughter of the sultan and the granddaughter of Tirimujgan.²⁷⁴

This expression is also seen in the writings about Perestu, the stepmother of Abdulhamid II. Some of our sources prefer an expression indicating that the said lady was a popular woman²⁷⁵, who had a good reputation in the palace, and who brought up the prince entrusted to her, with a genuine mother's compassion, and that the prince remained loyal to his stepmother with almost a love for a genuine mother.²⁷⁶ The extension of this matter to the reign of Abdulhamid II continues in the same positive line, and the sources emphasize that when the sultan ascended the throne he announced the assignation of his stepmother as the *valide sultan* (sultan's mother), and that Perestu who lived as a *valide sultan* for a period of 28 years was the only lady assigned as *valide sultan*, who in reality did not bring a sultan into the world.²⁷⁷ This relationship with mother-son sweetness is crowned by remarking that Perestu never used any of the powers of being a *valide sultan* for her own interests²⁷⁸, and by particularly emphasizing the sultan's fondness towards her. Moreover, the statements indicating that in her lifetime Tirimujgan mostly liked and appreciated Perestu the most among her fellow wives give a nice meaning to the fact that one day her son, on whom he was given to the women she liked.²⁷⁹

²⁷² Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler*, Kum Saati Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001 p.

²⁷³ İrttem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.37

²⁷⁴ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.24-25

²⁷⁵ Hülagü, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Sürgün Günleri Atıf Hüseyin Bey*, p.23

²⁷⁶ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.25-26

²⁷⁷ Öztuna, *II. Abdülhamid Zamanı ve Şahsiyeti*, p.18

²⁷⁸ Kazıcı, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti*, p.20

²⁷⁹ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.19-26

Although all of our sources discuss this subject in similar lines or by bringing criticism in a way with grounded reasons, the title of mother/stepmother cannot be expressed to be an element of creating the image of Abdulhamid II. For example; It is a logical opinion with grounded reasons that Prince Abdulhamid with a timid character felt the lack of protection of a strong mother in the world of internal conflicts in the harem, where the father did not look after his children; and that Prince Abdulhamid could not make himself heard during the conflicts in the harem due to the gentle, love creating and low voiced character of Perestu, selected as his stepmother by his father. Of course, this does not tend to depict an image. However, the expression formed with the combination of the opinions that we will mention now, which take a stand against all the positive expressions mentioned a little earlier, instinctively creates a negative image, of course. One of our sources expresses some rumors that Abdulhamid was not respectful to Perestu, who served him as a stepmother during his principedom period, and that the prince told Sultan Abdulaziz that his stepmother had an illegitimate relationship with a man named Osman Bey, and therefore Perestu did not want to live in the same place with her adopted child.²⁸⁰ Another one of our sources states that Perestu could not stand Abdulhamid II's strict discipline rules after his accession to the throne, and left Yildiz Palace but her efforts to gain the traditional status of *valide* sultan was the essential reason for that breakaway, after which rumors were spread about her illegitimate relationship with servants in the palace.²⁸¹ How a different perception emerges when the relationship praised a little earlier with many positive expressions, are read from some other sources. Of course, it cannot be alleged that our books relate such rumors with malice aforethought. What was ascertained here consists of how a perception and image emerged due to different information. As a result, our aim is to define Abdulhamid II's image in the 21st century's Turkish historiography, instead of defining the sources. Using what information and rumors they want is undoubtedly the most natural freedom and right of our books. It is impossible for us to know whether or not there is an intention of creating a perception in this regard. We, as readers, identify different Abdulhamid II images formed in our minds after examining different sources.

The fact that the element of mother is an instrument for creating an Abdulhamid II image is also understood from a narrative, which has always been narrated by imagining an imaginary mother. Moreover, our sources ascertain that a perception is openly intended to be created,

²⁸⁰ İrttem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.40

²⁸¹ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.107

regarding this issue. Our four sources mentioning about the rumor that Sultan Abdulhamid II was born from an Armenian woman named “Candir” or “Canbert” indicate that it is a baseless expression. Suleyman Kani Irtem states that this claim was put forward by the enemies of the sultan.²⁸² Similarly, a rumor that the sultan was born from the odalisque named “Gulnihal” is mentioned by one of our books, which remarks that the information is wrong and with malice aforethought, just like the assertion that he was born from an Armenian mother.²⁸³ As stated a little earlier, the writings of Ayse Osmanoglu, a daughter of the sultan and the author of one of our sources, about such rumors have the feature of being a determination and expression of the fact that the issue of “mother” is used as an instrument. Ayse Osmanoglu remarks that with such rumors, they attempt to create an enmity against the sultan, and that they act with the idea that the Turkish nation may disparage Sultan Abdulhamid, who was born from an Armenian lady.²⁸⁴ Based on this, we can say that the element of “mother” has an extremely active effect on the formation of the image of Sultan Abdulhamid II, both during and after his period, when used whether with intent to praise or revile him or when used in a completely objective manner. We envisage a "dutiful child" image as a result of positive expressions, while we envisage a totally opposite image due to negative-natured expressions. This is a situation that we encounter not only under the title of "Abdulhamid II and his mother" but also under the titles of "Abdulhamid II and his father Sultan Abdulmecid" and “Abdulhamid II and his brothers". If we try to explain this with an example; in one of our sources, it is written that the birth of Sultan Abdulmecid’s son Prince Abdulhamid was celebrated with five-times artillery shooting a day for a period of seven days²⁸⁵, while in another one of our sources, it is written that the sultan was given the notice of his prince’s birth when he was at the hamam. According to that narrative, Sultan Abdulmecid foresaw the inauspicious reign of that prince.²⁸⁶ Experience of one of these situations does not mean that the other situation was not experienced. The Sultan’s foresight that the reign of his son would be “inauspicious”, after he received the news of the prince’s birth, does not constitute any impediment for his act of informing his vizier of his son’s birth in a way stated above; and similarly, announcement of the news to the public in that way does not preclude Sultan Abdulmecid from having such an idea about his son's possible reign in the future. One or both of these might be experienced after the birth of the prince. However, the part that we are interested in is the fact that one of

²⁸² Irtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.37

²⁸³ Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler*, p.14

²⁸⁴ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.19

²⁸⁵ Yılmaz, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han'ın Aile Hayatı*, p.23

²⁸⁶ Irtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.38

the sources preferred the first expression while the other one preferred the second expression. For instance, our sources looking at the subject comprehensively define Prince Abdulhamid as a “sentimental boy” of Sultan Abdulmecid, and then mention about the effect of his father’s obvious indifference on the formation of the prince’s character.²⁸⁷ On the other hand, we have another book stating that the prince, who was essentially a withdrawn child, gained the ability to become self-sufficient and face the incident strongly, due to being deprived of the support of her parents. These resources clarify a matter by expressing the transmitted information in a cause-effect relationship, without leaving it open-ended. The positive and negative expressions used by our other sources do nothing more than creating a positive/negative image in the minds. In brief, the figure of "father" serves as an instrument intended for brightening or tarnishing the image of Abdulhamid II.

Regarding the matter of his relationship with his brothers, information which gives shape of the image of Abdulhamid II is not frequently seen our sources. We see some information about his childhood memories²⁸⁸ such how he ate puddings made for him, together with his brothers, or about that the fact he was not liked by his brothers, as a case that can be considered to be normal due to the nature of the Ottoman Palace.²⁸⁹ As we stated a little earlier, the depicted image says us that he was not liked so much by his brothers, as a case considered to be normal due to the nature of the Ottoman Palace. As a result, a seclusive figure appears who did not get attention as much as his big brother Prince Murad, due to chilliness of his father mentioned a little earlier as well as his poor chance of succeeding to the throne, and who did not joined the games with other princes and sultans even during his childhood.²⁹⁰ It is stated that Abdulhamid II was behind of his brothers also in terms of education, by emphasizing that even Napoleon III realized the difference between the knowledge levels of Prince Murad and Abdulhamid during their travel in Europe. Sultan Abdulaziz’s complaisance toward Prince Abdulhamid in the following periods is attributed to the assertion that he served as a spy for him and consequently the gap between the brothers got wider.²⁹¹ The sources we mentioned depict an image of prince, who is an alone, poorly trained, unpopular, and seclusive person engaged in some unlikeable activities such as espionage. In other words, the fact that Prince Abdulhamid became different from his brothers

²⁸⁷ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, Pozitif Yayınları, p.18

²⁸⁸ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.25

²⁸⁹ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.81

²⁹⁰ Yeğen, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.28

²⁹¹ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.41-42

or he was not liked by them is explained with the complaisance he gained by the way of espionage, or with his poor education. However, in another interpretation, the opinion appears that his different line is a result of his opposition against the European nonsenses and extravagance in the palace²⁹²; and his humble and simple lifestyle as well as his morality led him to become different from his brothers. And the reason for remaining in the background is not attributed to the assertions that he was not liked or to other negativities; instead, the effect of Prince Murad's assignment as the heir to the throne, who was estimated to succeed to the throne after his uncle, is mentioned.²⁹³ In short, our sources somehow consider Prince Abdulhamid to be different from his brothers; however, this is made in two ways. He is depicted either as a person with a proper life and positive characteristics compared to other brothers; or as a disliked brother and a prince who fell out with his brothers due to his espionage activities.

Such contrasting opinions will appear under all topic titles. Likewise, the same situation comes into question regarding the issue of education that we will mention now. The attempt to make the prince's image positive or negative, on the basis of his education, shows itself again. The fact that our sources mention about the courses and teachers of the prince is not so much important. What is remarkable is the fact that our books depict different images again, with contrasting opinions, when it comes to the explanation of the prince's responses to his teachers and the education.

Our sources presenting positive opinion about the prince's education praise him by stating that he was an intelligent, inquisitive and well educated person who sometimes incapacitated even his teachers by asking questions unexpected from a boy of that age, he was a perfect French speaker, and so on. The mentioned person was a prince, who was able to perceive the western science, techniques and industry by means of his perfect French, perfectly perceive the Islamic culture, write in perfect calligraphic script, and who had profound history knowledge.²⁹⁴ A prince, whose interest in education is defined as a passion... Regarding how such information are reached, our sources do not quote references to concrete points; however, apparently the idea that a sultan defined to be that much successful must also be

²⁹² Kazıcı, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti*, p.21

²⁹³ Engin, *II. Abdülhamid ve Dış Politika*, p.16

²⁹⁴ Babacan, *İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi Ulu Hakan Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.27-30

well educated exists at the back of minds. In this sense, it is seen that the personal image of Abdulhamid II was established on a firm base.

On the other hand, our sources that narrate negative things about the education of Prince Abdulhamid mention about a prince, who was not interested in education, and whose teachers complained about him. They state that he was a student, who could not properly learn even foreign language, Turkish, and exclusive knowledge. In contrast to the previous comment, they state that he have never been able to speak French without an interpreter.²⁹⁵ They narrate that his brother Mehmed Rasad made comments about that Prince Abdulhamid did not attend the courses and consequently remained ignorant.²⁹⁶

As can be seen, the narratives in our sources are incompatible with each other; and as a result, they either support or weaken the image of Abdulhamid II. The question in minds is “today from which source we learn the information that ‘his teachers were complaining about him’? Or, how we reach the information that Prince Abdulhamid incapacitated his teachers by asking some questions? In this sense, our texts do not include discussions about what are the sources, how they give two different data contrasting with each other, and with what crosscheck they reached such conclusions when there were two different results. The readers reading the texts that do not give such information are likely to doubt that an education is ascribed to the desired image. At this point, of course we do not say that our sources give us wrong information on purpose; however, maybe addition of some information to the texts in new editions, about from what sources such and similar information were obtained and through what filters they were passed before giving these results would enable us to read more efficiently.

The wittings about his pryncedom period enable us, the readers, to draw a general framework. In this general sense, there is a consensus that it was a freely lived period. However, this is a situation with two different directions as an unobtrusive, simple but comfortable period of youth lived with commerce and other similar activities; and a period of youth during which he was submerged in the realms of pleasure and lived an idle life. This section is presented with comments positioned between the simplest and quiet life, and the idlest lifestyle lived in the realms of pleasure. The consensus on the assertion that this period was lived freely also

²⁹⁵ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.82

²⁹⁶ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.38

applies to the end of this period. Even our sources narrating this period in the most exaggerated way share the same opinion that he began to live a quiet life after that point. The reason for this may also be caused by the fact that the lifestyle defined by debaucheries such as using alcohol, affairs with women, sauntering etc. could not get a suitable ground to continue in the same line during his reign. In the following parts, we will mention about various narrates written during his reign. In short, Abdulhamid II lived either a debauchery youth or a simple life unobtrusively, because of the freedom granted by Sultan Abdulaziz to the princes. As a fact in relation to his period of youth, we see an area extremely convenient to base the images of Abdulhamid II, which arouse from the lines of the relevant texts.

The lifestyle of Prince Abdulhamid appears in a series of narratives indicating that he approached step by step to a life of debauchery lived in the most extreme way, from an unobtrusive life. An image of prince who lived in various kinds of debaucheries and realms of pleasures is put against Prince Abdulhamid II, who lived a comfortable period in his unobtrusive life, by being engaged in commercial activities. However, there are some transition forms from one image to the other. The most unforgotten example is that, he was a person with a good financial status when his brothers were in depth, and who was a thrifty and skillful person staying out of alcoholic drinks and realms of pleasures. This is a narrative making a great contribution to the praised image of Abdulhamid II. Moreover, he had a fortune increased because of that simple life.²⁹⁷ A step after that, a person who found the pleasures in his house is mentioned. However, as different from the previous one, it is stated that Abdulhamid II was keen on the realms of pleasures but he managed to conceal it. Some information are touched upon that he quitted drinking at an early age upon the advice of his doctor.²⁹⁸ And the dose increases gradually, and we begin to read about a totally different person, who was extremely keen on drinking and entertainment, and who together with Prince Murad joined the carousals in the Ottoman palace, which spread up to Istanbul's suburbs. His addiction to drink, which was at a level threatening his health during his youth, is mentioned. His dissipation in his free environment is emphasized. However, also in this narrative, his doctor intervened in the situation, and after the age of 25, Prince Abdulhamid began to stay in the harem, and drink nothing other than water.²⁹⁹ In the next step, we face with a narrative containing rumors that adorn the carousals, asserted to be joined by the prince, in the finest

²⁹⁷ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul'u*, p.3

²⁹⁸ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.20

²⁹⁹ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.88-89

details. Consequently, we encounter an image of prince, whose health deteriorated, who experienced secret affairs, and who cheated his wives with various kinds of debaucheries.³⁰⁰ However, even our source indicating this last point states that he quitted that lifestyle. But it criticizes Abdulhamid II again, and states that he overshot the mark in terms of his religious devotion.

As can be seen, we see narratives different from each other. Some of our sources position themselves comparatively at a midpoint. However, the opinions occupying the endpoints mention about him in a manner as though they mention about other people. The narrative stating that Prince Abdulhamid lived a quiet life never deems him likely to be engrossed in a realm of carousals; but the other extreme opinion leaves the readers to a narrative that depicts an image of person, who is extremely keen on carousals, and that also does not keep away from mentioning about rumors. A similar narrative is also seen in the parts related to the assertions of stinginess attributed to Abdulhamid II. This situation will also appear in the issues of belief, and we will remain between an Abdulhamid II considered to be at a level of saint, and a superstitious Abdulhamid II, who used the religion for political purposes. First, let us see what are narrated about the issue of stinginess.

In this part, sources which have different opinions come face to face with each other, as in the issue of the realm of pleasure. We see a sultan defined between an image who had a strong commercial acumen and was very generous that he gave the gift for his enthronement himself; and an image who got someone beaten up for two cents, and caused quite a stir for several eggs. In this matter, the narrative which positively approaching Abdulhamid II states that he had a good financial status because of his thrifty character, commercial success, and modest life away from carousals. As a matter strengthening the position of Prince Abdulhamid, it is indicated that his brothers were in dept due to their lives full of fun, during his principedom period.³⁰¹ Our sources also give information explaining Prince Abdulhamid's situation and behavior related to his financial status, such as that he was not in a position requiring his to borrow from the people around him, because of the inheritance left by his stepmother or because of that he was not the first heir to the throne like his brother.³⁰² In short, the status of the prince is explained with personal attributes such as his commercial acumen and the

³⁰⁰ İrtəm, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.40-41

³⁰¹ Engin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve İstanbul'u*, p.3,
" , " , *II. Abdülhamid ve Dış Politika*, p.17

³⁰² Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.19-21

inheritance left to him; as well as with environmental features such as the atmosphere he lived in. The narrative in this line seems so far away from the assertion of parsimony. Moreover, we have sources describing the assertion of "stingy" as "malignity evilness".³⁰³ In other words, the people who narrate the assertion that the sultan was stingy are announced to be evil-minded, beyond denying such assertions and offering opposite arguments. When we come to his reign period, it is emphasized that he avoided wasting both in his private life and the state government, he maintained a well-balanced policy, and therefore he was not a stingy but a thrifty character.³⁰⁴ It is stated that he was called stingy due to that he kept the expenditures under the control in the palace, and he was thrifty in the general sense. It is remarked that due to the savings measures, reductions in the prince and sultan salaries, normalized number of personnel in the overstuffed places from the kitchen to harem, and many other reforms, those who had benefited from the opportunities of the palace became enemies of the sultan, and began to call him stingy.³⁰⁵ Our source denying the assertion of parsimony, far from putting assertion of parsimony into words, state that the yearly costs of the palace was more than seven million liras, which could not be covered by the Sultan's yearly collection of six hundred liras, and Abdulhamid II met the deficit personally. With such attitudes, the sultan is depicted to be the most generous one among the Ottoman sultans, towards the servants.³⁰⁶ Moreover, he is reported to be highly generous compared to the former sultans, in terms of giving gifts.³⁰⁷ In other words, totally opposite information is given about the sultan called 'stingy', and a highly generous image of sultan is depicted.

There is also another opinion approaching the matter from the exact opposite direction. Namely, it alleges that the sultan was a stingy character. After stating that he had a lot of goods and millions in European banks, some rumors are mentioned such as that his parsimony increased with each passing day, he reprehended his butler for several eggs taken from the coop, and got a yoghurt seller beaten up when he got fifty liras more than the normal price. When we look at the period of his reign, we see that those who make positive comments explain for what reasons the sultan was called stingy, and respond to such assertions, while those who make negative comments do not criticize him on the basis of parsimony. Our books criticizing Abdulhamid II in terms of finance base their opinions on the excessive grants,

³⁰³ Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler*, p.19-20

³⁰⁴ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.20

³⁰⁵ Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamit ve Ermeniler*, p.20

³⁰⁶ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.97-98

³⁰⁷ Özbayrak, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Uygulanan Sosyal Yardım Politikaları*, p.73

mansions given to all sultans after their marriages for enabling them to live a pompous life, and gifts given to ladies in high-ranked families.³⁰⁸ In addition, the ambition to acquire real estate and make money is another financial fondness alleged to exist in the sultan. In this sense, the much-debated Hazine-i Hassa (private treasury of the Ottoman sultan) becomes a topic to discuss. It is stated that Abdulhamid II made a great fortune, by a method that the previous sultans had never used.³⁰⁹ At this point, the application of Hazine-i Hassa is considered to be an application put into practice by the sultan as a result of his ambition to acquire goods and chattels, by which he exceedingly increased his fortune. Another one of our books approaches this matter by considering that behavior to be an economic policy required by the situation that the empire was in, instead of looking from the perspective of the sultan's ambition to make money. Since the Sultan's goods were less vulnerable to intervention by foreign states, compared to the goods of the state, the goods of the country were protected against the foreign interventions thanks to this project, probably designed by Agop Pasha. In other words, the strategically important revenue-generating lands and businesses throughout the country were made private property of the sultan, and they were transferred to Hazine-i Hassa; and by this means, foreigners who wanted to build establishments on the lands and mineral deposit had to apply directly to the sultan. And the assertion that the application was made because of the ambition to acquire properties is deemed to be a simple explanation made by the foreign forces, who were disturbed by that application.³¹⁰ In short, regarding Sultan Abdulhamid II's attitude in the matter of money, our sources approaching this matter positively depict a thrifty, logical, and generous image of sultan who acted in line with national interests; and on the other hand, our sources making negative comments depict a stingy image of sultan wholly absorbed in the ambition to acquire property, who did not hesitate to rough up in money related issues, or to cut off his nose to spite someone's face, and who even transferred the country's properties into his private properties. (Considering the general economic situation of the period, presence of this type of economic executions appear acceptable. For instance, at Rıza Pasha's memoirs when he assigned to the position on 1891, the warehouse was out of wheat, treasury had only 264 Kurus, and the salaries were irregular.³¹¹ Besides, Abdulhamid II mentions at his momerandum on 1889 that the treasury can not tolerate the military expenses. In that momerandum, the sultan states about the

³⁰⁸ İrtəm, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.137-138

³⁰⁹ Şensözen, *Osmanoğulları'nın Varlıkları ve II. Abdülhamid'in Emlaki*, p.9-12

³¹⁰ Terzi, *Bağdat-Musul'da Abdülhamid'in Mirası Petrol ve Arazi*, p.253-254

³¹¹ Aydın, Mahir, *Abdülhamid'in Seraskeri Rıza Paşa'nın Anıları*, Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2012, s.11

impossibility of the delay of military expenses and also the negative influence of limited salary payments to government officers.³¹²⁾

The matter of belief is another controversial issue taking place in our sources, like the other intensely-debated issues about the parsimony and private properties of Sultan Abdulhamid II. This issue is discussed by our sources in different parties, as well. Some of the sources exalt him by adorning the matter with exaggerations; while others badmouth him and strengthen the image that they depicted, with various exaggerations.

In our sources, the writings about the belief world of Abdulhamid can be defined as the positive and negative comments. Our books using positive statements about the sultan's belief world are classified in two parts as the ones which define the sultan as a sincere and real Muslim instead of a religionist person; and the ones which define Abdulhamid II as a person at the level of sainthood, by exaggeratively praising his moral character. And the ones making negative comments state that the sultan was not in a good position in terms of belief, by asserting that he was basically not sincere, he used Islam for his political purposes, and he was a superstitious person who had not adequate knowledge about the religion.

Our books presenting positive opinions about the sultan's religious beliefs and life state that Abdulhamid II was not bigoted but a religious man, who strongly stand against superstitious beliefs.³¹³ They remark that he was a straightforward Muslim with a perfect religious faith³¹⁴, who as a devout man tried to perform all of his religious duties that he could.³¹⁵ As an example for the respect showed to the religion by Abdulhamid II, who had a belief in this line, a narrative is mentioned that the water outlet of a printing house in Cemberlitas that published Quran was made separated from other water channels (with intent to prevent the dusts of Quran from being mixed with other dirty waters in the sewages).³¹⁶ These statements are based on reasonable information, which express the opinions of our sources about the sultan's spiritual world. As mentioned a little earlier, we took these books to the group that presents positive opinion in this regard; and we said that they express opinions about a matter, with reasonable expressions and examples. However, although they deliver positive opinions, we

³¹² Çetin, A. Atilla, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid Han Devlet ve Memleket Görüşlerim I*, Çamlıca Basım Yayın, İstanbul, 2011, s.98

³¹³ Tosun, *Osmanoğulları ve Aydınların Anlatımıyla İmparatorluğun Yüzük Taşı II. Abdülhamid*, p.57

³¹⁴ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.28

³¹⁵ Yeğen, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.230

³¹⁶ Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarla Dansı 2*, p66-67

have also some sources, which contain some examples going a little bit far and maybe going to extremes. Such resources consider Sultan Abdulhamid II to be at the level of sainthood, and give some examples which have not been mentioned by even his daughters. (They must have mentioned if he had such an attribute.) For instance, it is stated that although he has not gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca, he has been spiritually seen there many times by people, and in this sense, he was a perfect pious full of devotion that can be qualified to be one of the Saint sultans of the Ottoman Empire. It is alleged that he always kept a clean brick available at his bedside, whereby he performed *teyemmum* (ablution without water) every morning, in order not to take any step without ablution (his daughters do not mention about such a brick, although they mentioned about his many things from his pajamas to underclothes). This expression full of praise is supported by some examples such as that Abdulhamid II was spiritually informed of a man, who mentioned about his grief in the tomb of Sultan Selim I, and the next day he summoned him and resolved his problem; and that he took a mute child and enabled him to speak by praying in his phaeton.³¹⁷ As we mentioned a little earlier, these statements are used with intent to support the spiritual image of Abdulhamid II.

And our sources negating the Sultan's spiritual world mention about this matter, with some determination and examples. For instance, with intent to indicate that he had a poor belief, they show his fear of death, as something against Islam. Or some examples are given about that he had not adequate knowledge about the religion, he could not reply immediately even questions about the most basic issues, and he had not knowledge required for determining the authenticity of hadiths. After depicting an under-qualified personal image, the use of religion for political purposes is shown as the main reason for why the religion is this much prominent. Even his relation with a religious order and his membership in it are defined as the extension of his Islamism policy as well as the means of ensuring the domestic peace, rather than religious sensitivities and excitement.³¹⁸ The sources state that religion is the leading one of the most important elements ensuring the state and nation to cohere with each other in the social life; that Abdulhamid II provided it by bringing into the forefront various religious orders and their representatives; and that the sultan became a member of almost all the religious orders in his period, according to an assertion, which gained wide currency.³¹⁹ In other words, there is an opinion that the sultan's faith came into prominence as a policy rather

³¹⁷ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.38-43

³¹⁸ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.55-56

³¹⁹ Özzorluoğlu, *Abdülhamid'in Cinci Hocası Ebü'l-Hüda*, p.V-VI

than a belief. Some historians support this die, for instance Selçuk Akşin Somel says that, the religion came to the forefront in the reign of Abdulhamid II³²⁰ and according to Selim Deringil, in that period, religion became an official ideology and the sultan used the titles of the Chaliph and the protector of the Hejaz for adding some new contents to his position.³²¹ Of course, there is also an issue of superstitious beliefs. It is stated that the Sultan was interested in fortunetellers and magicians; and that such activities were in demand in Istanbul during his period, to an extent that many people even from foreign countries went to Istanbul. It is stated that Abdulhamid II sent gifts to those people, and asked questions about himself.³²²

When the sultan's characteristics are mentioned, "suspiciousness" constitutes another controversial subject, as known by everyone. In general terms, we see that our sources discuss this matter in three groups. Our first group says that the sultan is very brave, while our second group says that he was suspicious. And the third group approaches the character of Abdulhamid II, which is described to be worrywart, through the cause-effect relationship, and presents a more objective and concrete picture. The materials used by these groups, and their perspectives regarding the issues differ from each other. Now, we will try to touch upon them in brief.

Our sources expressing that Sultan Abdulhamid II had a brave character narrate that he stayed put without getting into a panic during the earthquake in Istanbul; he attended Friday Greeting (Friday divine service parade in Ottoman Empire) by showing firmness, when everyone created bloody murder due to the assassination anxiety during the attack against the Ottoman Bank, and he attended greeting again next week after the bombing incident at Yildiz. These are presented as events showing the sultan's character.³²³ According to our sources, the attitudes during such incidents are interpreted as the sultan's courage.³²⁴ All of these incidents are also narrated in detail, in the memories of Ayse Osmanoglu. These resources narrate the sultan's attitude related to his courage, that he showed during such hazardous incidents; however, they do not touch upon other matters mentioned by other resources asserting that the sultan was suspicious. For instance, let us discuss our second group and touch upon our

³²⁰ Somel, Selçuk Akşin, *Osmanlı'da Eğitimin Modernleşmesi (1839-1908) İslamlaşma, Otokrasi ve Disiplin*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010 p.22

³²¹ Deringil, Selim, *İktidarın Sembolleri ve İdeoloji II. Abdülhamid Dönemi (1876-1909)*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul, 2014 p.26

³²² İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.56

³²³ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.17

³²⁴ Çabuk, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid*, Paraf Yayınları, p.210

source among our books, which asserts that the sultan was suspicious, mentions about the matter at the most extreme point. In Suleyman Kani Irtem's book, the Sultan is depicted as a person in a state of fear and desperation, who confined himself in the Harem and did not want to see anybody when he was depressed, who did not trust his ministers and even his children, who thought that everybody would harm him, who did not eat fruits taken from outside, who considered insecure even electricity and telephones in Istanbul, who had fear of thunderbolt, who did not want any flying thing over Yildiz, who did not trust even the barber during shaving, who continuously carried a pistol, who pulled out his tooth by himself due to fear, and who took security measures in Istanbul to an extent paralyzing the life.³²⁵ In addition to Kani's words, we have also some sources stating the suspiciousness of Abdulhamid II by narrating that he stroke a negative attitude towards masons, since those who ignited the first and second Ciragan incidents were masons; he did not want women to veil themselves, due to the possibility that conspirators might masquerade as a woman; he did not like innovations such as telephone, electric, and trams; the army could not drill due to his suspiciousness; he did not want people to go to Europe, and so on.³²⁶ Now, regarding these two groups we can say that; our sources depicting the sultan as a courageous person offer their theses under the topic titles that we mentioned a little earlier; and they do not come up with any explanation about the criticism put forth by the 2nd group. And our sources in the second group do not mention about the sultan's brave attitudes, mentioned by the first group. These two groups do not mutually see each other. However, we hear the following words from the sultan's own mouth; "I am a resigned man. There is only the fear of God in my heart. I do not be afraid of anything else. I become alarmed to prevent any incident before its emergence. But if I feel that I am in danger, I do not hesitate to run into the fire if necessary..."³²⁷ Or; "Doubt is the beginning of prudence".³²⁸ Finally; "They think I am suspicious... No! I am just not incautious!"³²⁹ These words quoted from the sultan's own mouth tell us how he should be evaluated regarding the issue of suspiciousness. He openly states that doubt is necessary, he becomes alarmed in case of a possibility of any danger but he figures it out intrepidly when it come to the fore; and for this reason, he is believed to be suspicious but in fact he is just not incautious. In other words, our sources that we mentioned as the third group at this point, which prefer a method of expression that adheres to the cause-effect relationships, approach

³²⁵ Irtem,, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.52-96

³²⁶ Yeğen, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.230-231

³²⁷ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.62

³²⁸ Ogan, *Sultan Abdülhamid İftiralara Cevaplar*, p.59

³²⁹ Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarda Dansı*, p.18

this matter as it should be. Namely, when looking at the practices in that period, it is seen that the texts mention about some environmental factors such as the dethronement and murder of Sultan Abdulaziz, and the fact that his big brother Murad V lost his mental health after his 3 month reign³³⁰; as well as some other reasons such as the fact that in any part of the world, intrigue has not reached the level that it has reached in the Ottoman Empire, therefore it is unavoidable. On the other hand, some ideas such as that the censorship practices, which were prevalent in that period, can be understood by also analyzing the policy created within the framework of the relationship of the Ottoman society with the modernity, besides analyzing the sultan's character and psychological state³³¹, indicate that we should not evaluate such practices from only one perspective and should not take only the sultan's character as a basis.

This issue is also discussing by some other writers. Selim Deringil mentions about the high level physical and ideological influence of the government.³³² According to Sina Aksin, Abdulhamid was a suspicious man at the level of mental disease. Because of that, he attached importance to detective organization, promoted the journals, rewarded the untruth journals, he scared the society and censored the media.³³³ Uzuncarsili says that, Sultan Abdulhamid II knew that the journals were not totally reliable but he still made investigation about them. Uzuncarsili mentions that, this attitude is directly related with the sultan's suspicions. According to Uzuncarsili, Abdulhamid II's first years in the sultanate was strongly effected his suspicions.³³⁴ Autoterian administration of the Sultan Abdllhamid II had effected the most of fields in the empire. For instance, Selçuk Aksin Somel mentions about the teachers who exposed to tight control. Moreover, he describes to the Ministry of National Education as a censor instrument. Somel says that, even the speeches of the educators controlled by this instrument.³³⁵ Not only educators, students were also effected from these autoriterian administration. Benjamin C. Fortna mentions that, the government went beyond its purpose. The government increased the capacity of the boarding schools and emphasized religious and moral dimensions. Fortna interprets them as an intervention to student's daily life.³³⁶ But

³³⁰ Özdemir, *Abdülhamid'I Deviren Kurşun*, p.42

³³¹ Demirel, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Sansür*, p.13-15

³³² Deringil, Selim, *İktidarın Sembolleri ve İdeoloji II. Abdülhamid Dönemi (1876-1909)*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul, 2014 p.183

³³³ Akşin, Sina, *Kısa Türkiye Tarihi*, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul, 2014 p.46

³³⁴ Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı, *Osmanlı Hanedanı Üzerine İncelemeler Seçme Makaleler 2*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2012 p.588

³³⁵ Somel, Selçuk Akşin, *Osmanlı'da Eğitimin Modernleşmesi (1839-1908) İslamlaşma, Otokrasi ve Disiplin*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010 p.118-142

³³⁶ Fortna, Benjamin C., *Mekteb-i Hümayun Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Son Döneminde İslam, Devlet ve Eğitim*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005 p.291

again same writer mentions about the Sultan's uncomfortable position and touch on some cases like the decreasing borders of the empire, the problem of refugee, income losses and foreign interventions.³³⁷ According to Suraiya Faroqhi, Abdulhamid II did not strong as the sultans of the 18th century.³³⁸ İlber Ortaylı states that, Abdulhamid II controlled the empire while the disruption has started. He adds that, this disruption has started to be institutionalizing. And he also tried to use some new methods for administrate the empire. Therefore, he has known as the most despotic sultan of the empire while he was more innocent and legalistic than Mahmud II.³³⁹ Moreover, according to Kemal H. Karpat, there is no any sultan like Abdulhamid II because the other sultans did not face this much critical decisions.³⁴⁰

Let us state in brief that the narratives progressing on the basis of the cause-effect relationships reflect the scene more clearly and in a way nearest to the reality. These resources, tell us the issues and practices of that period, while approaching more than one perspective. One of such approaches consists of the presentation and evaluation of historical information, since the character of Abdulhamid II is not perceived to be the only factor. In addition, our sources that attribute the issues to the sultan's suspicious or cold-blooded and courageous character, by only making positive or negative comments as in the first and second groups, give us more ambiguous and biased information. At this point, the fact that the only perspective used is the sultan's character gives the impression of that our sources in the first and second groups discuss the subjects on the basis of the image. An inadequate perspective says that "Abdulhamid II carried out this practices because he was suspicious "; or a perspective intended for proving that the sultan was a suspicious person, which says that "Abdulhamid II did these because he was suspicious".

Undoubtedly, the topic titles about the personality of Abdulhamid II are among the most interesting ones written about his physical appearance. The fact that although photographs and pictures of Abdulhamid II—one of the sultans of the late Ottoman period—are available, sources desire to give this much information brings to mind that this matter has a function to make the sultan's image a little bit more positive or negative, depending on the intention.

³³⁷ Fortna, p.117

³³⁸ Faroqhi, Suraiya, *Yeni Bir Hükümdar Aynası Osmanlı Padişahlarının Kamusal İmgesi ve Bu İmgenin Algılanması*, Alfa Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011 p.169

³³⁹ Ortaylı, İlber, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2009 p.103-105

³⁴⁰ Karpat, Kemal H., *İslam'ın Siyasallaşması Osmanlı Devleti'nin Son Döneminde Kimlik, Devlet, İnanç ve Cemaatin Yeniden Yapılandırılması*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013 p.19

Depicting a historical figure, who lived in a period lack of photograph technology, does not come to anyone's attention, but it is interesting that many positive or negative words are used about the face, eyes, and nose of Abdulhamid II, whose photographs are already available. Since we gave wide coverage to the narrative about this issue, in the analysis section we will only mention about how different narratives far from each other are used by two different sources about the physical features of the same person. In one of our books, the high nose of the medium height Sultan Abdulhamid II is depicted as something bearing the sign of the Ottoman dynasty. (One of our sources states that the sultan borne the signs of the Ottoman Dynasty as can be seen the his photograph, and then prefers Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror as another example of sultan, who bears the same signs. By this means, a parallelism is drawn between the physical features of Abdulhamid II and that of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. Was Mehmed II selected at random?) The structure of his head and his wide and high forehead are described to be the signs of his brilliant intelligence. An analogy is drawn between the whiteness of his body and ivory. His hands and feet were reported to be well-shaped and medium-sized. It is stated that there was a sultanate dignity in his movements, and the semblance of the Ottoman Dynasty in his physical appearance.³⁴¹ Let us come to another one of our sources, which depicts him a person, who did not resemble neither his father nor his uncle, in whom a strange and terrible ugliness appeared as he got older; let alone saying that his physical features specific to Ottoman dynasty—mentioned a little earlier—resembled Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. While in the previously mentioned resource his wide forehead is depicted as a sign of brilliant intelligence, in this source it is depicted with some different words such as "slightly protruding forehead and bald head"; and the sultan's physical appearance is depicted as almost a monument of ugliness, by using many negative adjectives such as a man with an ugly red colored beard and hair, short stature, physical disease, a body unproportional upper and lower parts, hunched shoulders, bowed head, long arms, wide and stained hands, thick fingers, small feet compared to his hands, bandy legs, big head, long and bloodless ears, left eyebrow higher than the other, big nose leaning to the right, thick lip with a chap in the middle, missing teeth, bulging eyes like a mad man's eyes, etc.³⁴². From this short paragraph, we can draw the conclusion that the sultan's physical appearance is an image material, like the others that we mentioned under many other titles. The fact that our sources stating positive things and eulogies about this matter generally approach Abdulhamid II with

³⁴¹ Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.15

³⁴² İrtəm, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.52-53

sympathy, while our sources stating negative things generally use an execrative expression against the sultan support this idea.

And the profession and interests of Sultan Abdulhamid II are a topic title touched upon by our many sources, which help us to imagine the personal image of Abdulhamid II. His carpentry, bookishness as well as his interest in theater, music and animals constitute another section explaining the sultan's character, which differ from other topic titles in terms of basic common features because we do not see a manner of narration containing both positive and negative expressions and incompatible opinions, as we see in other topic titles. Almost all of our resources give the sultan what he deserves regarding these subjects. At this point, the things mentioned under this topic title begin to be seen as the movement area of the opinions that brighten the image of Sultan Abdulhamid II. For instance, nearly every book makes positive statements about his carpentry. Even our sources presenting the most extreme opinions about many subjects say that he was a good carpenter. And our books, which have generally positive opinions, enthuse about his that skill. This situation is the same in the sections about his interest in books and his big library. In this section, we also see some narratives stating that he did not only satisfy his personal interest; beyond it, he can be considered to be the father of the fields of publishing and librarianship. There is no negative opinion is touched upon in regard to his interest in theater and music, as a situation attracting a great deal of attention. There is no negative narrative other than the one about the security related incident in Yildiz Theatre. The sultan is perceived as an exact theater and music enthusiast. In fact, he wrote games, and when his girls played instruments, he corrected their mistakes. And when it comes to animal issue, his extensive collection is mentioned, and any negative opinion is not seen again, if we discount the fact that Suleyman Kani's title "is this a palace or zoo".

The relations of Abdulhamid II with the ladies in the Harem are another subject that our sources touch upon. When we read the sources, we can easily reach the conclusion that the Harem life was important for Sultan Abdulhamid II. As a matter of fact, one of our sources states that the sultan adhered to the Ottoman traditions as from his princedom period, and that he had many wives and favorites.³⁴³ Abdulhamid II, who had a private life in his house like every sultan and married man, is depicted as “a passionate lover, domestic father, and

³⁴³ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.107

egocentric person who dominated his harem”; and it is stated that he never deprived his harem from his interest and love, and that he established a sincere relation with his family and controlled them at the same time. Moreover, our sources making this definition says that he was a person who allocated time for sexuality even in his busy schedules, and that he also considered other people; for example, he sent a *cariye* (female slave) with her marriage portion to Tevfik Pasha, who was living only one wife. In other words, it is stated that the sultan was ambitious also in his love life, as in his political life.³⁴⁴ This ambitious image is strengthened by more colorful narrates and expressions in some of our sources. For instance, one of our sources tries to indicate the real-life grounds of some colorful narratives that attract attentions of European people as well, by some narratives asserting that the sultan secretly met with one of his favorites in the evenings in a mansion, where his jealous wife caught them.³⁴⁵

The image depicted by our books is a passionate sultan, who dominated the Harem. Such narratives mentioned above explain this. There are also some others who present some opinions that the sultan’s passion and his domination in the Harem was at an exaggerated level. For example, we have some books stating that he said “I have them pegged” about his wives in the Harem; and wanted those “properties” to serve him only. Therefore, those women could not walk around in the garden without his permission, let alone going out of the palace. That source calls the sultan "the only rooster in the Harem", and draws an analogy between the Harem and "medieval convents". In other words, although we do not see any negative discourse in this expression that directly offends the eye, in the general sense it can be said that it remains a negative image in minds. The perception of a person extremely jealousy in his Harem life arises. The source strengthens that perception by giving information even about the sultan's bedroom. We catch such a perception from some narratives saying that during the day, one of his favorites stood next to him, and in the nights, she left the door and another one stayed with him until midnight. Then she was replaced by another one who spent the night on a lounge. Meanwhile book was read behind a screen for the sultan. Our sources mentioning about that some girls cheered up the sultan in front of him, on a swing next to the small pool in the Harem’s garden, who sometimes had flower fight in two teams wearing colorful and light clothes, depict the sultan’s life in the Harem with such

³⁴⁴ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p.38-40

³⁴⁵ Uğurlu, *Padişah II. Abdülhamid’in Hatıra Defteri Ulu Hakan mı Kızıl Sultan mı*, p.102-107

extreme activities.³⁴⁶ The image left in the minds by this narrative is a sultan, who was on the razzle, and on extremers in terms of his relations with the *cariyes* (female slaves). Although it does not say this directly, it implies in a way. However, we do not see any data about from him/her and how they received the information about such events that was allegedly experienced behind the closed doors of the Harem, even about when and which wife of the sultan entered the sultan's room and how long she stayed there. At this point, we cannot verify such assertions which are nothing more than narratives. If these narratives are just groundless narratives without any known sources, they represent nothing more than an image depicted just with intent to create a perception, and this is exactly related to our study area. In the sultan's daughter Sadiye Osmanoglu's memories, we read that when he was on exile, he changed the extremely long-skirted dresses of the Harem girls as well as their headscarves, according to the normal clothes. His daughter remarks that Abdulhamid II said "I did not like this type of dressing style in Yıldız Palace too. However, I kept them unchanged because my brothers who will come to my position would not like the elimination of the old traditions." Based on this, it does not seem possible that the sultan, who hesitated to make a change in the dresses of the Harem girls, was able to live such a life mentioned a little earlier. Although this information received from the first person is approached with suspicion, eventually it is considered to be an historical source; therefore, it is in an acceptable nature in terms of verification of the information that we provided a little earlier, and this makes the likelihood ratio of this narrative significantly low. In this sense, the image of Abdulhamid II depicted with some narratives asserting that he went to extremes in entertainments and carouses in his principedom period, now progress in the line of a pleasure seeker sultan in the Harem.

We see a sultan highly away from this expression, to whom the ladies in his harem were extremely loyal, and who was very sensitive regarding his wives' rights associated with him. For example, Ayse Sultan's mother Musfika did not visit her daughter after the death of the sultan, although she was repeatedly invited by her daughter on exile. As the reason for that, she stated that Abdulhamid II was a very jealous man, who did not allow even chief eunuchs to look at her face, and therefore, the sultan might fell and suffer agony in his grave if foreign men look at her face during her visit in Europe.³⁴⁷ At this point, we see a family structure built in an extremely traditional manner. Abdulhamid II in this narrative is totally different from the one mentioned above. The information about that since one morning he could not

³⁴⁶ İrtem, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.101-108

³⁴⁷ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.27

wear his socks due illness, he was helped by her wife, upon that he insistently asked for her blessing³⁴⁸, constitutes the parts of another image different from the previously depicted one. Since this is reported by Musfika in person, it is considered as a reference. For this reason, this information conflicts with the image of sultan, who called her wives “property” and considered them as a “property” to be benefited from. Of course, the sultan's daughters and wives might have mentioned only positive things about Abdulhamid II. Just as our other sources depicting an image of pleasure seeker person, who doted on the harem. However, beyond its accuracy or of falsity, since we interested in the sultan image depicted by sources, it is possible to say that the narratives delivered by the two parties depict two characters different from each other. In short, the relations of Abdulhamid II with his harem, wives as well as with the girls in the harem appear as a means for constituting the sultan image in our sources.

3.2. Good Prince – Good Sultan; Bad Prince – Bad Sultan

The line of "good prince– good sultan / bad prince– bad sultan" is one of the remarkable features in our sources. In our books which generally deliver positive opinions about Abdulhamid II, his principedom is made positive as well. As a general line in our sources that negatively approach the subject, negative statements are made about his childhood period. In order to make the issue more visible, let us have a look at one of our books, which generally makes positive statements about Abdulhamid II, and which explicitly shows that it approaches the sultan with more sympathy. According to our source titled "*İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi Ulu Hakan Abdulhamid Han*", Prince Abdulhamid was born on the day after the Bara'ah Night (the night of forgiveness). His father Sultan Abdülmeçid celebrated the prince's birth with five-time artillery shooting a day for a period of seven days, and informed his vizier by saying “O, my vizier! Thank the Almighty Allah for His kindness and exalted favor. On the 16th day of this month (16 Sha'ban 1258) at ten o'clock a prince from our clean flesh and blood came into the world, and I gave him the name Abdulhamid Khan. May Almighty Allah give him a long life, and make him beneficial for us and all Muslims." His mother Tirimujgan is depicted as a woman with green eyes, long and light brown hair, white transparent skin, and

³⁴⁸ Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarla Dansı* 2, p.91-92

slim body. She was known for her fineness, kindness and beauty, among the women in the palace. (The narratives about the mother and son are quoted from Ayse Osmanoglu's memories. Prince Abdulhamid, who came up against her mother's illness and lost her mother at an early age, who was given to a stepmother by his father, who loved him by saying "my sensitive son.") Perestu, who adopted him, was the most valuable woman in the palace, and she was renowned for her piety, dignity and worldly- wisdom. That lady grew up the prince with a genuine mother's affection, and the prince always loved and respected as his birth mother. Prince Abdulhamid was given a good education during his principedom period. He was a highly clever person interested in research activities. His questions were very mature that could not be expected from his peers. He improved himself in order to be skillful in the fields of Sufism, calligraphy, history, horsemanship, military and many others. He spoke Circassian, Albanian, Arabic and Persian. In his youth, he made money from trade, managed farms, and lived a simple life.³⁴⁹

In one of our sources approaching Abdulhamid II in a critical manner, the line of a "bad prince–bad sultan" is seen in general. In the writing titled "*Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayati*", it is asserted that Abdulhamid II's birth mother Tirimujgan was a simple woman in the palace, and that she attracted Sultan Abdulmecid's attention by chance. In a narrative, his mother is alleged to be another woman named "Candır" or "Canbert", although that assertion was stated to be groundless later on. In the sense that he was not valuable in the eyes of his father, it is narrated that his father Sultan Abdulmecid was informed of his birth, when the sultan was at the bath, and upon that the sultan began to think negatively about the newborn prince. According to this source, Prince Abdulhamid was not well-educated, and that situation was also noticed by Napoleon III. He was not eager to learn foreign languages. His teachers complained about him, and the prince did not attend the courses regularly. At the same time, Abdulhamid II served as a spy for his uncle Sultan Abdulaziz. He was a pleasure seeker person in his youth. He spent his youth period with debauchery. With this kind of statement, our source strengthens the narrations in this line. When his health deteriorated at the age of 30, due to his passion for pleasure and debauchery, he quitted that life style, but after that he began to go to extremes in religiosity. He is reported to be stingy, as a character.

³⁴⁹ Babacan, *İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi Ulu Hakan Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han*, p.1-30

He had a fondness for money, which gradually get stronger; to an extent that he reprehended his butler for several eggs taken from the coop, he fired his servant when his several hens were lost, and he got a yoghurt seller beaten up when he got fifty liras more than the normal price. He has been suspicious since his early ages, and this matter is detailed in various kinds of narratives. In his belief world, he was bogged down in superstitious beliefs such as astrology, fortune-telling, and witchcraft. And when we come to his reign, we see that the same line was continued. In front us; there is a sultan who misbehaves the women. An analogy is drawn between the Harem and "medieval convents". Women are considered to be a property, with which he lived a life of pleasure in the palace. He is depicted to be a very ugly man, and his many physical details are criticized separately. His neurotic character continued during his period, as well. He considered everyone to be a person with intent to harm him. He did not trust even his own children and next-of-kins, and he had a toxiphobia. He had all kinds of security measures in depth; he pulled out his tooth and trimmed his beards by himself, and always carried a gun due to fear. He was interested in fortune-telling, witchcraft and charms. He granted expensive jewels to ladies in high-ranked families, and mansions to sultans for enabling them to live a pompous life.³⁵⁰ As can be seen, the negative line of Abdulhamid II, which was not so much bright in his principedom period, continued also in his reign.

Let us cut the long story short, and say that of course Abdulhamid II can and should be criticized. Likewise, Abdulhamid II can be praised, and of course he should be appreciated for his positive aspects. However, what we are trying to express is that, when one of our sources uses the highest expressions about a person, another one badmouths the same person, as an interesting situation. Furthermore, the positive/negative line progress in a straight line, at all the stages of Sultan's life. Human life continues with ups and downs, and this is the same for all of us and every person. This is the same even for a sultan. At this point, asserting that any person's life from the youth to old-age periods was invariably positive or negative would not be much realistic. Our sources form a childhood-youth-adult line within the scope of Abdulhamid II's image that put forth. For instance, "Abdulhamid the Grand Khan" was loved so much by his mother, who was famous for her positive aspects in the palace, by his valuable stepmother, and by his father, who loved him by saying "my sensitive son". He was perfectly educated and became a person skillful in many fields, and he lived an unobtrusive and quiet life in his youth. However, the "unknown Abdulhamid" was the child of an ordinary mother,

³⁵⁰ İrtəm, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.37-138

and a prince disliked by his father. He had not enthusiasm and skill for education. He served as a spy for his uncle. He was suspicious and stingy. He had superstitious beliefs. He spent his youth irresponsibly with carousals and profligacy, and consequently became an extremist religionist. This issue maybe better understood with a short example. Regarding education, the narrative continuing in the line of "Grand Khan" mentions about Sultan Abdulhamid's passion for education that cannot be expected from a person of his age, and about that he left his teachers in difficult situations with his questions, as a result of his intelligence and skill; but on the other hand, our source mentioning about "Unknown Abdulhamid" narrates a Prince Abdulhamid, who was an unenthusiastic and talentless person in terms of education in his principedom period. That source states that his teachers complained about that prince, who did not attend the courses according to his brother, and even Napoleon III realized his inadequate education. From what sources we learned that Prince Abdulhamid left his teachers in difficult situations with his questions, and that his teachers complained about him. Our books omitted to give us this information. Whatever those sources are, how two different information this much incompatible with each other can be obtained from them? If a dilemma arises from these sources, what was the basis of their comparison, and how such results were reached? Since we do not know the answers of these questions, a reader normally thinks that a good principedom narrative has been preferred for the good sultan, and a bad principedom narrative has been preferred for the bad sultan.

3.3. Expressions where the Perspectives Settle Account

At a certain point, the debate on the personality of Abdulhamid II goes beyond the sultan, who is at the center of the issue, and takes the form of settlement of the accounts between the different writings and narratives about the sultan. For instance, the name of one of our sources that we used in our study is directly related to this matter: "Sultan Abdulhamid İftiralar Cevaplar". In order to avoid causing a misunderstanding, let us note in advance that there is no objection regarding any amendments in the sources, intended for correcting the incorrect and unrealistic information about Abdulhamid II (according to the own opinions of the authors). Since we look at the image of Abdulhamid II in the sources, our determination indicates nothing more than the fact that our sources preferred that way. Otherwise, it would

be improper if we criticize such amendments; and in a sense, it would mean that we consider unnecessary to write a new book about this subject. It would make sense if the sources add a new thing to the said ones or if they correct something that they deem incorrect. What we are trying to express here is that, the matters at hand are not based on the information that changed upon discovery of new sources or on offering different comments from new perspectives for the existing sources; instead, they are based on responding to some negative information and comments about Abdulhamid II. For instance, the book determines the narratives, which it will discuss in its content, to be "slander" in advance, with its title that we mentioned a little earlier. In other words, it responds to the slander instead of inaccuracies, imperfections and different ideas. Namely, this means that the objects and opinions are not imperfect or wrong, but they are totally baseless slanders and told deliberately. That is exactly what we want to tell; the sources in our hand do not oppose and struggle with such narratives instead of historical mistakes and incorrect comments. And therefore, they act with the mission to respond to them. At this point, let us mention some headings in the book, the title of which was given in the lines above. "Sultan Abdulhamid Khan II is not a Killer", "Sultan Abdulhamid is not a Piker", "Sultan Abdulhamid is not Ignorant", " Was Sultan Abdulhamid Suspicious? ", "Was he Coward or Brave?".

We see similar things not only in our source mentioned above but also in our other books. For instance, in Ayse Osmanoglu's memories there are the following lines: "People are very evil. They do not hesitate to say things they know or things they do not know, by making them up. One of the assertion that my father believed in witchcraft and superstitious beliefs is one of the slanders about my father. Why my father would need magic, when he had an absolute power? For what and against whom he would use magic? In fact, my father was nothing other than a Muslim with the right and perfect faith.³⁵¹ The sultan's daughter decidedly defined the narratives about the existence of superstitious beliefs of Sultan Abdulhamid II as a slander, and responded such narratives accordingly. In another example is like this: In our source titles "Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarla Dansı 2" from our source, whether Sultan Abdulhamid II used alcohol or not is discussed in a similar manner. Our source criticizes another author's assertion that Sultan Abdulhamid II used alcohol. It criticizes that the source of this assertion is the word allegedly said by Osman Ertugrul Bey "My grandfather drunk port wine; and moreover, he made us taste it saying that it had a healing affect"; and says "This is not an

³⁵¹ Osmanoglu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid*, p.28

evidence. Then, where its document? It does not exist... "³⁵² Our author rejects this assertion about Abdulhamid II, by saying that it is baseless and undocumented. And these lines have been written as a response to that narrative.

As can be seen, what square up with each other are not the absolute truths proved by sources and documents, but the assertions and narratives. Now, we will handle this issue with another title. In this section, we will mention about the narratives that exaggerate positive or negative expressions.

3.4. Exaggerated Narratives

In the lines above, we touched upon the negative assertions about Abdulhamid II; so let us not interrupt the progress of that in this part and let us touch upon the narratives containing extremely negative expressions. For instance, in our writing titled "Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı" that we mentioned a little earlier, the sultan is asserted to be in carousal, and many narratives are presented in this regard; "The place by the Bosphorus that is currently the German Embassy was belong to Abdülhamid II at that time, and there was a bath on its shorefront land. The recreation activities organized in that sea bath of the prince took place in a way that made the worldly-wise people of the palace open-mouthed with astonishment. Prince Abdulhamid lived in a riotous living with his friends Pashazade as well as high-ranked people around him for years, to an extent that the people of Uskudar, Beylerbeyi, and Fenerbahce could not forget for a long time. Abdulhamid II had a secret relationship at ... by the Bosphorus, with ...'s wife A... Abdulhamid II communicated with that lady, and then went to the waterside residence by a rowing boat together with his slave Salim, spent the night there, and got out of the residence towards morning. Salim waited for his master outside the waterside residence, by staying awake till morning. The son of ...Pasha was alleged to be Abdulhamid's son. H. Pasha and M... Bey were the friends of that lady. By that means, those men became comrades of Abdulhamid II. During that pleasure and debauchery

³⁵² Armağan, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarla Dansı* 2, p.315-320

period, Abdulhamid II converted Belgian Mademoiselle Flora Kordiye with the name 'Fatma', with the promise of marriage, but then left her. However, eventually he lost his health due to that pleasure and debauchery life. That situation caused Abdulhamid II to suddenly change his life style at the age of 30. His private doctor and friend Mevroyeni's effect on that change was observed." The source says that the character of Abdulhamid II tended to prefer extremes in all respects; and that time he suddenly quitted pleasure seeking, wine, raki, strong drinks, daily carousals, and profligacy; he adopted the old Turks' abstemiousness, austerity, and serious and simple life; he began to be friends with only serious and straightforward men, hodjas and sheikhs in Istanbul; he was ill-tempered, sequestered and uncommunicative; he became a person different from his brothers.³⁵³ As can be seen, we see an image of a person, whose state changed suddenly from one to another, and who has no limits in extremeness. This opinion (we do not discuss its accuracy or inaccuracy) is supported by narratives, and presents us a highly extreme image in this regard. Unfortunately, our source does not state the sources of the narratives have told. The narattives written only about the assertion that he drunk wine are also viable at this point. Since there is no information transferred through a document, we see a way of expression carried by narratives forward more than required.

Does it appear only in negative expressions? Of course not. For instance, regarding the spiritual world of Sultan Abdulhamid II, we have books which makes him a saint. Such resources consider Sultan Abdulhamid II to be at the level of sainthood, and give some examples which have not been mentioned by even his daughters (they must have mentioned if he had such an attribute). For instance, it is stated that although he has not gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca, he has been spiritually seen there many times by people, and in this sense, he was a perfect pious full of devotion that can be qualified to be one of the Saint sultans of the Ottoman Empire. It is alleged that he always kept a clean brick available at his bedside, whereby he performed *teyemmum* (ablution without water) every morning, in order not to take any step without ablution (his daughters do not mention about such a brick, although they mentioned about his many things from his pajamas to underclothes). This expression full of praise is supported by some examples such as that Abdulhamid II was spiritually informed of a man, who mentioned about his grief in the tomb of Sultan Selim I, and the next day he summoned him and resolved his problem; and that he took a mute child

³⁵³ İrtəm, *Bilinmeyen Abdülhamid Hususi ve Siyasi Hayatı*, p.40-41

and enabled him to speak by praying in his phaeton.³⁵⁴ Let us add the following note. Of course we do not discuss the correctness of the things told; however, we must state that this expression supported by narratives shows an extreme manner of telling in terms of “historical information”, like what is done by our other source staying that taking as a basis the rumors about Abdulhamid II's drinking habit is wrong and means writing a historical text without any document. People consider such information to be correct to a certain degree, or they consider them to be wrong, in line with their spiritual beliefs. However, since in this study we investigate the historical texts and manners of telling, so we should make this determination.

We must conclude the matter as follows. The exaggerated expressions used to make the sultan positive can be a matter of debate in the course of time; just as how today we discuss the opinions containing extreme negation, which are asserted to be made with intent to tarnish the image of Sultan Abdulhamid II, according to our sources. At this point, as we said earlier, we observe how the depicted images and formed texts and expressions square up with each other. The title becomes Sultan Abdulhamid II; however, the issue is not the deceased sultan but the things told about him (due to the effort to make him positive/negative and form an image of Abdulhamid II in the minds, accordingly).

³⁵⁴ Çolak, *Son İmparator Abdülhamid Han'ın Gizemli Dünyası*, p.38-43

Conclusion

Sultan Abdulhamid II period is the most spoken and frequently referred timeline at ideological aspects. This period which extends our 19th century has not been a subject for him but for out of time debates like left – right, progressive – unprogressive and traditionalist – modernist.³⁵⁵ Abdulhamid II who was the sultan of the most problematic 33 years of the Ottoman Empire, has considered subjectively for a long time. He has discussed completely positive or completely negative. He has been considering objectively in recent years.³⁵⁶ Historiography on Sultan Abdulhamid II has undergone significant developments in recent years. “The Red Sultan - the Grand Khan” polarization that took shape with also the effect of ideological schism has been substantially overcome in academic historiography, but its effects are still observed in popular historiography. The period of the Ottoman State in general until the 1950s, and the period of Abdulhamid II until recent years have been kept out of both modernization narratives and the imagination of the past. The period of Abdulhamid II was tried to be included in the narrative, by means of academic historiography in particular; and this movement was supported with the limited studies between 1970 and 1980 (especially in the field of economic history), PhD thesis and monographic studies. With this new emergent historiography, continuity from the Ottoman State to the Republic came to the forefront, and the period of Abdulhamid II was included in that narrative, as well. And with the effect of academic historiography again, a mid-way attitude appeared, which had the assertion of being objective and scientific, by saying “He was neither the grand khan nor the red sultan” or “he was a tyrant but a reformist as well”. The period of Abdulhamid II became one of the main focuses of the studies of the 19th century; the interest in the period increased as from the 1980s; and that interest began to yield fruit as of the 1990s.³⁵⁷ It is observed that the same interest continued from the 2000s to the present, and even this modest study used 59

³⁵⁵ Kırmızı, Abdülhamit, *Abdülhamid'in Valileri Osmanlı Vilayet İdaresi 1895-1908*, Klasik, İstanbul, 2008, s.9

³⁵⁶ Yelkenci, Ömer Faruk, *Türk Modernleşmesi ve II. Abdülhamid'in Eğitim Hamlesi*, Kaknüs Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010, s.15

³⁵⁷ Özbek, Nadir, “Modernite, Tarih ve İdeoloji: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Tarihçiliği Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme”, *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, Cilt 2, Sayı 1, 2004, 71-90

sources as primary source which published/republished in that period. Based on this, the interest in the subject is observed to continue in terms of both the number of publications and the diversity of topics.

In the majority of resources, the narratives progressing on "parsimony", "suspiciousness", "faith" and other similar common subjects, try to make a substantial explanation by attributing the administration of Sultan Abdulhamid II expressed as "the period of autocracy" to his suspicious character; or by attributing his financial policies to his parsimony. This situation shows parallelism with psychological history and its methodology, which stipulates to investigate the incidents and especially their doers, and to make psychological explanations in order to explain the history; and which means putting forward such peoples, who changed the history and gave direction to it, as well as their cultures, personalities, beliefs, life philosophies, and social environments.³⁵⁸ Based on the fact that history can become negotiable only when it conceived by historians in the form of narrative. And although documents are adhered to, history is eventually a designed presentation. We came to the conclusion that, since a phenomenon in history is the event and interpretation taken, interpreted and shaped by the historian's mind and the historian incubates the documents and residues by interpreting them. Historians who have spirit and sense, take us to history in the way which drawn by their spirits.³⁵⁹ Historical sources and documents can not give us exact historical truths. These can only give new perspectives. Thus with the other achievements which we will read provides us the ability of consideration and new opinions.³⁶⁰ Most of the writings about Sultan Abdulhamid II (pros and cons) can not go any further than sensual matters. Handling with the sensual issue causes extremely critics or compliments about him.³⁶¹ These mean that there were narratives about Abdulhamid II, which were also told by the sources currently available in our hands and which differ depending on the authors. Based on this, we set out to look at "The Personal Image of Abdulhamid II in the Turkish History Writing in the 21st Century".

³⁵⁸ Karabağ, Gülin, *Tarih Nasıl Yazılır? Tarihyazımı İçin Çağdaş Bir Metodoloji* (ed. Ahmet Şimşek), Tarihçi Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2011 s. 241

³⁵⁹ Sakal, Fahri, "Tarihyazımında Temel Kavramlar", *Tarih Nasıl Yazılır? Tarihyazımı İçin Çağdaş Bir Metodoloji* (ed. Ahmet Şimşek) s.86-87

³⁶⁰ Dadyan, Saro, *Sultan Abdülhamid Midhat ve Mahmud Paşaları Nasıl Katlettirdi?*, Okuyan Us, İstanbul, 2013, s.12

³⁶¹ Sırma, İhsan Süreyya, *II. Abdülhamid'in İslam Birliği Siyaseti*, Beyan Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013, s.9

To the best of our ability, we tried to uninterruptedly state the factual information as soon as possible, about the mother, stepmother, brothers, education, character, life style etc. of Abdulhamid II during his principedom period, by means of the critical and synthetic readings that we spread on effort to provide. After that, we made an effort to reflect on our texts the factual narratives about the Harem life, stepmother, wives, physical appearance, occupations, interests, dressing style, character and psychological state of Abdulhamid II. And in the last part, where our analysis-based study exists, we tried to see the image of Sultan Abdulhamid II in the 21st century's Turkish historiography, by comparing and classifying the provided factual information. We tried to share some of our determinations, such as "good prince – good sultan; bad prince – bad sultan", "expressions where the perspectives settle account", and "exaggerated narrative", which appeared as a result of the interpretation and comparison of the subjects touched upon by the sources.

The interest of the 21st century's Turkish historiography in Sultan Abdulhamid II and his period is clearly seen. The effect of the idea and understanding with the assertion of being objective and scientific by saying "he was neither the grand khan nor the red sultan" or "he was a tyrant but a reformist as well", which appeared substantially with the efforts of academic historiography, is seen on the historywriting of that period. However, it is not possible to say that it is fully separated from the way of telling, which proceeds either "always positively" or "always negatively". In fact, if this differentiation appeared with the author and expression, which is partial in some sections and outspread in the whole in some sections was not available; this thesis would not be able to be written. The subjects discussed under the topic titles in our study are related to the personal life and character of Abdulhamid II, which are helpful for seeing his image. Depending on how the sources interpret these critical points, and on the usage places and methods of them in the history of Abdulhamid II, two different Abdulhamid II images are revealed, in a plain extending from the point of a severe satire and negation to an extent saying "red sultan"; towards the point of praise and making positive to an extent saying "grand khan". When we consider the two most extreme points on this plain formed by narratives, we see either a prince who was born from an ordinary mother, grown up by an unimportant stepmother about whom rumors are spread, was not liked by his father, spent his youth period with various types of extremisms and profligacies, and who was an uneducated, stingy, and suspicious person bogged down in superstitious beliefs; or a prince who was born from a mother famous in the Harem, grown up by a valuable and estimable stepmother, liked by his father so much, spent his youth period modestly, simply but

successfully, was away from entertainments and carouses, was engaged in trade, who was well-educated, thrifty, cautious and religious. In order to cut the long story short, let us content ourselves with saying that the conflicting two images appeared during the reign period. (We already discussed this subject in the text, with all its details.) Our resources tell the history of Sultan Abdulhamid II, based on their opinions, by means of the titles that we mentioned above with intent to give an example, as well as other titles that we emphasized in the text. Each book puts forth an image of Sultan Abdulhamid II either with serious differences or nuance compared to the image depicted by the previous book. The fact that until the 1950s, the period of the Ottoman Empire in general, and until the recent years the period of Abdulhamid II have been kept out of both modernization narratives and the imagination of the past has been accustomed; the continuity between the Ottoman period and today has come to the forefront; and the period of Abdulhamid II has been included in the narratives. With the effect of academic historiography, an objective and scientific perspective was obtained for the period of Abdulhamid II. This scientific, objective and centrist effect is also seriously seen in regard to the sultan's image and personality. Undoubtedly, the desired objective and scientific truth will be approached step by step, as a result of the evaluation of the positive or negative points in the context of cause and effect relationship. As for the expressions representing the most extreme points, they will get out of the line of 'either "always good" or "always bad"', as well as of having the incompatible narratives and opinions squared up with each other, and of going to extremes in narratives, in the course of time. Serenity will be provided at this point, as people read and write, and an objective and scientific line will be obtained for also the issue of personality of Abdulhamid II, to a great extent.

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